

THE USE OF WINE AND BEER AT VIENNA:

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE DRINKING PLACES.

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The city of Vienna and its environs have a population, according to the last census, of 932,000 souls. Most of the elements, so diverse in blood and language, which go to make up the Austrian Empire, are fully represented. Indeed, the leading newspaper of the city claims that seven languages are habitually spoken within her gates. One constantly sees on the streets evidences of this diversity, in the dress and social habits of the people, yet so far as the subject of this paper is concerned, they all seem to be members of one common brotherhood.

There are several pretty strongly marked social grades among the citizens. The nobility and upper classes are intelligent and cultivated, enjoying all the creature comforts of good housing and good feeding, which their wealth brings them. Another class, made up of wealthy bankers, merchants and manufacturers, lives well and is not exposed to the wear and tear of life more than the same class elsewhere. The next, or middle class, consists of traders, agents, professional gentlemen, teachers, etc., whose incomes allow of some degree of comfort; owing, however, to the excessive rents within the city they do not live so well as a similar class here. They are restricted to a very small amount of house room; a fact which has much to do with some of the outdoor habits of the people. Still another class is made up of workmen, commissaires, conductors, drivers, etc., whose wages range from eighty cents to \$1.50 per day. Lastly, there is a great throng of poor laborers (men and women) who work on the streets, pump water, lay brick, carry mortar, and do the lowest drudgery of the

city. Wages among these last two classes are much lower than with us. The women engaged in sweeping the streets earn forty cents per day; the men about eighty cents. Good workmen get from \$1 to \$1 50, with higher wages where special artistic training is required. Policemen in the city receive \$1; those at the "Exposition" (a picked body of men) receive \$2. The extravagantly high rents in Vienna eat up the earnings of the lower classes, and leave them very little surplus money. They do not have adequate incentives to thrift and frugality, while a large proportion of them are restricted to black bread and beer.

Among the people of wealth, of course, food is varied and abundant. Beer is drunk by all. But wine, of the finer qualities, is more commonly found on their tables, and partaken of by the whole family. Among the more dissipated young men of this class brandy and strong liquors are somewhat used; but society frowns upon excess, and intoxication is rare.

In the middle class the use of brandy, rum and spirit is not common. Light wines and beer are the staple drinks. At dinner a bottle of light wine, containing a very small per cent. of alcohol, is usually taken, while at lunch and often during the day, a glass of beer is relied upon to cool and comfort the partaker.

Among the third rank of people beer is the common beverage. At all hours of the day men turn aside from their work for a glass. Women pass you on the streets with mugs or pitchers of the foaming drink. With a glass or two of beer, and a piece of bread, the appetite is satisfied and business resumed.

With the very lowest classes the use of wine and beer is restricted. Wages are so small that even the cheap food and clothing exhaust nearly all they can earn. Consequently the very poor are wont to use whiskey and rum in small quantities.

The most striking feature of Vienna life is the open and universal use of wine and beer, and the almost total absence of intoxication on the streets and in public places. The drinking habits of the Viennese are very closely related to the manner of life, the wages for work, and the food of

the various classes. I shall endeavor to give an outline of their habits, and especially describe some of their methods of amusement. Perhaps the latter may be found worthy of introduction into our own country.

For the gratification of this appetite lavish provision is made throughout the city. There are no saloons with a green blind just within the door, and concealed drunkenness beyond. No secrecy is thrown about the habit; no taboo of society rests upon it. Gardens and cafés abound on every hand. Ladies and gentlemen sit at the tables, with the customary deference to the social rank of each saloon, and lunch in merry company. Every one is quiet and sober, and during the day-time there is no intoxication whatever. Beer is not guzzled, to use a coarse word for a coarser fact, but is enjoyed for its own sake. A habit of continued drinking, one glass after another, exhibited by certain wild Americans attending the "Exposition," was a source of constant wonder to the "beer-boys." Wine is not so commonly called for. Indeed it is rather rarely used in the gardens, but is more common in the restaurants.

