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Baden im Spiegel seiner Gäste

Fynes Moryson

Fynes Moryson wurde 1566 als Sohn eines schottischen Abgeordneten geboren, studierte und wurde später Fellow in Cambridge und Master of Arts in Oxford. Von 1591 bis 1595 bereiste er den europäischen Kontinent, von Deutschland und «Sweitzerland» bis Polen und zur Türkei. Nach einer kurzen Pause begab er sich neuerdings auf Reisen, diesmal nach Palästina. 1597 kehrte er nach London zurück und wurde Sekretär des stellvertretenden Gouverneurs von Irland, Charles Blount, wo er bis 1606 blieb.

Von 1606 bis 1609 schrieb er eine Geschichte der zwölf Länder, die er besucht hatte, und von 1609 bis 1617 sein Reisetagebuch, zunächst in lateinischer Sprache, aber gedruckt wurde sein «Itinerary» 1617 in vier umfangreichen Bänden auf englisch, von ihm selbst übersetzt, unter dem Titel «An Itinerary ... containing his ten yeeres travel through the twelve dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland and Ireland». Dem Brauch der Zeit folgend widmete er sein Werk einem hohen Herrn, nämlich dem Earl of Pembroke, von dem manche glauben, er und nicht der Earl of Southampton sei der Gönner Shakespeares gewesen. – Wie aus den nachfolgenden Ausführungen über Baden hervorgeht, war Fynes Moryson ein gewissenhafter Reisender und ein aufmerksamer Beobachter. Zwei Jahre lang hatte er sich auf seine Entdeckungsfahrten vorbereitet. Fynes Moryson starb am 12. Februar 1630.

I rode three miles to Baden in three houres, and so hired my Horse as besides the price of six or seven batzen the day, I paid as much for the daies in which he returned, and also paid the hire and charges of one to bring him backe. Most part of our way was in the territory of Zurech, through hils of corne and vines, and a plaine of inclosed pastures. Entering the City we passed the brooke Limachus by a bridge: the Suburbs are built upon the ascent of a Mountaine, and the City on the top of it, where there is a Castle upon a Rocke, of old very strong, but now ruinated: on the North side descending into a valley by the brooke on the right hand, or upon the East side, within a musket shot lie the Baths, which are famous for medicine, and are in number thirty, seated on each side the Brooke, which divideth them into Bethora the great and the little. In the great, divers Bathes are contained under one

roofo of a faire house, and without the gate are two common to the poore. These waters are so strong of brimstone, as the very smoake warmeth them that come neere, and the waters burne those that touch them. Of these one is called the Marques Bath, and is so hot, as it will scald off the haire of a Hogge: many having no disease but that of love, howsoever they faine sicknesse of body, come hither for remedy, and many times find it. Weomen come hither as richly attired as if they came to a marriage: for Men, Weomen, Monkes, and Nunnes, sit all together in the same water, parted with boords, but so as they may mutually speake and touch, and it is a rule here to shun all sadnes, neither is any ielousie admitted for a naked touch. The waters are so cleere as a penny may be seene in the bottome, and because melancholy must be avoided, they recreate themselves with many sports, while they sit in the water; namely at cards, and with casting up and catching little stones, to which purpose they have a little table swimming upon the water, upon which sometimes they doe likewise eat. These Bathes are very good for Weomen that are barren. They are also good for a cold braine, and a stomacke charged with rhume; but are hurtfull for hot and dry complexions, and in that respect they are held better for Weomen then Men. The Innes were wont to pay tribute to the three Cantons, of Baden, Brucke, and Bazell; but now Baden alone makes great profit of them, by the great concourse of sickely persons, and the Parliaments of the Cantons commonly held there. I paid for my diet six Batzen a meale.

From hence I hired a Horse at the same rate as before, and passing through woody Mountaines, came in three houres riding to the City Brucke.

James Fenimore Cooper

James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) ist jedermann bekannt als der Autor der «Lederstrumpferzählungen», durch die er berühmt geworden ist. Diese waren keineswegs für Kinder bestimmt; sie wurden seinerzeit in erster Linie von Erwachsenen gelesen – Franz Schubert verlangte sie noch auf dem Totenbett – und beeinflussten auch europäische Dichter, unter anderen Adalbert Stifter, dessen «Hochwald» deutliche Anklänge an die Lederstrumpf-Erzählungen erkennen läßt.

