

A U S T R I A.

CHAPTER I.

Tour from Havre through France and Germany.—Paris, Carlsruhe, Stuttgard.—The late and present King of Wurtemburgh.—Darmstadt.—Nassau.—The Elector of Hesse Cassel.—Frankfort. Its inhabitants.—Leipsic.—Prince Poniatowsky.—Dresden.—Prospect of Germany.

HAVRE is not the place to dwell long in or upon. Its port is small, its entrance narrow, and in the least gale even dangerous. Its custom-house and police regulations, however, still show that its trade is flourishing, and not a day passes but some snug Yankee vessel or a heavy built French brig enters with the tide.

This town, so old in appearance, was thirty years ago a poor village inhabited by French fisher-

men, when the discerning eye of Napoleon fixed upon it as a port for that very city, the aggrandizement of which he should least of all have encouraged. Its custom-houses, police-offices, cotton-bales, and sugar-hogsheads are not very interesting objects for a non-merchant. The third day saw me again in Rouen, to which place we ascended in the steam-boat Havre.

The martial fierceness of the French has, since the fourteen years I last saw their country and capital, assumed a pious turn. At whatever hotel we stopped, we were sure to find prayer-books and catechisms on the tables and commodes; and in Rouen we saw a large procession just entering the Gothic cathedral, joined by several dozen officers, who, to our no small astonishment, hastened to this devout service with the same ardour as they did fourteen years ago to a military review.—*Sic tempora mutantur*, thought I, while my Yankee companion, whom I had offered a seat in my cabriolet, exclaimed against the pious Norman princes, who, instead of cutting canals, or making rail-roads, raised such huge, uncomfortable piles as the church at Rouen, good for nothing except catching cold: he would not exchange his meeting-house for them

all; meaning a wooden frame building in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

We found in Paris an old king, more beloved however than his predecessor, notwithstanding his being surrounded with pious personages, and those sprigs of the ancient nobility in whom a Revolution and twenty-five years' exile could not produce the least change in their former prejudices, and their notions of a golden *siècle*—the true pictures of a run down repeater, which if made to strike a hundred times will always repeat the same strokes. Of course I visited the Museum, the Tuileries, the Palais Royal, &c. with a sort of cicerone, whose truly French pride brought honest Caleb, the worthy factotum of Ravenswood, to my mind. He commented on all the vacancies, never failing to throw the cloak of pride on the spoiliations of the barbarians, as he called them: *Voilà les barbares, les Prussiens, qui ont remportés les chevaux!—Voilà les bêtes des Autrichiens!* &c. I congratulate this nation on the good temper, or, as they term it, grace, with which they bear not only their vicissitudes, but suit themselves so exactly to the new modes with that light heart and frivolous mind, which made them under Robespierre, executioners,

under Napoleon plundering heroes, and under Charles the Tenth pious priests. But to be serious; they have every reason to wish themselves joy. They have earned, while John Bull and poor Germany only laboured. They have amassed a fine property from the spoils of other nations, and though they had to give back part of their ill-gotten fortune, their trade is flourishing; they have done away with their feudal encumbrances; and what is the chief point, they have taught their princes a lesson, which will secure, for a while, their rights better than a dozen charters. United, as they now are into one nation, they are through this union formidable; an advantage of which their neighbours, the Germans, are in want.

There is hardly any object from Paris to Strasburg worth mentioning. Paris is almost the only town which attracts and deserves interest; the rest seem to exist only for Paris. The towns of France are generally worse than those of other countries, the villages still more so, and, except an ancient castle here and there, it is the most monotonous country imaginable.

There is, in the German character, a sort of

familiarity which sometimes displeases, but shows at the bottom an open heart, even where there is no need of it. This, with a sincere though in a certain degree shaken attachment to their princes, constitutes one of the principal features of the present Germans. How could they else bear those incredible burthens laid upon their shoulders, and which so grievously oppress them ?

