

THREE MONTHS AT ABBAZIA

Richard Francis Burton / 1888



<http://burtoniana.org>

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Preface to the electronic edition

Abbazia, a popular summer and winter resort of Austria, in Istria, 56 m. S.E. of Trieste by rail. Pop. (1900) 2343. It is situated on the Gulf of Quarnero in a sheltered position at the foot of the Monte Maggiore (4580 ft.), and is surrounded by beautiful woods of laurel. The average temperature is 50 deg. Fahr. in winter, and 77 deg. Fahr. in summer. The old abbey, San Giacomo della Priluca, from which the place derives its name, has been converted into a villa. Abbazia is frequented annually by about 16,000 visitors. The whole sea-coast to the north and south of Abbazia is rocky and picturesque, and contains several smaller winter-resorts. The largest of them is Lovrana (pop. 513), situated 5 m. to the south.

-- *Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, 1911.*

This little pamphlet, reprinted from the *Vienna Weekly News* of 1888, has long been unobtainable, and is among the most rare of Sir Richard Francis Burton's vast output. One was offered in 2008 for \$5,000 on the open market. Only one or two others are known to exist in libraries. It is a long grumble about Burton's stay at a health resort, The Hotel Stephanie, in Abbazia over the winter of 1887/8. Although he does not say as much in the text, he was accompanied by his wife, his personal physician Dr. F. Grenfell Baker, and Lisa, Isabel's maid. They were flush with the proceeds of the *Arabian Nights* translation, and Burton was busy working on the *Supplemental Nights*.

Entertainingly dyspeptic and caustic at times, Burton's grumble bristles with advice and the sort of observations on local colour unique to Burton, alternatively pedantic and trenchant. He was then in the last years of his consulship at Trieste, and was well familiar with the country, its peculiarities and archeology, since it was within his jurisdiction, but he was ailing from various complaints associated, we now know, with tertiary syphilis, but which were usually described as "gout". Earlier in 1887, he had suffered his second heart attack. The Burton entourage decamped from Trieste to Abbazia so that he could take a "semi-hydropathic cure", the details of which are left unspecified, and to escape the *Bora* wind season in Trieste.

Trapped in the resort by walls of snow, which would last another two months, the Burtons “looked forward with horror to the Christmas tree, the New Year’s Day ball, to the concert of Tyrolese girls, to the Gypsy band, and to the occasional musicians”. During the local church service “the people howl (we cannot use any other word) a hymn in Slav, which appears to be of about ten bars in length and *da capo*, till your head is ready to burst: they never change either words or tune”. The establishment put its cess pool in the centre of the building, with the result that when it is cleaned “once per mensem” the building “becomes fouler than the worst hospital of the prescientific age: the stench is such that none but the strong of stomachs can withstand it”. He noted his boredom in his private journal: “a serious occupation or a study is a necessity. I got Father Josef Janc, the Catholic priest, to come and read German with me in the evenings, and I had my literature — my two last volumes of supplemental Arabian Nights.”¹ To make things worse, though he again left this detail out, the hotel would not accept Burton’s cheque, because, as he wrote in his journal “they did not know who ‘Coutts’ was.”²

As usual, Burton’s coming and goings were not unnoticed in the press. In the *Eclectic Magazine*, it was noted that “SIR RICHARD BURTON’S friends will be glad to hear that he has just returned in improved health to Trieste, after nearly three months spent amid snow at Abbazia, whither he had gone in search of a warmer climate. He hopes to arrive in England in the early summer, passing slowly through Switzerland on the way.”³

¹ Isabel Burton, *Life* (1893): 355

² *Ibid.* Coutts, founded 1692, was Burton’s bank in England.

³ *Eclectic Magazine* (May, 1888): 718.

It is impossible to say if the hospitality industry in Istria took any notice of the advice Burton bombards them with, but the region did go on to flourish as a tourist destination before and after the First World War. A consumptive Anton Chekhov loved it at first, but also grew disenchanted: it features in his story “Ariadna”.⁴ In 1912 it hosted a marvellous chess tournament in which nothing but the King’s Gambit was played. Today it is incorporated into Croatia, with “Abbazia” renamed “Opatija”, and its prime years, like this pamphlet, largely forgotten.

Gavan Tredoux
May 2008.

⁴ Donald Rayfield, *Anton Chekhov: a Life* (2000): 328.

THREE MONTHS AT ABBAZIA.

Reprinted from the *Vienna Weekly News*.

To the Editor of the *Vienna Weekly News*.

