LEDERER IN BERLIN

Comments on the Ways of the City on the Spree.

PRETTY WOMEN, RUDE MEN

The Soldier's Happy Lot—Furniture Ordered From Samples—Leisurely Bank Methods—Exploiting a Weighing Machine.

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Berlin on the Spree, Nov. 5.—"The women are pretty, the men are rude." That sums up the general character of the people in eight words—from the lips of my friend, De Ville Boggs, who is an eminent authority on every subject under the sun, in his own opinion. He may be right in his brief, but sweeping summary, but I don't agree with him, though the women certainly do seem to average up in great shape, and the men do jostle you off the sidewalk worse even than the women do in State street, Chicago, on a bargain day. And speaking of the latter makes me think of stores. It is an awful custom that the men here have of taking off their hats in all the stores they go into. The Berlin men know that it is a nuisance; they acknowledge it openly, but they don't know how to stop it. It takes from 300 to 400 years to get out of the way of doing things they've once got into the habit of doing in Berlin. That's why people call it a slow town.

* * *

Living is dear in Berlin. There are of course some things that are cheaper than in the States. With careful management a man could, for instance, drink himself to death cheaper than in America. If a person isn't going far he can get a ride on a horse car for 2½ cents. But he must wait for a car with a seat that is vacant, or where only two persons besides the conductor are standing on the platform. That is to say, only as many as can be comfortably seated (a stated number) are admitted, and two passengers in addition are allowed on the rear platform. This is all very nice in theory, but after you've seen three or four "full" cars pass by, and observe the complacent smiles of the fortunate passengers, you'll begin to sigh for cars on the American plan, where it is catch on as catch can.

* * *

Nearly everyone in Berlin, rich or poor, lives in apartment buildings, and the best of these flats are destitute of modern improvements. None of them is more than five stories high because elevators, except in one or two hotels, are unknown luxuries. Hot and cold running water are also unknown. Some of the bath rooms have little boilers that will heat enough water for a bath in one or two hours. Ice chests are seldom seen because there are no ice wagons from which to get a supply. Gas and electric lighting for apartments and residences may became common in time, but the popular plan is for each tenant to bring along his own lamps and candles. This is generally true even of the swellest places. Heating by steam or similar means isn't so much as dreamed of—with a few exceptions. You wouldn't in a hundred years wean the Berliner from his sepulchre, though it is like stone that never gets much above the freezing point. There are no janitors, but only porters who open the doors automatically and from a distance. They perform no other duties worth mentioning. There are no letter boxes or individual bells at the entrances. In short, the tenant gets nothing except bare rooms when he rents a flat in Berlin. He pushes the button and does the rest himself.

The flat resident is not free from the beggarly tipping system. He is expected to tip the man that brings up the coal, the grocer's boy, the man that brings packages from stores and generally everybody of that sort; even the letter carrier expects to be tipped frequently.

Rents, considering the accommodations, are excessively high.

Furniture is dearer than in New York or Chicago, but it is more solid—unwieldly, in fact. You can't go out and buy an outfit of furniture at a moment's notice. The furniture dealers will show you "models," as he calls them, and you can order from these samples. The order is sent to the factory, and the goods can generally be delievered in from three to six weeks. Just think of this condition of things in a civilized city of nearly two million inhabiaints? And yet these people think themselves so everlastingly superior. When they speak of things here being different from things in America, their reference is always in favor of Berlin.

The stores here are on a shabby scale. Outwardly they make a great show with their really magnificent store fronts and elaborately gotten up window displays, all of a most seductive character. But it is all on the outside. It's all a thin veneer of store fronts and fine fixtures. There are no complete stocks of goods and there isn't a single large store in the city. The great proportion of the goods in the stores are clap-trap, gimcracks and gegaws.

