

which know neither human beings nor love nor death, Magnus came up to me and took me into his arms. And he whispered tenderly: "Come closer, closer, closer, *ma chérie*."

Even now I hardly dare to believe it. So simply and naturally did he come back to me. All the feverish, terrible time is gone and forgotten. How could I have ever tried to resign myself to the loss of my husband and to look for happiness with Haakan or elsewhere? I cannot understand it! There is only one thing I know without a shadow of doubt: Magnus and I belong together, and only with him do I feel sheltered.

So far we have not said a word about the past. Perhaps we shall talk about it quietly one day. It seems to me as if I had never really known before what happiness means! Magnus is like an entirely new and very first great love, so tender and enchanting. He appears to me like a prince hitherto disguised as an ugly old man who now steps shining out of his rags.

The last few years have changed us both, rid us of our illusions. So we are able really to discover each other anew. How stupid I was all the time to have wanted to get back my "old" Magnus! The new Magnus, who came back to me of his own free will, has turned out to be humble, tactful, and considerate. He feels lonely and uncertain and has suffered,

fought, and made mistakes just like I have. He is not a great, strong hero, not a "Roi Soleil" to be admired, but a man who needs love and gives love in return.

January 5, 1943. Brita sent a telegram to say that her husband died last night of his wounds.

January 9, 1943. Brita has written and also telephoned from the field hospital. Her grief has taught me properly to appreciate my newly-won happiness, which I would otherwise have regarded as my divine right: now I know that happiness is a gift from heaven, like a rainbow, the first crocus, or the song of a lark. Although a person may possess the right qualities to harbor it, such as a contented nature, an eye for beauty, a sense of humor, and the desire to love, this by no means endows him with the right to possess happiness.

January 17, 1943. I am filled with a profound sense of complete and unblemished happiness which protects me against all evil. Outside, the east wind has been blowing wildly and without interruption since November, but I hardly pay attention to it any more; for everything that happens outside our home is a matter of indifference to me at present. Although the storm may rage outside, for Magnus and me in our four walls there blows at last a gentle trade wind, and we close our ears to the howling outside our doors as best we can.

THE RIVERS OF EUROPE

By GERRIT KRELING

RIVERS of Europe: visions spring up in our mind of broad stretches of green water flowing between wooded hills, of castles and great cities. We think of names: the Danube, the Tiber, the Seine, the Rhine, the Volga, the Thames; each name means something, means more than just a river. Along their banks is concentrated the life and the history of European nations. Although the rivers of Europe cannot compare in size with the mighty arteries of other continents; although they may seem dwarfed by the Nile, the Ganges, the Yangtze, the Mississippi, or the Amazon, their influence on the history, trade, and even culture of Europe has been immense. But not every nation is influenced in the same measure by its rivers.

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Let us turn to the ancient Greeks and Romans. Their culture, power, and interests were maritime. Their territories were all within easy reach of the sea. To them, rivers were of very minor importance, serving here and there to delineate boundaries, and their banks sometimes providing a good battleground. Italy's largest river, the Po (known to the

Romans as the Padus), was simply the border between the two Roman provinces of Gallia Cispadana and Gallia Transpadana; and the Rubicon, a tiny river separating Gallia Cispadana from Italy, only went down in history because of Caesar's political decision to cross this legal boundary and march on Rome. To this day the only river in Italy that has more than a merely historical association for us is the Tiber, and that only because of the grandeur that was and still is Rome. Although the Po is navigable as far up as Turin, the fact that there is no important port at its mouth points to how little the river is used for commercial purposes. On the Iberian Peninsula the situation is similar. The two biggest rivers, the Ebro and the Tagus, their levels being irregular, are of minor significance to Spain's economic life.

Many of the rivers of France serve as arteries of communication and are connected with each other by canals. Indeed, one fifth of all French goods traffic moves today on rivers and canals, more than half of it on the Seine and its tributaries and canals. The Loire is perhaps not quite so useful a river, its middle

