

Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

Digitale Sammlung der Badischen Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

**An Autumn near the Rhine; or Sketches of courts, society,
scenery, &c. in some of the German states bordering on
the Rhine**

Dodd, Charles Edward

London, 1818

Letter V.

[urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-120472](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-120472)

LETTER V.

WE proceeded to Aschaffenburg, by way of Wilhelmsbad and Hanau. The road runs through the fertile valley of the Maine, sometimes for miles along the river; the Taunus mountains rising grandly on our left as we quitted the stately towers and buildings of Frankfort. The Maine here glides through a sandy plain, scattered with villages rich in mingled gardens, orchards and corn country. The handsome white chateau of Rumbelheim, appeared on the edge of the stream—a cheerful summer residence of the Prince Frederic of Hesse Cassel, the father of the intended Duchess of Cambridge—a Princess generally spoken well of, and described as amiable and accomplished.

The whole country from the Heidelberg to the Rhingau, and Homburg mountains, and from the Rhine to the mountains

of the Spessart, presents one face. The vast plain is divided between large forests of the common *Pinus Sylvestris*, occasionally interspersed with oak and beech woods, (though these are principally on the higher ground,) and large bare districts of corn and vegetables, unrelieved by a single tree or hedge. The open fields are divided into small patches, by the difference of culture, which frequently denote the boundaries of each little peasant's farm. There are no large farms — and the proportion of those which are rented is small. The peasant generally farms his own little possession, paying tithe to his sovereign. When the young peasant starts in life, marrying is of course his first step. — His father advances him a sum sufficient to purchase a few acres of the sandy-soil, and a few cows. — If the donation is not very important, he often buys double the quantity, and mortgages his land to some monied man in the town — an accommodation to both parties. The investment supplies the place of public funds in States where they do not exist, and is often preferred to them where they do. A gentle-

man at Hanau, told me he had several thousands outstanding among the peasants in the neighbouring mountains, who brought him his interest with great punctuality.

The approach to Wilhelmsbad, which lies to the left of the road, is through a noble avenue of poplars, which looked doubly stately in the darkness of the evening when I arrived. The gloomy avenue is terminated by a thick plantation surrounding a Gothic tower, the factitious antiquity of which was happily concealed by the shades of night. — The road divides, winding round the tower into the plantation, by a bridge over a canal, whose artificial falls and rattling impetuosity, sounded very formidable. I was obliged to grope my way through this accumulation of horrors increased by the *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, till the lights in the hotel at Wilhelmsbad appeared through the trees to direct my steps.

Wilhelmsbad is a range of handsome white, slated buildings, in a sequestered spot, surrounded by woods; originally built by the Elector of Hesse for a summer residence, for the convenience of the baths of

mineral water. The Elector, with whom money is the *summum bonum*, has now converted it into a hotel, reserving a single suite of rooms for himself. For a considerable time His Highness farmed the Establishment on his own account, and pocketed the profits of the *table d'hôte* and the baths, as readily as any plebeian Boniface. Some jests of the King of Prussia and others, at the expence of the illustrious *Aubergiste*, induced him to let it to its present occupier. It is much frequented in summer by all ranks; and, besides picturesque gardens and shrubberies, presents the usual *agrémens* of a German Watering Place—a gaming table, a *table d'hôte*, public balls, swings, roundabouts, &c. The old Elector, who is doatingly fond of Wilhelmsbad, has bestowed much pains, and some taste, in laying out the grounds. The immediate environs of the house are in a cultivated and domestic taste, gradually growing more wild as you penetrate further into the surrounding wood. The place has a pleasing, and what the Germans call a *friendly* air, in spite of a profusion of little canals, bridges, islands, &c. too much in the

style of a tea-house garden at Pentonville. The season, at its height in July, was past when I visited Wilhelmsbad — and the Prince Paul of Wirtemberg, an exile from his own country, with his wife and family, almost the only remaining guests.

On the occupation by the French of the territory of Hesse Cassel, Wilhelmsbad was bestowed by Buonaparte on one of his Generals ; and the neighbouring Electoral Palace of Philiplsruhe, on his Sister Pauline, who, however, never occupied it.