The hotels are old fashioned barns as a general thing, only three or four at the most having ordinary conveniences. And yet the Berlin hotel manager will say to you: "You have nothing better than this in New York, have you?" or "I presume this reminds you of the Auditorium, doesn't it?" Auditorium, indeed. Yet there is this to be said in justice to the Berlin hotel managers: Personally they are ever polite and courteous to visitors. I know some American hotel managers who would feel insulted, humiliated, if such imputations were made regarding them. The Berlin hotel man may be primitive in his methods, but he is a gentleman in his bearing.

* * *

Besides soldiers, art galleries, museums, a zoological garden, and some statues, there isn't much to be seen here; and soldiers become tiresome in time—about four days is a dose.

The German capital is lamentably short on relics of an historic-architectural character; but it strives to make amends by being long on historical collections and eating and drinking places, more particularly the latter. Variety, which at first seems limitless, contrasts day by day. After one has wandered through the magnificent museums for a week the objects begin to merge into a few. The Greek torso of Venus and the dancing Maenad mingle unblushingly in one's mind with sculptured Julius Caesar, Zeus and Athene, while a Parthenon relief with imagination's aid mixes up most amiably with the sword and orders of Field Marshal Moltke. Even an old cannon, better as an example of filagree work than as an implement of war, assumes the outlines of a bronze Gustavus Adolphus. Old Museum, New Museum, the first lieutenants of huzzars, the Royal Arsenal, the National gallery, the hotel bill, the Egyptian, Industrial and Ethnographical Museums, the statue of the great Elector, the Panopticon, all become one magnificent whirligig. One's impressions become mental hash—or to be more elegant, as De Ville Boggs would put it, a perceplency saute.

It is a hideous way of broadening one's mind, this jumble of indiscriminate highly educational sight seeing. I expressed my feelings in this direction to Boggs, and he chimed in by replying: "Yes, this complex coalescence, this incoherent yet mosaic condition of one's brain cells, has its parallel, mirrored more deliciously in its mental aspect when considered in connection with the uncomfortably necessary grosser success."

"Devvy, would you mind pausing a stretch while I drop into this Buchhandlung and see if they happen to have a second-hand edition of the Quotidian Dictionary. I quite agree with you, but I fail somewhat of comprehension. If you are trying with your block system style of language to simply convey to me that your opinion is the same way, only more so, in the matter of eating and drinking, you can take it for granted that I quite agree with you."

I know what De Ville wanted to say and I simply shut him off. It was merely that the sensation of sameness becomes even more noticeable in the matter of restaurants. After a sojourn of a couple of weeks in Berlin it makes little difference where one eats and drinks. Everything begins to taste alike like the soups at an American railway station eating house. It doesn't matter much in a fortnight where one goes. It's the same old samey feeling, whether the place is one of those stunningly gotten up resorts Unter den Linden, with gilt and many-colored stuccoed ceilings and frescoed, picture-hung walls, with a profusion of costly plate and immaculately attired waiters, or the little joint up the alley where a square meal, quite well cooked and neatly served, can be had for a mark and a half—about the size of the fee one is expected to tender the waiter of the grand restaurants.

* * *

As I was saying, one gets weary of seeing monkeys in uniform, and even the noble German army wearies one, too, one sees too much of it. And how tired the German soldier must get of himself.

The man that would envy him his lot would change places with a billiard table. The German soldier has to hustle after a fashion; hardly a day passes that he is not put through his paces. Nearly every available space in the outskirts is used for drill grounds, where, from time to time, most of the 30,000 troops that are stationed here are instructed in the noble art of killing their fellow-men. And, of course, in the surrounding countries, these fellow-men are also learning the latest and most approved means of putting the men who drill here out of existence. It is a pleasant little game all around. And all the maneuvers are not made in the spring and fall, either. Every few days regiments are sent far into the country, where the ground is rough and where, fully accoutred as if for active service, they go through the humanizing motions of war. It's great fun for the common soldier. His officers are always kind and considerate to him—so kind and considerate that the common soldier frequently seeks relief in death. The soldier doesn't have to carry a thing but a blanket or two, a few pounds of ammunition, a line of side arms, occasionally a hatchet, a nice light ride and an assortment of odds and ends that must make a long march a delightful promenade. He is to be envied his opportunity to serve his merry emperor.

