

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1936)
Heft: 739

Artikel: A yorkshirewoman in Switzerland a hundred years ago [to be continued]
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686769>

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A Yorkshirewoman in Switzerland a Hundred Years Ago.

By Mollie Green.



SHIBDEN HALL from the grounds.



SHIBDEN HALL. The 15th century home of Anne Lister.

A hundred years ago there lived in an old timbered house in Yorkshire, (Shibden Hall, Halifax), a woman of outstanding character. In those days, when journeys were made with difficulty, by means of stage-coaches which travelled at ten miles an hour, it was not usual for women to travel a great deal; but this intrepid Yorkshirewoman, (Miss Anne Lister), not only posted through her own country, but also through Belgium, France, Switzerland, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Russia. Her letters, and those of her family for over three hundred years back, have been carefully preserved at Shibden Hall and those relating to her tour in Switzerland are particularly interesting to-day, showing as they do conditions in Switzerland a hundred years ago.

The following letter was written by Miss Lister, to her aunt, on June 25th, 1827.

"The Three Kings Hotel, Basle.

On reaching Basle, we had a thousand things to do — to unpack and send linen to the wash, etc., etc. I was obliged to have my hair cut, an operation of two full hours. At the table d'hôte we met the famous Saxon botanist and Councillor of State, M. Bridell de Brideric, a very gentlemanly man about fifty. He took us to the botanic garden here, and introduced us to the professor, — to the public library, and introduced us to the learned mathematical professor Hubert, and then went with us to the Cathedral ... a mixture of Saxon and early Gothic, and very interesting. Walked along the ramparts, and about the town — dined at half past 8 (the table d'hôte supper hour) and went to bed as soon as I could ... Never was more comfortable at any Inn in my life. The room is on two sides surrounded by the Rhine — we are a little way from the wooden bridge that connects the great and little Basle — the two skirt along the river's banks, the line of white houses beautifully broken here and there by poplars and other trees — the view is magnificent, bounded by the mountains of the black forest, and by the wooded range of Jura."

Miss Lister then mentions the places she hopes to see and her intention of visiting Berne as the coachman she has hired is from there. "We agreed with him yesterday" her letter continues, "tried him to-day to the Château and gardens of Arlesheim, and like him and his car-

riage — (a calèche, with a gig-top for half the carriage, and leathers that will cover in all the rest if required) — and horses very well — we shall thus, in this respect, be very comfortable for a napoleon a day. The greatest plague is the money, perpetually varying in superscription and value, and always tiresome to a degree you cannot easily imagine. We make a point of dining at the table d'hôte, because we always meet with very respectable, pleasant people who are perpetually of use to us — a German party went with us to-day to Arlesheim. We are well satisfied to have entered Switzerland by Basle, we come so well and gradually upon its beauties."

The next letter is dated from Constance, July 2nd, and the writer tells of their leaving Basle.

"... whether we had been inclined or not we should have been driven out of Basle. You can have no idea of the strong smell there is from the water, almost as if of sea-weed ... We left Basle on Wednesday morning, the 27th ult., went to Laufenburg, were much interested with the little falls, stood near an hour over the very spot where 29 years ago Lord Montague and Mr. Burdett were engulfed, watching the timber as it floated down the rapids to be embarked below, and then went to the pretty little town of Frick where we slept. Thursday, the 18th ult. We reconnoitred the old castle of Habsbourg, the cradle of the house of Austria, dined with about (upwards of) 60 people at the table d'hôte at the baths of Schinznach (like Harrogate water — the ex-queen of Holland there), saw the interesting old Abbey of Königsfelden, and crossed the Reuss by the bridge of the beautiful little village of Windisch (the Vindonissa of the Romans). From the top of the hill is a fine view of the confluence of the Aar, Reuss and Limmat. From Windisch to Baden the drive is perfectly beautiful — on leaving the other two rivers, we had the Limmat, whose high, beautifully sloping right bank is one continued vineyard. On getting to the gate of Baden, we turned down to the left, to the great Baths, a village romantically situated on the left bank of the Limmat.

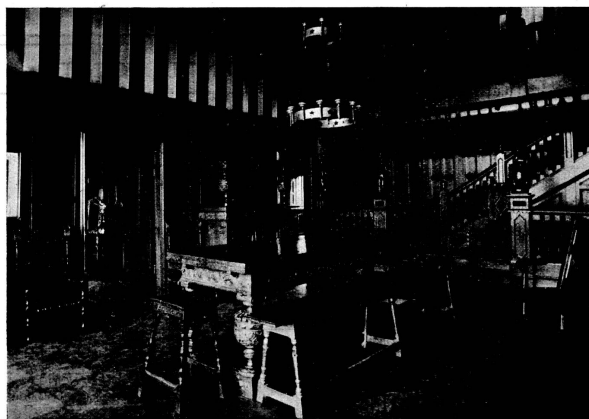
Friday, 6th July. Crown Hotel at Rorschach on the lake of Constance. We were very comfortable at Baden. From my bedroom, I went down a back staircase to my bath, lined with wood,

about 2 yds. square and a yard deep, the natural heat of the water 32° Reaumur, cooled down to 28° was so equal, so luxurious, I could have stayed in three hours instead of three quarters of an hour — the water the same kind as that at Schinznach, but tasted milder and had no bad smell. The country about Baden very beautiful — delightful walks — we were sorry to be off so soon.

Friday, 29th ult. Off from Baden — beautiful drive, and got to Zurich in 3 hrs., a little before one. Just in time for the table d'hôte — went in hot and covered with dust — who should chance to be my neighbour but the Rev. Mr. Robert Swann of York, whom you remember a little boy at Scarbro' ... He said he should not be at home for 3 months — was going to return by way of Germany — had his servant and carriage and 3 horses with him.

We had all of us heard so much of the beauty of Zurich, that, already spoilt by beauty elsewhere, we were almost disappointed. Yet the lake is beautiful, and the town finely placed at the head of it. Meaning to see more of the lake on our return from the Grisons, and afraid to miss seeing the falls of the Rhine at the best time, we went to Schaffhausen on Saturday, the 30th ult., and had the good fortune to see the falls in perfection that evening — the prints represent them very fairly. At the first peep, without being exactly disappointed, I caught myself saying, "Well! I suppose I shall never be astonished with any falls, unless I should see those of Niagara." However, on crossing the river (a little distance below the falls) to the Château of Laufen, contemplating them from the giddy height, and thus descending to the little wooden bridge that juts almost into the very foam of the fall. The horrible sublime of the latter situation made me sensible that it was worth while to travel all the way from Paris merely to see the falls of the Rhine ... It is by quietly contemplating them for some time, that one understands how they deserve to be so celebrated. When the melting of the snow on the mountains subsides, the river is so low, the peasants ford it just above the falls and dine upon the rock in the midst of them.

(To be continued).



SHIBDEN HALL. House Body.

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SHIBDEN HALL. House Body, showing 15th and 16th century windows.

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