Hanau is a compact, moderate sized town, one part of it of considerable antiquity, and irregularly built — the other part principally erected by French refugees, in the seventeenth century — and consisting of regular straight streets, with one large formal *Place*, containing the old *Rath Haus*, (Town House,) and a quaint ornamented well in each corner. Its trade is much fallen — and its wealth declined of late years. The Elector, when Hereditary Prince, resided here, but the palace has been deserted since his coming to the throne. There are many emigrants from Flanders ; and a considerable number of

Swiss (a people to be found every where) have settled here, and imported their skill and industry in the arts of watch-making and jewellery. This is now the principal direction of the activity of the inhabitants, who find a market for their productions in Russia and the north of Germany, whither they are conveyed by land, or, as the Germans familiarly say, *auf der Achse* (upon the axle-tree), a phrase, which one of our ingenious Journalists, in translating a German newspaper, once took for the *river Achse*, lamenting, that on reference to the map, he could not discover this river, which the German newspaper pointed out as the only mode of supplying the towns on the Elbe with goods, on Napoleon's blockade of that river.

Hanau, once considerable among the free cities of Germany, is now ostensibly restored since the peace to some of its ancient privileges. The towns-people are tolerably contented. The taxes are moderate; which, I was surprised to learn, is very generally the case in the territories of this tyrannical and singular Prince. At Hanau, every one is permitted to return their own

income, and those who possess above a certain number of guilders, (not a very large sum), pay about forty shillings a year. This is the only direct impost they are liable to.

There are few Princes against whom the cry of oppression has been louder, than against this hoary despot. His bartering of his people to bleed in foreign service, on the other side of the Atlantic, is a stigma not to be effaced — but, in justice it should be considered, that the buyers were scarcely less blameable than the sellers. And, though nothing can justify the principle of such a traffic, I am inclined to think it did not, in fact, cause all the misery attributed to it. The inhabitants of the sands of Westphalia, were not attached to their dismal homes, by the ties which have made such ardent patriots of the mountaineers of Switzerland, or the Tyrol. They were most of them willing emigrants. The Germans are excellent settlers and soldiers, and have generally shown a sort of phlegmatic indifference about the position of the soil they tilled, or the colours they defended. The Elector's cupidity would, however, have hesi-

tated little, if the misery he caused had been greater. Avarice, *hauteur*, and the foppery of a martinet, are his ruling passions. Having no longer a market for his subjects, his disposition takes the direction of starving them by monopolies and speculations in corn on his own account. By a whimsical sort of conscientiousness, he, however, acts the miser equally with his public and his private purse—sometimes in opposition to his personal tastes. His troops are his favourite hobbies; but no troops are worse paid, more shabbily cloathed, or more generally discontented—and by a strange coincidence in a state where the Prince is a notorious drill-sergeant, ever occupied in military details, the army are universally disaffected to the government. He, in fact, treats them as mere puppets, whom he likes to see dressed, and performing their evolutions like obedient machines—for their comfort or well-doing he little concerns himself. When I was at Hanau, the old Prince was expected—an event announced, as usual, by the yard of horse-hair, powder, and pomatum dangling on the backs of the

guards — a gratifying spectacle, without which the old Sovereign can by no means eat his dinner, or take his rest. The instant his back is turned, these cumbrous accoutrements are taken off, to be resumed on the next Electoral visit. Even the day that he was expected, I observed a number of officers without these decorations; who refused, at all risks, to make monkeys of themselves.

A subjection to such caprices is sufficient to disgust soldiers with any sense of their dignity; but the Elector has taken more effectual means to alienate his troops, along with a great body of his subjects. Restored to his dominions, where he was expected with an impatience which moderate prudence might have turned to account, he thought with a stroke of the pen to transform his states to the precise condition in which he had left them. He annulled the sale of the national domains, restored them to the emigrant proprietors, without recompence to the new ones. Every act of the Westphalian government was declared void. All Jerome's *employés* were dismissed and many obliged to quit the country. The promotions of

the old servants of the Elector, who had remained in the French service, were nullified, and they displaced or sent back to their former rank. The army were treated in the same way—and more than one general was degraded to his former rank of lieutenant. A gentleman in office, who knew how to stoop to conquer, got the whip-hand of the Monarch, with much adroitness.—When the Electoral Government left the country, he was secretary of a Department, of which he was made President during the Westphalian reign. The President seeing the course adopted by the Elector, when he was sent for in turn, and asked his situation, replied with humility, “I am secretary of the department of —.” The feeble old monarch, pleased with this recognition of his retrograding principle, instantly bade the secretary remain President.