We entered Germany on the middle of the bridge, leading from Strasburg to Baden, a fine country, with a fine race of men and women, a regular capital, and a handsome palace and park. It also boasts a constitution, or, as it is termed, an assembly of states, granted by the grace of Prince Metternich. The representatives are allowed to debate how to raise the expenses for the current year, among which is a civil list of 150,000/. and 10,000 soldiers. For these benefits the good people have taxes, which to pay they live on potatoes, and a sort of rye bread, whose colour resembles exactly that of the worn-out hats we see on their heads ; moreover, they are blessed with tolls and duties, which notwithstanding the Rhine washes their borders, make trade of any extent a real impossibility.

We arrived the same day in another sovereign's dominions, those of the King of Wurtemburgh. The palace in his capital, Stuttgard, is without any doubt the finest royal residence in Germany, and superior to the Tuileries in point of symmetric and architectural beauty. The crown, however, with which it is surmounted, and which is not quite as large as the cupola of St. Paul's Church, seems, indeed, a satire on the royal dignity, which in this insignificant miniature kingdom is over-acted.

If wealth be dangerous in subjects, this king has nothing to apprehend. His subjects, whom we know under the appellation of Swabians, are certainly the poorest creatures in the world, and, except one wealthy bookseller, there is not a rich man in the kingdom. The present king has added to his other benefits a Diet, modified by the same princely personage, Metternich, for which his subjects are little indebted to him. He has but augmented their burthens without conferring any real benefit. The two chambers of which the assembly is composed, have not the least legislative power; and their whole labour is to devise the best means of getting out of the empty pockets

of the wretched subjects the taxes which the minister of the treasury imposes on the country. Among the expenses are the civil list, with 150,000*l.* and 12,000 soldiers.

A cold shudder seizes me when I think on his late Majesty, commonly called the Fat King. He was a great huntsman. In the year 1817, during the dreadful famine, one of his deer and boar chases was held. Among the 4000 peasants who were summoned from the *Odenwald* to attend as drivers, there was a poor sick man who could not leave his bed. His only support was his daughter, who, from the earnings of her spinning, supported the miserable existence of her father. She dressed herself in her father's clothes, and went to attend the royal chase. It lasted three days, during which time these people were seen *bivouacking* in snow and cold. The king heard of this disguise, laughed immoderately, and was very sorry not to have known it sooner, as it would have been an excellent joke. When the maid returned to her father's house, she found him starved. The king heard of this, but did nothing. During the same royal sport, a boar approached a peasant, when a chamberlain was just going to dart his

javelin at the ferocious animal. The peasant, to defend himself, used his cudgel, and prostrated the beast. The disappointed courtier now turned his javelin against the peasant, and laid him with a blow dead at his feet. As he was a favourite with the king, he came off with a fortnight's confinement.

Though the present king is rather a better sort of man, yet he is but little beloved. His travels through France, Italy, and Switzerland, at the expense of his starving subjects, and his vacillating policy, have changed the odium which they bore to the former into an indifference towards his successor. The beautiful royal studs of Arabian horses, six miles from Stuttgard, and the celebrated Danneker's atelier at Connstadt, are well worth a visit. In the latter, however, we find nothing except Schiller's bust, at all worth mentioning. A tour through this kingdom is of very little interest. Miserable towns, with dung-hills and mud-holes in the streets, houses, or rather cabins, falling to pieces, still poorer villages, with huts, out of whose square-foot windows wretched and fretful faces are peeping ;—these are the features which accompany the traveller from Stutt-

