

NOTED NOVELIST VOYAGES HERE IN THE STEERAGE

Kurt Aram Relates Odd Experiences as German Immigrant Entering the United States

By HERMAN BERNSTEIN.

KURT ARAM, a well known German novelist and publicist, was recently sent by a German magazine as a steerage passenger to the United States. The purpose of his trip was to ascertain how an intelligent German, without the knowledge of the English language, without means and without friends to help him, would fare upon his arrival in this country.

Kurt Aram took along with him a steerage ticket, \$25 in cash, and an immigrant must show at Ellis Island to the immigration authorities in order to be permitted to land, and for incidental expenses on the voyage. The condition was that as soon as Kurt Aram should cable or write from America asking for more funds his expedition would be at an end. Another condition was that he was not to look for any but manual labor.

The experiences at Ellis Island and the account of his quest for work are of unusual interest.

Upon leaving New York the steerage passengers were in a state of intense excitement. "Where is the Statue of Liberty, the land of so many hopes and wishes?"

asked the immigrants. They looked for it eagerly. Suddenly they caught sight of it. The immigrants were speechless. Suddenly the solemn stillness was broken by a Jew, who exclaimed ecstatically, in a voice that quivered with boundless emotion: "America, I kiss your soil!"

The words thrilled the other immigrants. The first and second cabin passengers had landed. It was only 1 o'clock in the afternoon, yet it depended upon the mood of the immigration authorities at Ellis Island whether the steerage passengers would be permitted to land that day or not.

We waited for more than an hour for the decision of the authorities, and thus we learned to know American "freedom" from an unpleasant side," declares Kurt Aram.

But so many immigrants were expected to arrive on the following day that the authorities after all preferred to allow us to land on the day of our arrival. We had to go up on deck again with our packs and trunks, and from the steamer we came into a huge hall, where the custom inspectors were to examine our baggage. We were stationed in long rows, each with his or her baggage. But here we steerage passengers fared better than the other passengers of our steamer. Our baggage was examined very quickly and only superficially. What valuables had we poor fellows to smuggle into the United States?

"Then we boarded a small American boat with our packs and our trunks and we were on our way to Ellis Island. Our fears of Ellis Island kept growing. "Shortly after 3 o'clock we landed on the longest island. In an endless line, two by two, men, women and children, carrying the baggage with one hand, the doctor's certificate in the other, the hands were passed through a garden to an enormous hall. I was now cursing my handbag, which contained only two suits of clothes and underwear. But the other immigrants had much heavier loads to carry. And then the poor women and the small children! It would have been easy to make a pack of their baggage. The passengers could carry their hand luggage until after the examination, but it seems that it is intended that the steerage passengers should notice how little the American authorities care about them.

"At the entrance of the hall, which is decorated with an enormous flag of stars and stripes, a man wearing a derby roared:

"Hats off! I had to take my hat in the hand in which I carried the doctor's certificate, and I was amazed at this rude order in a land where all people are supposed to be equal and where people keep their hats on wherever they please. In order to obey the rude command it was necessary, of course, for most of us to put down our baggage on the floor. But the man immediately roared again:

"Keep your baggage in your hands! Those who did not understand at once were jostled in the ribs by another man, who seemed to be there for that purpose. Thus we walked with our packs, some carrying the children in their arms and holding the doctor's certificates and hats in the other hand, our heads puffing, our hearts filled with a feeling of rebellion, as we ascended an endless staircase. Poor women, poor children! We had supposed that the American was so considerate with women, even with the poorest of women. But then Ellis Island, it seems, does not belong to America in this respect.

"Without the slightest change in his face he replied: "You may register under any name you like."

"Then I wrote: "Fritz Miller, no profession, from Berlin, Germany."

In the course of his quest for work Kurt Aram came to a saloon in West street. There he made the acquaintance of a great variety of types of outcasts and desperadoes. He heard stories of crimes that had been committed in that neighborhood in bygone days. Among the crowd that joined him and drank beer with him there was a man who made fun of the Germans. The German writer was agitated, but he managed to control himself.

