

## How the Devil is in New Orleans and How He Lifts the Roofs from Houses

*A novel by Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein first published in 1861 and translated by Steven Rowan*

*This issue is devoted to the seventh and last installment of Reizenstein's fragmentary novel about New Orleans under federal siege at the start of the Civil War. The devil has appeared in New Orleans with the face and costume of the Northern zouave hero Colonel Elmer Ellsworth. The narrator has decided to join the devil on his night-wanderings. Finally he gets down to business lifting the roofs of houses to see what secrets are found inside. He derives this story-line from Alain René Lesage, whose **The Devil on Two Sticks** (based on a Spanish original) was a big hit in the early eighteenth century. The narrator has decided to join the devil on his night wanderings...*



*Photo of Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein  
courtesy of Baron Conrad von Reitzenstein.*

“A family reliquary is always interesting, and observing it is worthwhile, even if it is only an old hat,” Signor Diavolo responded.

“That is nice enough,” I remarked, “and I think it is entirely alright that the unfortunate wife so carefully preserves the hat of her husband, who found his death in the waves, as the sole witness to this tragic event. Perhaps this is even the room he most liked to spend time in — but to make such a fuss out of it, and to include it in this grandiose spectacle of infernal diamonds, I find that extremely odd, and Your Majesty could just as well have told me about it over a glass of wine.”

Signor Diavolo responded, “You would be completely right and this would be no more interesting than that of other dead people, if it were the hat of a dead person. But the owner of this hat travels a couple times every week from Havana to Matanzas, and he is only awaiting the lifting of the blockade to return to his family and to release



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his children from the illusion that their father is really dead.”

“What?” I cried out in shock, “then Mr. \*\*\* wasn’t drowned, and the entire tragedy was only a farce? And the reward that his family posted immediately after the announcement of his death for the discovery of his body was only a humbug?”

“So it was,” Signor Diavolo responded, “and the lady already feels such pangs of conscience because of the fraud committed on her husband’s life that she no longer has a peaceful night, and with weather such as tonight she rushes as if mad to the fireplace, where the portrait of her beloved, of her husband hangs, and she kisses it time and again until the storm passes and all is calm again. As you have already seen, she does this every time, and because she is very religious, she thinks she can calm the heavens through the tenderness she pours out on the image, and that she turns away trouble from her husband that her conviction, which borders on hallucination, sees as threatening him. She is normally a thoroughly good-hearted woman, but conditions compelled her to act with her husband to spin this plot to keep him out of the claws of his gruesome creditors, to avoid problems that a life of dubious legality brings with it. What frightens her the most is that the children might talk about their dead father, and although she does not expect to leave the city forever to rest in her spouse’s arms, her face reddens whenever she thinks, ‘What will my good children say when they see the father they thought was dead, and how are they to believe he was only dead for a year?’ She asks herself this a thousand times, and she has no idea what she would say if the moment ever came that the children should meet their father.”

Signor Diavolo accompanied these words with such a cold smile of Schadenfreude that I shuddered as I never had in my entire life. “If this story really develops as you are telling me,” I responded in shock, “then this can only be Your Majesty’s work, and I have no doubt but that you have also enticed the unfortunate husband to his daring speculation that plunges him into the abyss of perdition.”

“Sir, obedient servant,” Signor Diavolo agreed, “an indictment in all proper legal form! I only marvel that you do not also accuse me of leading the beautiful Cornelia from the principles of morality. — But that is just the way short-sighted mortals are wont to pursue. Whenever the circumstances under which a human heart goes astray cannot be immediately explained, it must always be His Majesty the Devil who has his hand in the game. — I tell you, though, that you human beings sin a thousand times before the devil hears anything about it or gives a direct incentive to do so. Ever since the great battle when we were thrown down from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell because we were not satisfied to be ruled by despotism but preferred to follow our own heads, people have sinned even without our involvement, that is, you will do evil, and if you do not have the understanding to see this in time to arm yourself against evil, then you go to your ruin due to your own devilry, and we are spared the trouble of seizing your soul and leading it into the eternal prison!”

“Splendid!” I cried out, “Your Majesty knows how to preach from an entirely different text. — But for my part, right now, I only harbor the desire to leave this place and let ‘the Cadi’s hat’ remain the Cadi’s hat as long as it wishes.”