Cooper schrieb aber noch zahlreiche andere Werke, die für die amerikanische Literatur wichtig sind, so daß ihn die Britische Enzyklopädie wie folgt charakterisiert: «Cooper's place in literary history is secure on two counts – as the first U. S. professional man of letters, and as a literary inovator. Both the sea romance and the frontier adventure story of flight and pursuit are kinds of fiction which he invented. He is one of a very few American authors

who have literally a world audience from his own day to the present.» Von 1826 bis 1833 bereiste er Europa, worüber er einen Reisebericht schrieb. Die Stelle über Baden wurde den 1836 in Paris im Verlag «Baudrys European Library» erschienenen «Excursions in Switzerland» entnommen.

We crossed the Reuss, and, inclining eastward, left the plain of the Aar, and entered the valley of the Limmat, which, just at this point, is dwindled into a narrow defile. After penetrating a short distance, we reached Baden; not the Baden of which you have heard, but a little town of the same name. The word means baths. Thus the Grand-duke of Baden is the Grand-duke of Baths, and his town, Baden-Baden, as it is called to distinguish it from this Baden, is the «Baths of Baths».

Baden was also a Roman station, and has some Roman remains. It is still walled; and the ruins of a castle, which are nearly as large as the place itself, cover a rocky eminence that overlooks it in a way to excite admiration. It has its local legends as well as all of them, and we mounted the height to examine it, thinking ourselves well rewarded for the trouble. It had been a citadel, however, rather than a baronial hold. The Congress which made the peace of 1714, or that which succeeded the long war of the Spanish succession, was held at Baden. It met in the town hall, a room of some size; and we were shown the window at which Prince Eugene proclaimed the result of its labours. The steeple of the church was a queer-looking object, covered with tiles of five different colours. This peculiarity reminded us of our rainbow capital, where the red of the bricks, the green of the blinds, the black of the iron, and the white of the marble, assembled within twenty-five feet by forty, leave nothing more to be desired.

The baths of this town were used by the Romans, and are still frequented by the people of the country. The place itself contains less than two hundred buildings, squeezed into a narrow defile, that is still more straitened by the Limmat, which glances under the windows of the houses.

We now took a northern direction again, crossing the low mountains which lie between the Limmat and the Rhine.

Monk Gibbon

Monk (William) Gibbon wurde am 15. Dezember 1896 in Dublin geboren. Er besuchte das St. Columba College in Rathfarnham und das Keble College in Oxford, wo er zum Dr. phil. promovierte. Im Ersten Weltkrieg wurde er verwundet und als invalid entlassen. Er hielt sich hierauf längere Zeit zur Weiterbildung in der Schweiz auf. Er erhielt für sein poetisches

und schriftstellerisches Werk mehrere Auszeichnungen und die Mitgliedschaft mehrerer literarischer und akademischer Vereinigungen. Sein Werk umfaßt Gedichte, Erzählungen, Selbstbiographie, Biographien, Literatur-, Ballet- und Filmkritiken und Reiseberichte. Er lebt zur Zeit in Dublin.

Im Jahre 1950 veröffentlichte er einen Reisebericht über die Schweiz unter dem Titel «Swiss Enchantment» (Evans Brothers Ltd., London 1950), woraus wir den Abschnitt über Baden abdrucken.

Baden lies about two-thirds of the way along the road from Basle to Zürich. I found it as pleasant a spot as one could wish to visit, and my only regret was that I had not more time to stay there. Built on the wooded slopes of a defile of the Limmat the town has a singular charm and graciousness, and it is no wonder that it is so popular with the Swiss themselves as well as with foreigners. There was an Helvetian settlement here, and the use of the thermal springs was already known as early as 300 B. C. From 58 B. C. to A. D. 375 the place was a Roman Spa with a large military hospital. The warm saline and sulphur waters rise from a very great depth and with a temperature of nearly 118 degrees Fahrenheit. There are twenty-four springs in all, three or four of them in mid-river where of course they are useless to the community, but from seventeen of them the water is bottled as well as being used for bath treatment and inhalation. You can stroll into the Stadthof and fill yourself a glass from the thermal fountain and drink it gazing across the Limmat at the vineyards rising steeply up the hill from which comes the famous Goldwandler, or wine of the Goldwall. Baden itself, though it seems at the foot of the hills, is like the rest of the Swiss plain more than a thousand feet above sea level. All around it are delightful wooded peaks and pleasant rolling hilltops which invite even the most mildly energetic pedestrian.