Some time ago, their small pay, and the continued vexations to which they were subject, induced the subaltern officers to assemble and address the States to interfere in their behalf. The address was signed by all the officers except three. Two

were charged to present it; on their arrival at Cassel, they were arrested and imprisoned. The account given in a German Journal of this transaction is so interesting and little known, that I cannot forbear sending it you.

“ The Staff Captain of Artillery, Huth,
“ and the First Lieutenant De Rottsmann,
“ were confined in the Castle of Cassel, as
“ instigators of the address. Their fate
“ was long unknown; and never had an
“ event occurred in the country which ex-
“ cited so strongly the interest of all ranks.
“ The officers received, not only from their
“ brethren in arms, but from all the in-
“ habitants of Cassel, continued proofs of
“ good wishes. Serenades were given them
“ at night on the Fulda, which runs under
“ the Castle. An officer, who was passing
“ the bridge with his company on mount-
“ ing guard, seeing De Rottsmann at the
“ window, cried out to his men to salute
“ him; and they gave the prisoner all the
“ honours of a Prince. The pastors in-
“ troduced the event in their sermons, and
“ took occasion to exhort the people to
“ perseverance and boldness in the struggle

“ for their liberties ; some of them select-
“ ing for a text, Luke, chap. xii. v. 32.,
“ ‘ Fear not, little flock, for it is your
“ Father’s good pleasure to give you the
“ kingdom.’ The conduct of the three
“ officers who had refused to sign the ad-
“ dress excited such general disgust, that
“ the people with whom they lodged re-
“ fused to retain them in their houses.
“ When the public mind was in this state,
“ the order was published, sentencing the
“ two officers to six months arrest in a
“ fortress, and dismissal from the service ;
“ while the three captains who had refused
“ to sign were praised for their exemplary
“ conduct, and promoted. As the affair
“ remained so long undecided, report as-
“ serted that the Elector had consulted the
“ Prussian Government what course to
“ take : but this is not probable. The
“ Elector is of an independent character,
“ and little consults others in his resolu-
“ tions. The order was not issued without
“ visible apprehensions ; the garrison was
“ dispersed — two battalions removed from
“ Cassel — and the Hereditary Prince, fear-
“ ful of passing the night at the Palace,

“retired to Wilhelmshohe. Such precau-
“tions were unnecessary, and the fears
“which inspired them ill-founded. All
“the officers detested sedition, and had
“no other view than that of asserting their
“rights in a legitimate and moderate man-
“ner. Almost at the moment when the
“order was published, the sheets of the
“*Observateur Allemand*, which related the
“commencement of the affair, arrived at
“Cassel. They were seized at the post by
“order of the Government. This only
“served to give more importance to the
“opinions of an impartial writer. The
“prohibited numbers were brought from
“the neighbouring States, and read with
“avidity. Vain efforts to conceal the
“truth! Nothing can now remain beneath
“a veil. An injustice committed on the
“shores of the Baltic rouses a cry of dis-
“content throughout Germany, which
“resounds to the mountains of Rhetia.”

On the publication of the order, all the subalterns of all the regiments demanded their *congé*, according to prescribed forms; each officer remitting to his commander a note to this effect:—“In signing the ad-

“ dress to the States, the subscriber has
“ incurred, on his honour, obligations which
“ compel him to demand his dismissal,
“ since he is only willing to serve his
“ country and his Prince as a man of ho-
“ nour.”—The officers acted with an unani-
mity and dignity which increased the
esteem of the public, and the interest
taken in their fate. Some, who were married,
and without fortune, were relieved by their
brethren from the obligation of resigning;
but they refused, with disdain, to separate
themselves from the common cause. One
only officer refused to give in his resig-
nation: he was generally insulted on the
parade, and when he sought protection
from his superiors, he was received by them
with contempt. Many of the officers, thus
thrown out of employ, embarked for Ame-
rica; and the Elector thus lost the services
of a body of men, whose attachment would
have been inviolable, if he had won it by
mild and reasonable treatment.

