

A FOOT IN THE HARTZ.

BY WILLIAM HORACE HOTCHKISS.



SOME one has called the Hartz Mountains a *terra incognita*. The hastening tourist goes up the Rhine, does Switzerland and Italy, takes a glimpse of Paris and of London, and is off homeward. To him the Hartz are unknown. Nor can he read much of this little wonderland in English, for our writers have never felt the charm which has made Hartzland the theme of German song and story. Yet here the

American who loves the picturesque, or he to whom the romance and history of the Middle Ages are an instructive pleasure, can find keener delight and memories more enduring than in the beaten paths of the Old World. Every rock-cluster has its myths, the pine forests are alive with goblins and nixes and the whole country—a tossing ocean of wooded hills and tumbling valleys—is a veritable Dom-Daniel.

The Hartz Mountains lie in Northern Germany midway between Berlin and Cologne, stretching fifty miles from east to west and half that distance from north to south. They are a succession of increasing hills rising slowly to the Brocken, which is the only considerable elevation, and though clothed in alluring forests and adorned with pretty dimpling valleys, they would be no more attractive than our own White Mountains nor half so interesting as our Adirondacks were they not clothed with the legends and adorned with the love tales of a romantic past.

En route from Berlin a glimpse of Halberstadt, whose famous and crumbling cathedral has a satanic legend worthy of the Brocken, prepares you for the Hartz. And the very name of Quedlinburg, still nearer the mountains, is a goblin tale

embalmed. So that if you are at all blessed with imagination you will be thinking, long before the train reaches Thale where your tramp begins, that the shrill whistle of the engine is demoniacal laughter, and will see in the smoke whisked by the window one of the witches of the Brocken astride her broomstick and guided by imps of darkness. And thus with a witch for a guide and spook-lore in your pocket is it best to begin your Hartz journey. Begin it on foot and continue it so, shunning the little railways as you do the slower carryalls. The subtle spirit of these woodland hills, the glimpse of its bogies and brownies and the keener relish of its romance and history are denied those who do not tramp. With a stout stick, hob-nailed shoes, rough clothing and a light knapsack plunge into this unknown land and plunge as deep and long as you can.

At Thale the mountains start abruptly from the plain. The tumbling Bode pours out of a rock-cleft the sides of which rise nearly a thousand feet straight upward. These crags, the door-posts of the Hartz, are two of the prize spots of the region. It is a cheery afternoon in May and you climb up a steep and winding path to the top of one, the Hexentanzplatz. What a view is this from the summit! Far below roars the swollen Bode. The cold cliffs of the opposite height look warmer in their setting of forest verdure, while to the westward winds the valley of the Bode, a tiny cañon clothed in green, and beyond, as far as the eye can reach, roll the hills and mountains up to the snowy Brocken.

Off to the eastward you will see a different picture—a great and silent plain stretching a hundred miles or more with fenceless fields of sprouting grain and, like ruddy May flowers on a furzy heather, the little red-roofed towns. Tradition calls this rock the Tanzplatz or Ballroom. The witches held their dances here—mere private affairs, it is likely, for the grand balls were all on the Brocken. The summit, a broad plateau, is now occupied by a little inn

with beer-garden dependence. Indeed, the American explorer of this undiscovered land finds his creature wants well cared for, especially in the matter of beer. There is a little beer garden down in the cleft of these Bodethal crags which occupies all the space between the foaming stream and the rocky wall; and in order to reach the shady valley beyond, where glorious views of the sunlit plain may be won, each trampler must pass through this garden. If you are wise you will pay the beer-toll thus cleverly levied and pour a libation to Gambrius while quaffing also some of the witchery of the spot.

