

High Spots in Europe---An Omaha Man's Observations Ostende the Place to See and Study the Sylphlike Water Nymph



Bath Hour at Ostend

By FRANK L. HALLER.

THE next time you go from England to the continent, take the Dover boat to Ostende instead of Calais. The journey across the channel by this route will take two hours instead of one. If the sea is rough you will be dead to the world anyway—flat on your back in the cabin—and one hour can't make you any sicker. If the sea is fine two hours will pass quickly enough in watching the ships of all nations that make this channel the busiest stretch of water over here. Ostende is the Atlantic City of northern Europe and largely patronized by the English for week-end holidays. It has a snug harbor filled with a picturesque fleet of fishing boats, auto launches and racing craft; a mile of sea front hotels built of stone and brick four to six stories in height, attractive in design and festive with flags. Long rows of Normandy poplars and distant village church towers give a pleasing introduction to the mainland. The sea wall and broad 100-foot wide stone walk over a mile long must have cost \$1,000,000 or more. It has the famous board walk of Atlantic City beat to a frazzle. On Sundays especially the promenade is a most brilliant sight. Not only the fashion of England and of France but holiday excursions of rural and village people from nearby towns add the quaint peasant costumes to the scene.

The Daily Parade and What Follows

Each visiting delegation marches up and down the broad sea walk with its military band and waving banners. After the parade they make a break for the beach. On the sandy shore a tented army of pleasure seekers in gayly striped tents are making the lives of the countless children one long summer of delight and bring the tint of returning health to hundreds of convalescents just out of hospital and sick room. Hooded wicker chairs, protecting from the sun and wind, and folding camp chairs galore give a home look to camp life. Bathing vans, from the plain wooden fourth class springless boxes on wheels to gayly painted cushioned-sprung stained glass bathing carriages de luxe, stand like parked artillery, row after row, awaiting the bather. There is no large single bathing pavilion as with us, with its hundred of cubbyhole dressing rooms. In spite of the fact that it is August and an overcoat felt comfortable, the surf was full of bathers. It is irresistible; you get into line with the rest and buy a 20-cent perforated bathing ticket, take one coupon and go to the "costumer" and get a zebra-striped armless and legless bathing suit and one towel. Then for the other coupon you claim a fourth class bathing van. The dressing room is 4x5, with two sliding wooden windows, a cheap looking glass and a wooden bench fastened to one side of the room and three nails to hang your clothes on. You pull a wooden lever up and down that projects through the eaves and has a red wooden ball on the outside end which becomes a signal to the man with the great Norman horse to come and pull your house into the surf. He taps on your window and holds out his hat for a fee, after which your ark begins to move, dragging the heavy attached sea steps along with it. After casting off the last remnant of modesty you brought with you from the United States at the same time with your clothes, you put on your abbreviated Sing Sing suit and start down the steps. The minute your feet touch the water you for the first time in Europe find all the ice water you want. You swallow your heart four times rapidly in succession and find after the first plunge there is nothing in the world so invigorating as this Ostende salt water. When through with your bath you signal as before and the great horse comes wading into the sea up to his breast and pulls your car back on the beach, where as you descend you find the bath woman, who gathers up your wet bathing suit and towel, standing with that tip expecting smile that won't come off. What takes your breath away quicker than the ice cold water is to see a pretty girl come tripping out of a bathing van in one of these skintight armless and legless Jerseys, without stockings or bathing shoes, but with the cutest chic little bathing cap on her head, go into deep water just once to satisfy herself that her wet jersey will stick to her like a postage stamp, and then join her companions of both sexes and all ages attired as she is and sport in the shallow water to the evident delight of an admiring audience armed with binoculars and kodaks.

Everybody Stockingless

But more striking yet to our modest and bashful American eyes is the universal habit of both sexes and all ages taking off their shoes and



Frank L. Haller Sends The Bee Another Fascinating Travel Letter

stockings and seeing how near the waist line they can wade in. I shall never forget one slim set middleaged spinster dressed all in black, wearing a large black hat, her shoes with her stockings stuffed into them tied by the shoestrings hanging about her neck, her skirts gathered high up with both her hands, standing thus calmly wading between two waves, utterly oblivious of an exposure of shirring white beanpole anatomy, showing not only above her ankles but above her knees as well. Ostende is no place for a minister's son. The best of good nature prevails and audible comments are freely made. The whole beach roared when two extremely fat country women wearing straw sunbonnets for bathing caps waddled ponderously out to sea, carrying their billowing adipose on supports whose factor of safety seemed ridiculously overestimated. But it is the children, after all, who have the best time. With little nets they catch the small sea snails brought in with the waves and

Idling the time away

which are eaten raw. They work like beavers with hands and spades, making sand dams to imprison some adventuresome wave that has come too far inland and then float their little boats. They build towers of sand on which they stand while the in-rolling waters make islands for them. They dig wells in the wet sand and build their little castles in Spain. The Punch and Judy shows and vendors of toys and kites fill their days with occupation in the open air.