I. RUM, BRANDY, AND SPIRIT SHOPS.

These are found scattered here and there about the streets, but attracting no attention by their elegance or obtrusiveness. The most popular one is situated opposite the Vienna Exchange. Usually they are small, dirty affairs, with rows of casks on shelves along the wall, and a few large bottles on the counter. By law the number is limited, and they are required to open at 4 A. M., and close at 10 P. M. As a rule, only the very poorest classes visit them, the street laborers and those who do the lowest labor of the city. Commonly in the morning, before starting out for the labor of the day, these people purchase a few cents' worth of liquor to use during the hours of work. When evening comes you see numbers within the shops, calling for and drinking very small portions at a time. A sum of three or four cents is all these poor people can afford to spend. Should one get drunk or be noisy he is at once put out and quickly appropriated by the police. If any disturbance arises the place is peremptorily closed. I entered very many of these establishments, early

and late, and seldom saw any signs of intoxication. However, by dint of many questions, I found that there is a proportion of these people who become so infatuated with the pleasures of the cup, as to forego almost everything to obtain the wished-for enjoyment. When a country youth visits the city for a "lark," he very quickly falls into the clutches of the law, and is sent back to his rural home. Every morning the visitor at Vienna sees several huge arks, without windows, only a narrow door at the end, filled by a policeman, lumbering through the gates toward the country. In one of these the unfortunate youth makes his triumphal entry into his home. Among the denizens of the city, it is a common thing for the wife to be present when the husband is paid off on Saturday night, and to reserve from his wages whatever sum she thinks necessary for household expenses. The rest is so small an amount that it does not admit of an extended debauch; it lasts until work begins. (In England, with the increase of wages during the last few years, has come increase of drunkenness, among many trades the men not getting at work until Tuesday afternoon, where previously the debauch was over by Monday morning.)

II. THE BAR-ROOMS

Come next, of various degrees of elegance and popularity. There are more than two hundred of them about the city, all outside the ramparts, obliged to close at 12 P. M. In these, one can obtain wine and beer with a limited variety of food. Many are simply furnished with coarse tables and chairs, while some are quite noted for their sumptuous appearance. Dreher, who has carried the manufacture of beer to a high state of perfection, has a famous saloon in the old city. On Saturday and Sunday evenings, particularly if the weather is a little unpleasant, these saloons are crowded. The visitor notices that most of the patrons are of the middle and working classes, who come to smoke and talk while they enjoy a mug or two of beer. There is a peculiar sociability among the men, most of whom are smoking big brier-wood pipes. If the evening is a merry one, a song is given occasionally, or a street musician comes in to play for awhile. Here and there in the corners you notice a reader asleep over his paper,

and occasionally parties engaged in a game of cards. But no one is on the floor, no one trying to create a fuss. In certain parts of the city there are a number of mongrel establishments, half bar-room, half garden, where the most abandoned of both sexes congregate. I mention them now only because the strange absence of visible intoxication is noticeable, even among the frequenters of these low and miserable dance-halls. In each a policeman is on duty, whose orders are to prevent disturbance at all hazards.

III. CAFÉS.

At these establishments, which exceed two hundred in number, one obtains tea and coffee, with eggs, bread and ices. Sometimes a more liberal larder is supplied, but in theory they are limited to these few articles. Wine and beer can be had, but are not very generally called for. The larger places are fitted up with considerable elegance, billiard-tables, pictures, and statues being quite common. These places remain open until 2 and 3 A. M.

IV. BEER-GARDENS.

These are the most prominent feature of Vienna life. Everywhere throughout the city and among the suburbs, these gardens are found, varying in size, completeness, and social rank. In one place a garden may consist of a handsome glass pagoda, brilliantly lighted at night, furnished with chairs, tables, surrounded by gravel-walks and a few trees. Again, one may consist of a hanging-garden, which, filled with trees, bright lights, and a merry company, is a very pleasant sight on a crowded thoroughfare at night. Often a bit of open land, where several streets intersect, gives room for a tent with a few tables and chairs. But the beer-garden *par excellence* consists of a grove of trees filled with round tables and chairs, and the ground covered several inches deep with pebbles, sifted from the bed of the Danube, an admirable preventive of dampness. Along the edge of the grounds buildings are erected, often of fanciful designs, open galleries, out of door dancing floors, and very commonly a band-stand in the centre of all. The covered buildings are in use during wet weather. Among certain grades of society it is quite