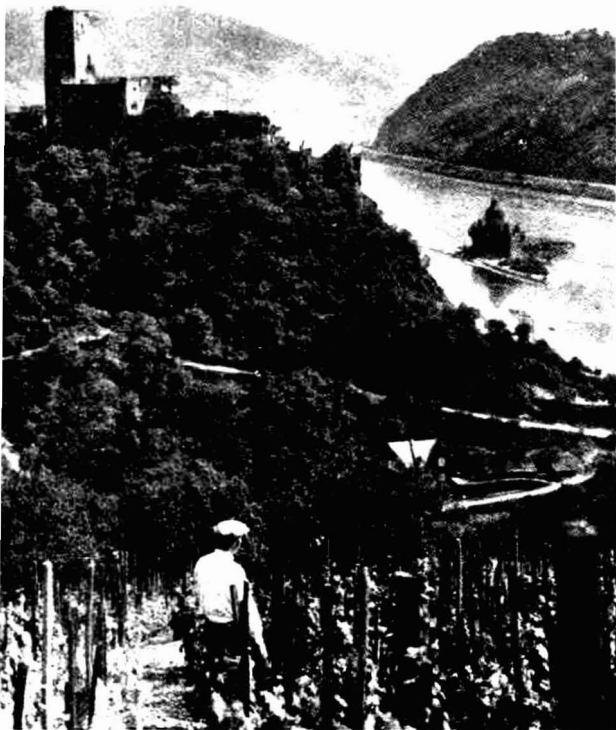


The monastery of Melk on the Danube, a beautiful example of baroque architecture

RIVERS OF EUROPE

Russian river, as painted by I. Levitan (1861-1900) in all its somberness





view of the Rhine at Kaub, looking down over vineyards from the Castle of Gutenfels



The Seine as seen from the towers of Notre Dame in Paris. The cathedral stands on an island in the river



The Sauer River, which flows through Luxemburg. It is but one of hundreds of rivers of similar charm in Central and Western Europe

and upper reaches being interspersed with rapids, but its beautiful banks provide the background for many of France's famous châteaux.

England, again, is a maritime country in which the rivers are small and not essential to transport. But they are lovely in their quiet way, meandering past ancient cathedrals and village churches, past feudal mansions and under moss-grown bridges. It is only the mouths of these rivers which provide shelter to shipping and have given rise to such great ports as London, Liverpool, Cardiff, Hull. The Clyde in Scotland, on which Glasgow is situated, is inseparably associated in our minds with shipbuilding. In Scandinavia the rivers are short, many of them rushing down dramatically from the mountains in huge waterfalls and rapids. The energy contained in these torrents has to some extent been harnessed and supplies Sweden and Norway with ample electric power, besides carrying their timber to the sea.

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In all these countries, the entire course of the rivers—with few exceptions—flows through the country in question, so that there was little chance of political friction over the rivers. But if we turn to Central Europe we find quite a different situation. Having their sources further from the sea, most of the rivers are wider and flow through several countries or along their borders. In Germany, only one or two of the major waterways have their source within the country and debouch into the sea on the German coast. The Rhine, for instance, rises in Switzerland and enters the sea in the Netherlands. The river valleys being the chief arteries of communication, they have always been of great political importance and the scene as well as the cause of many a battle. All the great towns of Germany grew up on the banks of rivers, often at the junction of a tributary with the main river. The earliest clashes between Romans and Germanic tribes were in the Rhine valley; Charlemagne defeated the Saxons in order to extend his influence to the River Elbe; the young Prussian state under Frederick the Great fought many battles to consolidate its position in the Oder valley; and, long before that, the German Knights had built their castles along the Vistula. But the Rhine was always regarded as *the* German river. When Louis XIV and Napoleon invaded the Rhine valley, the eyes of all Germans, no matter to what kingdom or principality they belonged, turned to that river, and the people rose to join the "watch on the Rhine."

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It is interesting to consider the question of a river as a border. The scarcity of water in the steppes of the East forced the people there to evolve a strict law governing river rights. For them the river, which they needed chiefly

to water their animals and for obtaining their own supply of water, was a border. On the other hand, the wealth of water in the areas inhabited by Germanic tribes gave the Germanic peoples the idea of a river system as a unit of habitation. In modern Europe the progressive regulation of rivers has led more and more to the opinion that nations can be separated by mountains and by seas but not by rivers. In less developed areas, however, a river may form a perfectly satisfactory border, as, for instance, the Rio Grande del Norte on the border between Mexico and the United States.

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During the Middle Ages, the Rhine valley was the great artery along which the treasures of the Orient and the products of the cultural centers of the Mediterranean moved northward. They brought wealth and culture to the cities on its banks, and the good burghers of these cities used this wealth to build mighty cathedrals. There were feudal lords, too, who were attracted by the riches passing along the Rhine. They also built: but they built castles on unassailable rocks and mountain tops overlooking the river whence they could sally forth to levy tribute from the merchants passing by. Later, after the age of discovery, the direction of the flow of goods changed: now the treasures of the Indies and the strange products of the New World moved from Holland up the Rhine valley to Southern Germany. To this day the Rhine has remained a busy thoroughfare. Indeed, Duisburg-Ruhrort is said to be the largest inland port in the world. There are always long lines of barges, loaded with coal and agricultural products, being towed upriver to return with a cargo of iron ore and South German bulk products.