Up above is the Rosstrappe whose beetling crags seem ready to break away and fall into the valley. Its summit reveals another picture of the plain, and on the topmost point there is a colossal hoofprint, a foot or more broad and inches deep, stamped in the rock. Rosstrappe means "horse's footstep." In the good old time a princess of the region, the beauteous Brünhilde, when chased by an unwelcome suitor vaulted the Bode Valley—it is over five hundred feet wide at the point—on her trusty steed, and the print still exists where the charger pressed his hoof for the mighty leap. Some say she jumped not from but to the Rosstrappe, a story which makes the illustrious nag wear his hoofs backward. But what matter? Brünhilde got over safely, while the suitor, Bodo, jumped to his death and bequeathed his bones and name to the valley. Still another explanation is advanced by the archæologists. They declare that the Druids had a sacrificial altar here and carved a white horse as the sign of their mysteries; whence the name. But as their horse was white and Brünhilde's hair was red the eternal fitness of things seems properly preserved and you leave learning to get away with romance if it can.

As the trampler walks up the valley he falls to musing on the beauties about him. The path squeezes between the cliffs, is carried round promontories on bridges, then, the scenery growing less rugged, winds through shady woods by the side of a little river in the hill country. And then it brings you into Thereseburg, a Hartz hamlet half hotels, tucked away in a valley slumberous and beautiful. Had you been there that evening in May you might have seen the

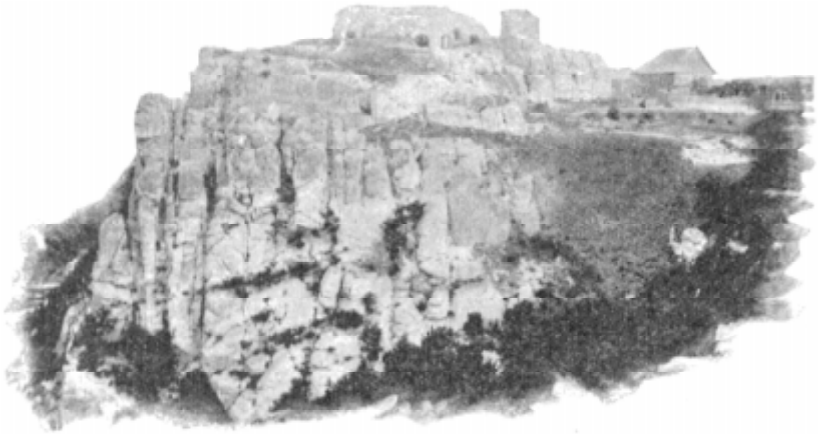
festival of the recruits. Seven young men of the neighborhood had just been chosen to serve their time in the army, and with band to the fore were marching about celebrating the end of their liberty. At each inn they ordered a halt and serenaded, getting liquid refreshment in return. Then with cheers—real English hurrahs—for the *Besitzer und seine Gemahlin* the bacchanalian march passed on. In spite of their hubbub Thereseburg fell asleep early that night, its American colony at least, and its dreams were attuned to the purling rhythm of the Bode. Imps, witches and devils are unknown in such a peaceful nook as this.

Guide books are not dog-eared in the Hartz. Thanks to the Hartz Club, the forest paths are safe and easy even for foreign tourists. The whole region has been divided into routes, each one with a number and letter. At each cross-road or short-cut the club has set up a finger-post surmounted with signs whereon one can read not only directions but distances. It is so simply yet so carefully done that the trampler may leave the highway with impunity and, following the little signs and paint-marks on the trees traverse pathless woods and save many an hour of needless windings with the carriage road. The club has also built rustic seats here and there, especially at prominent viewpoints, and the further to aid the tourist, has provided thirty information-bureaus in all parts of the mountains, reliable maps and guide books, to say nothing of its work in preserving these glorious forests from destruction.

On the northeastern edge of the mountains, three hours from Thereseburg, lies Blankenburg. Its castle, now the summer residence of the Duke of Brunswick, was once the home of Maria Theresa; and stories of the warrior Empress, after the fashion of the Hartz, are told in the same breath with those of the White Lady of Blankenburg whose apparition betokens ill to the ducal house. The town itself is no more interesting than its fellows out on the plain. Off to the eastward an outcrop of rocks, looking in the distance like a jagged rampart, has given rise to the fable that here Satan set up a bulwark against Christianity. The gigantic fortification is called to this day the Devil's Wall. The lion of Blankenburg

is Regenstein, an isolated rock two miles to the northward. Its sides are precipitous, its summit crested with a ruin. A strong castle once stood here of which remain only a few walls and chambers hollowed in the rock; for Schloss Regenstein was built in, not on, the mountain—a robber's nest beyond compare. The Count of Regenstein—Germany's Paul Clifford—has immortalized this rocky fortress, and though this wonderful knight existed but in fable, the chains with which he once was bound are among the treasures of a neighboring town. The rock has also its romance. A captured maiden, immured in one of Regenstein's rock-built dungeons, cut through the flinty rock with the aid only of her lover's ring and made her escape. But of Hartz legends

