



IN THE STADTPARK, VIENNA.

POPULAR LIFE IN THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN CAPITALS.

BY WILHELM SINGER.

DO you envy the man who, on arriving in a large city, registers, classifies, and records in his head all the impressions he has received; investigates carefully the museums, the water supply, the markets, the canals, and the sewers, and becomes a peripatetic "annual report" of the kind which municipal governments issue?

In the eyes of such profound students the frivolous pleasure-seeker will find little favor. The latter may be endowed with but slight profundity, but he keeps his eyes open and his nose in the air while he saunters through the streets, delighting in all that is picturesque, as a connoisseur

enjoys the flavor of fine wine. He views the public monuments only *en passant* as something to look at. In the show-windows of the publishers he takes special note of the books with piquant titles and striking illustrations. He cannot resist the attraction of a green garden, or a jolly company, or a good restaurant. He likes to drift with the human current, and life in the midst of the people is to him a source of inexhaustible pleasure.

The writer of these lines willingly—and, if you like, penitently—confesses that he belongs to this class of harmless loafers, who are in danger of being accounted mere unliterary curiosity-hunters, because they only put down that which they have seen and heard, and don't care a button for legends or anything which already has been beautifully described by others. To unite into a mosaic the frivolous, genial, and jovial phases of popular life is the object of the present article, and the author has no higher ambition than to draw by his harmless levity a smile of satisfaction from his reader.

Few are the travellers who do not recall with pleasure their sojourn in Vienna



TYPE OF VIENNOISE.

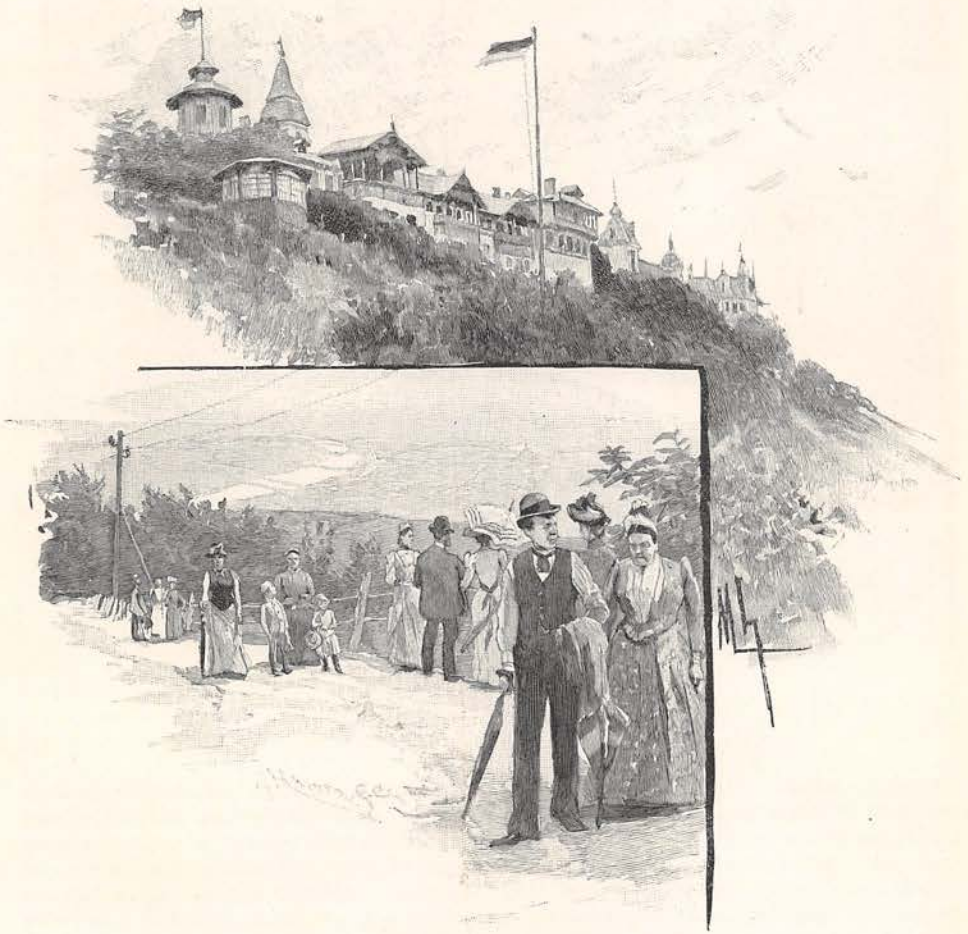
—provided they did not get mixed up in the social and political quarrels which, for the moment, are threatening to injure the ancient reputation of the Viennese for genial good-nature, but surrendered themselves without reserve to the delightful impressions of the city and its characteristic folk-life. The Viennese folk-life is easily understood. The chief factors are—or were at least formerly—a mixture of naïve careless gayety, an impetuous, sanguine temperament, love of song, fun, and laughter, and appreciation of a good bumper. Those who boast of belonging to the upper classes have, to be sure, donned the stiff uniform of European social etiquette, but in moments of overflowing vitality the Viennese characteris-

tics will yet victoriously assert themselves. Of the very highest class I am not now speaking, for its members constitute a separate and distinct caste, with habits and customs of their own, which the Viennese snob (for this variety is also extant) finds enviable and worthy of imitation.

It is amazing what a number of experiences a man can get through within a single day in Vienna. The native rises early, because he does not go to bed late. If he be a bachelor, his first visit is to a restaurant. Only a few Viennese cafés are permitted (as they are in Paris) to take possession of the sidewalk with chairs and tables. Whoever is desirous to drink his coffee in the open air will find a friendly reception in the City Park (Stadtspark), in the vicinity of the small "Kurhaus," in the shadow of trees and with fragrant flowers round about him; and he will, moreover, find a pleasant pastime in watching the groups at the neighboring tables.

The Stadtspark is a small, well-tended garden, in whose arbors devotees of the *dolce far niente*, old pensioners (and young ones too, for that matter), enthusiasts reading a love romance, or on the lookout for one, idle away their time, listening to the song of the birds and the sirens. For it is a fact that Cupid also gets up early in the morning in Vienna, and at quite an unseasonable hour one may catch glimpses of loving couples under the leafy crowns which shade statues of artists, or a sculptured fountain, with the perpetual plash of water.

