

For the Carolina Era.
European Correspondence.
MR. EDITOR:—The old proverb, "prostitution is the destroyer of time," is my only excuse for not writing more frequently. Indeed, it seems the less one has to do, the less he is inclined to do it. Here I am, an "innocent abroad," endeavoring to learn, from general observation, the leading characteristics of this great people. There is scarcely any nation in the world which has excited so much curiosity and admiration among us of late as the Germans; there is none so deserving of our intimate knowledge. They are fast becoming the people of America. Thousands land upon our shores annually. The habits of their mother country are to a great extent retained in this new adoption. Then it is not only desirable but necessary that we should know something of the manners and customs of the Germans at home. In a former letter I spoke of them generally; in this I purpose to particularize.
If it be true that there can be no real friendship between people who have never eaten and drunk together, the laws and customs of meals are of great importance. In nothing is a man so severely judged as in his behavior at meals and in his mode of conducting them in his own house and in those matters the German has his peculiarities.
The family meet in the dining room at, say, eight o'clock, for what may be called a very liberal "breakfast." The *Meine Frau*, sits at the table with her china and steaming coffee, and the coffee pot before her gives to each person a small cup of tea or coffee, at choice; and this, with a single sandwich, must content the keener appetite till midday. All is over in a very few minutes, and I can assure you that a terrible discontent, on the first finding of fault for one who has been accustomed to a hearty breakfast—such as a juicy steak or ham and eggs. But much may be said in favor of this light meal, for when reconciled to it by use, body and mind are in a better condition for hard work than in the more important hours of the day, than when overburdened by a heavy breakfast.
After this slender meal the gentlemen light up cigars and go to business. The next family meeting is generally at twelve for lunch. *Meine Frau*, her china and kettles, are there as before, but she has her plentiful supply of bread and butter, and perhaps wines are also on the table. The meal scarcely differs from the earlier one, except that there is a greater quantity eaten. Then comes the inevitable cigar and separation.
These little snatches, merely whets to the appetite—lead up according to the principles of DeQuincy to dinner, the great preponderant meal. During one half of the day it is impossible to be unconscious that you have not dined, and during the other half you are conscious that you have not dined. The facts—appetite and repletion. Now to describe the dinner: Supposed the guests seated; there is one preliminary which seems odd to us who are accustomed to hearing the grace before meat, the minister of the table is the head of the family. I refer to the manner of knocking together each other wine glasses and at the same time saying "prast." Wine is always drunk for dinner. You must hold your glass by the small part in order to make it gingle loudly. Singular as it may appear it is one who will never be departed from without one's making himself the subject of unpleasant remarks. On with the dinner. Of course the first dish is soup—*ox-tail, a la jardiniere*, &c. Fish, flesh and occasionally fowl are the staples. Four or five courses of vegetables, and these are invariably two courses of solid meat, and the changes are rung upon beef, ham and mutton. In the province of Pomerania, they eat geese, which are looked upon as a great luxury. The amenities of the table and its customs have slight resemblance to the *de rosière* and other dishes are carved by the hostess into slices upon a plate which is passed from guest to guest who help themselves according to fancy. One little custom prevails in helping a neighbor to wine—you must be careful to pour a few drops into your own glass. Whether this is simply to give yourself the benefit of any particles of cork or dust upon the top, or be actually the remains of the ancient custom of tasting to deny the presence of poison in the cups, the thing is always done with each bottle and every glass with due care. The Germans have solved the great eating-with-the-knife question in a very effectual manner, by doing away with the temptation. The diner in Germany is expected to cut up his eatables all at once upon his plate when he deposits his knife upon a holder by the side of the plate. He is not to go to the fork and knife held in the right hand. Immediately after dinner the cigar box is taken round, and no lady dreams of objecting, nor is even consent asked. After a little time tea is taken, when the gentlemen lounge off to business. The usual amusement and occupation of an evening at home in a family in easy circumstances, which is the sort of family whose daily life I am endeavoring to describe, are very nearly the same in all parts of the world and these people are no exception.
All whose circumstances permit, have beautiful little cottages in the country, to which they resort during the summer months, but these country houses may be regarded only as retreats for mothers, grown-up daughters and the younger children. The elder children go to school, the young men are at the paternal farms, go back wards and forwards to their country house and place of business. So that except on Sunday's ladies in the country generally have the greater part of the time to themselves. Their mornings are devoted to household matters, after noons to driving, and evenings to walking. The gentlemen ride on horseback very little, the only resource left them for amusement is the billiard room. One means of passing time never fails—tobacco. The German with his long pipe is a thing of the past, but he would be strange to see one at a town, and of the day to make excursions out of town for the day—which together with dinner parties and flirting help to render the day very agreeable but rather unsubsantial.
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customary manner, and the lover makes his offer without any intermediary assistance. Consent of parents, however, is necessary. When that has been obtained, and all other arrangements made, the young couple have to go in company, to make calls upon his and her friends. The proverbial slip 'twixt cup and lip is not unknown here, however, but this system of making calls, and engagement, is rather upon slight grounds, and it would be rather embarrassing to be compelled to call upon people a second time and introduce sweethearts. It is a part of the lovers' duties late as the Germans; there is none so deserving of our intimate knowledge. They are fast becoming the people of America. Thousands land upon our shores annually. The habits of their mother country are to a great extent retained in this new adoption. Then it is not only desirable but necessary that we should know something of the manners and customs of the Germans at home. In a former letter I spoke of them generally; in this I purpose to particularize.
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