

The Environs of Vienna.

The environs of the Austrian Metropolis may be said to be surpassed in beauty only by those of Naples or Constantinople.

The irregular oval plain on which Vienna is seated is bounded to the east by the Carpathian mountains and to the west, by the undulating hills of the Kahlenberg, Leopoldsberg, Cobenzel, etc. Northward of the town flows the Danube. The wooded hills on the right bank of the river greatly serve to embellish the landscape, whilst on the left, which in a picturesque point of view offers nothing remarkable, the vast plain of the Marchfeld discloses itself to view. It was on this very Marchfeld that the fate of the empire more than once was at stake, and here many a bloody contest between Ottokar, king of Bohemia and Rodolph of Habsburg, and the battles of Aspern, Essling, and Wagram, have been fought.

Owing to the excessive heat and very unpleasant dust which in summer are prevalent in the town, most of the Viennese families who can afford it spend the summer months in the country. Thus it is that the villages situated at a small distance from the Capital boast in summer of a mixed population, viz. of citizens and peasants, who by-the-by do not always live on the best terms. The railway or omnibuses will take the stranger to any of these places (see for omnibuses page 141).

The first place the stranger should visit is Schönbrunn and its Imperial Palace, whither plenty of omnibuses, starting every quarter of an hour from Peterplatz, will convey him. The actual building was built by Maria-Theresa (1744). The imperial palace contains 1440 rooms and 140 kitchens.

The park, in the taste of that of Versailles, is always open to the public. Behind the pond rises the „Gloriette“ from the top of which a beautiful view of the town may be obtained. Here are a menagerie and a botanical garden to be seen; the latter was originally established by Francis I, in 1753 and contains very extensive hot and green-houses.

To the right of Schönbrunn lies Hietzing which, with its splendid villas, is in summer the most frequented place of resort for the fashionable world, and, being mostly occupied by wealthy merchants and some of the higher nobility, can hardly be called a village. There is a public walk, a celebrated coffeehouse, baths, a theatre, eating-houses with gardens attached to them, viz. Dommayer's and Schwender's dining-halls, where in summer an excellent band plays two or three evenings a week. — Facing Schönbrunn to the north is *Penzing*, a village nearly as large as Hietzing though not so fashionably frequented. — It contains however several houses and gardens of equal elegance and beauty, and has likewise a very commodious bath-house.

The other villages in the vicinity of Schönbrunn which as places of country residence should be mentioned here, are: Ober- and Unter-Sanct-Veit, Baumgarten, Lainz, and Hetzendorf. The Southern Railway, after Hetzendorf, passes through *Mauer*, *Kalksburg*, *Rodaun*, *Perchtoldsdorf* with its gothic church, and *Brunn* all of them villages situated ad the foot of the hills which extend to the South-west of Vienna and present huge blocks of calcareous rocks disseminated here and there amid the trees of the forest and the luxuriant vineyards which cover them. Beyond *Rodaun*, and winding in among the mountains to the right, is the wild and solitary valley of *Kaltenleutgeben*. The woody neighbourhood beyond Kaltenleutgeben is so beautiful that it has not unaptly been compared to the lower parts of Switzerland and Savoy.

A branch line of the same railway will take the stranger to *Mödling*, an ancient town possessing two interesting old churches; thence, in an eastern direction, to *Laxenburg* one of the imperial summer residences generally known on ac-

count of the splendid palace and park it contains. Here are to be seen: the *Löwenbrücke* (Lion's bridge), the *Fischerdorf*, the *Forsthaus*, the *Rittergau*, with the knight's monument, dating from more than 6 centuries, the *Rittergruft*, the *Franzensburg*, where a great many historical curiosities are stored up, a large pond, etc. From Mödling, in a south-eastern direction, lies the Brühl, a most romantic valley, between two rows of high rocks surmounted with a forest of lofty pine trees. On several of its heights artificial ruins have been constructed by express desire of Prince John Liechtenstein. Two of these ruins however are genuine, those of the ancient fortified castles of *Mödling* and *Liechtenstein*, the former of which was for some considerable length of time the residence of the Princes of the house of Babenberg.