Contrary to the general fact, the Elector
is, I understand, no where more unpopular
than in his own Capital, Cassel. The

penury of his Court and government, as well as its arbitrary caprice, are there more immediately felt, and more strikingly contrasted with the extravagant splendour and gaiety of the French Sovereign and his suite; and, by a singular coincidence, the persons who least suffer from the oppression of the old doating tyrant, are the peasants, who are removed out of its sphere, and on whom the taxes are very moderate. It is politic in the Elector to avoid equally exasperating the lower and the higher orders of his subjects; as it is among the former that discontents generally assume an active shape, and in such an event, he could little rely upon the affection of troops, whom he treats with a mixture of caprice and injustice.

Little neighbouring States have their rivalries as well as great ones; and not the less ardent for the insignificance of their causes. An ancient animosity has subsisted between the house of Hesse Cassel and Hesse Darmstadt, in some degree extending to the subjects of the two countries. This grave breach, which has kept his Electoral

Highness for many years a stranger to his Grand Ducal neighbour, has just now been closed: an event, signalized by an exchange of the orders of the respective houses, and a reciprocal conferring of them on the respective Prime-ministers. A bridge over the Maine which separates the two territories, is to be built in token of reconciliation. About three weeks ago, the Elector paid his first visit at Darmstadt, with the Crown Prince, when he was received in grand gala at Court; and to the usual gracious summons from the Court — *Fourrier, in propria personâ*, was added, an agreeable command to be at the Castle by twelve o'clock, to form a circle to receive his Electoral Highness:—the ladies not to forget their trains.

The Elector's person is not more attractive than his character. He is now advanced in age, and has the infirmity of an enormous excrescence, nearly the size of a hat, on his neck. A fair lady of my acquaintance, who was in a family way, was recommended to beg an excuse from Court from encountering an object so little likely

to produce pleasant impressions. She however persisted in meeting his Electoral Highness: and the first view cost her an involuntary shudder — I trust the only consequence of her hardihood.*

The Crown Prince is in most respects the reverse of his father, without being a jot more estimable: dissolute, extravagant, without character, and loaded with debt. He married a Princess of Prussia, who suffers much from his brutality. The people have little hopes from his succession, which will probably present only a change of evils — “*Dente lupus, cornu taurus petit.*” He will spend more money among them; at first drawn from the treasures of his father — afterwards, in all probability, from their own pockets. The Elector returned the same evening from Darmstadt to his favourite Wilhelmsbad; while his hopeful son, for whom a pleasant evening circle was prepared by the amiable Hereditary Princess of Hesse, had the good taste to prefer

* I rejoice since, to learn that the fair Baroness has safely given birth to two fine boys as yet presenting no traces of the impressions made by the Elector.

putting himself to bed at six o'clock, and amusing himself with a circle of courtiers round his bed-side!

North of the town, on the other side of a small river is the spacious field bounded by extensive woods, the scene of the battle of Hanau—the last stand of the French in their hurried retreat from Leipsic.—The town was garrisoned by Bavarians—and large bodies of Austrians and Bavarians had marched thither from Aschaffenburg, to intercept the retreat of the French. In the conflict, the town was several times taken and retaken, and a large portion of the suburbs are still in ruins from conflagration. In the Jews' street, on the northern side, the watch-word was changed between the French *Qui vive?* and the German *Wer ist da?* seven times in the course of the night. A mill on the little river, was the scene of desperate conflicts. The post was in possession of the Bavarians, and the mill-dam served as a communication between the field of battle and the Hanau side of the stream. In the course of the conflict, the Bavarians and

the French in turn often retreated and pursued each other over this slippery bridge—the miller favouring the former by drawing off the water as they passed, and suffering it to flow again, to obstruct the passage of their adversaries. Hundreds of Frenchmen thus found their graves in the mill-hole. Though the French were routed at Hanau, with immense loss, their defeat is considered not to have been so complete as it might have been ; and the Prince Wrede, who commanded, is much blamed by military men, for not having waited for them in a narrow pass between the hills, near Hanau, which they must pass, and where their retreat might have been completely cut off.

How far these criticisms are just, it is difficult to judge — but when was a battle ever fought, on which fire-side Heroes did not discover that if this General had done that, or that Officer had not neglected this, the victory would have been so much more complete — or so many thousand lives would have been spared? Perhaps the critics of the Battle of Hanau, like those of many other battles, are of that sort which

are so admirably silenced by Sir George England, in the Tatler.