Sir,-We are writing to you from Varese, Lombardy, the centre of a charming country, geographically a neutral ground between the uplands of Swiss Ticino, pretty, pleasant, and picturesque, and the lowlands of the Italian Milanese, all flat and admirably fertile. It is a region of hills and mountains, lakes and rivers, forests and fields overscattered with flourishing towns and villages, with steepled churches and chapels, palaces, villas, and huge manufactories of silks and cottons. We are housed at the Grand Hotel where, thanks to the manager, Signor Eugenio Marini and his English wife, we have many of the comforts of home, the independence of hotel life and the pleasures of society. None would believe, without seeing it, that such an establishment exists, or can exist, in the rough and ragged and mesquin hotel life which characterizes Italy: suffice it to say that the Excelsior Hotel (bogus name!) is as superior to the best in Milan and Venice, as these distance their rivals in Trieste and Fiume. And if Abbazia could have an English hotel, we suggest that the Varese establishment be taken as its model and *exemplar*.

You have asked us for a realistic description of the new Austrian Riviera and the Istrian *Curort*, also of the three winter months between December and March we passed at the Hotel Stephanie. We proceed to satisfy you, under the conviction that only your excellent paper would print the truth, about a place which spends so

many florins in advertizing itself and in silencing the unpleasant voice of truth. Let us now begin with

THE CLIMATE,

It need hardly be said that the winter of 1887-1888 was exceptionally severe: the cold began very early, and lasted very late, and the snow did not disappear from the highlands about Fiume and Trieste until well nigh the last of May. Our object in choosing Abbazia was to avoid the terrible Bora, the gift of the disforested Carso or Karst, and in this we were ultra-successful. During the three months in question, Aquilo, who ever hails from the direction of Fiume, blew only by fits and starts, and during a glorious ten days of December and January we enjoyed a "Tramontana" which, even in winter, is here grateful, as the Spring Borino of regions further North. But we had exchanged one pest for another. The prevalent wind during the twelve weeks of "fashionable" season was the Scirocco (*Auster versus Aquilo*) the scourge of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, the nerve-depressing, enervating, enfeebling draught atonic, lacking oxygen and ozone and vitality, which starts from torrid Africa, which greedily laps up the moisture as it sweeps over the waters, and which arrives in Istria surcharged with vapours presently to be shed in torrential rains. This is the pestiferous wind which alternates with the Bora at Trieste, which robs the population of health and energy, which soon converts the active Northern foreigner into a listless Southerner, which causes a mortality of 35 to 36 per cent. per annum, and lastly which explains the salient and mortifying contrast between rich Hamburg and poor Trieste.

But there are certain temperatures to which the Scirocco is most grateful, and whose highly strung nerves are soothed and relaxed by the tepid, reeking, vaporous atmosphere, when the dry, harsh, and highly electrical flora adds fuel to the fire. Again a comparatively mild winter is a boon and a blessing - to the weakling and the incipient invalid, who must look forward

fearfully to the dreary dead season of Vienna and Buda-pest. For these few, Abbazia, as far as climate is concerned, may safely be recommended. But the public must regard with wholesome suspicion all observations of temperature made at the Curort. The excellent Correspondent of *The Lancet* (Jan 21. 1888) has laid down the mean temperature between May 1885 and April 1886 at 13.6 C = 56.4 F. But he (good English innocent) has taken his figures from the "Direction." Nor, by the by, will the stranger attach much importance to the "Prospect" (reclame) of the "Curort Abbazia," (Vienna 1887), printed by the Südbahn. We carefully consulted every morning the maximum and minimum thermometers of the little instrument box planted outside the Hotel Stephanie, and on one occasion we found the mercury marking + for the night when ice, nearly an inch thick, stood within a hundred yards. Consequently we determined that a pious fraud had been perpetrated on the thermometer and the foreigner.

Nor is Abbazia fitted by art for residence when the Scirocco blows. During the persistent drenching rains, walks are confined perforce to the house galleries and the few square yards of gravelled park. The clay roads are impassable. There is no covered *Wandelbahn* as in the Austrian Bader, no glassed-in promenoir as in the Swiss establishments, and no *Cursalon* for general meeting, except a frowzy coffee room of small dimensions in the smaller hotel, called Quarnero, which reeks with bad tobacco and which expects -you to "consume." Of this grievance more anon. We cast from our windows despairing glances at the Farasina Channel, between Cherso island and the mainland of Istria, where gigantic heaps of purple nimbus with ragged skirts, rolled up in serried masses, broke and deluged a dripping world. And ours being an exceptional year, as, by the by, it always is in so-called "health stations" whose chief industry is climate, rain did not have all its own way. The snows of Scandinavia began shortly before Christmas day and produced a fair imitation of the Siberian landscape. They veiled the world with a white pall, and

they recurred in often-repeated drifts; they weighed down the boasted laurel-groves, breaking the stems and branches by the dozen, and at the rare intervals when the sun shone, they made earth sloppy and muddy and miry as any bog-trotter could desire. Moreover, the little inside world was as miserable as the outside. The roads and railroads were blocked up, passengers were detained in the hotels and those daring enough to venture were stranded in the snows, which, at the station St. Peter, stood up in two walls, higher than the train. On such days no visitors and no letters! and we are shut out from the outer world as in a ship at sea. The water supply was cut off by the freezing of the pipes and as Abbazia under the existing circumstances procures all her supplies, even of "dairy," from Vienna, *viâ* the *Südbahn*, *café au lait* and tea became impossible luxuries.