After the crowd had dispersed the waiter, who was a German, said to Kurt Aram with a smile: "As you have just arrived from Germany you are no doubt interested to know who that man is. He is Count du Passy, who recently escaped from a German prison."

"My first intention was to cable to Berlin," writes Aram. "My second intention was to inform a German American newspaper about it, for that was a less expensive way. But I reconsidered and decided that Fritz Miller, who had no profession, had no business with Count du Passy, alias Schlimmick. I resolved that I must not forget my role. I was neither journalist nor detective. And I knew that if I had betrayed that criminal I could never come back to that saloon. And as a greenhorn I still needed that saloon, that was quite clear to me."

Kurt Aram remained for some time in Hoboken and looked for work by answering advertisements in the German newspapers. But his efforts were futile. He failed to find work, and his funds were disappearing rapidly.

One day he returned to the saloon in West street. He had stayed away for several days after a quarrel with one of the men there.

"Hello, Mr. Miller," the bartender greeted him. "Where were you all this time?"

Aram did not answer. The bartender then surveyed him from head to foot and added:

"You have done well to stay away. Why didn't you kill the scamp?"

"I said nothing in reply. Several sailors clapped me on the shoulder.

"How did that happen?" the bartender asked.

"He wanted to stab me, so I defended myself. Shall I report it to the police?"

"What?" The bartender stared at me wide eyed. "Have you lost your reason?"

"I looked at him in astonishment. "Well, you are green in this country. Have you a witness that the fellow wanted to kill you?"

"I said that I had no such witness."

"Well, then, you are lucky you have not done anything. Otherwise you might land in Sing Sing."

"But it was he who grabbed me by the collar. I merely defended myself."

"The bartender laughed and explained the situation to the others. They also laughed.

"That man is a politician in this country," the bartender explained to me. "He has many tramps under him and they are citizens. In time of election he gets his tramps together. For a quarter of a dollar he can get each of these tramps to vote for anybody he likes. Do you understand? He also has tramps



Kurt Aram, the Well-Known German Writer, Who Entered the United States as a Steerage Passenger.

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The results of the recent Olympiads have obliterated for all time some ancient superstitions which have been handed down from father to son for generations. For example, that Lord Desborough, always the gentleman sportsman, did his best to relieve a hopeless situation but his own cannot make an athletic meeting a success any more than one swallow makes a summer.

We were treated to the spectacle of English officials running around the track with megaphones coaching and encouraging their countrymen who were competing. We saw English officials rush on the track, break the tape and create what looked very much like a riot when they imagined that their representative had been fouled in the 400 meters final. In the Marathon race we saw English officials carry Dorando, the Italian, to the finish line which he never would have reached in any other way—at least not that afternoon. The protests against the decisions of the judges were numerous and from many different nations. America refused to accept the decision in the 400 meters final. Sweden withdrew her entire wrestling team, other protests were made in different events and the general mismanagement reached its climax when the English competitors pro-

gress to the satisfaction of the home press. The American runners travelled 3,000 miles to London and a still greater distance to Stockholm, yet they were able to give a good account of themselves. Let us have done once and for all with this old World legend "the endurance of the English athlete."

Since the conclusion of the Stockholm Games the London press has teemed with excuses for the poor showing of the English. It would be idle to take up in detail the innumerable excuses which have been made. One man was sick, another was lame, another fell down and still another did not run as fast as he was expected to. In many of the articles we noticed this statement: "The Americans win because they specialize. England alone produces the all round athlete."

It is interesting to note that the Stockholm programme contained two all round competitions, one of five events and the other of ten, comprising short and long distance running, jumping, weight throwing, hurdling and so forth. Each of these competitions was won by an American.

There was also another competition called the modern pentathlon, not included in the athletic portion of the programme, in which the competitors were obliged to fence, ride, swim, shoot and run two miles across



A Group of Future Americans at Ellis Island.

Kurt Aram at Work as a Porter in New York.

Sarcastic Allusion to What the True Significance of the Statue of Liberty May Mean

who will thrash anybody for half a dollar. And they thrash so hard that the people they attack are laid up in bed until after the election. That's the way it is."