No Danger Whatever of Being Drowned

You are not going to be permitted to drown at Ostende. Besides the life lines and life-saving crews in boats, expert swimmers are appointed as watchmen to parade the beach. Whenever an adventuresome bather goes beyond the danger line the watchman blows his horn, the lifeboats start shoreward and the offender is compelled to retreat into safe waters.



Posing for a Plunge



On the Beach

Omaha Public Library and Museum

TAKEN by themselves, the queer objects in the Philippine collection in the public library museum may not mean much more than other scattered curiosities from other parts of the world. But when you try to find out something about the place where these articles are common, and the people who use them, they acquire a new interest. That charcoal stove, which looks like a broken flower pot with a clay kettle over it, does not seem as interesting as a gas range or a blue-flame oil stove. But when you learn that all the cooking in all the native homes in the Philippines is done on just such stoves or their variations, then it becomes a little more important in your eyes. In "The Unofficial Letters of an Official's Wife," Edith Moses says: "The stove for which I vainly looked, and from whence came the appetizing odors that filled the air, was nowhere to be seen, but on one side of the room on a bamboo table was ranged a number of terra cotta charcoal stoves: over each stood an earthenware oil, or kettle; in this primitive manner an elaborate dinner was being prepared." It sounds quite easy, though, until you read the account given by William B. Freer in his "Philippine Experience of an American Teacher."

IN THE PHILIPPINES
each one hot at the required moment. But woe to the American who, in the absence of his cook, attempts to prepare thereon a simple meal. Likely the fire does not burn; stooping over the stove, he places to his lips a bamboo tube and utilizes his lungs as a bellows until he blows the ashes into the food. The fire becomes too hot, the pot boils over and he burns his fingers trying to lift the lid and remove some of the burning fat. When, finally, by the exercise of great patience and self-control he finishes the cooking process, he finds that he has for his repast a dish of food well flavored with smoke and burned on the bottom, which he eats in solitude, recalling meanwhile the family table at home in "God's country."
The houses where such primitive methods are still practiced are, of course, somewhat peculiar. Some are of hardwood throughout, elaborately furnished—witness the beautifully inlaid table in the same case with the charcoal stove. And in the same city perhaps with these are "nipa huts" of the palm leaves and rough implements of different kinds. Civilization seems to be curiously backward in some ways; well advanced in some others. The rice mill in this same case suggests the slow method of preparing flour used for bread in most of the country districts in the Philippines.

This is why, as Mr. Freer says, all American teachers, except those in the larger cities, eat boiled rice in place of bread, often three times a day, as the natives do. Certainly the rough stone mill, operated by hand, does not give the impression that bread would be easily or quickly prepared from the new product.
Another case shows various Philippine articles purchased at the time of the Transmississippi exposition: A wooden money box, neatly carved; measures made of the hollow sections of bamboo; a dipper of a hard cocconut shell; a bamboo pillow; a rice broom which resembles in shape the fans used by the ancient Egyptians.
All that is needed is to furnish the background for these and they become more than scattered curios; they are the product of a poetical, unpractical people, accustomed to doing things by rote, and lacking accuracy. Add to this a climate which does not demand even as much of the people as the North American climate did of the Indians here, and you are surprised at the progress made by the native Filipino.
If you would know more about the islands and the people, read, in addition to the two books mentioned, Worcester's "Philippine Islands and Their People" and Le Roy's "Philippine Life in Town and Country." These books are all obtainable at the library.

bling rooms. In Ostende I first saw the government telephone poles. They are usually located in an attractive little park, a block or two apart, built of open ironwork towering fifty feet, with an open grill work cylinder on top from which the telephone wires run down to houses and hotels, doing away with unsightly poles in streets and alleys.
Half an hour from Ostende you come to that most charming of old towns, Bruges, once a seaport, the chief commercial city in medieval Europe, now three miles from the sea. Still, with its lovely canals, a northern Venice, it draws from all over the world the artist to paint its quaint old houses, lovers of the fine arts to wonder at and admire its painted shrines and old pictures, architects to study Longfellow's belfry of Bruges, and wearied tourists to rest a day or two in the quiet of this old, old town.

International Exposition at Ghent

Another half hour and you come to Ghent, which is to have an international exposition of botany and agriculture in 1913. The exposition buildings are already partly constructed. One will be the longest greenhouse ever built, for Ghent is the City of Flowers, having more hothouses than any city in the world. This is the birthplace of John of Gaunt and the castle of the counts of Flanders, nearly 800 years old, still stands complete, a perfect specimen of medieval fortress. Splendid old churches full of historic tombs and famous paintings altogether will make the exposition well worth visiting next year.

After Ghent comes Brussels, Paris and continental Europe, with its endless and tasteless table d'hotes eternally the same. There is one article of food used everywhere abroad, however, that we might well adopt, and that is green nuts of all kinds—hazelnuts, almonds and English walnuts. While green they do not contain so much oil, are easily digested, extremely palatable when once you appreciate them and as refreshing as a salad.