After having passed *Gumpoldskirchen*, where the excellent wine bearing the same name is produced, the railway will take one to *Baden*, the most celebrated watering place in Austria. Baden offers but little of interest to the stranger, except the beauty of its situation and its thermal waters which seem to be a very good remedy for Rheumatism. The great number of persons who go there to take the baths does not amount to one third of those jubilant Viennese, who on holidays set forth from Vienna to explore the beautiful country surrounding Baden. Worth seeing are the „*Eiserne Thor*“ (Iron Gate) two German miles from Baden; — it is a high mountain whose summit is surmounted with a tower, built by express command of Baron Sina. The platform on which the tower rests (2500 feet above the level of the sea) commands a grand panoramic view which extends from the Alps to the Carpathian range and encircles Vienna, the vast plain of the Danube, and the mountains of Lower-Austria and Styria. — In this direction there remains only the village of *Heiligenkreuz* to be mentioned with its old Cistercian monastery which latter was founded by Margrave Leopold in 1134.

The Western Railway again conveys the stranger to *Penzing* and *Hütteldorf*, thence to *Mariabrunn*, *Hadersdorf* and *Haimbach*, which last village, consisting of only a few houses, is entirely hidden in the midst of a large forest. In

the proximity of Haimbach are the *Sophien-Alps* and the *Tulbingerkogel* two mountains from the summits of which a most magnificent view of the surrounding woody country may be had.

A great number of omnibuses establish a communication between Vienna and the villages west of Vienna, such as: *Dornbach*, with its beautiful park, the property of Prince Schwarzenberg, *Neuwaldegg*, *Pötzleinsdorf*, and *Gersthof*. The valley of Dornbach is, owing to the delightful position it occupies, reputed to be one of the most enchanting spots in the vicinity of Vienna. *Döbling*, *Sievering*, *Grinzing*, and *Heiligenstadt* form another series of villages at the foot of the mountains *Kahlenberg* and *Leopoldsberg*, whose sides like the greater part of the adjacent country, are covered with vineyards, while their summits are crowned with woods and dwelling-houses. On the top of the Kahlenberg stood in former times a convent of Camaldule monks; now there is nothing worthy of remark here, except a church and an inn, the terrace of which latter commands a splendid view. The Leopoldsberg, 1356 feet high, boasted under the Romans of a fortress which was at a later period destroyed by hords of barbarians. The Margraves of Babenberg at different epochs caused a fortified castle to be erected on the same spot, which was subsequently demolished to prevent the Turks from using it as an entrenchment. Leopold caused a chapel to be built here, but the same was subsequently destroyed by the Turks in 1683 and rebuilt in 1693. From the gallery of the chapel and the terrace of the castle a most beautiful view of the town, some of its environs, and the Danube winding its course through the landscape, may be gained. *Nussdorf* is situated at the foot of this mountain and on the banks of the river; — *Klosterneuburg*, possessed of a monastery of Augustine Prebendaries, contains a great many artistical and historical curiosities, and higher up the river, the ruins of *Greifenstein* are worthy of notice. From the heights of the hills *Kobenzl*, *Himmel* and *Hermannskogel* a beautiful view may likewise be obtained of Vienna and its environs.

With these heights, the valley of *Kirling*, and *Weidling* we terminate our tour through the interesting places

in the country surrounding Vienna, though not without previously directing the attention of the traveller to the wonders of the *Semmering* and *Schneeberg* (mountains), the latter 6500 feet above the level of the sea. Although this part of the country is too distant to be annoverated among the sites in the vicinity of the metropolis, yet communications have been rendered so easy by the Southern Railway plying between them, that the traveller should not leave Vienna without seeing them; — the Simmering on account of the objects of art it possesses, and the Schneeberg on account of the splendid view which may be obtained from its glorious crest