common to give the wedding-supper in one of these halls. These gardens are always very brilliantly lighted at night, and are usually provided with a good band, often both stringed and brass, which performs with a deal of fire and precision. The greatest aggregation of these establishments is at the Prater, so-called, the large park of the city, in which the Exposition was held. Here are gathered together beer-gardens without number, restaurants, theatres, menageries, shooting-galleries, a grand aquarium, concert-halls, velocipede-rinks, "Punch and Judys," and all manner of things to attract and amuse. A uniform appearance of neatness and good taste pervades everything. Every variety of amusement is provided in a legitimate and respectable way, and every place is thronged by respectable and orderly people.

In the development of the plan which is to make of Vienna one of the most magnificent cities of the continent, a tract of land was reserved for a city park. This has been laid out in the charming style of landscape-gardening so universal in Europe, and is a very favorite place of resort, especially with children. At one end of the park a large and handsome building has been erected, called the Cure Saloon, and the open space in front is filled with the inevitable paraphernalia for eating and drinking. Here one always finds a throng of well-dressed people with their children. The peculiar feature of the place, however, is the fact, that the various mineral waters of the country are on sale, and their genuineness is provided for by a government inspector.

Another favorite place of resort is the People's Garden, nearly in front of the palace of the emperor. In summer the grounds are filled with the most exquisite beds of flowers, arranged with fine taste. But what gives it a peculiar character, is the fact that on certain evenings in the week, Strauss, either Johann or Edward, gives a concert here. A portion of the garden is railed off at night by a light rop-netting, and within the reserved space stands a permanent semi-circular building and two orchestral stands. Very numerous gas-jets are distributed among the trees where the chairs and tables are crowded thickly together. On evenings of great days a military band occupies one stand, and Strauss,

with his strings, the other. During the Exposition season an admission fee of seventy-five cents was charged, but the concerts were always thronged with a nicely-dressed and well-behaved company, promenading about the walks, or sitting at the tables quaffing beer and eating ices, while the passionate music rose and fell on the evening air. Outside in the garden, often, thousands of people were quietly listening, with no sign of disorder, rowdyism or drunkenness.

Near Schönbrunn, a village a few miles from the city, where the emperor has a summer-palace, is the largest and most popular beer-garden of all. Its proprietor, Mr. Schwender, is commonly spoken of as a public benefactor, for having established so beautiful a palace of amusement. He calls it the New World. It embraces a large amount of space, filled with walks and beds of flowers, with buildings for various uses, a theatre, shooting-galleries, and a semi-circular band-stand, which can accommodate singers or musicians by the thousand. In honor of great fête-days he provides enlarged entertainment. One evening he massed twelve of the best military bands stationed about the city, making a total of over 700 performers, and also provided an extra dramatic entertainment, the whole closing with fireworks. By 7 P. M. the grounds were flooded with light from the gas-jets, arranged in cones, wreaths, and festoons, and were crowded with merry people. The neat, unostentatious dress of the Austrian officers appeared on every hand. Tall orderlies, with spur and clanking sword, stalked about the walks. Whole families were here, all eating, drinking, chatting, and listening to the music which the monster band rendered most charmingly. Here were several thousand people, but not a noisy word nor an ungracious action during the evening. As the crowd hurried for the cars and omnibuses, it certainly was unexampled for order and good nature.

During the day the gardens are not very numerously visited. But as the late summer afternoon comes on the citizens begin to wend their way toward the suburbs, where the gardens do most abound. On Sundays, for instance, after attending church in the forenoon, the people fairly load down every means of conveyance toward their favorite resorts. After 4 P. M. of that day the theatres, circuses, and similar

places of amusement are allowed to open. The German of the middle class and the well-to-do laborer take wife and family and go out to some cool, shady retreat. Every garden is filled with family groups, sitting at the tables, with merry children running about from place to place. Here, listening to good music splendidly played, they laugh and chat with neighbors and friends, while they leisurely sip from the tall glasses of white-capped beer. Later they wend their way homeward, having passed an evening of simple, hearty enjoyment, finding at the same time relaxation and fresh air. On some evenings of the last summer 150,000 people were among the gardens at the Prater.