There is one country which practically owes its existence to the Rhine: the greater part of Holland's territory consists of soil deposited throughout the ages by the river. The patient Dutch turned the marshes and mudbanks of the Rhine delta into some of the most fertile land in Europe by cutting irrigation canals. These waterways, with the windmills along their banks, dominate the scene in this part of Holland.

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Another river that has played an important part in the history of all Europe is the Danube. On its long course from the Black Forest into the Black Sea it flows through or skirts many countries. (European politics being what they are, the number of these countries has often varied.) In the days of the Roman Empire, the Danube was a sort of outer moat along which the Romans built fortresses. Later the river formed the backbone of the Hapsburg Empire. The attacks first of the Huns, then of the Turkish hosts, on Europe followed the course of the Danube and were halted on its

banks. The greatest of the European rivers and an ideal west-east artery, the Danube has always, like the Rhine, been a connecting link as well as a center of political events.

In its upper reaches the Danube flows through mountainous country just as beautiful as the Rhine valley. Here, too, we find castles, cathedrals, and picturesque monasteries. In the Rhine valley most of these buildings were put up during the Middle Ages, so that there the Romanesque and Gothic styles are predominant. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the political situation was too turbulent to permit the inhabitants of those parts to indulge in much building activity. The opposite was the case along the upper Danube. The Hapsburg Empire was then at the height of its power and greatness, so that many of the cathedrals and rich monasteries along the Danube were built in the elaborate baroque style popular at that time.

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In the great rolling plains of Russia, the rivers also form the main arteries of life. On the Volga lay the capital of the Tartars, who ruled Russia for two hundred years. The influence of the small state of Moscow advanced along the Volga. On the banks of the Volga rose some of the richest cities of Russia. The most famous of the Cossack hosts took their names from rivers—the Don, Kuban, Terek Cossacks. They chose the land along those rivers for their settlements because here the soil was most fertile, because the river itself provided them with food, because it facilitated traffic and trade with other peoples and tribes, but also because it offered chances for plunder, for the major part of the goods from the Near East and Persia was transported up these waterways. The great rivers with all their tributaries offered so many facilities for transport that until recent times Russia never seriously bothered to develop an efficient road or railway system. On the Rhine and on the Danube there are also passenger steamers, but they are used by excursionists to enjoy the scenery. The Volga steamers, however, are used by the population because they are the most convenient and comfortable mode of travel. The many millions of tons of freight moving on the Volga every year give an inkling of what this one river alone means to Russia's communications.

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How have the rivers of Europe affected the people? How do Italians, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans, Russians, feel about their rivers? Here, in addition to the varying importance of rivers to the countries in question, we must also take into account the difference in the mentality of Latin, Slavic, or Germanic peoples. Contrary to the general idea of his always being a hot-blooded, emotional person, the Latin can in reality

be very practical and realistic. Nature is but rarely the stimulus for his artistic creations, and rivers seldom occur in Italian and Spanish works of art. The Frenchman likes his rivers, and on Sundays and holidays one can often observe crowds of French people sitting along the banks of the rivers around Paris. But they are fishing. They like the rivers chiefly for the fish they can catch or hope to catch in them.

The Germanic peoples and the Slavs, on the other hand, feel very deeply, even sentimentally about their rivers. Even in England where, as we have seen, the rivers are of little commercial or historical significance, there are songs about the rivers; rivers wind their way through the landscapes of Constable and other painters of his period. Shakespeare is known as the "Bard of Avon"; and on bank holidays the Thames and its tributaries are covered with punts and canoes filled with holiday-makers out to enjoy the river scenery.

In Central and Eastern Europe the rivers permeate the poetic, musical, and artistic feelings of the people. It is hardly to be wondered at that, in the landscape painting of Rembrandt and other Dutch artists, water, be it brook, canal, marsh, or river, forms the center of interest, as it is difficult to imagine the Netherlands scene without water. But in Germany, too, as well as in Russia, river scenes have attracted painters from earliest times. The German Romantic painters of the early nineteenth century usually preferred smaller tributary rivers flowing through rocky wooded valleys as their subjects, while modern German painters have turned to the more somber scene of the lower reaches of broad, majestic rivers like the Elbe, Oder, or Rhine, or to harbor scenes combining modern industrial effects with the appeal of flowing water.

