

MUNICH
The Isar River and the Mountains

flavour. There is a big surplus of women in Germany, and this can be seen in the attentiveness of the women and the reticence of the men.

They accompanied us with polite ceremony to our train for Cologne after finding out when and where it left.

"She was grateful to us for putting him in a good humour and kept her cigarette to give him later," I said. "It's hard on these girls."

"But they look attractive and alive on it."

THEY were more sophisticated people in the train to Cologne—a middle-aged man, in business by his manner, a smart young woman, a studious-looking schoolboy, and a young man who was looking for an opportunity to be friendly to everybody.

The older man looked very stiff and reserved, but when I offered him one of our cigarettes he took one, saying he was "very partial to English cigarettes." The young woman and the boy refused decorously, but the young man, with a broad and amiable smile said, "I certainly will" in an American accent. I thought for a moment he might be an American, but he said "No."

"I'd forgotten—we're going along the Rhine," I said to my wife.

The castled crag of Drachenfels
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
Whose breast of waters proudly swells
Among the banks that bear the vine.

There were the wide river and the vines. Where was Drachenfels? I could scarcely think of it as a place to be seen from a train window. I asked them.

"We'll get there about eight o'clock," said the young man in a matter-of-fact tone. "But it will be getting dark then and you might not see much. Why do you want to see it?"

I explained to him, and he told the others something about "in poesie" and "Lord Byron."

"From *Childe Harold*?" said the businessman, obviously proud of knowing.

But there was the Lorelei too. It was an old legend, said the businessman.

I decided to air my knowledge of German poetry.

Sie kaemmt ihr goldenes Haar;
Sie kaemmt es mit goldenem Kamm
Und singt ein Lied dabei

But for some reason it sent them into peals of laughter.

"The Lorelei sat on a rock combing her hair and singing. We shall come to the rock presently," said the businessman.

I tried to retrieve my dignity by offering more cigarettes. But I could see that the businessman felt that to accept too many would cause him to lose his. But I insisted. The young man merely said, "I'll rob you again," and began asking me about conditions in New Zealand, saying that there was a shortage of labour in some industries in Germany, and in agriculture. With his open easy-going friendliness, modelled on the American manner, he was quite different from the older man, who would continually tend to retreat behind a stern and forbidding exterior.

WE arrived late at Cologne. The teller at the exchange said: "Go to the Bahnhof Hotel, it will be only about eight marks." It was a luxury hotel, and the night porter laughed when I told him this. Two policemen good-naturedly tried to coax him into putting us up on the cheap, but without success, and we had to go across the road.

Next day we looked at the Cathedral, of which the roof and as much as could be found of the old windows have been restored, at the mosaic, the perfectly preserved flooring of a Roman villa, discovered when an air raid shelter was being made, and at the new opera house, only a little less startling in design than that proposed for Sydney. It was not completed; we fell in behind a party inspecting the progress of the work. They were pleasant people here: the shop-girls chatted to one another, continuing their conversations as they served us, just as in New Zealand—jobs were obviously easy; the proprietor at the little hotel told us to forget about our passports and the form required by the police—"you've come, you've gone."

ON the way to Amsterdam we met the same type of young German as we met in the train from Mannheim.

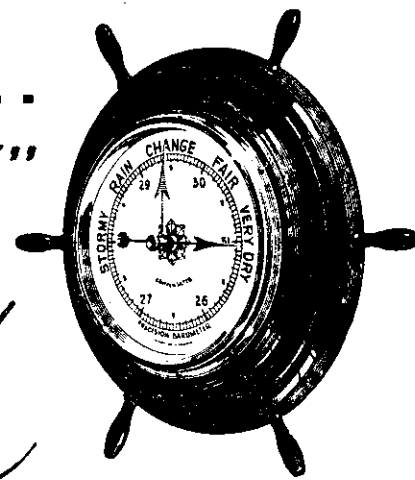
"I like to get away to Holland," he said. "It is so fresh and clean. You get tired of Germany with its factories and smoke." He spoke in English.

"France is paying too much attention to Algeria and neglecting Europe," he said. "Do you know that France has only one division in Germany? Only one."

"You seem to like foreign troops here," I said.

With an elaborate wink and grin he replied: "Well, without them I might have to go to the war myself."

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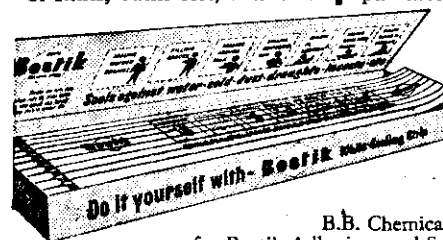
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