"But that has nothing to do with the court of justice."

"What will become of you here if you do not understand all this? You appear before a Judge, but he is also a politician and belongs to the same party. Then you take a lawyer, who also belongs to the same party. And you go to Sing Sing, whether you are right or wrong. Either you must be in politics or you must be rich, then you will not get yourself in trouble. That's the way it is in America."

"I shook my head. The bartender resumed talking enthusiastically to the others, who confirmed his opinion. I could not judge whether he was right or wrong. At any rate, such was the opinion of the entire crowd in that room."

"After a while the waiter there asked me whether I had already found any work. I told him that I had not. He wanted to know what my profession or trade was. I told him I had none. He grew thoughtful. Then he said:

"Have a talk with the boss. The night porter is leaving. Perhaps he will engage you."

"The bartender interrupted him: "You are crazy. Look at his hands. A night porter's job is no job for Mr. Miller."

"The waiter defended himself. He said that the night porter had been a 'gentleman' in Germany and that he was now found a position in an office. He added that I could also make my way in a similar manner."

"The bartender again looked at my hands. "Can you work a typewriter?"

"I said that I knew how to typewrite. "Do you see?" he turned to the waiter. "Mr. Miller ought to find a job in an office where he would not have to work hard."

"But he doesn't know any English," retorted the waiter triumphantly.

"The others also participated in the conversation. Some asked me whether I had any money. The bartender advised me to hold my mouth closed about that."

"About two weeks after my landing in America I had \$13.55 in my possession."

"During my stay in New York while I was looking for work I spent \$5.75 in the following way:

7 lunches at 20 cents	1.40
20 trips at 5 cents	1.00
40 glasses of beer	2.00
3 egg sandwiches	2.00
4 meat sandwiches (suppers)	.60
2 bread and coffee	.20
Correct Guide of New York	.15
1 gallon spring water	.10
Total	\$5.75

"I realized that I must now seriously look for work, otherwise I would soon be bankrupt. I read in my newspaper that there were about 200,000 unemployed in New York at the time. In the Battery Park I had seen crowds of unemployed men and women; I observed their emaciated, haggard and yet strong faces; I saw people who were sober and men who were intoxicated; I saw young people and old people—a legion of woful figures. None of the men had any clean collars—the last sign of external reputation here."

"I studied the newspaper advertisements with still greater care. Most of the positions I applied for had already been filled, and in some places I was not wanted because I did not seem young enough to the employers. Even the waiter at the West street saloon advised me to dye my hair. I followed his advice, but still I was unable to find a position. I was now so poor, for I had spent \$2 for dyeing my hair and forty cents for coffee."

"One day the waiter at the West street saloon said to me: "The boss wants you. Why don't you go over to him?"

"I rose from my chair and walked up to the boss, to whom I had never spoken before."

"He surveyed me for a while and said: "I have a job for you."

"What kind of a job?" I asked.

"Go to this office, but go there at once," he handed me a card. "Tell them that I have sent you. That's all."

"And he turned away from me. "Thank you," I said.

"All right," he muttered. I hurried away to the office.

"There I handed the card. I had to pay one dollar and was placed with three other men, who seemed to know just as little about the nature of the work we were wanted to do. We waited. Soon two others came over to us. They were all tall men. Then a stout man appeared, looked us over, and told us to follow him. We crossed a ferry with him and finally found ourselves in a huge marketplace with noise and bustle on all sides. The 'manager' brought us over to a wooden shed and told us that we would get \$20 a week for our services. All we had to do was to stand in front of the shed and shout 'Frankfurters!'"

"I soon realized that I was in Coney Island. The manager gave me a white apron and a large tin plate. I was to sell sausages—sausages, rolls and sauerkraut. From midday until midnight I worked. From Wednesday until Sunday night."

"On Sunday night I received a check for \$10 and was told that my services were no longer required."

"I now had \$17.75 in my possession. The beginning was made, and all beginnings are difficult."

EXACTLY ABOUT THE ENGLISH IN OLYMPIAD

By Hugh H. Baxter.