The new Curort has been praised as a summer place. Of this season we have (thanks be to goodness!) no experience, but after a *Sommerfrische* at Sauerbrunn Rohitsch we ran down to it in the third week of September. Evidently society had not duly appreciated its value. The heat was stifling, the air was stagnant, the guests may have numbered twenty-five to thirty, instead of two or three hundred, and there was nothing to recommend the place except the excellent sea baths. And now for

THE SITE.

The Eastern shore of Istria offers in fine weather a charming panorama, and Abbazia lies at the head of the Fiume gulf which, for beauty and picturesqueness, ranks not much below the Bay of Naples. It is a noble basin with outlines alternately *riant* and stern, gentle and majestic Monte Maggiore, the culminating point of the little peninsula miscalled from the Danube, backs Abbazia with an altitude of 1390 metres, and the sea-line of Croatia is subtended by the lofty Velebič, the Alp which connects the inns of Carnia with the Dinarians of Dalmatia.

To the Southeast is the low lying islet of Veglia where, according to all experts, the Sanitarium ought to have been built; further South the chine of Cherso, with its topping hummock Monte Sys, acts break-water to the glorious natural harbour.

The land lying 2° North of Nice, will not produce the vegetation, tropical and subtropical, which glorifies Southern France, yet the growth is characteristic, and contrasts sharply with that of the bleak uplands behind the shore. The Thyme-laurel attains fine proportions and "Lovrana" preserves the name Laurelum (bay-grove) given to it by the Roman colonist. Magnolias, as in Southern Austria generally, reach a height of 25 to 30 feet, and there is a single camphor-tree which flourishes despite all weathers. The Arbutus bears its crimson berry and the Mimosa its fluffy ball, while Dracaenas and Yuccas, myrtles and lentisks, with here and there a stunted bamboo and a fan-pilot, flourish by the side of firs and stone-pines. We note also a Syrian harvest of pomegranates and chestnuts, olives and vines set off, in the higher regions, by heath and gorse. The richness of the verdure, and peculiarity of the growth marked the plate in early days as rich in climatic advantages. The Augustines were the first to settle here and hence the modern name Abbazia or the Abbey. The picturesque little church with its priest's house and village school facts the sea, and still bears for inscription the following characters which perforce we modernize

150 DIE 21. IVLY. SYMO
ABAS. FIERI. FEC.

And a metal plate, let into the wall, commemorates as follows the re-building in A.D. 1793 :

CVIVS IN HOC RENOVATA LOCO
PIA FVLGET IMAGO
SIS CVSTOS POPVLI
SANCTE IACOBE TVI.

You will remark that the larger capitals added together supply the date.

These Augustines were followed by the Jesuits, who, here as at Fiume, had their day, and have left their traces in the land. Long before the Iron Horse had whistled and snorted over the country, Abbazia made herself a name as the Sanatorium of Fiume, and a local dignitary, Cav. Scarpa, whose effigy in marble-caricature may still be seen near his own creation, built the villa Angiolina (of angelic significance) for his own use and for the benefit of his invalid friends. When we first remember it in 1874 the villa was a mean little place in a delightful position, but now it has been furnished with an upper story and is mostly reserved for Royalties when visiting the health-resort. The first was the Empress Maria Anna, who in 1860 passed here the whole *Badesaison* ; and her example is still followed in winter by sundry junior members of the Imperial House. Finally the *Curort* was taken by the *Südbahn* or Great Southern Railway, which bought the whole emplacement for a small sum - we do not specify the amount as each authority quotes different figures. The influential Company began by building a smaller Quarnero Hotel close to the sea, and two years afterwards they opened with great labour and greater expense the Hotel Stephanie. They spared no money, they lavished it and still lavish it wastefully enough, and the results are veneer without solidity, splendour without comfort and an utter absence of the conveniencies and even the necessaries required by the modern health-resort. And now we proceed to our

GENERAL REMARKS.

