

LETTERS

OR

SILESIA,

WRITTEN DURING A

TOUR THROUGH THAT COUNTRY

IN THE YEARS 1800, 1801;

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

THEN MINISTER PLÉNIPOTENTIARY FROM THE UNITED STATES TO
THE COURT OF BERLIN; AND SINCE A MEMBER OF THE
AMERICAN SENATE.

IN TWO PARTS:

PART I.

Containing a Journal of a Tour through Silesia, performed in the latter Part of 1800, by Mr. Adams; in which the Topography, the Agriculture, Manufactures, and Commerce, and the Morals and Manners of the People of that Duchy are accurately described.

PART II.

Containing a complete geographical, statistical, and historical Account of Silesia; together with a Detail of its political Constitution, military, civil, and ecclesiastical Establishments, Seminaries of Education, Literature, and learned Men.

EMBELLISHED WITH A NEW MAP

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LETTER XXI.

*Landeck—Its Baths and mineral Waters—
Beauty of its Environs—The River Biele
—Waterfall at Wölfelsgründe—Ruins of
the Town of Habelschward.*

Glatz, 25th August.

THE governor of the town being absent with the King, who was holding a review at Neifs, I sent my compliments on Saturday morning to the *commandant*, with a request to see the fortress, which had been mentioned as the only thing worthy of remark that we should find in this town; but he took so much time to deliberate, whether in the absence of the governor he could give us the permission, that I concluded that day to go on Landeck, which we did in one of the common carriages of the country. Landeck is a small town three German miles

distant, with baths and mineral waters, which are much frequented by company in search of health or amusement during the months of July and August. Now there is scarcely any body there, but our landlord at the inn told us there had been much company before the King and Queen came into Silesia, and expressed a hope and belief that after the review at Breslau many of them would again find leisure enough to be sick, and come to bathe and drink a little more. The bath waters are about milk-warm; those they drink are cold and clear as crystal, but so much impregnated with sulphur, that they taste like bilge-water. Whatever their efficacy may be, I have never seen any bathing-place, the situation of which had an appearance more calculated to preserve or restore health than Landeck. It is in a valley, surrounded by hills more or less elevated, some of which are still covered with forests of stately trees, while others present the aspect of cultivation to their very summits.

On the side of one of these hills are the two baths; the church; a large and elegant house built by the Governor of Glatz; another, less spacious, built by the Count Hoym, the directing minister of Silesia, for his son-in-law Count Maltzahn; the saloon or hall, in which a table d'hôte is kept, and a few apartments for the accommodation of the bathers, and various other buildings. Upon another hill, about half a mile distant from the baths, is a sort of temple, built likewise by Count Hoym, which occasionally serves for a dining-room, as it did on Friday to the Queen, when she visited Landeck. All the wood is left upon this hill, which is only laid out in walks, with here and there a square or circular open plot with stone benches, upon which the weary saunterer may repose. About the centre there is a pyramid erected upon a high basis of cemented stones, dedicated to the protecting deity of the grove. In the valley at the foot of these hills the river *Biele* rolls rapidly

along its penurious stream, which, like all the other rivers in this country, would in America scarcely be dignified with the name of a brook. Near the baths are several glass-shops, and workmen who grind and cut glass; the article itself is made at Friedrichsgrund, three miles beyond Glatz. It is much better than that of Warmbrunn, and about equal to the Bohemian glass at *New-welt*, though nearly double its price.

That pleasing and continual interchange of hill and dale, of wild rocky mountains and green meadowy vallies, of thick tall gloomy forests, and harvest-laden fields, which has given us so much pleasure from the moment of our departure from Bunzlau, has been as striking on the road to Landeck as in any part of our journey. But there the roads practicable for our carriage, and all the pleasant part of Silesia, end. We have already discovered, by the increasing wretchedness of the inhabitants, by the gradual degeneracy of the inns, and by the growing

proportion of Catholics, that we were fast approaching the borders of Upper Silesia and of Poland. Beyond Landeck we had been assured before we left Berlin that we should find very little for instruction, and nothing for pleasure. We had therefore fixed that for the bound of our outward excursion; and having on Saturday evening and yesterday morning satisfied our curiosity with a view of what was remarkable in the place, between eleven o'clock and noon set out upon our return. But we doubled at least the distance of the way, and more than trebled it in the badness of the roads, by going to see the waterfall at Wölfelsgründe. If you have ever stood at the edge of a precipice two hundred feet steep, with your arm round a tree, about as big as itself, shooting out from the side of the abrupt, to hang over and look down upon a sheet of water that pours in a beautiful arch from a rock eighty feet downwards, and dashes in snowy foam upon another rock; or if you have ever stood

at the bottom, in the narrow cleft between two high mountains which look as if they had been split asunder at one stroke of an Almighty hand; and there, in the thrilling coolness of a spot which never beheld the radiance of the sun, with the silvery spray sprinkling your face like dew, looked up to the massive fragments of rock over which hang the steep declivities of mountains clad with dark, lofty, majestic trees, rising in rows behind each other, like an amphitheatre; if you have seen and felt all that a scene like this inspires, but which would disdain to be conveyed by descriptive powers infinitely superior to mine, then, my dear brother, I am not afraid of your inquiring whether I have not had enough of waterfalls. That of Wölfelsgründe is about the same height as the Kochel-fall, but has a much greater effect than either of the three we had seen before, being much better supplied with water.

We had not been fully aware of the dif-

tance and badness of the roads we had to travel, and made it later before we left Landeck than we should have done to return at night to Glatz. It was eleven at night before we reached the gate, and found they had been shut at ten, after which they never admit anybody into the town. We were therefore obliged to take up our quarters at an inn without the walls, and come into the city this morning. Upon our return we passed through the ruins of what one week ago was the town of Habelschwerd; last Monday it was burnt to ashes, and we now found nothing but the walls of the houses more or less in ruins. A few houses without the walls, and a church, have been spared, amidst the general devastation. Before the doors of these houses were numbers of women and children, apparently robbed of their habitations, and only housed by the charity of their neighbours. Here and there in the streets, amidst the heaps of rubbish, or within the shells of the houses, a solitary sorrowing

form seemed lingering on the spot of its former residence. Before the crucifix at the gate a child of twelve or thirteen years of age was kneeling, probably to implore a shelter of that Being whose dreadful visitation had taken away the roof from over her head. The gloom of this dismal scene was heightened by the dusk of evening, as we passed through these relics of calamity, and made it altogether one of the most melancholy sights I ever beheld.