The student of racial peculiarities and one interested in the athletic development of nations the Olympic games of London, 1908, and Stockholm, 1912, furnish much that is of interest.

It might be well to state at the outset that the article considers only the athletic events and does not take into consideration the politics, religion, football and other sports which served to make up the Olympic programme in its entirety.

First, let us take Stockholm. The most interesting feature of the meeting was the sudden rise into athletic prominence of Russia, or shall we say Finland? In 1908 at London that country did not win a single first prize, yet at Stockholm the subjects of that great scored first in six events, easily beating all the other competing nations except America. As compared with the London Olympics, Sweden doubled her score of victories with four wins in Stockholm to two in London, Greece reappeared as the first, South Africa, and Canada won their own, while America retrograded slightly but she still won more first prizes than all the other nations combined. England fell far behind her achievements in 1908 and was relegated to fourth place. She was Sweden as a nation, although they have cultivated gymnastics and wrestling for years are new to athletics as the Anglo-Saxon understands them, but they are apt athletes and always ready to learn. For

the last few years their athletes have visited England and America and the knowledge they acquired is now making itself felt. Also, they secured the services of Erna Hjertberg, a Swede by birth, but who for a long time has been training athletes in America. This man was sent on a pilgrimage through all the towns of Sweden, coaching and instructing on the most approved American methods. The result was that Sweden finished third to the Americans and easily defeated the English.

But it was not only in the product of her athletic talent that Sweden made a success of her Olympics. From beginning to end the athletic department was superbly managed, every little detail of track and field arrangement was up to date and the judging was fair and impartial. The only criticism which can be made of the meeting as a whole is that the Swedes unfortunately selected the English method of starting, which is not satisfactory for a large meeting and is altogether too much like the old professional "mutual consent" start. It is probably as fair for one man as another, but it leads to endless delays and bickerings and is apt to make the time in the sprints of little or no value.

Let us now turn to the London Olympics of 1908.

For centuries the English have competed in athletic sports. We read of hammer throwing and running as far back as the Norman Conquest. At the present time

athletics flourish all over England to an extent unknown in other countries and it is not uncommon for from twenty to thirty meetings to be held in and around London on the same afternoon. I have seen 10,000 people at a meeting in a little country town which would not have drawn 500 at home. Yet with all this public interest in athletics the management of their Olympic meet was truly lamentable. There is no doubt but that Lord Desborough, always the gentleman sportsman, did his best to relieve a hopeless situation but his own cannot make an athletic meeting a success any more than one swallow makes a summer.

We were treated to the spectacle of English officials running around the track with megaphones coaching and encouraging their countrymen who were competing. We saw English officials rush on the track, break the tape and create what looked very much like a riot when they imagined that their representative had been fouled in the 400 meters final. In the Marathon race we saw English officials carry Dorando, the Italian, to the finish line which he never would have reached in any other way—at least not that afternoon. The protests against the decisions of the judges were numerous and from many different nations. America refused to accept the decision in the 400 meters final. Sweden withdrew her entire wrestling team, other protests were made in different events and the general mismanagement reached its climax when the English competitors pro-

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country. The first four places in this event were won by Sweden. America finished fifth and the English competitors were still further behind. Where, then, does the English all round athlete come in?

A note of disapproval which we occasionally hear in England at this time is the cry of "commercialism." According to the English papers numerous sums of money are constantly being spent on despoiling American athletes. It is said they subordinate sport to the chase of the almighty dollar, while the Englishman is the only athlete who competes for the pure love of sport. Let us see how near these statements fit the facts.

At the average athletic meeting in America the first prize is usually a medal worth perhaps \$10 or \$15, though the value of this article has run up to first prizes of \$100 and more. In some cases the prize is a rather meritorious person who has received a silver medal, gold and worth about \$500. The silver and bronze medals for second and third prizes have almost no value except as souvenirs. Only the first prize is of any value. I have before me as I write a programme of a little country meeting down in Surrey, where a few London cracks compete with the English athlete, who, if we are to believe the newspapers, competes solely for the love of it.

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