Abbazia is fit only for Israelites, Americans and Princes, say the Triestines, who cultivate a bitter and biting manner of wit. This is the usual half-truth. The *Südbahn* has spent its money far too freely, and the outlay must be recouped from us, the public. The prices are those of Vienna and Budapest, and dearer than London and Paris: when we last exchanged Bad Sauerbrunn for Abbazia, we found all our expense at least doubled and often trebled. For four persons, lady's

maid included, we spent £400 in the three months, a total which cannot be called exorbitant for 13 1/2, weeks, had we had, as the homely phrase is, something for our money's worth. How far this was from being the case, you will presently comprehend.

Abbazia, like most watering places in Austria, perhaps we may say throughout Europe, is not intended for the invalid properly so called. Indeed, to die here is considered a gross insult to the *numen loci* or the holy spirit of the health resort, and the offender is carefully removed to the mortuary chapel at midnight before he is cold, so as not to discourage or frighten the *Curgäste*. The establishment may suit the incipient stage or the convalescent condition, but it is carefully to be avoided by those who want the comforts of the modified home. Setting aside the deadly dulness which overhangs the little world like a funeral pall, arrangements for the patient, as he is very properly called, are of the very worst. Meals brought up to the sick room begin by paying an extra 2 per cent. The service for the invalid is vile, on all but the ground-floor, where the maids and waiters love to congregate. They have no regard for time, so important to an invalid stomach, and after half an hour's hard ringing they bring up tepid soup without spoons, half cooked dishes without forks or salt and wine or water without glasses. In fact, if there is a slovenly or ill-tempered waiter in the house, he is told off to wait upon the sick upstairs and is not allowed to show himself below.

At Varese there is a good chemist, and an able English assistant, Mr. Ross, lives in the establishment. At Voloska the obliging and energetic apothecary "Zur heiligen Mutter" is compelled to keep shop at Volosca, a drive of twenty minutes, and thus an unfortunate, suddenly taken ill during the night, might easily slip out of the world before the necessary drug could be procured. We were assured that this grossness results from the folly or greed of the Direction who will not allow a druggist to cumber their ground without paying an exorbitant rent. You are also informed

that, by slipping a post-card into a certain box, you can get your medicine within the hour. This is not true, although you will probably receive it before night.

There are medicos in plenty at Abbazia, but their chief attention seems directed to their fees which are, apparently, charged even for looking at your face. For sundry things, however, they are to be praised. Like those of Vichy and Royat they will not treat a bad invalid, what a satire upon a "health" resort! Also, like the surgeon at Aden, they ship or shunt off their hopeless cases with all possible dispatch and avoid the scandal of sufferers dying under their hands. Austria, like France, tolerates no foreign practitioners unless they pass an examination and take out a diploma. Wiser Italy encourages the stranger-physician because he brings with him patients to pay, or rather who are made to pay, after the reckless fashion practised upon invalids.

Some months ago "materfamilias" complained dolorously in your columns about the supplies of bread and water at Abbazia. The former is now good enough, and there is always a supply of Graham (pronounced Gracham) Brod. The latter is a grievance of grievances which will cost a large sum to abate. The water-supply comes from a spring lying about one kilometer to the South-west of the Stephanie Hotel. Thence it is pumped up by steam through pipes into a high-level cistern, and finally it is brought down to the great hotels which, however, lack distribution in the bed rooms. The cans for the morning tubs and, indeed, hot water generally, must be wearily hauled up from the kitchen by the maid-servants, the "lift" not being allowed. When the wind is Scirocco, that is from the South or South-east or South-west, this spring which opens upon the sea, is absolutely brackish, worse even than the Nabresina water of Trieste. During the hard frosts (as in January 1888), the frozen pipes caused a water-famine, and goodness only knows what we drank. As health compelled us to a semi-hydropathic cure, we bought rain water from the good apothecary of Volosca whose private dwelling-house,

like most of them hereabouts, has its own cistern and reservoir. The sole remedy for this state of things, so deadly to the reputation of the health-resort, will be to canalize one of the clean and wholesome head-springs from the upper slopes of onto Maggiore, and this will be at considerable expense. The Littrow fountain, so called from the well-known poet and popular Captain of the Imperial Navy, whose pen has done such good work *inter alia* for Fiume and her environs, is pure enough, but dries up in summer ; and the same is the case with the winter-torrents from the slopes which feed the Gulf. But Abbazia has ever suffered from a scanty water-supply. Hence the public baths are confined to the Quarnero Hotel, and in the worst of weathers the patients of the Stephanie and the two Dependances must face snow or sleet or rain for a hundred yards of open air.

Of course, there are all the modern appliances, electric baths (expensive humbugs) douches (fit only for paralytics), shower and needle and Fichtennadeln, and so forth; in fact, the regular establishment of a water cure. We need not say that they cost florins instead of francs. Lack of water affects the toilettes and other necessaries and, last but not least, the washerwoman. At Abbazia there is a neat little outlying chalet which has conveniences for washing and drying after the admirable American fashion, but it is quite insufficient for a full house, not to say for four full houses. You cannot get your linen under a week or ten days, and here again the franc is ousted by the florin.

