

CHILDREN OF ALL NATIONS: THEIR HOMES, THEIR SCHOOLROOMS,
THEIR PLAYGROUNDS.

X.—AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY.



A LITTLE HUNGARIAN BASKET-MAKER.

AUSTRIA and Hungary are made up of a number of nationalities, and when I speak of Austrian and Hungarian children I mean little German - Austrians, Tschechen or Bohemians, Slavonians, Roumanians, Croatians, Bulgarians, Magyaren or Hungarians, and Tyrolese, besides Jews, Ruthens

(Russians), Poles,

Armenians, gipsies, as well as many others.

Of course, the lives and habits, homes and languages of the children are as varied as the nationalities they represent, and in describing them I can, in the limited space assigned me, only pick out what I think will be most interesting to English boys and girls, though there is so much that is interesting that I scarcely know where to begin.

Not know where to begin!—The little street-boy, who begs for a *zehnerl* in the “ring” at Vienna, helps me out of this difficulty. When he has got his *zehnerl* he dances away, shrieking at the top of his voice,

“S giebt nur a Kaiserstadt
Giebt nur a Wien.”

(“There is but one Empire-town,
Is but one Vienna.”)

and all Austrians sing the same song, and firmly believe that there is no town or place in the wide world that will bear comparison with their merry, beautiful, music and art-loving capital.

Following the hint that the street-boy has given me, I might take you to the lovely Park or Prater, with its three noble avenues, one leading to the Danube baths, one in the middle, the Volks or Wursten Prater, the third to the left, the Nobel Prater, and show you the gaily-dressed children there, who are driving with their parents to the Pavillon, or walking and playing beneath the chestnut-trees under the care of nurses in pretty

peasant costume, or of French and English governesses, or buying cakes and bonbons at one or other of the many cafés along the route.

You would like the Volks or Wursten Prater best, for there all the wonders of the world congregate at different seasons of the year. Dwarfs and giants, Punch and Judy shows, white mice and monkeys, dancing dogs and happy families, tight-rope dancers and wandering menageries, all are here, the noise and the fun are great, bands are playing, singers are singing, barrel-organs are droning, Italians are crying:—“Salamucci, Salami, Salamini duci!” to induce people to buy their Salimi and Swiss cheese, and cafés in which everything besides coffee can be bought, are even more numerous than in the Nobel Prater.

Yes, I am inclined to sing also—

“S giebt nur a Kaiserstadt,
Giebt nur a Wien.”

but then I reflect that, apart from their specially merry and laughter-loving disposition the Austrian children are not unlike their cousins in Germany, that they have similar home customs and amusements and pretty toys—among which one of the favourite ones is of course the kitchen, where Roserl placing her doll well wrapped up in its pillow on the floor by her side, reaches out the honey to Kätherl, who is busy in stirring the mass that is to become “Lebkücherl” (gingerbreads). They have similar schools, too. Thus, there is the Kindergärten, whose mistresses take their charges in the pleasant summer afternoons away into the woods with dolls and battledores, and baskets for the wild strawberries that they are sure to find on the mossy banks.

So, for the reason that these have been already described in LITTLE FOLKS in the paper on German children in the previous volume, I cannot stop in the fair city of Vienna, but must make excursions, now to the Tyrol, now to Roumania, Slavonia, Croatia, &c., and relating something of the child-life in these countries, help you to form an idea of the whole.

And first to the Tyrol.

“Auf der Innbruck möcht'ich steh'n
Dort kommen Flösse mit lust'gen Leuten
Tyroler jodeln schon von Weiten
Huld'öh!”

(“On the bridge of the Inn I would stand and see
The rafts with their merry company;
Tyrolean voices sing from afar,
Huld'öh!”)



SCENES FROM AUSTRIAN CHILD-LIFE. (See pp. 272-275.)

1. Off to the Woods. 2. Boy and girl with Dulcimer and Cither. 3. Making a mimic Water-mill. 4. A Toy Kitchen.

A number of schoolboys out for a day's excursion are floating down the river Inn on a raft. This is fine fun, but not without danger, especially when the freight is such an unruly one as the present. But the tall, brawny Tyrolese raftsmen are equal to their task, and guide their unwieldy craft carefully with their long poles, taking the bends and falls of the river in masterly style.

Now the boys have reached their destination, and are all landed safely, minus a cap or two, which the Inn with its light blue waters tosses about in triumph, and will not give up again. "Huldiöh, öh!" sing the boys as they climb the hill-side, decking their remaining caps with green, and looking for bilberries on the way, and "Huldiöh, öh, Huldiöh!" answers the raftsmen's son, as he looks after them, a little wistfully maybe, and helps his father to set the raft afloat again. The raftsmen's son has plenty of hard work and not too much pleasure, but he grows up hardy and strong, and has a more enviable lot than many boys and girls of his country. For instance, there are the Schwabenkinder, so called because they are sent into Swabia every spring to serve in the farm-houses of that country.