“Thankless fellow,” Signor Diavolo

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### President's Message

This Summer Issue of Der Maibaum includes the last in a series of articles on Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein by Dr. Steven Rowan. Future issues will include a regular feature on German customs.

The Deutschheim Verein participated in Living History day in June, at the site. Also preparations have already begun for the Kristkindlmarkt held the first weekend in December. We plan to participate with our usual selection of items for sale.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Der Maibaum and welcome articles you may wish to submit to the editor for publication.

## New Book

### IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE SETTLEMENT OF MISSOURI

A new book has recently arrived from some old friends, authors Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering. Their popular book *German Settlement in Missouri: New Land, Old Ways* is now followed by *Immigrant Women in the Settlement of Missouri*, which gives us the stories of women from all across Europe who left the Old World for Missouri. Drawing heavily on the women's own stories, it illustrates common elements of their lives without minimizing the diversity and complexity of each individual's experience.

The book begins with description culled from diaries, letters, and memoirs documenting preparations for the journey, the perilous Atlantic crossing and the sometimes equally long and arduous trip from the port of entry to Missouri.

*Immigrant Women in the Settlement of Missouri*

Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering

\$12.95 paper

ISBN: 0-8262-1591-2

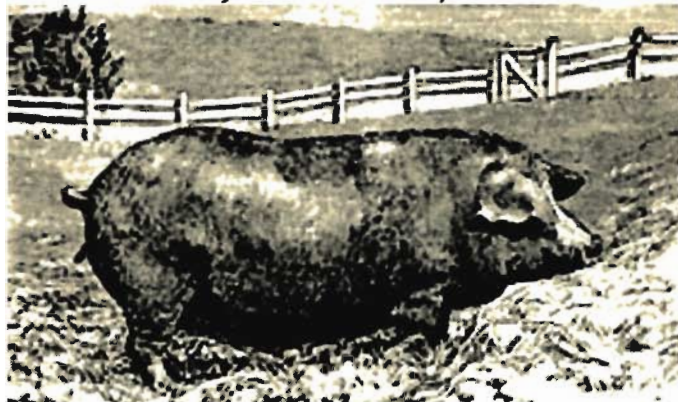
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## A Recipe from the Verein



### Sauerkraut with Sausages Sauerkraut mit Würsten

from

Marilyn Schuster Rowan

If you think you don't like sauerkraut, it's because you've eaten the ingredient, not one of the various wonderful forms of the dish. It comes packed in brine which must, first and foremost, be washed thoroughly out. Then you have the ingredient for something very, very good.

In a large kettle put the following:

1 large package of sauerkraut ( from the refrigerator case of the store!!! )

Put it in a colander, rinse thoroughly,

& drain to get rid of all the juices.

1 1/2 c. apple juice ( add more later if needed for moisture )

2 large chopped onions

3 large peeled and chopped tart apples

1 t. black pepper

2 T. chopped parsley

1/4 c. packed brown sugar

8 whole dried juniper berries (optional)

Bring to a simmer and then add good German sausage. Push the wurst down into the kraut, cover, and simmer till done. Serve with a good, dark German-style mustard, solid,



growled. But that was only a phrase, since even the devil is not always ready to give the right answer.

An intense bolt of lightning that even pierced the closed shutters and lit up the entire room for an instant almost froze the blood in my veins, for it revealed a third person in the room, sitting in a high armchair alongside the round table, a person whose presence I had not sensed up to now. "Your Majesty!" I said, hardly capable of forming the words, "have you seen it? There is someone else in the room with us — and you have not said anything about it to me?"

"That is the Cadi himself," Signor Diavolo responded with an icy coldness that chilled me through and through.

"The Cadi himself?" I stuttered away, "What does that mean?"

"That means that the Cadi has really died in this instant in Havana or Matanzas, for what you saw sitting in the flash of lightning was his departing soul staring along with us at his hat, with which he had done such tricks in life."

At almost the same moment one also heard the smashing of a heavy object followed by the shattering of a pane of glass. Without waiting for a question, Signor Diavolo said in a phlegmatic tone, "That was the picture that hung on the wall — it was of the Cadi in his order's costume — only a poor lithograph of the lovely original that sits there in the armchair — not much lost with that picture! But let me hide my lantern so that the lady is not even more frightened when she comes in here from the hearth."