Abbazia makes its own gas in a little *usine* beyond the Stephanie, and prefers gasoline, the produce of coal-tar: the gruff engineer is naturally and rightly very fierce if you approach the place with a lighted cigar. The quality is detestable, and by night the long gloomy convent-like corridors look as if here and there illuminated by a glow-worm of bilious diathesis and yellow complexion. The heat evolved by this stuff is inordinate, and the smell is such an *úpouvantail* for delicate nostrils and lungs, that it often has to bear blame for the cess-

pools. These latter are wells sunk *inside* the courtyards, not outside as at the older places on the French Riviera. They are cleaned out at night by workmen with iron pans: and other manual contrivances, once a month, or once in two months, or once in six months, according the various information of the Manager, and the servants. Our experiences laid down the rule at once per mensem: nor could we possibly be mistaken. The Stephanie, for a day or two, becomes fouler than the worst hospital of the prescientific age: the stench is such that none but the strong of stomachs can withstand it, and the results are all sorts of minor complaints-headache, sickness, diarrhoea, and sore throat. At such seasons the medical adviser should strongly cure a two days flitting from Abbazia; far better are the discomforts of that most wretched one-horse harbour town of Fiume than wholesale poisoning at the "Health Resort." But the local medicos make light of the matter and gloss over fact with glaring fiction. This horrible process should be put down with a strong hand. The two principal establishments are built upon ground high enough for shedding water either to the sea or to low lying tanks, which could be deodorized by the earth system. At least the horrible cisterns should be moved to outside the building. How such a pestilential abomination was allowed to poison a Curort we cannot understand. Perhaps, however, the architect was unwilling to disfigure or defile his foreshore by an open drain, or was not allowed sufficient funds to convey the refuse in pipes beyond the reach of the insignificant Adriatic tide.

The post office is managed by a civil official, who is quartered outside, instead of inside, the health station, and here again the general *mesquinerie* of the arrangements makes itself felt. A letter addressed to you at the Hotel Stephanie must be delivered by a postman who is authorized to charge you for the delivery, and thus you have to pay an extra tax which the establishment itself ought to pay. *Au reste*, the service is well done, nor did we lose a single letter during our stay.

Parcels, however, are not so well attended to. The station Mattuglie, despite the telephone between it and the Hotel Stephanie, kept a parcel of ours for a month and then telephoned down to know if we should like to have it. It turned out to be an unexpected gift from an Archduke, and made us appear extremely gauches, by not replying and thanking. Again, if you order a dozen of pills from London, you may not receive them until you have taken a three florin carriage and driven twenty minutes to Volosca, and made a declaration before a magistrate, accompanied by a local medico. In short, life is made too heavy by red tape and the Direction.

A military band (now Graf Jellačić, Nr. 79) plays twice a week, on Thursdays and Sundays. Like all Hungarian bands it can play well when it pleases, especially if an Archduke sits amongst the listeners, and it can also perform poorly and carelessly as the average English article. Of course there is a band tax for residents after the custom of Curorte generally.

The tax for the fire brigade is presented in the form of a voluntary contribution, and we have nothing to contribute to the *Verschönerungs Verein*.

A peculiar *déplaisir* for foreigners, in this part of the country, is the state of local politics which appear to us so stupid and contemptible. Predilections are divided into Hungarian, Croatian, German, and Italian, and the bearing of the workmen and the peasantry contrasts most unfavourably with the frank, manly, and courteous demeanour of the Swiss. If unhappily you address a Croatian peasant in Italian, he either turns his back upon you with a growl, or follows your retreating form with hateful eyes. These half reclaimed races not only hate all strangers, they abhor everyone but themselves, and they have opprobrious words to denote all but their own caste. If an Italian, the foreigner is called *Taljancic*, or *polenta*, or *irredenta*, if a German he becomes *nemcur*, or *nemckutar*, or *Knödel*; if a Hungarian, he is *Magyaron*, or *padella*, or *Paprika*, the last from the national condiment. But *en revanche* these churls

are honest and harmless, and women and children may walk about the nooks and corner unprotected, which is more than we can say for our own English cross-country byeways.

To conclude we must offer a few remarks concerning

SOCIETY AT ABBAZIA.