It is a sad sight to see these children, many of them not above eight years of age, assembling at different points in the Tyrol preparatory to commencing their journey. Those who have been before do not mind it so much, but the little ones who are leaving their homes for the first time find it very hard, and shed many a tear.

In very poor clothing, a stick in their hand, and a little bundle on their back, containing, besides a clean shirt or blouse, a piece of cheese and a hunch of barley-bread, they form themselves into troops about the beginning of March, and under the guidance of an old man or woman, wander on their way from village to village, living on charity, which, as the poor little children are much pitied, is freely given.

The whole of the way has to be made on foot, and when they arrive in Ravensburg or Weingarten, or Waldsee, near the Lake of Constance, they are foot-sore and weary enough.

The first market—for they are exhibited at a market—is held at Ravensburg on the 19th of March. The streets are lined with children waiting for employers. Farmers from the neighbourhood and even from some distance make their choice, and one often hears the strange question, "Are you sold already, my lad?" Those who are not sold jump round the farmers crying, "Buy me, please buy me."

Among many very comical scenes there are some sad ones. One boy will be engaged by one farmer,

his little brother or sister by another. The separation is hard for the children, but there is no help for it. As a rule they are treated well. The farmer gives the boy he has bought, beer, bread and sausage, and then takes him home with him in his cart. The master's wife welcomes him on his arrival, and gives him a good meal. That day he may rest, but then, after a good night's sleep, he must begin work, which generally consists in looking after the cattle, tending the sheep, and pigs, and poultry, and leading the horses or oxen in the ploughing field.

So the summer passes. In the autumn, on the 19th October, the old man or woman reappears ready to take the children back to their homes. They return much better dressed than when they came. They have earned a good suit of clothes, perhaps two, and if under nine years of age from six to twelve, above nine from twelve to twenty-four marks.

The children are merry and healthy, but have little or no opportunities of learning, and become so much accustomed to a wandering life that they do not settle down properly to steady service. For this reason many benevolent people are trying to do away with this old custom by bettering the condition of the parents and inducing them to keep their children at home, and have so far succeeded that at present the number of little ones "sold" to Schwabenland is much less than formerly.

A number of Tyrolese children, girls especially, are occupied in the summer months in picking bilberries or cranberries, or collecting ant-eggs.

In the lower valley of the Inn, and above all in the neighbourhood of Innsbruck, the whimberry or bilberry grows in large quantities. The *beererinnen* (berry-gatherers) begin their work early in the mornings of August and September, and as the berries, *zotten* as they are called, that grow highest on the rocks are the best for making the *mostbeerl-wasserl* (bilberry-brandy) and fetch the best price, there is a good deal of climbing to be done before the gathering commences.

The children have a *rissel* or *kamm* (comb) to assist them in gathering the fruit, a kind of long cup with a handle, and below the handle a comb. When this instrument is pulled gently through the plants the comb draws the berries off, which fall into the cup, and when the cup is full it is emptied into a basket.

Many of these baskets are seen on market-days floating down the river on the rafts, the little gatherer beside it on her way to Innsbruck to sell her berries.

The ant-egg collectors, *ameisen* or *amas-hexen* (ant-witches), as they are called, because they put

on the most shabby and ragged articles of clothing they possess for this occupation, are seen principally in the neighbourhood of Seefeld. There the woods and forests are thick with underwood, and the soil bituminous, conditions very favourable to the well-doing of ants. The *Formica rufa* (brown-red forest ant) is the one the girls look for, as ants of this species live together in great numbers, and have larger eggs than other kinds.

The way the eggs are collected is singular.

First of all the girls seek a sunny place where a brook or some little runnel flows. At the edge of the stream they make a kind of island by scooping out a small ditch round about two feet of soil, and leading the water of the runnel into it, let it flow off below into its natural bed. In the little island thus formed they scoop a few holes, which are covered over with green leaves and twigs to keep them shady. After these arrangements the girls go into the woods in all directions and look for ant-hills. They have a kind of small spade or trowel with them and a bag; now and then also a pair of coarse gloves to protect their hands from stings.

The ant-hill discovered, they remove the soil gently with their spade till the white eggs are laid bare. If the eggs be much scattered they do not waste time, but shovel the whole ant-hill into their bag, and proceed on their search for more. After they have filled the bag they return to their island, and empty the contents of the bag, ants, eggs, and soil on to it, taking care to leave the shaded holes free. Then they go a little aside and eat their frugal meal by the brook's side, perhaps, too, take a nap, for they know that the ants will do the rest of their work for them. And so it is. The little creatures set to work without delay to remove all their eggs into the shady holes provided for them. At the approach of evening the girls can collect the eggs without difficulty, and turning the water off so that the poor deluded ants can leave the island at their leisure, they march off with their booty. These eggs sell well for the food of birds.