gard to Heidelberg. Here the country assumes a romantic aspect, rather more friendly and prosperous, owing to the exceeding fertility of the soil, and the Jew students who spend their money in the latter place. The united efforts of the German Diet at Frankfort, and of the Committee of Censors at Mentz, have tamed these gentlemen in a way more galling to their feelings than even Napoleon's Despotism. Half a day's ride brought us to Darmstadt, the capital of the third sovereign's dominions. Among the curiosities we found a splendid theatre, an assembly of States, in the same form as that of Wurtemburgh, 10,000 soldiers, who, in the true spirit of Hessians, complain loudly of John Bull's being on friendly terms with Brother Jonathan, and of being thus deprived of every chance of having their legs or arms shot off, in order to get half-pay. Another half day's ride brought us to Frankfort, the seat of the German Diet. A good charger may carry his rider in an hour through three sovereigns' dominions, viz:—the Elector of Hesse Cassel, the Duke of Nassau, and the Prince Landgrave of Hesse Homburg. A few traits, which we can state as authentic, are sufficient to give us such characteristic outlines of

these princes, as may enable us to form a competent opinion of them, and the respective happiness enjoyed by their subjects.

The Duke of Nassau thought proper, in the true spirit of liberality, to grant to his people a constitution. In acknowledgment for this benefit, the loyal representatives presented him with the domains of the dukedom, the national property. He accepted of the gift, passed over to Vienna, and gambled them away in the course of three successive nights. The poor people lost their only resort for paying their taxes, and have now to pay their representatives who voted their property away, and 6000 soldiers, besides a civil list of 100,000*l.* to the princely family, from a country not much larger than London. His neighbour, the Elector of Hesse Cassel, is said to be the richest, but the most despotic, among the petty sovereigns of Germany: and his country is a proof it. He is indebted for his wealth to his grandfather and his father, two *worthy men*, than whom none of the German princes better understood the rights of sovereignty. The former proved it by selling his loyal subjects, the latter by exercising that privilege which the German

princes and nobles enjoyed of yore. He left, it is said, not less than seventy-four children.

As he owed his wealth principally to his grandfather's soldiers, he paid them a proportionate attention. As soon, therefore, as he was returned to the Electorate, they had to resume their *queues*, as worn in the time of Frederick the Great. As no means could be devised in the ministerial council to fix them upon their heads, and the growth of their hair would have taken too long a time for his Highness's patience, they were fastened on their collets, to the no small amusement of the knowing students of Göttingen, who instantly provided themselves with this new head-piece, stalking with their pig-tails all over the country. It happened frequently that some of the old soldiers, who followed the late elector into his exile, had still preserved their *queues*, and were bound to add another, thus carrying two of these ornaments instead of one.

There is nothing more disgusting than these petty sovereigns, who, by the grace of bowing and cringing to Napoleon, became independent; a prerogative, of which they make such use as

might be expected from minds narrow as their territories. They now carry on a sort of petty warfare with their tolls and duties, in that modern style which ruins a people, not at once, but by degrees. They thus contrived to make of each territory a little Japan, where nothing except home growth and home produce is allowed. This combination against free trade and commerce, and in fact against the only means of subsistence for the subjects of petty states, which have no sea-coast, no produce of a superior kind, no resources, and a civil list of nearly three millions sterling, with an army of more than 100,000 men, was begun by the King of Prussia; and as every duke, or prince, or landgrave, would think it derogatory to his dignity to yield to the King of Prussia, in any point, they used reprisals. During my stay at Frankfort, I had to pay for my excursion from this city into the surrounding country, a distance of three miles, not only three different tolls, but for my coachman, who carried about half-a-bushel of oats with him, a duty double the value of the oats. Owing to the same cause, a bottle of Rhenish wine is, thirty miles from its growth, quite as dear as in Great Britain. What an influence such a system must

necessarily produce on the brave and generous Germans, I need not observe. Poverty, smuggling, with all the train of vices incident to such a policy, are the evils resulting from it. In Germany it is not the mechanic nor the manufacturer, as in Great Britain or France, who is subject to periodical distress; it is the farmer, the proprietor of his estate; it is the very heart-blood of the country, which is exhausted beyond any idea. There is, generally speaking, an absolute poverty—none are wealthy but the thirty-six sovereigns of this country. One may see hundreds of people, and some of the most honest and industrious farmers, selling their small property, which even in France would support them in a decent way, and wandering to the borders of Holland to seek a foreign country; but even this sad hope is denied to them. Generally, when they arrive at the sea-ports, their last penny is spent; they are refused a passage on board as redemptionaries; and they either starve, or return absolute beggars.