Germany proper and Austria-Hungary are now the only empires in Europe which support an exclusive aristocracy, separated by birth and breeding from the surging tide of democracy which is rain around them. But all these families of ancient and historic name are more or less cousins, and no stranger can find his way into their society, and much less into their intimacy, unless he be firstly a Catholic, and secondly a connection by marriage. From the usual run of foreigner, and from the *medio ceto* of their own country folk, they are divided by a deep gulf, which both are too proud to attempt passing. The sprinkling of aristocracy at Abbazia eats together, drives together, lives together, and only *sees* the second division. The latter is a large class of respectable, decent, inoffensive people, professionals, commercials and others, who go simply to cure, or to enjoy themselves, and do not think about society one way or the other. And lastly there is an unpleasant little leaven of foreigners, shady English; German-Americans of Israelitish persuasion, who as butchers, and bakers have made large fortunes in New York, or elsewhere, and who broad-cast their easily gained dollars with alarming profusion (hence the skit common in Trieste.) We leave readers to imagine the facilities for "society" that exist at Abbazia. And now at last for our

DIARY OF PROCEEDINGS.

We left Trieste on the dull and dreary 1st December, at 6 a.m. which necessitates rising at 4 a. m. on a cold, damp winter's morning. This is the only available direct train at this season of the year; there are others, but all three take the whole day to cover four hours travel-

ing. At bleak St. Peter's, the coldest of junctions, with its beggarly station like an ice cave, we were a delayed about twenty minutes, changed trains, and reached Mattuglie, where we left rail for carriage, and after an hour's drive down a good road with a lovely panorama we were landed at Abbazia in time for 12 o'clock breakfast.

The Austrian Tourists Society at Vienna will never attract strangers, charm they ever so wisely, until they reform the hours of the Austrian railways.

The whole Southern contingent of Abbazia, from Gorizia to Trieste, must travel either at dawn, or at dark, by the fait of the Südbahn, which refuses to start comfortable mid-day trains as in every civilized part of the world. We would strongly recommend invalids leaving Abbazia in winter by night to engage a special carriage, and to pay for having it tacked on to the Vienna-Trieste train at the junction St. Peter. We did so on our return, and it was worth all the money, not to stand for an hour between two high walls of snow waiting for the late train.

But why should the *Südbahn* alter its *orario* or trains for the benefit of a public which is so easily satisfied? Nothing exceeds the docility of the Austrian *en voyage*, except perhaps the American, who submits to official tyranny at home with a wondrous contrast to his bumptiousness abroad.

The "British Grumbler" is here much wanted; the same, we may remark, who has made modern Switzerland, who is fast rendering Italy a land of comfort, and who in the fullness of time shall take charge of Spain, Portugal and Greece. He is a marvellous contrast to the polite Austrian, who pays Parisian prices for a reception unworthy of a French village; who thanks the extortionate host with a lovely bow, promising a speedy return to be fleeced, and who though he may complain privately to a few friends, will hardly ever fail to walk into "Spider's parlour" once more. Now this is thoroughly unfair both to hotel-keepers and to rail-

road managers, who never hear complaints, and who consequently are not called upon to improve.

The drive down from Mattuglie is characteristic, affording a lovely view of the Gulf of Flume; close to the station towers Castua, one of the favourite trips from Abbazia, the old Roman Castra, the Northern capital of Queen Teuta, and walled round in more modern days against the dangerous Uzkok pirates. Here were shown to us four Glagolitic characters, which proved to be chronograms and which read 1537. The townlet once abounded in Glagolitic manuscripts, which also were used in the islands of Fiume and Dalmatia. They should be collected before they go to the grocer. Castua contrasts curiously with Abbazia, being in winter a rough and rugged climate. On the way downwards we passed the coach road which connects Fiume with Trieste, a distance of eight hours' driving with two good horses and a light carriage. We have often traversed this old road and admired its picturesqueness, finding a decent mid-way inn, where to breakfast and to bait the horses.

Westward of the line lies "Cici-"land, a curious country enough, and an exaggerated Carso in all its barrenness. We would willingly send you a description of Mune and Sejane, the head-quarter villages of this race of charcoal-burners and robbers, but it would run off our subject, and prove two long.

After a long zig-zag we debouched upon the bay of Preluka, the "forehaven," still showing tunny-ladders and the remains of former prosperity, such as the palace of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany which is now in the market. Thence a good road leads to Volosca or the "Bull Village," which is the country town of Abbazia with a huge church and hospital, and modern symptoms of having made money by the Curort. Here economical and sensible guests hire rooms. Then a scatter of villas and lodging-houses, fields and gardens and groves, with a glorious background of blue sea, lit up with the myriad sparklings of the sun, placed us within the hour in the hotel grounds.