Besides these avocations are many more in which the Tyrolean children are engaged, carving in wood, for instance, embroidering, and making lace, helping their parents, too, in one or other of the many trades peculiar to Tyrolese villages, such as the making of gloves, training of canaries, washing and bleaching for towns and, as in Teferregen, manufacturing carpets from cow-hair.

A favourite amusement of theirs is playing the cither or the dulcimer. Often the girl takes her cither, a stringed instrument well adapted to the Tyrolese Volkslieder (national songs), and the boy

his dulcimer, and very sweet does a duet on both sound in the open air. Boys are also fond of making all kinds of mechanical contrivances, of constructing mimic water-mills among the mountains, etc.

But now I must mention one sad race of children—those belonging to the Dörcher or Laniger. These words are thought to be corruptions of Durchgeher or Laniger, meaning wanderers or vagabonds, and apply to the gipsy tribes who have their homes in some dirty villages, Stilfs and Schönweiss in Bintschgau and Oberinthal, and in Mötztal in the Oberland.

In these places the children and their parents pass the winter, but at the first approach of spring they begin their wanderings, which they often extend to Karnten (Carinthia), Steiermark (Styria), or even Croatia.

A shabby two-wheeled cart drawn by the father of the family, or if he be a man of substance, a lean donkey, is covered with a rude awning, and contains besoms and brooms, baskets, pitchers, pans, or whatever the gipsy has taken up as his nominal trade. In front a number of birdcages hang, some of which are sure to be inhabited by clever trained birds, which can sing a variety of songs and perform one or two clever tricks, and by the side of the cart runs a dirty, evil-looking dog, whose qualities, however (for it is sure to be true as steel), surpass its charms.

The father, mother, and half-dozen children are dirty and ragged, but have the scraps of bright colour in their clothing of which all gipsies are fond. Their coming is so certain every year, that in towns distinct places are set apart for their accommodation, and if in the villages their accustomed barn or shed is not to be had, they think it no trial to camp out in the open air. Their lives are the lives of all the gipsies in the world; the father mends pans or baskets, the mother sits near her cart and tends the baby, occasionally earning a dishonest penny by telling passers-by their fortunes, and the children wander about in all directions to beg or to steal.

But we must now hurry away from Tyrol and pay a visit to Hungary, to the homes of the Magyars, the Slavonians, Roumanians, Croats, &c.

In all these countries are numbers of Germans, Saxons, as they are all called, and till a short time ago the German language was the one chosen as the medium through which the many-tongued countries of Hungary could understand each other, and in which most of the instruction of the schools was given. But the Magyars, who are a proud race, do not like this, and are doing what they can to push out the German element. The Slavonians

are endeavouring to do the same, and what the result will be we cannot tell, or who has most right to consider himself master of the soil.

In the meantime it is a fact that where the houses are bright-looking and clean, the children tidy and well taught, and a general air of industry and prosperity prevails, we may be sure it is a German village, and I hope that the mother in Siebenburgen (Transylvania) may long sing her pretty cradle song to her children in prosperity and peace.

Though the little child has such tender songs addressed to him, he is brought up to be hardy and strong, and taught to be very industrious. So industrious indeed, that it has become a saying among the neighbours that if a Saxon have no other work to do he pulls down his house and builds it again. Not that his house needs pulling down, it is generally pretty, with a garden, which the girls keep full of bright flowers, and a pigeon-house kept by the boys, and a balcony where the father and



SCENES FROM HUNGARIAN CHILD-LIFE. (See p. 277.)

Two of these cradle-songs are the following :—

In Winter.

“ Wol flaegen de Wülken, Wol sausz der Wajint, Wol staewen de Flöken Aemeraenk. Schlōf nor, schlōf nor Me guldig Kaſjnt !”	“ The clouds are flying, The winds are sighing, The flakes are falling Around so wild. Sleep on, my precious one, Sleep, my child !”
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In Summer.

“ Schlōf Hanzi, schlōf De vigel sainjen am hōf, De Kaze spaennen af em hiert; Te baest mer tausent gaeld e wiert, Schlōf Hanzi, schlōf !”	“ Sleep, Hansi, sleep ! In the yard the birds are singing, On the hearth the cat is purring; Thou’rt more than thousand gulden worth To me, my Hansi, sleep !”
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mother find time in the evening to sit and chat with their friends. Inside the house is roomy and neat. A great green stove, the *kalejok*, with benches round it and poles above it, on which clothes are hung to air, occupies a good part of it, boards are ranged below the ceiling for plates and dishes, and below them hooks in very symmetrical rows with jugs hanging from them that are only used on festal occasions. A Black Forest clock and a few books, perhaps a picture of Luther and Melancthon, deck the walls, and in side rooms we have a glimpse of clean beds piled up with pillows and coverlets as in Germany. In many parts of Hungary, no doubt to save room, the bedsteads are made with drawers in them. These are always pulled out at night and serve the children as beds.

