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## **The Pilgrims of the Rhine**

**Lytton, Edward Bulwer Lytton**

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Chapter XVI.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

GERTRUDE—THE EXCURSION TO HAMMERSTEIN—THOUGHTS.

THE next day they visited the environs of Brohl. Gertrude was unusually silent, for her temper, naturally sunny and enthusiastic, was accustomed to light up every thing she saw. Ah, once how bounding was that step!—how undulating the young graces of that form!—how playfully once danced

the ringlets on that laughing cheek!—But she clung to Trevelyan's proud form with a yet more endearing tenderness than was her wont, and hung yet more eagerly on his words; her hand sought his, and she often pressed it to her lips, and sighed as she did so. Something that she would not tell, seemed passing within her, and sobered her playful mood. But there was this noticeable in Gertrude: whatever took away from her gaiety, increased her tenderness. The infirmities of her frame never touched her temper. She was kind—gentle—loving to the last.

They had crossed to the opposite banks, to visit THE CASTLE OF HAMMERSTEIN. The evening was transparently serene and clear; and the warmth of the sun yet lingered upon the air, even though the twilight had past, and the moon risen, as their boat returned by a lengthened passage to the village. Broad and straight flows the Rhine in this part of its career. On one side lay the wooded village of Namedy, the hamlet of Fornech, backed by the blue rock of Kruzborner Ley, the mountains that shield the mysterious Brohl; and on the opposite shore they saw the mighty rock of Hammerstein, with the green and livid ruins sleeping in the melancholy moonlight. Two towers rose haughtily above the more dismantled wrecks. How changed since the alternate banners of the Spaniard and the Swede waved from their ramparts, in that great war in which the gorgeous Wallenstein won his laurels!—And in its mighty calm, flowed on the ancestral Rhine, the vessel reflected on its smooth expanse, and, above, girded by thin and shadowy

clouds, the moon cast her shadows upon rocks covered with verdure, and brought into a dim light the twin spires of Andernach, tranquil in the distance.

“How beautiful is this hour!” said Gertrude, with a low voice: “surely we do not live enough in the night—one half the beauty of the world is slept away. What in the day can equal the holy calm, the loveliness and the stillness which the moon now casts over the earth? These,” she continued, pressing Trevylyan’s hand, “are hours to remember; and *you*,—will you ever forget them?”

Something there is in recollections of such times and scenes that seem not to belong to real life, but are rather an episode in its history; they are like some wandering into a more ideal world; they refuse to blend with our ruder associations; they live in us, apart and alone, to be treasured ever, but not lightly to be recalled. There are none living to whom we can confide them—who can sympathise with what then we felt?—it is this that makes poetry, and that page which we create as a confidant to ourselves, necessary to the thoughts that weigh upon the breast. We write, for our writing is our friend, the inanimate paper is our confessional; we pour forth on it the thoughts that we could tell to no private ear, and are relieved,—are consoled. And, if genius has one prerogative dearer than the rest, it is that which enables it to do honour to the dead—to revive the beauty, the virtue that are no more; to wreath chaplets that outlive the day, round the urn which were else forgotten by the world!

When the poet mourns, in his immortal verse, for the dead, tell me not that fame is in his mind!—it is filled by thoughts, by emotions that shut the living from his soul. He is breathing to his genius—to that sole and constant friend, which has grown up with him from his cradle—the sorrows too delicate for human sympathy; and when afterwards he consigns the confession to the crowd, it is indeed from the hope of honour;—honour not for himself, but for the being that is no more.

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