The snorers, *die Schnarcher*, are however at Schierke, the next village—great rocks which resemble the snouts of snoring humans. This is Goethe's *Gegend von Schierke und Elend* where Faust saw the witches' train and where begins his mystic interlude, "The Walpurgis Night's Dream." Near Schierke a bock may be seen tethered by the roadside—a giant fellow big enough to carry half a dozen witches. The town itself trails along a rocky valley. It is the Mecca of Faust lovers and is now disfigured by some modern hotels. Beyond Schierke the pine forests become thinner, the scenery wilder, and at every turn appear fantastic rocks and lonely hillsides pictured in Goethe's masterpiece. Here and there the triple crosses are scrawled on stable doors as



THE RUINS OF REGENSTEIN.

there is no end. Those of Thale and Regenstein are mere curtain-raisers to the mystery plays of the Brocken.

The most interesting road to the Brocken begins at Rothe Hütte, a mining village in the heart of the mountains. This is the route of Mephistopheles and Faust in Goethe's tragedy. The ascent may be made by carriage as well as on foot. Take the latter and you go through forests of scrubby pines, by desolate hamlets, up weird valleys, the way increasing in difficulties until the summit is reached. Elend, the first village, belies its name—which merely commemorates a band of Hartz Templars in days long gone. It is a pleasant place and has a claim to immortality in Goethe's fine line:

The snorers snarl at Elend, snorting peers.

talisman against the witches. As you near the summit the melting snow lies deep in the path, though it is already a fortnight after May-day, and Mephisto's question has an added meaning:

Dost thou not wish a broomstick steed's
assistance?

The sturdiest he-goat I would gladly see.

But you are still fresh on your legs and so wade onward and at last reach the broad and treeless summit.

The Brocken is a round-topped mountain in the heart of the Hartz, three thousand seven hundred feet above sea level, the feature of the landscape for leagues around and a landmark in German romance and history. It was the last pagan fortress among the German tribes and the cathedral of the last converts to Christianity. Wodan's altar once stood

on its summit, and in the Town Hall at Goslar is preserved an oath wherein Wittekind vows, in return for victory against Charlemagne, to offer up the prisoners on this holy mountain to the great god. In later times the Brocken was called Blocksberg and thought the residence of Satan. Men told large stories of orgies there presided over by the Evil One, its summit became the rendezvous of witches and spirits damned, and not until the sixteenth century was old did some foolhardy explorers visit the satanic height. A century afterward scarce one hundred and fifty annually braved its perils. Then came Goethe and Heine. In the year 1893 the visitors to the Brocken numbered thirty thousand or more.

The path from Schierke just before reaching the summit skirts two rocky masses which are the holy of holies of

the midst of a scene to delight the poet and impress the philosopher. To the south and west roll the piny mountains, waves of swaying verdure, while from their distant tops come the cuckoo's well-known call and the liquid note of the nightingale. In the foreground to the north and east are the rippling hills with red-roofed towns nestling in their broadening valleys; while out beyond is the great plain stretching to the horizon, its fields here green with early wheat, there brown from freshly turned furrows. Though the view is more extensive than that at Thale it has not the same charm. The Brocken landscape is too vast. Yet he is stolid indeed who can view it without bowing his head in contemplation. This mighty picture, with its noisy towns and rattling railways, and not a sound! It is as if Nature were hushed to harken to Nature's God.



BROCKEN HOUSE.

spook literature, the Devil's Pulpit and the Witches' Altar. Hither came the witches and evil spirits on the eve of the first of May, listened to a sermon preached by the venerable Doctor from the Pulpit, and, after a banquet, with Satan as master of ceremonies, danced about the Witches' Altar, then at the stroke of one were off astride their broomsticks or bocks, to come again another year. This was the Witches' Sabbath on Walpurgis Night, and the scene of Goethe's picture of the festival.