A young Belgian Officer, who was Aid de Camp to General Excelmans, at the battle of Hanau, described Buonaparte's temper to me in lively colours. — His rage, of which both himself and the General were occasional objects, was frantic and ridiculous beyond measure. — He would gnash and grin with his teeth, and talk through them in a shrill, crying, tone — and fling his cocked hat on the ground, and jump on it — then drop on a sudden, into a tone of irony or exhausted composure. — Some General (I think a General Lihu,) who had commanded a body of Cavalry, in an engagement, had committed a fault. — Buonaparte ordered another to take the command, and the General to attend him. — He assailed him with a torrent of abuse, the lowest and most emphatic he could bring forth — concluding with — *mais cependant vous êtes un brave homme — je me fie à vous — mais vous ne valez pas quatre sous — vous êtes un — bête.* — And, after thus abusing the poor General's incapacity, the Emperor showed his appreciation of his fidelity by

instantly giving him the command of a guard round his own person.

A French Nobleman gave me a somewhat similar account of his occasional fits of choler at his levees and audiences. A disgraced diplomatist, one day appeared at the Levee, as if nothing had happened. Buonaparte's rage on the occasion was awful. — He burst upon him, pursued him with voluble invectives, and fairly abused him out of the circle. His manner was soured for the rest of the day; and he accosted every body after, with a sort of snappish politeness — asking one "*Comment se porte votre femme?*" in a tone of invective — and another his judgment on a picture or a tragedy, in a voice of thunder.

You will laugh when I tell you that a very profitable letter of introduction which I presented at Hanau, was from the pen of a most invaluable personage — my washerwoman in London. The good woman having a daughter in service at Hanau, I charged myself with a packet for her, under cover to her master, one of the first citizens of the town. His wife being an Englishwoman, and he himself having resided many

years in England, they overloaded me with hospitable attentions. My host's history is rather curious. A quarrel with his step-mother had induced him to quit home young, and embark for England. Having acquired a fortune in trade large enough for Germany, he married and returned to his native place, where he found his parents dead, and himself in possession of their property. A large rambling house, containing thirteen rooms on a floor, and adorned with pictures of old Electors, in which I found him, was a part of his patrimony. The house goes by the name of Noah's Ark, from the singularity of its construction, arising, as the story goes, from a singular cause. The upper story is a complete second house, built on the first. The builder, an opulent citizen, who possessed ninety-nine houses in Hanau, was ambitious of attaining to a hundred — but the jealousy of the citizens opposed his harmless whim, unless he consented to pave a path to the church, some hundred yards long, with Reichs Dollars. He declined this exorbitant tax; but unwilling to resign the pride of one hundred houses, he contented his

ambition with a hundredth placed on the top of one of the ninety-nine.

My Hanau acquaintance, now a gentleman at ease, is amusing himself in constructing a steam-boat to navigate on the Maine and the Rhine, between Frankfort and Amsterdam. A clever mechanic, whom he has found at Hanau, flatters himself to have discovered several improvements which will obviate the danger, and increase the power of the machine. With all his ingenuity, I have great doubts whether the stream of the Rhine, at all times very rapid, and sometimes swelling to an irresistible torrent by a single day's rain, will not be an insurmountable obstacle to the scheme. It has already foiled several attempts of the kind. In the meantime difficulties hardly less formidable, present themselves in the hesitations and the scruples of the diplomatists of the different Governments at Mayence*, whose consent it is necessary to obtain. Some

* Mayence is the seat of a Central Committee for the superintendance of the navigation of the Rhine — composed of Commissioners from the different States who border on the river.

of the Powers demur about the colours he is to carry — others the danger of the mode of navigation. The builder is willing to remove the former difficulty, by carrying the colours of all, or any of the Powers, as they please; and he is building a model of his vessel, with which he will return to the scrupulous Diplomats, to convince them of the impossibility of danger.

Taking leave of our hospitable acquaintance, we proceeded towards Aschaffenburg. We passed a handsome obelisk, just out of the city, erected by the grateful townsmen to the Elector, when he was stopped in his career of beautifying and improving the city, by his elevation to the throne. A fine, open, fertile country lay before us, terminated by the lofty wooded mountains of the Spessart Forest, which commence just above Aschaffenburg.