Those who are fond of museums may take an inventory of the Ambrose collection in the Belvedere, and admire the Theseus who, in the midst of the charming Volksgarten, slays the Minotaur for the edification of the peaceful newspaper-reading citizen. We prefer first to take a drive in a fiacre through the Ringstrasse, with its splendid display of monumental buildings, and then to make a little excursion into the country. The Viennese cabmen have the reputation of being the best whips in the world. In speed and skilful driving they are, indeed, not easily excelled. Their cabs are light and kept in good repair; their horses are racers of a very respectable sort. The driver cultivates a certain elegance, in accordance with his station. He does not, as in many other cities, wear a uniform, but mostly a jacket, tight-fitting trousers, a shirt with



AT KAHLENBERG.

tall starched collar, and on his head either a small felt hat with a feather in it, or a straight-brimmed, excessively shiny cylinder, known in popular parlance as a *Stösser*.

Scarcely any city in the world has so charming an environment as the Austrian capital. Its seal and its sentinel is the ancient wooded Kahlenberg, with its villas and monasteries. From the city to the Kahlenberg is a short drive in a fiacre. It is also possible to go by boat. An inclined railway runs to the top of the mountain, from which one may enjoy a delightful view of the wide-spreading city, girdled by the Danube. An incomparable adornment is the extensive Wiener

Wald (Vienna Forest). Wherever one turns he is likely to strike a picturesque corner where jolly pleasure-seekers rejoice in God's creation. Around the primitive tables, in the neighborhood of which industrious hens are frequently seen scraping up a scanty living, sit gay Viennese men and women drinking the native wine, mixed with soda-water (known in local parlance as a *Gespritzter*), and munching the national "rolls." The demands for modern improvements are, to be sure, beginning to assert themselves here and there, in the erection of pretentious hotels in Swiss style; but, for all that, the little cozy inns are not yet extinct, with their verandas and projecting



OVER THE NEW WINE.

balconies, wreathed in vines and ivy, beneath which it is so pleasant to sit, and, oblivious of the world and its problems, gaze out upon the trees nodding in the wind, and whispering their ineffably home-like melody. The connoisseur of good Austrian wine will find a hospitable welcome under the arbors of the famous monastery Klosterneuburg. Probably he will be tempted to tarry there longer than is good for him, for he will not easily find an environment more conducive to conviviality than the prospect from the summit of the cloister, especially when the sun is beginning to sink beneath the distant horizon, and the ghostly shades of night spread over the wide landscape.

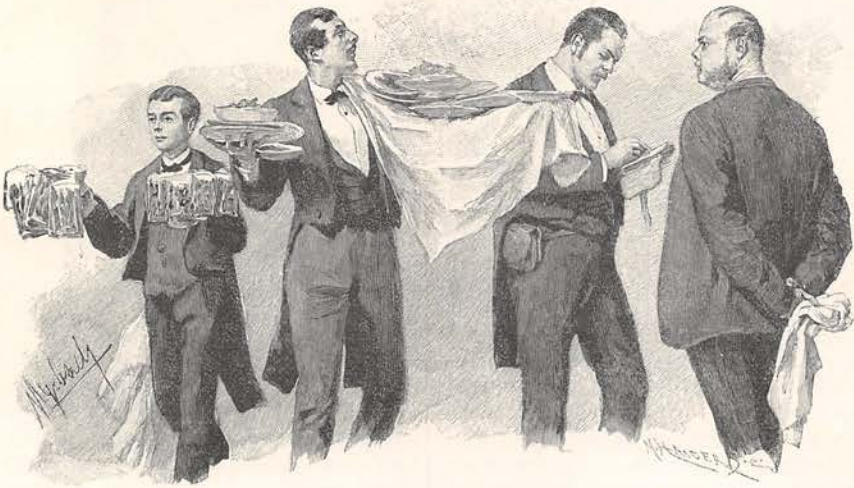
The hour for dining is between three and four o'clock, and does not conform to the custom in other cities. In some hotels an attempt has been made to domesticate the *table d'hôte*, but the prejudice of the Viennese in this particular is not to be overcome. His independence in the choice of his viands, and his predilections in reference to the composition of his prandial circle, amount to obstinacy.

He clings to his fixed, habitual table companions as he clings to his religion. There are hotels and taverns where for a long series of years the same people have dined daily at the same tables. Each has his own glass, his own pipe, and his tastes and habits are known and respected both by landlord and waiters. These "fixed guests" (*Stammgäste*) get always the best portions; they are most attentively waited upon, and constitute a kind of hereditary bibulous aristocracy. It is almost impossible for a stranger to be admitted to any of the so-called *Stammtische* without the permission of the company. The fixed or habitual guests are mostly married citizens of Vienna who like to spend their evenings at a tavern. As slender and modest youths these freemasons of the eating and drinking fraternity first took their seats at these tables; but with the lapse of years they have grown stout and gray and highly respectable; and there they now sit, listening to all sorts of anecdotes, even the hoariest, and relating the same kind. The *Stammtische* are a less frequent institu-

tion in the larger hostelries, conducted according to the pattern of the great and fashionable restaurants on the Continent; but they yet flourish in the small smoky taverns which the Viennese call *Beisel*. This is, to be sure, a derogatory term, but is used in its present significance as a pet name. The *Beisels* are mostly situated in out-of-the-way streets, hidden away in hallways and upper stories, where in the period of police persecution (now long since forgotten) the citizen could withdraw from the too curious scrutiny of the vigilant guardians of order.