Another chap who probably doesn't know his luck is the frequent sentinel whom one sees at every turn holding down the pavement in front of the plaster palaces of some of Berlin's most popular princes. The sentinel is there to keep the joy of the populace in check. He hasn't a thing to do except to remain almost motionless for a few hours at a time. Nothing to do but stand. How time must fly with him?

To tell the truth he looks doleful.

Everything looks doleful.

It is raining dolefully.

Even my delectable friend De Ville Boggs is in a decidedly doleful mood this wet afternoon. He does hate to be taken down a peg and he has taken down a hatrackful. After breakfast, he went, under my escort, into an adjacent cigar store to lay in a stock of cigars for the day. The weed merchant could talk English fairly well, even if the sign outside did read Cigarren Import. Berlin is great on variety in cigars, even if the quality generally is worthy of the deepest reproach, not to say indictment. Mr. Boggs purchased three Berlin cigars (to give away), two Uruguay, two Mexican, and one each from Sumatra, Havana, (Ill.), Bolivia, Guatemala, Brazil, Connecticut, and Venezuela, besides an odd half dozen from Africa and India. The 20 came to two marks and 90 pfennig. He tendered a "thaler" in payment, and receiving a 10-pfennig piece in change was about to walk out, when he espied a drop-10-pfennig-in-the-slot weighing machine. Here was an opportunity for finding whether his jail diet had reduced his flesh. So he stood on the scales, dropped in the 10-pfennig piece, and the indicator flew around—and stopped at 70.

Mr. Boggs stamped his feet on the platform. His eyes blazing with anger he turned round to the cigarman.

"This thing is a fraud! It won't go any further."

"Pairshops it has far enough gegone."

"Now don't get funny with me. You give me my money back, or I'll bust the stuffing out of this machine. I don't care any more for 10 finnegans than George Gould does for a million, but I won't stand being robbed of a red, "Kill a what!" from Mr. Boggs.

"Kilogrammes, you weigh severhenty kilogrammes."

A light dawned on Boggs—a cigar light. A kilogramme he knew well enough was about two and a half pounds.

You get the metric system of weights and measures chucked at you everywhere in Berlin. Boggs now declares he is going to try the metric system at Monte Carlo. He has tried every other system in similar places.

But it is a nuisance to have to remember all about stares, decagrammes, litres, hectares, millimetrés and a dozen other hecto hacto and milliomme things, whenever you want to buy anything or want to know how far it is to some place.

Part of His Military Training.

* * *

"I'm afraid," confided De Ville one evening, "that I shall never again feel quite at home in a New York bank. Whenever I've gone into a bank at home I know I've immediately become an object of suspicion. I was simply surrounded by an atmosphere of distrust the moment I went up to the little shelf where the various blanks for depositors are kept on file. The officials, I believe, suspected me of a constant desire to swipe the calendar on the shelf or to embezzle the two-pronged pens. The bank people never failed to get rid of me in five minutes. It isn't so here. The bank fellows in Germany trust me with a lamblike simplicity, but they haven't a particle of faith in my convertible securities. Give them an hour or so and they'll advance me a few pounds on my letter of credit, but checks or drafts make 'em shy like a year-old colt at a steam roller. But I'm getting to like their deliberate ways. I was intended by nature to be a gentleman of leisure, and only a man of that ilk should do business at a continental bank. Whenever I've an hour or so to spare and want to get absolutely away from all scenes of turmoil, I take my letter of credit around in the Deutsche bank and draw a few cards on it. There is a little room for strangers containing a hatrack, a map of Berlin and a table with a carafe of water with glasses on it. Of course I don't touch the water, but it gives me a homey feeling to see a jug of water again. The carafe is such a gentle act of deference to Americans that I always bow to it, just as I doff my hat when I see an American flag floating anywhere abroad. After giving the man at the little window my letter of credit, I sit down and give myself up to quiet meditation until 20 minutes or so have elapsed, and the bank man nods to me, at the same time holding out two papers for me to sign. I haven't the faintest idea what they are. They may be judgment notes or first mortgages on this hotel for all I care. A fellow over here gets so in the way of signing his name to anything any foreign official may happen to ask him to. Then I sit down again.

