

The tortuous limestone roads, now dipping now rising, the abutting fields parcelled out into long, narrow, stringy strips, planted with hardy grain or hardier flax, now and then broken by patches of red-headed poppies and luxuriously growing hemp have not succeeded in attracting many strangers. The villages and little towns hanging sleepily on mountain slope or nestled in valley nook seemingly have an abiding charm only for him, who, when a child, trudged his sled up to the one to have a magnificent slide down to the other; yes, clear down to the old *Rathaus*.

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The collection of large farm houses—large, for the *Bauer* shelters his stock and his agricultural products under the same roof that shelters him—stands closely crowded together, facing the winding streets. The latter usually make for some neighboring hamlet or settlement. The houses, half wood, half stone, usually graced on the outside with scriptural texts or image of saint, perhaps even of the trinity, and covered with an ample projecting red-tile roof, are ranged longitudinally along the highway. In winter there is the merry clatter of the flail from many a threshing floor. In summer the tourist is almost overcome by the deathlike stillness brooding over this Sleepy Hollow. Man, woman and children, except those in the kindergarten, are then out in the fields bearing the heat and the burdens of the day. Even the artisan, who at other seasons stands at forge or work bench, at turning lay or weaver's loom has been pressed into service in the *Kornesch*.<sup>\*</sup> Their wives and daughters, nimbly though they wield the sickle, are unable to cope with the

pressing work. The early matin bell (*Betzzeit*) had found many a group of harvesters at their post, a mile or two from the village. Toward evening heavily loaded wagons, decked with hemlock boughs, and drawn by large oxen, bring home the day's labor. And no wonder the yield is bountiful: for the village priest has headed the solemn procession and has borne the blessed sacrament about the growing fields to ward off hail, flood and tempest. The quarrel between neighbor and neighbor has been settled, the choir trained to altar-service lent their voices and the village maidens carried consecrated tapers; hence the plentiful harvest.

Much land is still held in common. That is, there is a system of communal land-holding by which every member of a commune or parish has the usufruct of a certain portion of the public domain. These shares are apportioned periodically and by lot, the poorer and the well-to-do classes participating equally. Some pasture, some meadow and, usually, enough firewood being included in the "*Buergerrecht*," the problem of existence is materially lightened. The Black Forest people thus continue the system of joint ownership of land, which they inherited from their ancestors, the Alemanni or rather the Suevi.

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Not only in their economical and social arrangements do these people conserve the old and protest against the new, but in their apparel and speech the same tendencies are manifest. The language of to-day is practically that of the time of Walter von der Vogelweide or the Niebelungenbards. This, despite the fact that in school, church and courts of justice literary German is used. This conservatism is striking when it is remembered that the difference between the two idioms—the Middle High German and the modern literary German—is as great or greater, than between the English of Chaucer and Tennyson. Occasionally an unlucky innovator ventures to employ the High German, but the sturdy mountaineers deprecate

\*In this region, as indeed in many other parts of Germany, the old custom of compulsory rotation of crops still obtains. By this arrangement the lands lying around and belonging to the villages, are divided into three approximately equal parts, each called *Esch*. Thus there is the *Korn-Esch*, where, for the season, grain or cereals are grown. The *Brach-Esch* or fallow lands; the *Kartoffel-Esch*, in which vegetable and other small farming is carried on. The following season the fallows are cultivated and another third of the land is allowed to recuperate.