The excellent Viennese beer halls are, in a certain sense, in spite of all their simplicity, the *salons* of the *bourgeoisie*. No one will object to their cheapness. In these places, barring a certain number which have furnished a gathering-

fingers of his despotic chief, and who in the evening, when weariness prematurely closes his eyes, is more frequently aroused from his sweet slumber by a well-applied box on the ear than by the beneficent fee of a customer. He, too, wears, like his superiors, the swallow-tail, whose cleanness, to be sure, is not always beyond question. Only in the last months of his apprenticeship does the youngster betray an aspiration toward elegance; for he is then soon to enter upon the second stage of his development as a dish carrier, and his art, which will then demand a low-cut waistcoat and neatly parted hair, is a very advanced one. The Viennese waiter who has been promoted to this point, when he is competent to receive orders from the bill of fare, knows how to build up with mathematical exactness a

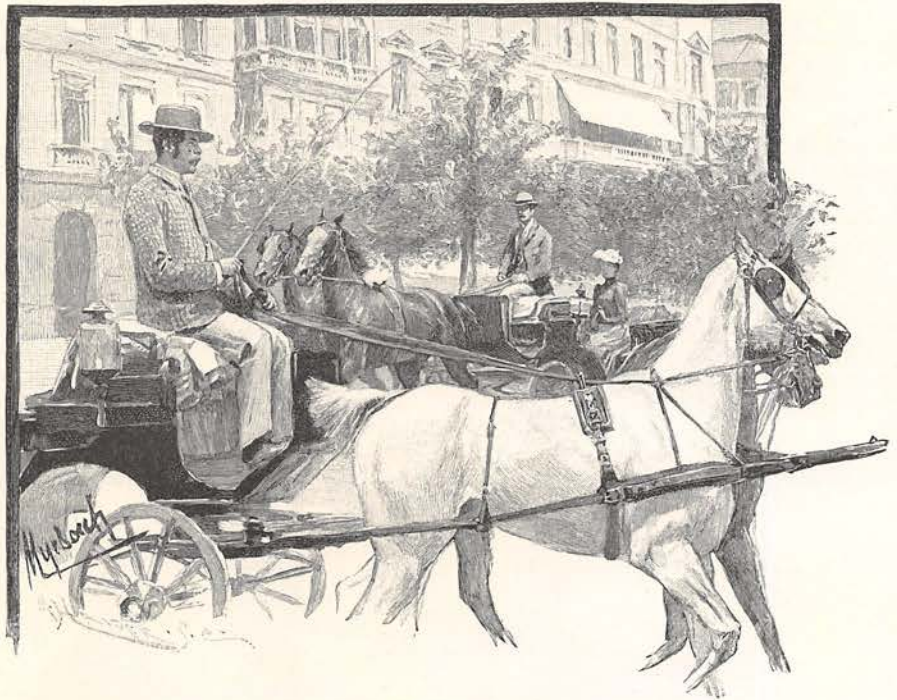


VIENNESE WAITERS.

place for stupid political malcontents, one is apt to meet some of the most prominent and cultivated people of Vienna, and one is often surprised to hear conversation concerning literature, art, and science. Here one has furthermore a chance to observe a notable phenomenon, viz., the Viennese waiter in all the stages of his development. First, the small and clever beer apprentice, who carries a bouquet of large and small glasses in his red, toil-worn hands, and dodges about among the little tables with express-train velocity, whose hair-fashion is often disarranged by the energetic intrusion of the

perfect tower of dishes, in the distribution of which from table to table he evinces the most extraordinary dexterity and skill.

The third stage of development is represented by the head waiter (*Zahlkellner*), who cultivates a certain ease of manner and *embonpoint*; who will condescend to wait only upon the most distinguished *habitués*; who, moreover, receives the money and the larger tips, while the dish-carriers and beer apprentices must content themselves with more modest fees. The generalissimo of the beer restaurant is the superintendent or business manager.



VIENNESE FIACRE.

He has divested himself of that badge of servitude, the swallow-tail, and he is also above accepting fees.

Besides the tower of St. Stephen's Church, with its pinnacle looming against the sky, the Prater is the pride of the genuine Viennese. To be sure, the ancient simplicity which formerly manifested itself in respect for unspoiled and unimproved nature, only here and there interrupted by some picturesque barracks, is now no longer to be found in the Prater. The demands of a great city have also penetrated into this pleasure-ground, and have there found modern expression in paved roads, railway bridges, and ships with mechanical contrivances in the way of engines, etc. Besides, the World Exhibition of 1873 subjected the democratic part of the natural garden—the so-called Wurstel-Prater—to a transformation which the old local patriots have never ceased to lament. To this day lies in the Prater, like a gigantic turtle, the rotunda of the exposition building.

The Prater ought not to be compared to the Hyde Park of London or the showy Bois de Boulogne. The Prater is some-

thing apart by itself, in spite of the aristocratic tone which has been imparted to it by the Constantine Hill, which was laid out in imitation of the Paris Cascade, surrounded by a lake and adorned with a restaurant. For what constitutes the chief charm of the Prater is its ancient groups of trees, which yet remain unmolested, and a certain primitive grandeur in the *tout ensemble* which rebels against all attempts at transformation. A part of the great park, which is traversed by a wide avenue of chestnut-trees, is known as the Nobel-Prater. Here private equipages and nimble fiacres are continually parading. The plain citizen, sitting before the three coffee-houses (so called because hardly any coffee, but almost exclusively beer and wine are drunk there), contemplates with delight the display of luxury in the carriages, while the magnificent Austrian military music is ringing in his ears.

Of the popularity of this military music one may form an idea any day when, about noon, a military band marches up toward the Imperial Palace, in order to play at the relief of the sentries. Whoever has sound



legs marches bravely along with the band. There is the Vienna loafer, with his hair parted on his temples, his hands in his trousers pockets, his patched felt hat perched on the side of his head, a long Virginia cigar in his mouth, and a bright necktie with flying ends. There, too, are the witty, impudent apprentice, the plain citizen, who happens just to be going the same way, and the slender gazelle of a laundry girl, with a yoke on her back, and her hands gracefully resting on her hips. Here we meet also the numerous train of the unemployed, who run along as if electrified by the spirited tunes of the horn-blowers, the stirring noise of the triangles, the drum-beat, the clash of the cymbals. But let us return to our Prater.

Whoever does not care to sit idle and let the sun shine into his face will take a seat at one of the tables in the coffee-houses and sip the good light Vienna beer, while listening to operatic arias and Vienna waltzes. From this coign of vantage he may in spring, and particularly on the 1st of May, behold, passing in review before him, everything that Vienna has to show of rank, distinction, wealth, beauty, and also of false glit-



CAFÉ CONCERT IN THE PRATER.

ter and sham. Here he may also observe the affectionate reverence of the Viennese for the Emperor and the Empress. The latter they hold to be the noblest of women, and they express their admiration for her distinguished bearing by the most enthusiastic homage. The archdukes, each with his special court, are also likely to pass here. The members of the



PROMENADE IN THE PRATER.