On the left, about two leagues from the road, rises a bold range of hills, covered with forest and cultivated country; the commencement of a district, called the Frei Gericht, to which the simplicity and sturdy spirit of its inhabitants give consi-

derable interest. The Frei Gericht was formerly an *immediate* territory of the Emperor, and partly from that circumstance, and its remoteness from the seat of empire, the inhabitants enjoyed an undisturbed existence, with many immunities, to which their neighbours were strangers. In the commencement of the revolutionary war, the Emperor ceded the district to the Elector, in liquidation of a debt. The first attempt of this new master was to make soldiers of the rude inhabitants, who had hardly heard the report of a gun. They opposed themselves to this invasion of their freedom, with an inveteracy and indignation surpassing all bounds. Squadrons of troops were sent into the mountains, who secured parties of the peasants, after a desperate defence with their implements of husbandry, and brought them down to Hanau. Here they were subjected to the cruellest discipline of the guard-room, which they supported with an obstinate and declared determination never to become soldiers but in defence of their own mountains. An act of cruelty, committed by an officer on one of these poor men on parade, was re-

venged by one of his comrades, who instantly stabbed the officer with his bayonet. The man contrived to conceal himself, and when all were interrogated with intimidating menaces, the real culprit was sheltered by every one eagerly offering himself up as the perpetrator. By dint of continued severity, some were at last forced into the ranks; others remained firm in their resistance, and were at last suffered to return to their mountains. What the ill-judged harshness of the Elector's officers could not accomplish, has since been effected by the French; and numbers of these sturdy peasants have been drawn into the ranks in the late campaigns. The spirit with which they defended their freedom, is the best proof that they were not wanting in the main qualities of a soldier, when they took up arms by choice.

We did not omit stopping at the little village of Dettingen, about three leagues from Aschaffenburg, celebrated for the battle in which George the Second commanded in person, in 1743. We made inquiries at the little inn, for the field of battle, and the house where our Monarch slept. The

former adjoins the town, but the house, which is still standing, lies at some distance. The moment the lad to whom we addressed our inquiries, understood their object, he ran up stairs to fetch his grandfather, who, he assured us, could tell us all about it. The gouty old gentleman came hobbling down with a tattered printed sheet in his hand, which proved to be an account of the battle, printed at the time — with full details, and long lists of killed, wounded, and taken. The old host preserved this record with great care, and resolutely refused our offers to purchase it — no doubt finding it a lucrative property; for the English, he said, never passed without inquiring about the battle. He assured us, that he remembered well seeing the *König von England* in his red uniform, on a white long tailed horse, — that he was nine years old at the time — consequently now eighty-three — an age quite consistent with his bulky paralytic figure and broken voice.

After leaving Dettingen, the country becomes a rough waste of forest and sand, in the waves of which, drifted by the

wind, the stunted firs are sometimes half buried. The passage through the deep, long, avenues resembles travelling in the snow; you move stilly and slowly on, never exceeding a foot pace. Aschaffenburg appears before you, beautifully situated on a little eminence at the foot of the wooded mountains of the Spessart. Between Dettingen and Aschaffenburg we passed from the Electorate of Hesse Cassel into modern Bavaria. On a terrace covered with shrubs, overlooking the Maine, stands the venerable Castle of Aschaffenburg—a large, red stone edifice, whose slated minaret towers, and grotesque pinnacles and ornaments, present an imposing but incongruous *melange* of every description of architecture. Most of the palaces and public buildings in the neighbourhood, of a few centuries date, display the same impure variety. The Castle, formerly the seat of the Electors of Mayence, and since of the Prince Primate of the Rhenish Confederation, is now the summer residence of the Prince Royal of Bavaria, who keeps here a pleasant little Court. The Princess is an amiable handsome woman,

of the house of Saxe Hilburghausen, sister of the Princess Paul of Wirtemberg, and the Grand Duchess of Nassau. Aschaffenburg is a neat little town, with no other importance than what it acquires from the residence of the Prince's Court, which is complained of by the inhabitants as retired and unostentatious, with none of the life or the splendour of the half ecclesiastical and half civil one of the Prince Primate. The walk which the Prince Primate constructed round the town, called the *Schöne Thal*, (Beautiful Valley,) is an agreeable *memento* of his reign. It is a fine wide promenade, running along the bottom of what appears to have been once the ditch of the ramparts. The sloping sides are covered with plantations, whose luxuriant branches arch thickly above, forming a delightful green vault. This cool promenade nearly makes the circuit of the town, ending in the beautiful shrubberies under the Castle overhanging the river, which something remind one of those at Windsor,

“ Whose hoary sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access deny.”