The Roumanians are a simple mountain people. They are despised rather by the proud Magyars, who call them Wallachian bears (*olah medve*). When a Roumanian child is born the father says, "Mi-a cazut noroc la casa" ("Happiness is fallen on my house,") and certain it is that he has very little trouble with his child, who grows up as hardy, as indolent, and with as few wants as himself. A few days' after the child's birth victuals and money are placed on a table for the three fairies (*ursitele*), who are supposed to determine its fate. The nurse pockets the money and eats the victuals, but this very likely comes to the same thing. When the child is three years old its hair is cut with great ceremony with a pair of new scissors, a cake (*turta*) is broken in two over his head, and some present which will be useful to him when he gets older is given. His food is maize made up into a paste, *mamaliga*, a cheese made of the milk of sheep, *branza*, vegetables, and fruit. He is taught to pray: "Sa nu-i dee Dumnezeu omului cat poate suferi" ("Lord, give not to man as much as he could do with"), to stand with bent and bare head to salute the rising sun, which is considered holy (*santul soare*), and has to learn many rules with regard to what is thought clean or unclean. Besides the sun, some animals and even wheaten bread are thought sacred.

The village schools are good and plentiful. The children of Slavonia are very intelligent, and are specially clever at learning languages. They always know one or two besides their own, and are skilled in the making of pretty little baskets, carving, painting, and modelling. They are fond of singing, but many of the old national songs are lost because their priests (they are Catholics) do not approve of their singing them. They are fond of wise proverbs, legends, and fairy tales, which in the winter evenings when the spinning-wheel is set in motion, and the father sits at his loom and weaves, the mother or grandmother often tells them.

Hungarian children are not very industrious as a rule. The boy who drives the geese lets them go at their own sweet will, and never dreams of hurrying them or himself; the girl who is mending her brother's sheepskin coat, with the long thin needle or skewer that is common to the mountain districts of Hungary, takes her time and listens with interest to what her sister, who is sitting on the ground beside her, is relating. The boy, resting on his strangely-shaped wheelbarrow, plaits his whip, and thinks of the time when he may possess a horse and scamper about the country like fellow-countrymen of his whom he has seen and envied, but all are content to enjoy the summer days in

lazy quiet, and also to let the future take care of itself.

And now, not having room to write about the Bohemians, the Bulgarians, or the many Jews, I will close with one or two scenes from the life of a Croatian child, and a description of Christmas in Croatia.

In this country very patriarchal ideas of race prevail. All the members and relations of a family form one company (*sadruga*). One of the company is chosen as head, who takes charge of the property of all, adjusts disputes, and portions out the work to be done. The children are taught to be respectful to their parents, very respectful to their godfathers and godmothers, and to live on the best footing with the children of other communities, Greeks, Jews, &c., who may be their neighbours. They have good schools and learn well.

Among many pretty and singular customs peculiar to different seasons of the year, those relating to Christmas are perhaps the most interesting. For the Christmas feast, the finest wheat flour, the sweetest honey, the richest fruit, and the best wine are stored up. The grandmother dips the three wax lights that must stand on the Christmas table. The boys are sent to the woods to find the immense log of wood, which, after being sprinkled with wine, is put in the stove on Christmas Eve. Two great loaves are baked, which are to signify the Old and New Testament. When the church-bell rings on Christmas Eve, the whole family assemble in the dwelling-room; the first of the tapers is lighted, and a hymn sung. The table is spread with eatables, and near the two Christmas loaves which are placed on it is a small cup or vessel filled with wheat, barley, oats, etc. Before the feast begins, the father goes to the table, takes the burning taper in his hand, and says, "Christ is born." The children and others present repeat, "Is born, really born." Then the taper is placed in turn in the hand of each child, who has to stand on the bench by the stove and say three times, "Praised be the Lord! Christ is born!" whereupon the other members of the family answer, "Praise the name of the Lord for ever, and may he grant thee life and health!"

On Christmas Day, the second taper is lighted, the father says a short prayer, and then blowing the taper out, pushes it down among the grains contained in the little vessel we have already mentioned. Then he examines it. That kind stuck to the candle, wheat, barley, or oats, will, he believes, yield the best crop in the coming year.

The last of the three tapers is always burned on New Year's Day, and closes the Christmas festivities.

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