Austrian imperial house wear almost always uniforms, even though they may, like Archduke Rainer, devote themselves in an enlightened manner to art and scientific study.

From this same post of observation the Viennese has also a chance to philosophize concerning the aristocracy, who have now become useless, and therefore unjustly enjoy their privileges, but who, nevertheless, yet form a world by themselves, and consume a certain annual revenue, whether it be their own or borrowed from somebody else. Their principal occupation consists in getting up horse-races, gambling, and riding. They are most elegant in their attire, and display a kind of physical chivalrousness, which impels the snob and the *parvenu* to make

themselves ridiculous by caricatured imitations, and awake in them a certain respect—shall I say?—or, at least, an unconfessed consciousness of the distance which separates them from the aristocrat—or “gavaliar,” as they style him.

Furthermore, we find in this Vanity Fair the rich banker who has been knighted, and who strives to attract attention by luxury and excessive display. We shall encounter wealthy manufacturers too, and merchants with heavy watch chains and broad rings, and at their sides their usually well-fed and buxom wives. Actors with smooth-shaven faces pass also in review, and over-dressed actresses, who assume the most absurd attitudes in their carriages, betraying a high-nosed consciousness of being known to all the

world. Lastly, the ephemeral beauties of Vienna seize this opportunity to show themselves.

In fine, the Nobel-Prater, in spite of its Viennese character, bears the stamp peculiar to the gathering-place of the *classes dirigeantes* in all large cities. Characteristic of Vienna in a far higher degree is the Wurstel-Prater, the gathering-place of those whom Richard Wagner would call the less cultured, and unhappily also the less prosperous classes. We will pass by the buxom servant-maids who here, upon the green grass under the old trees, receive the court of military Don Juans (from the corporal down), while the children with noisy laughter play their innocent games. Such scenes are to be found in all cities. Neither will we linger in the company of the flea-trainers, bearded women, red-nosed prophets, faded somnambulists, female ser-

pent-charmers, and lion-tamers in thread-bare velvet, women with fish tails, ladies with hairy necks and a mustache which would not ill become a drum-major—all these belong to the international brotherhood of roving jugglers who are distributed over the entire earth. Nor are we inclined to place the theatre in the Wurstel-Prater in the first rank of Viennese "specialties," although plays are there performed which deal in a language perfectly well adapted to the mode of thought of the lower strata of the Viennese population.

What particularly deserves consideration as a distinctly Viennese feature is, for instance, the swings in which girls with glowing cheeks and a wild grace of motion shout and scream merrily, while stalwart fellows in shirt sleeves, urged on by their encouraging cries, hurl them high into the air. The spirited, fleet-footed dance



SHOWS IN THE WURSTEL-PRATER.

on the green, under the open sky, deserves to be seen, for here all types, in all sorts of costumes (only none that are elegant), form a picturesque *tout ensemble*. So also it is entertaining to hear the ladies' bands in the restaurants play Viennese tunes. It is advisable, however, in order to gain an insight into the harmless and genial manifestations of the Viennese popular character, to take a seat under the leafy roof of the chestnuts in certain



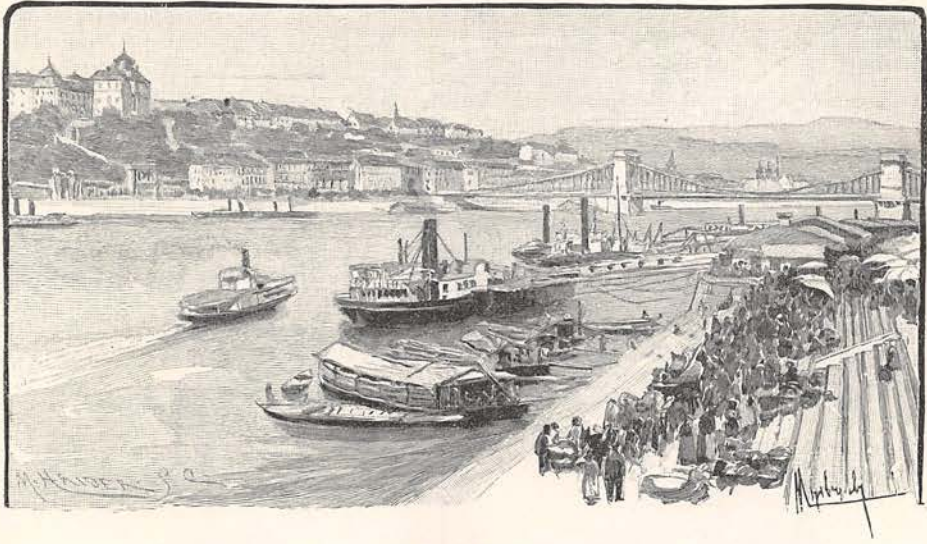
A FEMALE ORCHESTRA.

parts of the park, and participate in the lively drama which is there being enacted. To be sure, one must, in order to comprehend the pleasure of an old Viennese in these scenes, try to share sympathetically his old Viennese sentiment. A stranger is not unlikely to find fault with the large-flowered and not always immaculate table-cloths, the not altogether stainless napkins, the plain and often bent forks and spoons, ascribing all their shortcomings to a defective sense of comfort. He will conclude, perhaps, that a little sausage and cheese from a dealer in

"delicatessen," or a breaded veal-cutlet (Wiener Schnitzel) procured from the waiter, or a couple of small sausages with vinegar (of the kind which in Vienna are called Frankfurters, and in Frankfurt Wieners), constitute too frugal a meal according to his notion. He may insinuate, too, that the dishes presented excel more by the generous abundance of their quantity than by the fineness of art displayed in their preparation. Granted.

But just in this simplicity there is an inexpressible charm to the native, who has brought with him as spice a generous dose of health, good *ch er*, pleasure in living, and, above all, a good appetite, and has the faculty to laugh heartily at a stupid witticism. He bravely admires the jugglers on the stage in their faded tights, and he is particularly well disposed toward the musicians who perform the Viennese yodel, or melodious Viennese ballads in soft and soothing strains. If the old Viennese, to boot, has consumed his fair share of excellent beer, then he is filled with a blissful sense of oblivion of all the world, which finds vent in the saying, "Sell my coat: I am in heaven."