The inhabitants of the town are Catholics, having always belonged to Catholic Sovereigns. The Prince Primate during his reign preached occasionally there on grand occasions; and according to the taste of the Innkeeper's pretty daughter, His Highness was a *recht schöner prediger*—a right fine preacher. Descending from the terrace on which the Castle stands, we passed the picturesque stone bridge over the Maine towards Darmstadt; visiting in our way a country house and gardens, formerly of the Electors of Mayence, now of the Prince of Bavaria, called *Schöne Busch* (Beautiful Bush.) A long alley of poplars conducted us for a league up to the gardens—the lawns, lakes, wildernesses, and parterres of which, are disposed with much taste and beauty. A crew of noisy grotesque looking figures, were exploring them at the same time, whom we presently recognised for Students from the University, who generally spend their summer vacations in rambling over the country on foot. You never fail to distinguish them by their strange costume and looks, and riotous behaviour. One of the youths,

pursuing the same route with ourselves, joined us. He was a handsome lad of eighteen, whose long hair flowing on his shoulders, uncravated neck, and quaint red cap with the Bavarian cockade, and knapsack at his back, did not quite so ill become his pretty face and figure, as the awkward, fall-grown men whom you often meet similarly disfigured. He was studying physic at Wurtzburg—an University of some repute; and now making a peregrination to Bensheim in the Berg-strasse, on a visit to his friends,—anticipating with much glee the delights of a waltz at Auerbach—a favourite place of bourgeois rendezvous—on the next Sunday evening. With his knotty stick, and light brown jerkin and trowsers, and pipe in his mouth, he swung on at a gay pace, which we, who were not so much used to pedestrian performances of ten leagues a day, were sometimes obliged to check. His little gourd bottle of brandy and water, dangling at his button hole, was every now and then applied to his mouth, as he vented a *million sacraments* on the heat—the Germans always adding emphasis to their oaths by numerical process—

and a *hundred thousand million sacraments* being the ordinary climax of rage. For six leagues of sand we trudged on in a hot sun, through a noble forest, sometimes of fir, sometimes of rich beeches and oaks, enlivened by our gay young companion, to Diburg—a mean little town, which presented the first habitations we had seen since Aschaffenburg. Our Student, who was an economical traveller, took us to the worst inn in the place, where he flounced down his knapsack on the table, and shook hands with Madame Klenck, the pretty landlady,—who acknowledged him as an old acquaintance—and was soon relating his swaggering tale to the gaping peasants lounging over the kitchen table.

After refreshing ourselves by a sprawling nap on the benches of the black dirty inn, and a dinner of bread-soup, sausages, and bad Burgundy, we proceeded towards Darmstadt; again entering a fine forest of oak and beech, through the arched shades of which the high road rambled in picturesque irregularity. Long green vistas occasionally opened on each side, cut for the convenience both of hunting and carting wood,

and affording short communicating passages to those sufficiently versed in the mazes of the wood, not to fear the fate of the fair Sister in Comus. The mail-cart to Aschaffenburg, passed us toiling through the ruts at a foot pace — the wood echoing to the cracking whip of the post-boy, who was laughing cheek-by-jowl with a heavy peasant girl he had taken up to beguile the journey. Epistolary correspondence, as you may judge from the character of this Mercury, does not travel in Germany quite at the rate of the Bristol mail — that happy invention for bringing bills of exchange and lovers' vows speedily to hand. A letter is sometimes ten days in travelling from Hanover to Frankfort; and one which we wrote to Germany from the Netherlands as our *avant courier*, brought to some friends the pleasing intelligence of our approach, when we had been enjoying their company about three weeks. We arrived at Darmstadt on Saturday evening — in time for the Court chapel the next morning, the Court dinner at noon, and the grand Opera in the evening — the invariable Sunday occupations of the gay world in the little capitals.