I walked through streets wet from the last shower of rain to the Limmathof, the hotel at which I was to stay. Its great slatted shutters and small iron balconies overlooking the river, its gracious rooms, its rose-coloured curtains and its gold overmantles, all carried me back to the eighteenth century. That evening after dinner, hearing that there was a musical play and ballet at the little theatre in the Kurpark Gardens nearby, I borrowed a large umbrella and sallied forth again. I was prepared for disappointment. Instead I had a fascinating evening. I found the small timbered theatre hidden like a Petit Trianon amid the dripping trees. It was packed by a soberly-dressed audience whose general demeanour seemed in keeping with the dark panelled interior of the theatre; not a fashionable audience but a cultured, homely, good-

natured one, quiet, but capable of hearty laughter, who made room for my chair at the end of the gangway in the front row of the balcony with every appearance of friendliness. The operetta was «Der Vogelhandler», with music by Zeller, and when the curtain rose on eighteenth century brocades and wigs and laces, this seemed wholly appropriate, and I felt that it would not have been in the least surprising had one of my neighbours nudged me to point out that talented individual, young Dr. Goethe, seated below us in the stalls. When Der Vogelhandler – The Bird Catcher – was put on in London a few years ago it was a complete failure, probably through mis-casting, or because much of its humour is wholly verbal and did not take kindly to the new setting. But though I can speak no German myself I found the situations and by-play extremely amusing, the comic Baron excellent, the charming little post-girl a joy to watch, and the comedy miming so good that one was still spellbound by it even when one had lost the thread of the plot. When the moment for the ballet arrived we were given some really excellent country dancing and acrobatics by two young men and a girl. Watching this swiftly-moving and clever parody of bumpkin animation, it seemed to me that the girl, with her two small-eared bows tied tightly above her short twisted pigtails, was familiar to me, but I racked my brains in vain to know how. I had no programme but going out I obtained one and, studying it next morning, I read the name Ulla Soederbaum, a Swedish dancer who was with Jooss's company till it was disbanded, and whom I had seen in Dublin in many of his ballets. I went back to the theatre next morning and found some of the players from the Stadt-theater of St. Gall – who had been playing in the Kurtheater in Baden the whole summer and were just coming to the end of their season there, conning their parts for Hamlet on wooden benches under the trees at the back of the theatre. It might have been Weimar in the time of Goethe, and a red-faced elderly man, the typical comic-relief actor of all time, rose from his bench and directed me how to get in touch with my ballerina. Ulla came to lunch with me and Dr. Münzel, and we talked of Kurt Jooss, with whom I had been lunching in London not so many months before, and who has given our age probably its most moving stage spectacle – «The Green Table», whose tragic implications must be unforgettable, unforgotten, to all who have ever seen it.

Baden has a Kursaal as well as a Kurtheater and there you can dance and listen to music from an excellent orchestra which provides two or even three concerts daily. There is a huge outdoor swimming pool on the outskirts of the town and a riding school with horses for riders of all degrees of proficiency. And, even if you are not rheumatic, you should do as I did and

take at least one mineral bath for the sake of the experience. Emerging into the hotel corridor you make your way to the lift which plunges you swiftly into the bowels of the earth and delivers you safely to the bath attendant. For twenty minutes, for an apprentice, or for half an hour when you have become acclimatised, you can watch the sands run through a glass above your head, as you while away the time in aquatic dalliance, in a tiled sunken pool about seven feet square and four feet deep, into which the warm mineral waters run continuously from the mouth of a large wooden bung. You can study the foreshortening of your fingers and toes under water, you can prop your head on a convenient ledge and almost float, so buoyant is the water; you can bunch your knees up and spin slowly round; you can do everything short of actual swimming. And at the end of twenty minutes you are – as was prophesied – beautifully relaxed, slightly lethargic and quite glad to return to bed, press your head languidly against the comfortable pillow and stretch your limbs, while you press the electric bell for the waiter to appear with coffee, rolls and a dish of black cherry jam. By the time you have dealt adequately with these you will be ready for the road once more. Visitors will enjoy the old wooden bridge, the bailiff's castle at one end of it, which is now used as a museum, and the fine hall of the Diet in the Rathaus. After being a Hapsburg stronghold in the Middle Ages, Baden was captured by the Confederate forces in 1415, and became the usual meeting place of the Diet, and practically the Swiss capital, from 1426 to 1712. Montaigne stayed here in 1580. He liked the baths but he was a little less complimentary to Baden's publicity service of that date. «We were five days in Baden and made every possible enquiry, and yet did not hear a word of what we ourselves saw the moment we left the town; a stone about the height of a man, abutting the highway and bearing a Latin inscription. I could decipher nothing of it, except that it was dedicated to the Emperors Nerva and Trajan.» He was a shrewd observer, as his comments on Swiss women prove. He describes them as «generally tall and handsome with fair complexions... the ordinary dress of the women appeared to me as neat and becoming as that of our own – even the head-dress, which consists of a bonnet turned up before and behind, and decorated with tufts of silk or fur-edging. The hair hangs down the back in large plaits. If you take off their bonnet in sport, they are not angry... the mode of salutations to the women-folk is to kiss your hand to them, and offer to touch theirs. Bows and raising of the hat evoke no response.»

Uli Münzel