

tack. Hour after hour we tacked, and seemed to get no nearer home. The afternoon wore on, the evening came, and still we tacked. The sun set gloriously, the moon came up, the sea was a deep violet, the clouds in the eastern sky about the moon shone with a pearly whiteness, the clouds in the west were gorgeous past belief, flaming across in marvellous colours even to us, the light reflected from them transfiguring our sails, our men, our whole boat into a spirit ship of an unearthly radiance, bound for Elysium, manned by immortal gods.

Look now how Colour, the Soul's bridegroom, makes  
The house of Heaven splendid for the bride. . . .

I quoted awestruck, watching this vast plain of light with clasped hands and rapt spirit.

It was a solemn and magnificent close to my journey.

## THE ELEVENTH DAY

FROM WIEK HOME

THE traveller in whose interests I began this book and who has so frequently been forgotten during the writing of it, might very well protest here that I have not yet been all round Rügen, and should not, therefore, talk of closes to my journey. But nothing that the traveller can say will keep me from going home in this chapter. I did go home on the morning of the eleventh day, driving from Wiek to Bergen, and taking the train from there; and the red line on the map will show that, except for one dull corner in the south-east, I had practically carried out my original plan and really had driven all round the island.

Reaching the inn at Wiek at ten o'clock on the Sunday night I went straight and very softly to bed; and leaving the inn at Wiek at eight o'clock on the Monday morning I might have got away without ever seeing Mrs. Harvey-Browne again if the remembrance of Brody's unvarying kindness had not stirred me to send Gertrud up with a farewell message.



Mrs. Harvey-Browne, having heard all about my day on the *Bertha* from the landlady, and how I had come back in the unimpeachability of singleness, the Professor safely handed over to his wife, forgave the chin-chucking, forgave the secret setting out, and hurried on to the landing in a wrapper, warmth in her heart and honey on her lips.

'What, you are leaving us, dear Frau X.?' she called over the baluster. 'So early? So suddenly? I can't come down to you — do come up here. *Why* didn't you tell me you were going to-day?' she continued when I had come up, holding my hand in both hers, speaking with emphatic cordiality, an altogether melted and mellifluous bishop's wife.

'I hadn't quite decided. I fear I must go home to-day. They want me badly.'

'That I can *quite* understand — of course they want their little ray of sunshine,' she cried, growing more and more mellifluous. 'Now tell me,' she went on, stroking the hand she held, 'when are you coming to see us all at Babbacombe?'

Babbacombe! Heavens. When indeed? Never, never, never, shrieked my soul. 'Oh thanks,' murmured my lips, 'how kind you are. But — do you think the bishop would like me?'

'The bishop? He would more than like you, dear Frau X. — he would positively glory in you.'

'Glory in me?' I faintly gasped; and a gaudy vision of the bishop glorying, that bishop of whom I had been taught to think as steeped in chronic

sorrow, swam before my dazzled eyes. 'How kind you are. But I'm afraid you are too kind. I'm afraid he would soon see there wasn't anything to make him glory and much to make him grieve.'

'Well, well, we mustn't be so modest. Of course the bishop knows we are all human, and so must have our little faults. But I can assure you he would be *delighted* to make your acquaintance. He is a most large-minded man. Now *promise*.'

I murmured confused thanks and tried to draw my hand away, but it was held tight. 'I shall miss the midday train at Bergen if I don't go at once,' I appealed — 'I really must go.'

'You long to be with all your dear ones again, I am sure.'

'If I don't catch this train I shall not get home to-night. I really *must* go.'

'Ah, home. How charming your home must be. One hears so much about the charming German home-life, but unfortunately just travelling through the country one gets no chance of a peep into it.'

'Yes, I have felt that myself in other countries. Good-bye — I absolutely must *run*. Good-bye!' And, tearing my hand away with the energy of panic I got down the ladder as quickly as I could without actually sliding, for I knew that in another moment the bishop's wife would have invited herself — oh, it did not bear thinking of.

'And the Nieberleins?' she called over the baluster, suddenly remembering them.



'They're on an island. Quite inaccessible in this wind. A mere desert—only sea-birds—and one is sick getting to it. Good-bye!'

'But do they not return here?' she called still louder, for I was through the door now, and out on the path.

'No, no—Stralsund, Berlin, Bonn—good-bye!'

The landlord and his wife were waiting outside, the landlady with a great bunch of roses and yet another basket of cakes. Brosy was there too, and helped me into the carriage. 'I'm frightfully sorry you are going,' he said.

'So am I. But one must ultimately go. Observe the eternal truth lurking in that sentence. If ever you are wandering about Germany alone, do come and see us.'

'I should love to.'

And thus with mutual amenities Brosy and I parted.

So ended my journey round Rügen, for there is nothing to be recorded of that last drive to the railway station at Bergen except that it was flat, and we saw the Jagdschloss in the distance. At the station I bade farewell to the carriage in which I had sometimes suffered and often been happy, for August stayed that night in Bergen, and brought the horses home next day; and presently the train appeared and swept up Gertrud and myself, and Rügen knew us no more.

But before I part from the traveller, who ought by this time to be very tired, I will present him with the following condensed experiences:—

The nicest bathing was at Lauterbach.

The best inn was at Wiek.

I was happiest at Lauterbach and Wiek.

I was most wretched at Göhren.

The cheapest place was Thiessow.

The dearest place was Stubbenkammer.

The most beautiful place was Hiddensee.

And perhaps he may like to know, too, though it really is no business of his, what became of the Nieberleins. I am sorry to say that I had letters from them both of a nature that positively prohibits publication; and a mutual acquaintance told me that Charlotte had applied for a judicial separation.

When I heard it I was thunderstruck.

THE END



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