"Get up, doctor. It's time." With this call we are aroused from our dreams, for in Vienna every man who wields a pen is styled doctor, even though he really be one. Accordingly the doctor dresses himself rapidly, locks his trunk, distributes fees right and left, mounts a fiacre, and at full speed he is driven to the Danube Canal, where a slender ship awaits him, already overloaded with people and luggage. Don't worry about that. The voyage to Pesth is not to be made upon this tiny craft. Her destiny is only to convey us to the large Danube, where a spacious steamer, with a well-furnished saloon, offers us a friendly reception. One feels, at being transferred from the small to the large steamer, like a man who exchanges a tight-fitting dress-



VIEW OF BUDA.

coat for an easy lounging coat, or a pair of tight boots for a pair of soft slippers. One is not likely to wait long before finding pleasant company, if one is content with simple conversation about things which, to be sure, are not vitally interesting, but yet interesting enough to kill time with. Some of the passengers begin at once to play cards, and do not stop until they are summoned to a meal. We had the opportunity to make the voyage to Buda-Pesth in the company of a troop of Viennese actors, with their manager, famous both in Germany and Austria.

The affected posing of these people, aiming to attract attention, was extremely amusing. With a certain instinctive skill they selected the places which could best serve as a setting for their unnatural attitudes, while the old manager walked up and down upon the deck with his lieutenant. If he had been the captain he could not have looked about him with a more anxious air of responsibility, as if we were sailing upon the stormy ocean, and not upon the beautiful blue Danube, which, by-the-way, is always green. It flows calmly through the midst of flat country, and occasionally through a wooded landscape, from which, now and then, a ruin upon a hill-top or a straw-thatched village emerges. After a sail of about two hours, the ancient royal city of Pressburg,

with its picturesque castle, glides into view, like a beautiful transformation scene in a theatre. Later the fortress of Komorn attracts some attention. Then the ship ploughs its way onward between meadows, fruitful fields, and irregular banks, on which, occasionally, some straw-thatched cottages are scattered. Then come, perhaps, a little church (before which a flock of geese and a couple of jolly little pigs), some playful children in primitive toilet, a peasant in wide linen trousers with a broad hat on his head, or a peasant woman with picturesque head-dress and a figure in the style of Rubens. Then one has to kill time smoking, chatting, sleeping, as the German poet Nicholas Lenan (who was of Hungarian descent) has remarked in one of his poems. But when evening comes the monotony of the landscape vanishes, to be replaced by charming and, in part, romantic scenery. From a hill in the distance rises upon its many pillars the dome of the Gran cathedral, which, as the steamer presses forward, constantly presents itself to the people on board in new shapes, until, like a scene in a fairy tale, it vanishes behind a cloudy veil.

Parallel with the river runs the railway, upon which trains are constantly hurrying by. Nor should Wischegrad be forgotten, which in solemn majesty mirrors itself in the current. With the

change in the landscape the character of the passengers, who are becoming more and more numerous, also changes. Large, well-fed Hungarian figures, in braided coats and top-boots, with yellow complexions and dark mustaches, predominate. A band of gypsies come on board, and in order not to make the trip at their own expense, but rather to profit by it, they begin to fiddle to us one piece after the other, with a truly stirring *verve*. When the water in the Danube is high, the steamer arrives in Buda-Pesth by daylight, otherwise the journey is prolonged until the artificial light has begun its im-

Attila. Now the ship has come to a full stop. On the pier stand, sure enough, the committee of reception. The porters yell in wild confusion; the band of gypsies strike up the national hymn with its rousing rhythm. Yes, we are in Buda-Pesth. *Eljen! Eljen!*

Like all large cities, Buda-Pesth has beautiful hotels, on which we need waste no words. When we arrive in a strange town we do not go in search of those things which it has in common with other municipalities, but we look for those things which are distinct and peculiar. We will then take advantage of the beau-



GYPSY MUSICIANS.

potent competition with the starry sky, and the landscape melts away in shadowy outlines. We arrived in the evening.

With increasing garishness the rows of gas lamps dazzled our eyes, and with every moment the noise of the city became more audible. The steam-whistle sounded. Great commotion among the passengers, who stood laden down with travelling bags, boxes, and packages. Now we are passing under an enormous suspension-bridge, and land in the heart of the town. Our troop of actors crowd about their manager, who, knowing that an ovation is in store for him, strikes an attitude worthy, at the very least, of an

tiful evening not to visit the National Theatre, where the Hungarian language is used (which, unhappily, we don't understand), or the New Opera, which strives to compete with the opera-houses of other cities, but to enter a Hungarian restaurant in the court-yard of a house, where some dusty oleanders form a sort of garden, covered with an awning. Peculiar, wondrously appetizing odors of the kitchen greet our nostrils, for we are here on the classical soil of the Hungarian "gulyas," which the Viennese pronounce "gollasch," and the Hungarians "guyaasch."

What is, then, a "gulyas"? Meat

roasted in a peppery onion sauce. But what a stupid definition that is! It is like saying that an opera by Mozart is a combination of sounds. One thing, however, is beyond dispute—if there is a Hungarian heaven, “gulyas” is sure to be eaten there. “Gulyas,” then, is a concoction of onions, pork, meats of all sorts, and paprika (red Hungarian pepper). But who can praise in fitting language its savoriness? Who can describe with adequate eloquence the blood-and-marrow-penetrating strength of the paprika, this boasted national product? Who can praise sufficiently the pungent pepper with which the “gulyas” is seasoned in such abundant measure that the stranger who eats it feels something dissolve inside of him? Stars dance before his eyes, and the perspiration breaks out upon his brow. But this excessive pungency is tempered and enriched by the potatoes cooked into a mealy liquid and the little dumplings known as “nokerln.” In “gulyas,” as in music, there are infinite variations possible, but the key-note is always the paprika. With the “gulyas,” one or more bottles of fiery Hungarian wine are drunk. Ho, ho! Hungarian brother! *Eljen!*