It is truly wonderful how the princes of Germany could have allowed liberty a little nook in Frankfort, the very heart of the country, and

where the effects of this freedom are so strangely contrasted with the surrounding poverty. We may account, however, for this phenomenon, by a sufficient knowledge of the character of their subjects. A newly-discovered Minnelied*, such as the Nibelungen, (1) will make them forget constitution, liberty, and misery; and though they can exactly tell what sort of government China, Japan, and Siam have, and give an exact account of the mismanagement in these empires, yet it never occurred to them that their own is the very worst of all.

Frankfort is an ancient and noble city, where a proportionate wealth is diffused through all the classes of society, though their liberty is rather galled by the overweening airs of the Austrian and Prussian sinecure ambassadors. (2) It is the only city in the south of Germany which, besides Vienna, may be said to be rich; and though the greatest part of these riches is in the hands of half-a-dozen Jews, yet they share the spoils, which flow into the gulph of Hebrew subtility, from the sweat of the brows of the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian slaves. It is a pity that

* Love lays.

the high character of the Germans and their virtues are so little known, and still less esteemed. There is an intenseness of feeling in the German character, which touches the very heart. (3)

To an incredible extent of knowledge and enlightened learning they unite an unostentatious simplicity and unassuming manners, which bespeak the sterling cast of their minds. What would this nation become, were they allowed only a small degree of civil liberty? A social circle of the better class in Frankfort has a particular charm. Out of fifteen young ladies and as many gentlemen, who meet in a company, there will scarcely be five who are not versed in English literature; and Walter Scott, Moore, and Cowper, are their favourites. The salutations and unshawlings are scarcely over, when the knitting-work is resorted to; while one or two are playing on the piano-forte, or reading a favourite novel of the above-mentioned authors. They are interrupted by the tea-party, after which they hasten to the Cecilia Union, an institution highly honourable to the youth of Frankfort. About fifty young ladies of the best families, with as many gentlemen, assemble regularly twice every week, to perform

Handel's, Haydn's, Grauns's, &c. classical works, under the direction of a musical gentleman of high standing. The salary of this director, (Shelble,) the expenses of the *locale* and of the orchestra, are defrayed by subscription of the members. Only sacred music is here admitted. I heard the Messiah and Haydn's Creation performed, and I do not hesitate to affirm, that although the London performance is more splendid as relates to the orchestra, yet the general impression produced by these hundred youthful and blooming singers, is far superior to any thing I ever heard.

The tower where the emperors of Germany were crowned is interesting, if it were but to convey an adequate idea of the ancient notions of magnificence. The hall where the coronation took place is an oblong chamber, or rather a chapel, such as we find in moderate country mansions of Great Britain. The worn-out likenesses of the emperors, the more ancient of whom have visibly been renovated at various times, and the scene of desolation which reigns throughout, are true representations of the present state of the holy Roman Empire.

The country between Frankfort and Leipsic, if we except the Fichtel mountains and a dozen small residences of Saxon princes, is of little interest. We visited at Leipsic the spot where the gallant Poniatowsky fell, the hope and the idol of his countrymen. Fanciful and enthusiastic as they are, it was no wonder they once clung with fondness to the hope of seeing him seated on the throne of the Sobieskys and Casimirs. ⁽⁴⁾ A very curious circumstance respecting the fate of this interesting prince, and one authenticated by several of his friends, is the following. He was, about six years before his death, on a visit to a relation of his in Silesia, with a numerous party. They were assembled in the pavilion of the country seat, when a plaintive but melodious voice was heard before the gate. It came from a gipsey, who was called in to prophecy the fate of each person. The first who stepped forth was Prince Poniatowsky. The gipsey took his hand, looked attentively at it, then at him, and muttered in a low voice, "Prince, an Elster will bring you death." As Elster in the German language denotes both the river Elster and a magpie, the company made merry, wrote

the prophecy down, witnessed and sealed it. It is still extant.