Wandering here and there for months, visiting every garden and place of amusement, I saw not one intoxicated person. The wonder continually grew. It was impossible to believe the fact, yet such was the actual case in my experience.

V.—ESTERHAZY'S WINE-CELLAR.

It may be worth while to mention one of the peculiar institutions of the city, known as Esterhazy's Wine-cellar.

Turning off from the Graben, a leading street of the old city, a few steps bring one to a narrow door, down a little alley. Entering, you find yourself at the head of a flight of narrow stone steps leading down into the darkness. Once safely arrived at the foot, you are in a range of small, arched cellars, irregularly connected together, with rows of plank benches and plain chairs along the sides, and a ledge just above to support the glasses. In one small nook a woman retails sausages and cheese, behind a dirty candle and pile of black bread. A few flaring lamps give an uncertain light through the gloom. Every bench is occupied, the air is thick with smoke pouring from the tobacco-pipes. At one end an extemporaneous bar is established, over which active boys dispense the liquors called for, and behind which an interminable and mysterious range of cellars seem to stretch off into the darkness. A clerk records each order in a huge ledger before him. In these subterranean cellars are gathered a strange aggregation of tongues and nationalities. The noise is a perfect babel of sounds, yet you rarely find any

person intoxicated. Many are singing, but not noisily. Girls and boys come in constantly with bottles and pitchers for the liquor. A placard on the wall announces the names and prices of the wines : Weisser ruster Wein, 23 k. ; Weisser badaesdner, 17 k. ; rother sexander 12 to 13 k. (A kreutzer may be considered a half cent.) These are Hungarian wines, of a stronger character than those in common use among the Viennese.

VI.—HÖCHSTER HENRIGER.

It would be pleasant to say that nothing worse than the previous showing in relation to this subject existed in Vienna, but it is too true that intoxication can be found if one seeks in the right place for it. A place of this character is called a "Höchster Henriger," and is marked by a bunch of grape-vine leaves or a pine-branch over the door. Entering the largest one of the city, consisting of a series of large halls around a garden, with planks laid down for out-door dancing, with dancing-halls, music-rooms, and banquet-rooms, here and there, you come at once into a very large room, exceedingly brilliant with gas, and filled with the noise of two bands and the clinking of innumerable glasses. Here you find a great company gathered, often numbering four hundred,—babes in arms, children, men and women. Every table is crowded, everybody drinking, smoking, singing, beating out the time on their glasses, and having the wildest time imaginable. In one group I saw once three couples, and on their table were sixteen empty wine and beer-bottles. It is needless to say that all in that party were intoxicated. Here sit young men and girls in very close proximity, mostly coarse in dress and features. They are the servant girls, the diensters, the commissaires, the wild and reckless of the city. Moravian girls, with curious black turbans on their heads, serve the guests with wine and beer. The wine is that of the last making, not yet done fermenting. It is pleasant to the taste, but quickly mounts to the brain. One notices in these companies many women with babes in their arms. They are one of the curious features of Vienna life, which may be appreciated when I say that the illegitimate births of the city are sometimes thirty-three per cent. of the whole. These people find

their highest relaxation in the "Höchster Henrigger." What must be the morals of children habituated to such scenes! Again, an unexpected fact attracts attention. You see no one drunk upon the floor. Nobody is wrangling with his companions. Uproarious hilarity pervades all the people present. As the clocks strike twelve a policeman puts his head in and announces that the festivities of the evening are over. Such extravagant hugging and kissing as then goes on is a sight to see; but each gets hold of his or her companion, and they wander off, all quite unsteady, but yet well able to proceed.

Such are some of the places where the Viennese obtain their liquors, and their customary ways of drinking.

SOME EFFECTS UPON THE PEOPLE.

The constant and free use of beer and wine must have some influence upon the physical well-being of the Vienna people. You notice, as men and women sit drinking in the gardens in company, that their eyes become red and full of tears; the face flushes and often gets purple, and a certain stupidity or sleepiness comes over all. Often one is irresistibly inclined to sleep after two or three glasses. Everywhere throughout the city are evidences of this sleepiness. Hackmen drop off to sleep on their coaches, and commissaires are curled up on the door-steps of churches. Examining photographs of Vienna people there is easily recognized a universal thick look about the eyes, as if the brain was doing its work under a clog. Not that all cases display such strong effects.