The Romantic period, initiated by Rousseau's writings, which swept across Europe during and after the French Revolution, made poets and authors acutely nature-conscious and thus river-conscious. Countless are the poems describing the charms of rivulet and river written by European lyric poets. Naturally the Rhine, with all its historical associations and romantic past, appealed to them more than any other. The hundreds of legends connected with it offered abundant material. One of these legends is known all over the world, that of the beautiful Lorelei who sat on a rock combing her golden hair and luring the fascinated fisherman to his death. Incidentally, she has a counterpart on the Danube, the lovely Ida on the Jochstein; but the latter, being perhaps of a more kindly southern temperament, instead of luring mariners to their death, warns them of her dangerous rock. Both the Rhine and the Danube form the main scenes of action in the ancient Nibelungen saga.



Crossing the Elbe at Schreckenstein
(Painting by A. Ludwig Richter, 1837)

There is probably no river in all of Central Europe which people have not at one time or another mentioned in some song. The very words "the Blue Danube" conjure up the strains of music. Again it is the Rhine of which more songs are sung than of any other river in Europe. Indeed, it appears in no less than two hundred songs, which is about half the number of all the more well-known songs centering around German rivers. Whether they are songs of drinking, romance, or patriotism, it is the Rhine whose praises Germans love to sing. Some say it is the golden wine from the grapes grown along the Rhine that has loosened the tongues of poets and inspired the souls of composers. But wine is also grown along the Moselle, the Saar, the Neckar, and many other German rivers which, although they appear in song, do so far less frequently than the Rhine. The songs of the Rhine speak of wine, but they also speak of rocks, elves, naiads, fir trees, castles, and mountains crowned with ruins. They call upon Germans to defend the Rhine.

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Elves and naiads: in ancient times every river had its own god. It was usually a "good" god, for the relationship between man and the river in Europe has always been an almost human one, with the river playing the part of protector, helper, and provider of good things. The Germans speak of "Father Rhine," the Russians of "Little Mother Volga," and one of their songs says "our father is the Don, our mother Russia." But there is no river in Europe which was regarded as sacred, as is the Ganges in India. With the coming of Christianity the cult of river deities gradually disappeared although—a relic of pre-Christian traditions—there are rivers on which special festivals are still celebrated: the inhabitants along their banks throw garlands and flowers into the waves, in remote recollection of the sacri-

fices to the old river god. In Central Europe, the tales and legends of fairies, naiads, elves, and magicians dwelling in rivers and lakes are also relics of ancient beliefs. But in Italy, for instance, nothing has appeared in the place of the vanished heathen cults to reveal anything about the feelings of the Italians toward their rivers.

Among the inhabitants of the Don and Dniepr regions, we also find many fairy tales of water spirits and naiads living in the rivers whence they entice, enchant, punish, and cast spells upon the people. The Volga is more symbolic of sound commercial prosperity, of cosmopolitan trade, of rich agricultural areas, although from olden days there is still a breath of romance connected with the bandits and river pirates who used to infest its banks. The song of "Stenka Rasin" still stirs the heart of every Russian, while the melancholy "Song of the Volga Boatmen" shows another side of life on the river.

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It is not only the great rivers of which the nations of Europe sing, and there are songs known to every German about the Neckar, the Saale, and other such comparatively insignificant rivers. Three rivers occur in the German national anthem. Another national anthem referring to a river is that of Bulgaria; it sings of the Maritsa, for whose sake and on whose banks the Bulgars fought many a bitter battle with the Turks.

In some cases, cities have become so identified with rivers that they or their inhabitants are dubbed by a name connected with the river only. Berlin is nicknamed "Spree Athens," because it is situated on the small river Spree; and Leipzig is often called the "Pleisse City" after a stream flowing through it which is a tributary of a tributary of a tributary of the Elbe. There are many newspapers named after rivers; and every German knows that, when the "Neckar City" or the "Isar City" are mentioned, Heidelberg and Munich are meant.

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On all the five continents of our earth, rivers are essential natural forces. Yet perhaps nowhere have they played quite so intensive a role in cultural, historical, political, and economic life as in Europe. Once again the destiny of Europe is being decided along the banks of its rivers, and their names—Rhine, Moselle, Maas, Memel, Vistula, Danube, Po—fill the bulletins of the warring nations. May the day soon come when the people of Europe remember their rivers not in war communiqués but in the peaceful transactions of their trade and in songs.