

1912.

Relocating an Idyll



How British Travel Writers Presented the Carpathians, 1862-1912

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Abstract

PDF

Thus responded Lion Phillimore to the English landscape, on a train to Folkstone in the summer of 1912. Phillimore was headed for Cracow, and a tour of the Carpathians, a mountain range that encompassed what was then Austrian Poland (including the regions of Galicia, Ruthenia and Moravia) and parts of Hungary and Romania. Her and her husband's insistence on sleeping rough and travelling with only a horse and cart and a teenage guide may have perplexed the locals, much to the Phillimores' delight, but the novelty would have been far less to the British public who would read her account of the tour. In the Carpathians has many of the hallmarks of the twentieth-century genre of travel writing identified by Paul Fussell (1981: 209–211) and Mark Cocker (1992: 157–9). Phillimore journeys eastwards on European rails to escape encroaching modernity, to shake off the 'industrialism' that plagues her vision every time she looks out of the train window right through Germany into Poland; her destination 'the last capital in Europe untouched by civilisation and in which the glamour of the Middle Ages still lingered' (Phillimore 1912: 12).

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