The bank man disappears, probably to eat one of his five little daily meals. Then he comes to the window once more and gives me the money. Some of it is in a little shovel and the rest in bank notes that must be modeled after the lottery tickets that you see sold at nearly every cigar store. After that I unhang my hat and overcoat, and tiptoe out of the bank as I would if I had to go out of church during services."

De Ville does so like to hear himself talk. I had to interrupt him by telling about the bank at Magdeburg, where the English speaking young man behind the counter greeted me with,—"Well, what's the matter with you?" He was laboring under the impression that he was using a very elegant greeting, and was probably looked up to by many of his fellow bank clerks as a superior linguist.

* * *

I caught Boggs just now in the act of dating a letter to a friend in Brooklyn thus:—"Berlin-on-the-Bum."

The authorities 'll get after him again if he doesn't look out.

Charles Lederer.

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No. 1, Butte express, making connection at Butte with Great Northern railway through trains from East and West, arrives daily ..... 5:45 p m

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No. 4, Butte express for St. Paul and all Eastern and Western points, departs daily ..... 3:00 p m

Montana Union Time Card.
TRAINS ARRIVE AT ANACONDA.
No. 105, from Garrison and all points West on the N. P. ..... 10:35 p m
No. 101, Butte express ..... 11:55 a m
No. 103, Butte express ..... 6:00 p m

TRAINS LEAVE ANACONDA.
No. 104, Butte passenger ..... 10:35 p m
No. 100, Butte express ..... 9:00 a m
No. 102, Butte express ..... 2:20 p m
Train No. 100 connects at Butte with N. P. eastbound overland train.
No. 102 connects at Silver Bow with U. P. fast mail.

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No. 4, Anaconda express, connecting with Great Northern railway through trains for East and West, arrives daily ..... 4:15 p m

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No. 3, Anaconda express, leaves daily ..... 10:45 a m
No. 1, Anaconda express from St. Paul, Helena and intermediate points, leaves daily ..... 5:00 p m

Montana Union.
TRAINS ARRIVE AT BUTTE.
No. 2, Garrison express ..... 11:30 p m
No. 100, Anaconda express ..... 10:00 a m
*No. 102, Anaconda express ..... 3:50 p m
No. 607, U. P. fast mail ..... 11:20 a m

TRAINS LEAVE BUTTE.
No. 1, Garrison express ..... 8:35 a m
No. 101, Anaconda express ..... 10:50 a m
No. 103, Anaconda express ..... 5:00 p m
No. 602, U. P. fast mail ..... 4:00 p m
*Connects at Stuart with train from Deer Lodge and Garrison.

NORTHERN PACIFIC.
TRAINS ARRIVE AT BUTTE.
No. 7, from St. Paul, Chicago and all Eastern points, arrives Northern Pacific local depot daily at ..... 9:15 a m
M. U. No. 2, from Spokane, Tacoma, Seattle, Portland and all Coast points, arrives Montana Union depot daily at ..... 11:30 p m

TRAINS LEAVE BUTTE.
M. U. No. 1, for Spokane, Tacoma, Seattle, Portland and all Coast and California points, leave Montana Union depot daily at ..... 8:20 a m
No. 8, for St. Paul, Chicago and all Eastern, Southern and Canadian points, leaves Northern Pacific local depot daily at ..... 10:30 p m

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Train No. 2, Butte and Helena, express ..... 8:00 a m

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