Signor Diavolo had no sooner put the diamond back in the pocket of his cloak than the same lady who had kissed her husband's picture moments before appeared at the threshold with a light in her right hand to see what the noise was all about. She had barely

taken two steps into this room when she sank to the floor with a terrified cry.

"That was the Cadi's hat," Signor Diavolo said, once we were out from under the roof again. "Even in death the Cadi could not be apart from his hat."

### The Devil in the Concert Hall

This episode in the house on Esplanade Street had occupied my imagination to such a high degree that I passed the rest of the night without sleep. I was upset with Signor Diavolo for raising the veil from my own secrets that even the most malicious gossip had as yet been unable to decipher. Since he parted from me most coldly that night, I believed I could hope that he would not pick me up again so soon to participate in one of his roof-raising. Yes, I even avoided sitting near the St. Charles Hotel, where he was living during his visit to this city. I left it to chance when and how we would meet again.

So several weeks passed without my seeing him. Then my curiosity drove me to learn whether he was still in New Orleans. For this purpose I only had to approach the lepreux of the hotel. This countryman of Cincinnatus of Caprero, currently first lieutenant, junior grade, of the cooks' regiment, gave me the mysterious message that Colonel \*\*\* did indeed still live there, but that he was only at home for ladies of high rank. Since I did not pretend to wish to visit his colonel, the answer of this flour-covered lieutenant seemed a little pert. But I let it go and without dignifying him with my gaze any further, I turned my back on him.

I repeated as I walked away, "Only receives ladies of high rank?" And who might these female acquaintances be that find entrance to the chambers of this hotel under the aegis of this hotel

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leparello? This question pressed so much on my avid spirit that I steadily fell away from my determination to avoid Signor Diavolo, until I came to the resolution to approach Signor Diavolo again under some plausible pretext. An occasion soon presented itself. They were presenting the "Teufelsmühle," and because Signor Diavolo had shown himself an avid fan of German theater while here, I could almost take it as a certainty that he would attend this magician's opera unless other pressing business kept him away.

I was not disappointed. Immediately on my entrance into the classic space of the concert hall I saw him on the left side of the proscenium, leaning against the wall under the image of the prince of German poets. Since he was only slightly bowed and wore a black top hat as a head covering, his figure reached all the way to Goethe's feet, so that it seemed that Goethe was standing on his hat.

One could think of no more suitable tableau than what these two gentlemen presented. For that reason I must voice the opinion that His Majesty chose this position on purpose to suitably occupy (until the curtain rose) the imagination of those onlookers whose nervous systems were already being wound up by the overture. For the devil does nothing without a plan, and whether the moves or stands still, the slightest things still add to symbolism. The proof of this is his horse's hoof, which he carries with him if only as an allegory.

His appearance this evening pleased me to an extraordinary degree, and I felt drawn to him even more than before. His civilian dress suited him significantly better than the uniform of a colonel of Fire Zouaves. A dark-blue, long coat of the finest woolen cloth, cream-colored spats of the same material, a sulfur-yellow vest of watered

silk, white batiste cravat and silver-gray gloves formed an ensemble that would evoke involuntary tears of envy from every dandy.

As was the case with our first encounter at the shop window where the trophies were displayed, this time he was not wearing his Ellsworth beard. Instead there flowed a long mane of snow-white hair with the same glow as loose silk down to his shoulders, making his face appear even paler than it really was. His temples seemed to me dreadfully fallen this evening, pressing his high forehead, on which there were neither wrinkles nor faults, into an imposing arch. His aquiline nose was thin and finely modeled, the mark of his sharpness of understanding, his deep sensibility, but also his unlimited secretiveness, particularly when his ever-moving nostrils were taken into account. His lips were narrow, and when he spoke he revealed two rows of faultless teeth, as white as orange blossoms and as close together as pearls on a string. Not the slightest trace of a moustache could be seen on his upper lip, and his chin and cheeks were equally bald as an eggshell. His admittedly large eyes did not show the slightest fire this evening but stared out without glitter. They resembled those of a dead man, whose lids no loving hand had pressed closed.

I was almost reluctant to approach him, since I did not have a good conscience, at least to the devil. For when only a few steps away from him, I realized that I had had no real reason for avoiding him week after week. There was no doubt that he had long seen me coming, and it was my own problem how I was properly to introduce myself to him a second time in order to restore our acquaintance. After a rapid approach to the left side of the proscenium I stepped up to him, greeted him with a light movement of



the hand and said, "May Your Majesty not marvel that I dare to express my thanks for gracing our German temple of the muses with his high presence."