The prosperity of Saxony, notwithstanding the ravages of a war which led a million of soldiers, at different times, into the heart of the country, and the subsequent division or rather laceration of this little kingdom, seems but little affected. The healing hand of a paternal government is everywhere visible. Whatever may be the fault of the king, whose plain honesty and ill-timed faith led him to persevere in an alliance when his royal and princely brethren and cousins were already playing false, he has severely suffered; but even in his sufferings this venerable patriarch of kings is an instance of what common sense, with true honesty, may perform in so short a time. His simple method was that which every wise father of a family, whose speculation proved fatal, resorts to,—retrenchment of his expenses, and a strict honesty in fulfilling his obligations. This honesty has effected what no other aggrandized monarch can boast of,—a firm public credit, prosperity, a trade but little diminished, security, and an unbounded love of his subjects. The inhabitants of Dresden, and of

Saxony in general, are renowned for their good manners, cultivated taste, and frugality. A dozen well-dressed gentlemen will sit down in the first hotels to dinner, which consists of a wing of a fowl and two thin slices of bread and butter—a very moderate lunch for an Englishman. This frugality may originate in a comparatively poor soil, which yields its tribute not without hard labour; but it is certainly a high eulogium on their princes, that they have opened to their subjects sources of mental perfection in those well-known treasures of the gallery, which justly give Dresden the appellation of the Florence of Germany. Compared to this gallery, the treasures of the grand ceiling are mere trifles. You stand hours and days before the Madonna without being satiated, and always return from your rambles into the adjoining rooms to this *ne plus ultra* of genial art.

Dresden has no splendid edifices; even the Catholic church, the palace of the King and that of Count Marcolini, are not imposing; but the whole city presents so beautiful an *ensemble*;—its situation, without being romantic, is so calm; the bridge,

built in a chaste and noble style, and with such perfect propriety, spans both towns,—that the impression which it leaves behind is certainly a most pleasing one. If we add to this the absolute gentleness of their literary character, some of whom are of a distinguished standing, as Bottiger and Nostiz, one is indeed sorry to leave a city where so much taste and refinement are blended with the most unassuming manners.

Will Germany, after having had its Müllers, Fichtes, Herders, Schillers, Goethes, &c. follow the course of human nature, and establish a national liberty, such as is the inseparable companion of a free will, the result of an enlightened understanding? Will it follow the example of England, which resumed its natural rights when its Shakspeares, Addisons, and Miltons, had diffused light through the ranks of their countrymen; or the example of France, after its Corneilles, Racines, Montesquieus, and Rousseaus, had done away with the prejudices of a feudal and barbarian age?

Divided as Germany is into petty districts, separated from each other by jealousies, man-

ners, and many antiquated prejudices, but, above all, governed by princes who, devoid of every national character, are the tools of Austria and Prussia, as they formerly were of Bonaparte; by the united efforts of these powers and princes, and the "*reign of darkness*," the Germans will gradually sink into that state of slavery fit to become subjects for Russia, when this power shall have subdued Austria and Turkey, and have annexed to its empire Bohemia, Moravia, the rest of Poland, and Hungary. The genius of culture draws towards the West. It rose in the beautiful plains of Euphrates, Tigris, Araxes, and Ganges. They are now a desert. It moved towards the borders of the Mediterranean, and Lydia and Ephesus shone forth. Their glory is gone too, to make place for the bright star of beautiful Greece, whose splendour sunk with the walls of Corinth, and imperial Rome took the command of the world. She is now only extant in the records of history, and Europe's hope rests on the proud rock of Albion. But the tide runs towards America, and, perhaps, before two centuries shall have elapsed, the Genius of Europe, to avoid Scythian fetters, will

have alighted on the banks of the mighty Mississippi.

May the Genius of Europe never fly from this noble, proud, and happy Island ! may it for ever be what it has shown itself—the Bulwark of Liberty !