On arriving we proceeded to see our apartment which we had engaged in September. The hotel is well built and the rooms are good and comfortable save that the windows fit badly to keep out draughts, and that the lift is often out of order and strikes work. We found breakfast ready in the grand saloon and were thoroughly satisfied with the way in which it was served, and with the waiting generally. We continued to be pleased with our food throughout December, but in January, when the season began and the place was fuller, the "portions", became small by degrees and unpleasantly less, contrasting marvellously with the bounteous supplies of Switzerland. Henceforward the rations went from bad to worse, in quantity and quality, till we began to - suffer, and after "tholing" for ten days, we exchanged hotel life for the comforts of home on the 5th of March, three weeks earlier than we had intended. We cannot say enough in praise of the attendance and the servants generally, and they deserve it the more because there is no control over them, no head to the establishment and they can do what they like with us. Every Austrian and Hungarian, no matter in what class of life, behaves instinctively like a gentleman, and the politeness with which everybody treated us, from the manager downwards, was most pleasing. This is, indeed, hardly to be expected, as the manager as well as the officials and servants are salaried by the *Südbahn*, and it is a secondary subject to them whether ten people come or five hundred. The one improvement we would make in the service would be to put the maid-servants, who now look untidy, into uniform and we would place a small staff of civil lads to wait upon the sick under the valuable and attentive head *Zimmer-Kellner* Ernest Mayer.

The only trace of superintendance is in the dining-room where the chief *Kellner* whom we used to call *guten Abend* from his evening greeting; approaches every table with an extra low bow suggesting that he is the proper channel for complaints. The Director of the *Südbahn* who takes the greatest interest in the establishment visits Villa Angiolina periodically, and carefully

eschews all the *Curgäste*, wisely refusing to hear any complaints which must be ready by the ton-weight. The manager never appears in the dining-room : if he were a Swiss hotel-keeper he would not only drill his waiters like a company of recruits, but he would be present at all meal times to give his word of command. Here, however, on account of internal differences, a *table d'hôte* is impossible, and each party must eat at its own table. After *déjeuner à la fourchette*, substituting spirits and siphon for the wines which are dear and inferior, we asked in vain, what is to be done? Unless the visitor carry with him plenty of work, hard and continuous, he will find himself here truly miserable. There is a wretched little reading-room badly provided with a few newspapers and odd volumes where cross featured individuals look grim and fierce if the silence of the parlour be broken by a single whisper, and adjoining it is a music-room with just space enough to walk round a grand piano at which youths and maidens practise their scales and where embryo fiddles scrape and squeak just at the moment you would give anything for rest. In these little rooms we are forbidden to smoke and even to drink coffee, in fact *verboten* is the first German word one learns at this establishment, and it is the last to meet the stranger's eye. Everything as "*verboten* as *verboten* can be." When you are driven out of the smaller dining-saloon by foul gasoline and tobacco reek, you are referred to an *estaminet* in the other hotel with a pleasant walk of some fifty yards in rain or snow, or may be burning sunshine. By the bye, if the Direction would connect their four houses with covered bridges it would be a great benefit to all *Curgäste*.

Finding little attraction in the house, we strolled about the strip of ground between the hotel and the shore, and inspected the little Bazaar with its multifarious "chow-chow," the photographer's quarters, the kiosque, and other appurtenances. At the base of the parterre, grandiloquently called a park, the company is at a considerable expense to build a sea wall, which shall form a sheltered promenade for sun-basking invalids,

and we remarked that the money might have been spent in half-a-dozen ways to better purpose. For instance the many walks up the precipitous hill sides behind the establishment should be graded and gravelled, and the number of level walks, now only one, might be indefinitely increased. Again a *Cursaal*, in the shape of a promenoir built of glass in iron frame-work, might be laid out in front of the Hotel Stephanie; also a Wandelbahn is much needed: this would obviate a great grievance as there is no centre where society can meet. It is impossible to make acquaintances, and if you do, you can see them nowhere except by asking them to your bed-room. You take, we repeat, your meals at your separate tables, and after you have finished, you have nowhere to pass your evening, and must retire sadly to your room, where you have already lazed through the greater part of the day.

Of drives we have said, there are only two, the road to Fiume, and the road to Moschenizza, *viâ* the neat little fishing village of Ika, and the old townlet of Lovrana whose ruined walls and broken towers and huge old mansions have a queer stale flavour of the Middle Ages. From that point the highway to Moschenizza is hilly, but the view from the ancient "Crow's nest" repays the traveller. And you can also push on to Albona-town famous for casteliieri or prehistoric villages. Good carriages and horses are attached to the Hotel, or to be hired from the village close by, these are expensive, but the others are reasonable enough. There are longer excursions by steamer to the islands in the Fiuman Gulf, and by carriage, horse or foot to the Veprinaz village, which commands an admirable prospect, and to the summit of Monte Maggiore where now is a little traveller's bungalow. It was very different when we ascended the ridge in 1878. The favourite form of sport in this part of the world is porpoise-shooting. Those who affect it, start betimes in the morning in small boats, which are here numerous, cheap and well manned. They seek particular spots which the Dolphin is supposed to affect. They wait till he springs from

the water, when a snap-shot lodges a bullet as close as possible to the gills-
no easy process.