"I am glad to see you again," he responded in a courtly manner, as if we had never been at odds. Then he left the position he had been holding, which is to say he freed himself from Goethe's footsteps, put his right arm on my shoulder and continued, "They are playing the 'Teufelsmühle,' tonight, and I am convinced that it will be generally well done, but not far from us will be sitting (and here he looked at someone who sat sunk deeply in thought, studying the theater program) Dr. Sassafras, a penetrating critic who makes every imaginable effort to make the actors feel his mood. For that reason he is seated next to Atoti, the great literature-devil, who will convince him how little purpose it would serve for him to stymie the growth of your German stage by pouring out all the stock of established phrases from decades of reviews in order to embitter the morning coffee of the poor readers. Atoti will tell him that the larger public is confused about the true talents of the performers through his criticism, and that he is more or less compelled to take over the office of judging their efforts."

"There Your Majesty is entirely correct!" I responded, "and let all theater critics who write with goose-quills be condemned to drown in their own ink."

"Easy, easy my friend," Signor Diavolo responded, "let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater, for next to Dr. Sassafras there sits another who writes with a hawk's feather, and then ..."

Then the curtain rose. I followed Signor Diavolo's hand, who moved to the center of the proscenium. [End of the last episode - none further]



### **Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein**

Reizenstein published a last German-language novel about New Orleans in 1865, as the Civil War was in its last days. It was entitled "Bonseigneur in New Orleans," and it dealt with the group guilt of the Creoles for introducing slavery to the American South and the Caribbean. After the war he would be a good friend and frequent house-guest of George Washington Cable, who would win a reputation as a novelist of the Creoles, particularly for "The Grandissimes." After Reizenstein's death, Cable would use his old friend as the central figure of a novella entitled, "The Entomologist" (1899). Reizenstein would die of tertiary syphilis on 19 August 1885, and he would be buried in the family tomb of the Berthelssons due to the marriage of his daughter Sophie. He would be joined there by several other family members over the years, as is the practice of New Orleans. The Reizensteins in Germany still live in their ancestral home in Bavaria, near the town of Hof.

Events at the Deutschheim State  
Historic Site  
in Hermann, Missouri  
from Bruce Ketchum, Historic Site  
Specialist III

Deutschheim State Historic Site is enjoying another good year in regard to visitation. The first six months of 2005 show a slight increase in visitation to the site over 2004, which had an increase of twenty four percent over 2003.

On June 25, a very hot and humid day, Deutschheim held its second annual Hermann Living History Day. Visitation for the event wasn't as hoped for, but the weather was extremely hot and uncomfortable. Even with the bad weather, visitation was about the same as in 2004. The Hermann Living History Day event will be held on June 3, 2006 next year and will coincide with the Hermann Garden Clubs' annual Garden Tour.

Over the coming months additional changes will take place at Deutschheim State Historic Site. Restoration work got underway on the Pommer-Gentner house on July 5th. It is expected that work will be concluded by November. If possible, the house will be decorated for Christmas and a combination Christmas Open House and grand Re-opening of the house will take place during the first two weekends of December 2005.

Work continues on the development of a printing shop in the Strehly house basement. It is intended that a 19th century print shop will be open for visitation soon. In addition, the coming months will see the return of a 19th century winery within the Strehly winery. In the near future a tour of the site will be very different than it has at any time in the past.

## Achtung!

Inside you will find an article on a new book *Immigrant Women in the Settlement of Missouri* by our friends Ken Luebbering and Robyn Burnett. They will be speaking on the subject in Hermann this fall, and for more information on the date, time and location please call the Gasconade County Historical Society in Hermann.

## *Deutsche-Amerikan Day at Kohmueller Farm*

German-American Day will be celebrated this year in Washington Missouri with a Deutsche-Amerikan Day at Kohmueller Farm. This event will be sponsored by Washington Preservation Incorporated on October 8, 2005 from 9 a.m until 5 p.m. at the restored German farmhouse in the City Park on Grand Avenue. There will be German food, German zither music by Franz Schwarzer (a.k.a Bob Yarborough) with lots of other fun activities. Living history, a Civil War reenactment, and other interesting activities highlight Washington's long German history will also be ongoing all day. Plan to bring the children and spend the day, with fun activities for the whole family. For more information contact 636-390-8257.