Clear weather is rare on the Brocken. There is, however, nothing more impressive in the Hartz than the superb panorama spread out before the lucky mortal who scales the mountain on a cloudless day. The broad summit stands high above its loftiest neighbors and in

The Brocken House occupies the summit of the mountain. It is built of stone and iron, matched and clamped into the rock itself, and can accommodate perhaps a hundred persons. Not only is it stone and iron without, but within, its floors and partitions are equally massive. It is anything but tempting to all save foot-sore travelers.

It is the third house on the spot. The first, called Cloud Cottage, was erected in 1736; the second dated from 1800, and the present building from 1860. The landlord is the Count of Stolberg-Wernigerode, though it is needless to add that he does not preside in person. Things might get on better if he did.

The House contains the Brocken Book in which one may feast for days. This book is *sui generis*. It is the

Yankee landlord's register and a catchall of Hartz literature besides. There is a disease which rages the world over, but with peculiar virulence on the Brocken, *cacoethes scribendi*; the irreverent call it the "writers' itch." Few Bracken travelers escape a twinge of it. This book, begun in 1753, is a collection of sense and nonsense without its like in all the world. Heine says: "The Palace of the Prince of Pallogonia contains no such insipidities as this book." Goethe prays the Brocken witches "to sweep the wishwash from it," and then writes in its pages:

Quis coelum posset nisi coeli munere nosse,
Et reperire Deum, nisi qui pars ipse Deorum
est?

Andersen confesses that "genius has shown itself there in many ways," adding: "I wrote in it myself." Long-winded ecstasies in German doggerel waste much good paper, though hers and there are some flashes of wit. The burden of each poet's song seems to be the weather. Here is one melancholy quatrain, written in 1882:

Wir sitzen auf dem Brocken
In dichter Nebelschicht;
Zwei Kühe sah'n wir grasen,
Doch And'res sah man nicht.

Concluded in OUTING for June.

SPRING SNIPE SHOOTING.

BY ED. W. SANDYS.



WHEN the law-makers of the province of Ontario finally passed the existing measure prohibiting spring shooting they performed a righteous task, although at the same time they destroyed one of the most enjoyable forms of sport with the gun. All honest sportsmen of Ontario recognize this, none better than the crack shots of the famous grounds contiguous to lakes St. Clair and Erie, yet several seasons of skirmishing and drumming into line were required before the needful pressure could be brought to bear upon the Legislature. Older heads than mine schemed and planned to save the northward-bound game migrants; I helped—as the "we killed the bear" story goes, and at last the thing was accomplished. Small wonder that the majority of keen gunners yielded reluctantly! Right well they appreciated the sacrifice they were called upon to make, for the passage of the no-spring-shooting bill meant the doom of snipe shooting in its most attractive shape. They were ready and willing to afford any kind of protection to duck, but the snipe was a veritable bone of contention. "What! No snipe

shooting on those leagues of sodden plain and marsh where birds swarmed, where their fathers had bagged their fifty brace per day for season after season, and where famous "Forrester" had shot historical matches versus "Dinks"? It went sorely against the grain, and had those men guessed that the remorseless hand of improvement would within a few years ruin the snipe grounds by extensive drainage, the law would never have been passed and some of the good old crowd would be shooting their few straggling snipe this blessed spring. Indeed, it is unlikely that even the most earnest advocates of the protective measure would have put their hearts so thoroughly into their work could they have dipped into the future and seen the grim dredges eating canals across the fens and leaving the erstwhile drowned lands dusty dry. However, such proved to be the fact and the only thing the protectionists accomplished was the loss of several seasons of clinking good sport without any important benefit to the snipe.

One of the chief arguments used by the enthusiasts in making converts was that the birds, if unmolested during the spring flight, would return in greatly increased numbers at early autumn and, with the progeny of the few birds which bred in the locality, furnish sport amply sufficient to repay those who held their hands during the early season. Such reasoning sounded first rate; but