We dined in Abbazia at 7 p.m., a little before the great rush: most of the guests eat the "noon-meal" at 1-2 p.m., and those who prefer more civilized hours must dine when others sup. Otherwise they will have the refuse: as a rule, we found that all the best had disappeared, and here we noted another fair subject for complaint. In September the large salon, a spacious hall, was set apart for the majority, i.e. all who were not professed invalids and an Archduke being present, smoking after meals was permitted. But since that time the Manager has discovered that tobacco reek spoils the painting and gilding (as if both were not made to be spoiled and renewed,) and he reserves the larger salon for a handful of sick folk, perhaps ten or twelve, and packs all the rest like sardines into the smaller salon. On the discomfort of this proceeding we need not enlarge, except in so far that at about 8.30 p.m. you can cut the atmosphere with a knife. We and others, if not all, repeatedly entreated the Manager to give us the big room. He always replied, "that he could not that the Direction did not allow it." In fact whenever we expostulated on our manifold hardships, he replied, "it was done by order of the *Direktion* but when we begged for the *Direktion's* address, he only answered, that it was useless to appeal, because the *Direktion* would refer all applications to him, and knew no more than he did;" in fact, he himself proved to be the *Direktion*. As this unfortunate is practically ignorant of hotel-life, it is not to be wondered at that he is, although an excellent man and extremely polite and civil, as untractable as he is incapable.

We looked forward with horror to the Christmas tree, the New Year's Day ball, to the concert of Tyrolese girls, to the Gypsy band, and to the occasional musicians, simply because, as in all ill-managed establishments, everything was turned topsy-turvy, and we were driven to dine in a yet smaller saloon, without light, save from gasoline at night, and without ventilation. A little

changing and opening of more rooms on the ground floor would obviate all this-but none sees the need, or rather none reports it, and even when pointed out, an invisible *Direktion* bars the way to all improvement. Moreover, when any *Curgast* ventures to remonstrate against any inconvenience he or she is told, practically if not in so many words-"I cannot do anything to alleviate it, the *Direktion* wont listen to you, and the Press is so bound to us, body and soul, that no paper will print a complaint. So come or go as you please, we draw our salaries all the same, if you choose to stay with us you must pay right royally, and suffer too, and read in every paper all the bosh we choose to write in our own favour *ad majorem gloriam* of Abbazia."

One more remedy and we have done. Almost the whole of the *Curgäste* as well as the residents and country folk are Catholic, yet on Sundays and Feastdays there is only one mass at 9.30 a.m.

The Church is small, and it is crowded with a pious peasantry, so that there is hardly standing room for invalids, while the reek of ploughmen's clothes, especially on a rainy day, produces a steam enough to cause faintness. During the whole service the people howl (we cannot use any other word) a hymn in Slav, which appears to be of about ten bars in length and *da capo*, till your head is ready to burst: they never change either words or tune. Lastly in the middle of the Mass there is a Slav sermon, of which none of us understood a word, and which lasts from 30 to 45 minutes. The Rev. Mr. Tosip Janc is a dear excellent pastor, and he became on most friendly terms with us, so we prayed him to give us a second low Mass at 11 a.m. for the *Curgäste*. He desired us to apply to the Bishop of Trieste, and we did so, but it was refused for some reason (as reasonable as all the reasons at Abbazia), being disapproved of by the parish priest of Volosca, though one fails to see how he would have been injured or affected by the improvement: moreover it *was* allowed whenever an Imperial visitor honoured the Chapel, but only then, showing it could be done. The only way for

Catholic *Curgäste* is to club together and pay ten florins every Sunday to bring a Capuchin from Fiume. We learned too late that everybody would have been willing to do this.

Far be it from us to write these things with a view of running down Abbazia. Had the Manager and the *Direktion* listened to us when we complained, this article would never have been penned. But as things now stand, this is our only means of letting the Directors and the Shareholders know how they ought to work the place, and how they can attract a public to recoup their expenses.

The establishment is still in its infancy, and it has high pretensions and ambition with capabilities to match. Those interested in it will be sure to act upon these Suggestions, when the pique of reading them is past, and Abbazia will, in a few years, become, not only all they pretend it is now, but all it really ought to be. Nature's materials are there, but there is yet no competency, no *savoir faire* to make use of them. And we do not recommend people to go there, in fact we strongly dissuade them from so doing until the place is formed upon the principle that it ought to be, and as we may add, it could be, by a mere turn of the wheel.

We are, Sir,

yours faithfully

RICHARD & ISABEL BURTON.

LONDON, 4. August 1888.