

THE CHARM OF BERLIN

By

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My bedroom at Berlin looks out upon the elevated railway. It looks at it diagonally, across and aslant a triangle of loosesoiled garden. The garden contains a green bench, a long rectangle of red carpet which has hung for eight months upon a cord, a golden ball of glass on a green pole, and a large china statue of a bull-dog. The bull-dog turns his tail upon the trains as they rattle or thunder above him, but the glass ball reflects them very quickly. I have seldom seen any motion so quick and so continuous as the flashing reflection of the trains that skim around the golden ball. When I tie my tie in the morning, I stand by the window and look at the trains. The local electric trains jingle past me, like virgins going to school, like kingfishers or canaries darting across the shadow of a pool. For my garden is a pool. The great European trains flap up from the main stations like storks or herons, lumbering along so slow at starting, the black vans that terminate their scarlet Mitropa bodies, trailing cumbersomely backwards as if the black legs of a heron or a stork. For they are off to the smell of leather which greets one at Eydkühhnen, or to the smell which greets one at Bentheim of a proximate and salted sea. At night, when I tie my white tie for the evening (a symbol of bondage) the gold ball and the bull dog are no longer visible. There are no intermediaries between me and the Reichsbahn. The electric trains soar upwards as they pass me, they are chariots of gold, they are the rockets which carry people, who have been to tea at Rummelsburg, back to supper at Charlottenburg, they are the comets on which the intellectuals of Wilmersdorf are borne enchanted to the no less cultured homes at Weißensee. I look up at them, and see a blur of light, the mist upon the windows, a man leaning outwards against the pane. They look down at me and see an English diplomatist (stout



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