Taking the mass of the people together, one seems safe in saying that the mental acumen and celerity of action among these beer-drinkers does not equal our own. Yet the beer satisfies a want of the system. The water is unfit to drink, and the cooking full of grease and onions. The pleasant bitter of the beer corrects this unpleasant feature of their food. Where the beer is made an article of food more than the means for the gratification of an appetite, it has scarcely any unfavorable effects. Many classes of the city do not taste of meat by the month together. To them a few cents worth of beer is a positive addition to their food.

It is well known that German women are often large and stout. Many influences conduce to bring about this result.

Many of the men are portly and dignified. Hackmen are gross. They are the hardest drinkers of the city. Medical men claim a great exemption from dyspepsia among the beer-takers. Certainly the pale face of the dyspeptic was not common on the streets. Rotund ruddy faces predominated. Among the young soldiers, of whom there were above twenty-five thousand about the city, there was a bronzed healthy look quite refreshing to see. They were allowed remarkable freedom about the city, but, among the hundreds on the street daily, I never saw one intoxicated. This liberal use of beer throws increased labor on the kidneys, which accounts for certain unpleasant features of life in continental cities.

The use of wine is far more common than that of brandy, rum, and whiskey. At the restaurants a large variety of brands is offered to the visitor. The best Austrian wines are considered to be the Gumpoldskirchen, Bisamberg, and Vöslau, and these are drunk in immense quantities. They are not unlike a Hock wine, and contain a very small per cent. of alcohol (Hock wines contain from 11.93 per cent. to 14.37 per cent. of alcohol). They are furnished, too, at a very low price.

The Hungarian wines, which have been mentioned in connection with the Esterhazy wine-cellar, are much stronger. I find a curious statement in a Vienna publication, that these wines are too strong for the climate of the city, though wholesome in Hungary; as if the people did not care for the intoxicating properties of their drink.

The beer is of two kinds; the Vienna a coarser quality, and the Pillsner, so-called, originated, I believe, in Bohemia. This Vienna beer is about the same in quality as the Bavarian or Munich beer, but is claimed to be superior. Immense quantities of it are now manufactured for export, Dreher being the most prominent manufacturer. The Pillsner beer is comparatively a new article, being an attempt to make a lighter, less intoxicating beverage. It is slightly more costly, of a lighter color, and more limpid, and does not wear so well in its use as Vienna beer. The latter seems to contain just the elements needed with the peculiar food of the people, supplied in a cheap, non-intoxicating form. This brand costs about four cents a seitel or glass, and Pillsner five cents.

A very wide field is open in the discussion of the medical bearings of the question. I made attempts to obtain statistics concerning the crimes committed in the city as the result of intoxication, but I could obtain no real information. I tried, also, to obtain the death records, to see what proportion of deaths resulted from causes depending in any degree upon the use of wine and beer. But to obtain valuable records will require a vast amount of long-continued and accurate research. I had interviews with a number of the leading physicians of Vienna, and found, in reply to questions, that, in their opinion, no effect upon the mortuary statistics is produced by the drinking habits of the people.

Dr. Sigmund, the eminent syphilologist and alienist, said there was no predominance of diseases of the liver and kidneys; that there was a very small proportion of patients in the insane asylum from the effects of alcohol. Dr. Grunfeld, assistant in the syphilitic wards of Dr. Sigmund, said there was not an unusual amount of Bright's disease, but that occasional cases of delirium tremens were received into hospital. Dr. Neumann, author of a well-known work on skin diseases, agreed substantially with the above statements. He had studied in the hospitals of Paris and other continental cities, and was of the decided opinion that there was less of liver and kidney disease in Vienna than in those cities. Mr. Holmes, an American engineer and contractor, and well known through England and on the continent, informs me that he had never seen so much drunkenness anywhere as in some districts in Scotland. He remarked again and again upon the marked sobriety of Vienna.

There seems to be in Vienna unrestrained use of wine and beer, with almost complete absence of public intoxication. Law is rigidly enforced, and some of the unpleasant results of this freedom are perhaps thereby restrained. The people, however, seem to use these liquors as food, more than as means for dissipation.

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