As an accompaniment to “gulyas” and paprika belongs gypsy music. One of the many bands, whose chief is a local celebrity, installs itself in a corner of the room. In foreign countries one sees gypsies of questionable origin. Often they are Bohemians, or even Germans (in Hungary they are called *Schwoooh*), who in meretricious huzzar costumes exhibit themselves to their guests. But in Buda-Pesth such playing at gypsies would not be practicable. Here the brown, brawny fellows, with their shrewd, deep, dark eyes, and their mustaches, show themselves in all their native picturesqueness. Their clothes present a mixture of peculiarly Hungarian and European costumes; on their heads they wear small round hats with turned-up brims. The men play without notes, and it is asserted that the



TYPE OF HONGROISE.

majority of them do not know one note from another, but play by ear, if not to say by instinct. The leader of the band plays the first violin, turning constantly with nervous alertness to the right and to the left, and the others simply accompany his melody with all sorts of variations. An important rôle belongs in every gypsy band to the cymbal-player, who with two little hammers beats a kind of big zither. According as the leader with nervous, almost convulsive motions belabors his fiddle, the others file away after him, until they work themselves up, just as he does, into a musical delirium. Long-drawn, plaintive, melancholy, sighing tunes alternate with sudden, unbridled bursts of joy. Like the clever psychologist that he is, the leader of the gypsies instantly picks out some quiet patrician in the audience, to whom he addresses the music. Boldly he places himself in front of him, sticks his



A HUNGARIAN MAGNATE.

fiddle almost into his face, and performs first tearful tunes, which make the listener gaze with a serious intentness into space; then the gypsy accelerates the tempo until he reaches the delirium, which kindles such an intoxicating ecstasy in the patrician that, with a half-smothered "Jai!" he grabs his head. When the playing is at an end he says not a word, but pulls from his big leather purse a bank-note of considerable value, and spitting on the back of it, pastes it on the gypsy's forehead. Not so quiet is the scene when the whole company have been wrought into ecstasy; then some one present is apt to tear a bill of a high denomination in two, give one half to the gypsy and stick the other half into his pocket, surrendering it only when the gypsies have given the company their fill of music. Frequently a struggle for existence arises between the musicians and the carousers. It has happened many

a time that the gypsies, when they have earned money enough, have vanished one by one just as the company had been seized with a desire to dance. To guard against this contingency each one of the band had to pull off one boot and keep the other, playing with one foot bare. The confiscated boots were flung into the cellar, and only surrendered when the dance and jollification were at an end. This ingenious procedure does not express, perhaps, a high degree of mutual confidence; but practical and effective it is, which is, after all, the main consideration.

He whose sleep is not disturbed by fantastic dreams and reminiscences of the previous night is apt to wake up in the morning in a good humor for exploring a town of fascinating beauty and romantic charm. From whatever side one contemplates the twin city, divided but not separated by the broad current of the Danube, it affords a most delightful spectacle. If one looks from Pesth toward Ofen a view is presented of the royal castle, situated upon a hill, surrounded by a girdle of houses, shaded by green trees. It is flanked on one side by that mighty sentinel the high-crested Blocksberg, and upon the other by the Schwabenberg, the villa region in Anwinkel, where a refreshing spring leaps out of a black sow's head sculptured in the rock.

If, however, you take the inclined railway as far as the plateau, not far from the royal castle, then you will from this elevated station see Pesth spread out like a fan, with its quays and its new streets, which during the last twenty years have given evidence of a marvellous progress. For we have known the old Pesth, with its narrow and crooked streets, which from an architectural point of view were anything but imposing. Where formerly mostly small, squatty houses jostled each other, expands now the Pesth Boulevard, the Radial or Andrassy Street, with the Grand Opera at one end, and with long rows of houses and villas, built in all kinds of styles, extending all the way to the City Forest (*Stadtwaldchen*). The latter is a gem of a public garden, which, however, were worthy of less modest dimensions. Where formerly stood dancing-halls surrounded by board fences are now seen lofty apartment-houses; street cars rush by, and none of the modern improvements applicable in large cities are

wanting here. A wise government, conducted during the last fourteen years almost entirely by the iron hand of Herr von Tisza, does everything possible to heighten the splendor of the capital. The city now even permits itself the luxury of raising statues to its great men, as, for instance, to the organizer Szechenyi, to whom Buda-Pesth, among other things, owes its connection by the great suspension-bridge. There is also a statue of the

parliament buildings, and churches (one of which had no sooner been completed than it tumbled down, and has not since been re-erected) which vividly impress the image of Pesth upon our memory, but it is its fairest and most imposing adornment—the broad, majestic Danube, upon whose bosom the large, heavily laden ships and passenger steamers of all sizes are the jewels. During our promenade along the quay, in the company of some



DANCING THE CZARDAS.

eminent statesman Deak, which, however, from an artistic point of view, has been subjected to severe criticism, because the great legislator appears altogether too enormous in the big chair in which he is seated. The contrary is true of the slender statue of the noble poet Petöfi, who looks as if he wanted to run away from his pedestal.

It is not, however, the statues, museums,

highly ornamental Hungarians and fascinating ladies, we cast a glance upon the animated Danube, with the picturesque Ofen in the background. We feel the caress of the soft breeze and the Southern sunshine, which induce a wanton sense of well-being, light-heartedness, and delight in living, of which we have never been so conscious in any other city.



MARGARET ISLAND, BUDA-PESTH.

Old Homer makes the people of Phæakia say:

"Daily our joy is the feast and the dance and the zither,
Frequent change of attire, the quickening bath, and sweet slumber."

Homer might have said the same of the Hungarians. But to account for these qualities by a study of their ethnic psychology would lead us too far. As mere idle observers we shall have to fall back upon our personal experience in asserting that people in Hungary take no end of comfort in mere material existence; and we have often wondered why exiled mon-

archs and persons who have given up ambition and the struggle for wealth do not prefer Buda-Pesth as a residence to the larger and noisier cities. For surely Buda-Pesth is a hospitable place. At all events, among the good old Hungarian race hospitality is a chivalrous virtue, which scarcely anywhere else is practised with the same heartiness and vigor; though here, as elsewhere, a part of the younger generation appears to be degenerate.

