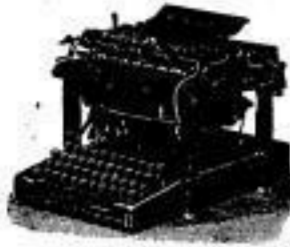


:: BERLIN ::

frock leaves a symmetrical throat and a softly rounded neck free. On her lap the little maiden holds a puppy, with a silky whitey-brown coat, which appears to be asleep. The beauty of this picture is quite unforgettable. Dr. A. S.



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BERLIN REVISITED.

I was drinking my coffee at a certain café not far from the Potsdamer Platz when a young man whose clothes and bearing betrayed his English prejudices looked hard at me two or three times, and came finally to join me at my table.

"It is very trying," he said at once, "to renew acquaintance."

"It is sometimes officious," I retorted. "And, besides," I added, "I do not recognize you."

He laughed. "Oh, didn't mean you," he said, "I meant Berlin." "In that case"—said I, and shrugged my shoulders. "But you are anti-Berlin?"

"No, I am anti nothing. I am revisiting Berlin. I have not been here for six years, and I am afraid I was too young at my last visit. Youth has illusions."

I nodded my head solemnly. "No," he went on, "Berlin is not what I thought it was, or imagined it was. It is not what I remember, and it is not what I expected."

Again I shrugged my shoulders. "It is Berlin," I said.

"No," he replied, "it is not. Don't think me paradoxical, or a lunatic. Berlin is not what it is said to be, and therefore it is not Berlin. Let me explain my method of argument. It is psychological: call it egoistic, if you please. As Carlyle says, every man carries the world under his own hat, and I carry mine. I have always carried Berlin in a certain relationship to the Cosmos; my conclusions have been shattered. I am assimilating new sensations, new impressions—"

I interrupted him with (I am afraid) a contemptuous gesture.

"In ten years' time," I said, "your impressions will have been revolutionized."

"I live in the present," said he, "and the present interests me too much for me to care about the future. Let me continue. I have unlearned my Berlin. I come fresh from the breezes of Piccadilly and the rattle of the Strand. I come from a world of omnibuses and policemen, from a world of fogs and political excitements, from a world of freedom and newspaper correspondence. What do I expect to find? I am looking for the rule of blood and iron; I am looking for the obsession of the State in the shape of mounted policemen; I am

looking for rioters and cynical bureaucrats; I am looking for the notorious rudeness of the Prussian."

"And you find?"

"I find nothing. People are so polite to me that it unnerves me. For example: yesterday I asked a man to tell me the way to a museum. I approached him somewhat carelessly, but he touched his hat. I began, in my broken German, to frame my request; he anticipated my wishes, he gave me the fullest directions, and left me with a Castilian sweep of the hat and a bow worthy of Lord Chesterfield or Count d'Orsay. I assure you my knees trembled. Do you know, I expected that man to give me a push into the gutter?"

He looked at me long and earnestly, but as I remained silent, he continued to harangue me.

"Yes; everywhere it is the same, and it hurts me. It destroys my self-respect; it makes me feel that my impressions are valueless, superfluous."

"Not superfluous," I murmured.

"Bah," he said, "you are like the rest of them. Why won't you be rude to me? Why won't the police snap at me? Why won't the post-office officials grimace at me through the glass door of their cages? Why doesn't anybody bother me for a passport?" "Because," I said slowly and impressively, "this is the year one-thousand-nine-hundred-and-eight, and Berlin has outgrown it."

There followed a pause in which the young man studied his feet with much melancholy attention. He was clearly grieved.

"At all events," he said at last, "I know where to take my revenge. I have seen Charlottenburg."

I raised my eyebrows.

"We are very proud of Charlottenburg," I said.

"There is some new architecture."

"There is," he said, and laughed a few loud, snappy, staccato notes. "There is."

"Good Lord," he continued, "Architecture! I nearly laughed myself to death when I arrived. You have become symbolical, and your god is scratched stucco. You have the mannerisms of the Renaissance with the taste of a pompous parvenue. Charlottenburg looks like a bad copy of *Jugend*, and I should not be surprised if it was inhabited solely by young ladies with a temperament, and the courage of their convictions."

"Excuse me," I said stiffly, "It is a very respectable quarter, comparing quite favourably with Regent's Park or Campden Hill; and many intellectual people live there. You do not perhaps understand the architecture. It is something new; we are pioneers. Space, light, colour, ornament—we have them all."

He smiled bitterly.

"I wish," he said, "I could take it from you. I can't, though. Charlottenburg is like a plaything grown up, and as self-conscious as a school-girl masquerading in her sister's ball-dress."

"You have flats in London?"

"We have, but we have not got an artistic movement. We are a practical people."

"Well," I said, "you are going back."

"Yes," he answered, "I shall go when I am tired of it."

"But how long have you been here?"

"I came yesterday morning."

I summoned the waiter, and gulped down my coffee.

"Zahlen," I said briskly.

"Oh," said the young man, "if you are going to be cross— But impressions are impressions, and we English don't change our minds once we have made them up."

I turned my head when I got to the door.

"Fools are fools," I called to him, "and nothing can change them." And I banged the door as hard as I could.

C. M. K.

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