Buda-Pesth has also a sufficiency of intellectual life. We need only mention the fact that a man of genius and a thoroughly modern spirit like Moritz Yokai has his residence here. The city has, moreover, its universities, academies, and conservatories, and lies by no means beyond the currents of the world's intellectual intercourse. The latter, to be sure, are perceptible only in slight ripples, and the wearisome clamor and quarrelling of the philosophical and literary cliques find so far only a feeble echo in the Hungarian capital.

The eminent works of the world's celebrities are offered for sale; people read French novels, even the spiciest and most exaggerated, written by authors who regard themselves as great classics, because they find among their contemporaries, perhaps, none greater than themselves. One is, accordingly, not in danger of intellectual starvation in Buda-Pesth. But, on the other hand, material existence could not easily be richer, more lavish, and fuller of enjoyment.

Buda-Pesth boasts an advantage over nearly all other large cities in the possession of wonderful medicinal springs. In

Ofen, not far from the castle, we catch sight of the very comfortably arranged bathing establishment, where for very little money we may have a bath in water welling forth warm from the bowels of the earth.

Ladies and gentlemen, a fig for the so-called civilization! It forces all the world into its own uniform, and robs the nations of their peculiarities. With sincere regret we see in Buda-Pesth cylinder hats, dress-coats, and the long trousers, hiding the shape of the leg and destructive of all poetry, taking the place of the chivalrous Hungarian costume. What is the reason that the Magyars now appear only on great holidays (as on St. Stephen's day) in their shining *czismen* (cavalry boots), tight-fitting, richly braided breeches, flying fur-trimmed dolmans, and round *kalpaks* (hats), in which a plume gallantly points toward the sky? Why do we not see them more frequently in this costume on horseback? For they are capital horsemen, and seem with their steeds to form one single creature. Why do they no more carry their curved swords at their sides? If a Maria Theresa were to come to Hungary to-day she would, perhaps, find the same chivalrous spirit, but hidden away under claw-hammer coats and white neckties, as in the *blasé* audience of a first night at the opera. It would be a pity to lose the magnificent figure of the portly, broad-shouldered, well-fed Hungarian, whose round skull is covered with thick dark hair, whose half-shrewd, half-challenging eyes, shaded by bushy brows, express so much self-confidence, who wears above his necktie a narrow strip of beard, which frames his yellowish face, but whose chief mark of distinction is a defiant mustache, both of whose ends (by means of a kind of indestructible beard wax) have been made stiff and pointed, so that they stand out like two bayonets. For such a Hungarian, as he proudly strides along, flourishing his silver-headed cane, is, in truth, a lord of creation. By his genius for governing he asserts his supremacy over all other races resident in Hungary. Almost every Hungarian is an excellent orator, and as such no less fond of striking images and similes quietly presented than of that grand, kindling eloquence for which the Hungarian language is peculiarly well adapted, when the audience feel their flesh creep, clench their fists, and burst into frenzied shouts

of *Eljen!* Are we never more to see those bold election agents ride on their smart horses around the carriage of the recently elected member of Parliament, who stands up bareheaded, bowing in all directions? Are we henceforth to admire the Hungarian costume, with the richly colored, braided *burnus*, reaching almost to the earth, only on the persons of pompous janitors? Why can you not keep your picturesque attire, which constitutes the charm of your city? Do not lose yourselves in the general European indistinctness. We could more easily put up with the loss of the proud Magyar who promptly knocked down every one who ventured ever so slightly to step on his toes, but who with sweet quiescence finds it perfectly natural to have his fellow-men, of the lower classes, sentenced to twenty-five lashes, administered by a functionary in national costume with a waxed mustache. These five-and-twenty lashes have played no inconsiderable rôle in the popular education in Hungary.

No man is without his foibles, and it will therefore surprise no one to learn that the Hungarian also has some. A worthless minority of agitators, who through gambling and carousing have been reduced to poverty, and through violence hope to get on the top again, have even a good many. In the Hungarian women we purposely overlook any that may exist, for, without palaver, the Hungarian women are among the most beautiful in the world. They are not languishing, diaphanous creatures, composed of cobwebs and the odor of musk, with a sickly pallor or a hectic flush in their cheeks. No; erect and straight as a candle, hearty and vigorous to the core, the rare pictures of good health and abounding vitality. They are gifted with small feet, full arms, plump hands with tapering fingers, and wear long braids. The sun has spread a reddish-golden tint or a darker tone over the complexion. The Hungarian woman is not a beauty of classical contour, nor does she perhaps frequently present a riddle to the psychologist, and ethereal poets will scarcely find a theme in her for hypersentimental reveries. She is rather the vigorous embodiment of primeval womanhood.

As her exterior, so her whole character is enchantingly fresh and positive. She likes to eat well, is fond of a drop of wine, takes naturally to swimming, dancing,

gymnastics, and has not the least objection to being admired. Although not specially inclined to sentimental effusiveness, in one sense of the term, she may, in moments of love and passion, give a profoundly stirring expression to her emotions; she may clothe her sentiment in words of enrapturing *naïveté*, drawn from the depths of the national temperament, if it does not find utterance in the all-expressive "jai," whispered in the acme of ecstasy, accompanied by an ineffably blissful glance. This is true of the so-called girls of the people no less than of women of the higher classes, for grace and beauty know no difference between high and low, and often bestow upon a poor, barefooted, short-skirted peasant girl (with her face framed in a kerchief tied under the chin) the same enchanting form, the same graceful walk, the same magically attractive glance, as upon her more favored sister.

Perhaps it would now be in order to visit the casino of nobles, and listen there to political conversations, so as to become competent to estimate at its worth the important social and national mission of the nobility. Perhaps, too, we ought to pay our respects to all the national celebrities. We might also have paid a visit to the Parliament, and heard ancient revolutionists accuse the Prime Minister of all sorts of crimes, which accusations the Prime Minister receives with a quiet chuckle. We preferred, however, to saunter on the quay, and with delighted eyes to observe the sun-bathed fruits and melons in the market-place. The picturesque, many-colored confusion of buxom peasant girls, heaps of fruit, fragrant canteleups, bargaining and gesticulating customers, formed a sensuous symphony of colors, voices, and perfumes which was extremely effective. Our next preference was to take a stroll through *Königsgasse*, and let the turmoil of carriages, carts, peddlers, barefooted servant-girls, children, beggars, loafers, street dirt, small merchandise, and open omnibuses driving to the *Stadtwaldchen* defile before us. These omnibuses were probably once upon a time fresh as to color, and their leather upholstery uncracked. It was a perfect salad of men, horses, and conveyances—of persons and things—which crowded upon our view. Particularly we observed with pleasure the Hungarian peasant, with his tall shiny top-boots, his wide canvas

breeches, short cloth jacket, round hat, and, of course, an enormous mustache. He is not to be confounded with the Slovak, whose whole toilet consists of a coarse canvas shirt, and whose small eyes and upturned nose form an easily recognizable contrast to the features of the Hungarian type. We take an interest, too, in the gypsy, the expression of whose face alternates between a sly appreciation of his own advantage and well-acted humility. We watch the porters, often nude to the girdle, whose language is richly spiced with curses. Especially pleased we were at the sight of the beautiful peasant girl, with her short bunchy skirt, the embroidered bodice, the silk kerchief about her head, and a coy good-nature in her face. No end of services were offered us by the many peddlers and hucksters and other street characters in shabby, threadbare, and ragged clothes. And as we happen to be in a mood for confession, then let us just as well add that we are so hardened as not even to repent having fallen into "the Blue Cat." Yes, not to mince matters, into "the Blue Cat!" "The Blue Cat" is a low-ceiled, smoky place in the *Königsgasse*, where one drinks beer, and, leaning back in his seat with a cigar between his lips, gazes at a stage where, in a German jargon (which, by our soul, we did not always understand), songs were sung by ballad-singers, and where Hungarian girls in bold rhythms performed Hungarian folk-songs, which, unhappily, we were unable to translate into our language, but which, judging by the rapture, the hullabaloo, the enthusiastic *Eljen* and applause with which they were greeted by the audience, must have been extremely moving. Youthful representatives of the so-called aristocracy often come in a state of blissful intoxication to "the Blue Cat" for the purpose of making scandal. In a corner of the room sit a couple, full of an ardent desire to tell each other something which nobody else need know anything about, touching the perennial theme of love in its introductory stage.

In another place we witnessed a genuine Hungarian "czardas," which is danced in the highest as in the lowest circles, with the same passion and with the same inventiveness in the sequence and accumulation of *nuances* of exciting motion. For a "czardas" two young people are required—a young man and a girl of robust physique—and a gypsy band. If the

youth and the maiden are in love with each other, the "czardas" will be the more passionate, attractive, and fascinating. If they are not in love with each other, but dance only for the sake of dancing, it makes little difference, for the "czardas" is itself volcanic passion expressed in hops, leaps, and gestures. The gypsies play at first with measured rhythm. The dancers, who ought to wear the Hungarian costume, stand *vis-à-vis*, with their arms akimbo, and make short *chassez* motions with their legs, while gazing steadily into each other's eyes. So far one might call the dance a slightly peppered minuet. But soon the storm breaks loose. The gypsies change their rhythm. All the instruments give a sudden wail, as if quivering in the intervals between electric shocks; the action of the limbs becomes more rapid, with bolder *chassez* movements. The youth raises now one, now the other hand to his head, dances toward the girl, who roguishly tries to escape him, but again approaches him and again slips away, until, after a great deal of such playful teasing, she permits him to put his arm about her waist and to swing her about in a ring. Nothing can be more charming than this *allegro* which intervenes between the *andante* of the beginning and the bacchantic fury which is to follow. The music of the gypsies begins to rage, and infuses a wild glow into the excited blood of the dancers. Now the legs fairly twinkle as they fly to the right and to the left; the feet touch the floor, now with the heel and now with the toe, the cheeks burn, and the eyes are wide open. With the enraptured cry "Jai!" the youth grabs his head like a drunken man, while the girl, like a sylph, skips before him. The music fairly lashes them; the excited spectators burst into tremendous shouts of "Eljen!" until the dancers seize each other by the shoulders and spin about in a wild whirl.

And now to thee, thou small paradise, fair Margareten Insel, last in order of sequence, but not last in our affection! From the great quay in the middle of the city commodious steamers carry merry pleasure-seekers to the large green island in the Danube, adorned with old trees, shrubbery, and groves. Even if the Margareten Insel were only as nature made it—grass-grown, wooded, and cooled by soft breezes, having, moreover, an abundance of retired spots, where one might pleasant-

ly kill the time in sweet reveries, or with a dear friend discuss the affairs of the heart, while the waves of the Danube murmured mysteriously at our feet—it would still be a delightful bit of earth, which fancy might without effort populate with figures in the style of Watteau. But, at the instigation of the Archduke Joseph, ingenious man has transformed the island into a river-girt sanatorium, in which a large bathing establishment and a *Kur-saal* have been erected; and moreover a tramway has been laid, which runs the entire length of the island, and hospitable pavilions have been built, which afford pleasant shelter to promenaders. On the Margareten Insel one sees the beautiful women of Pesth walking about, refreshed by a recent bath, in bright costumes, laughing and merry, listening to the music. All day long the steamers carry passengers to and from the city. In a happy mood the stranger contemplates this ever-changing picture.

With the coming of evening the visit to the Margareten Insel culminates. The restaurants on the island are crowded with people. Under the ancient trees, whose branches gently creak and groan in the evening breeze, and whose crowns nod with mysterious confidence, heads of families, with their ever-hungry progeny, take their places at the small tables, which are lighted with torches. A romanticist may take offence at this desecration of the poetry of the place through prosaic nourishment; but the people of Pesth are not troubled with that kind of sentimentality. The waiters bring very respectable portions of highly seasoned food—chicken swimming in peppered cream sauce, veal in a sauce of cream and paprika (*Pörkelt*), and finally the classical "gulyas"—all to accompaniment of gypsy music.

Many a one will, perhaps, come to the conclusion that we have indulged in too much enthusiasm in our description of Buda-Pesth. Quite possible. The unfavorable sides of this city may have impressed others more than they did us. To be sure, much that is worthy of censure has not escaped our attention. But then it was not our intention to set up as a critic; nor do these cursory sketches make any pretense of including the entire life of the city. Wherever anything struck our fancy we simply put our photographing apparatus in order, in the hope of obtaining a fairly felicitous picture.