

Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

Digitale Sammlung der Badischen Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

Excursions along the banks of the Rhine

Hugo, Victor

London, 1843

Letter XXVI.

[urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-125010](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-125010)

LETTER XXVI.

THE RHINE.

Mayence, 1st October.

A BROOK issues from the lake of Toma, upon the eastern declivity of St. Gothard, another from a lake at the foot of Mount Lukmanierberg; a third distils from a glacier, and descends among the rocks from a height of a thousand toises; and at fifteen leagues from their several sources, the three intermingle in a ravine near Reichenau. By what simple though powerful means does Providence bring about the grandest results. Three shepherds meet and form a nation; three torrents meet and create a river. The nation was born the 17th Nov. 1307, at night, on the border of a lake, where three shepherds met and embraced each other. It rose from the earth, calling upon that God who is the creator of emperors and serfs, to protect its infancy, and then seized upon flails and forks for self-defence. A rustic giant, it grappled, arm to arm, with the giant emperor!

At Kussnacht it crushed the tyrant Gesler, who would fain have had it worship the empty cap of his empty head; at Sarnen, the bailiff Landenberg, who put out the eyes of aged men; at Thaleweyl, the bailiff Wolfenschiess, who hewed down women with

his axe; at Mongarten Duke Leopold, at Morat, Charles the Bold. Under the hill of Buttisholz it buried the three thousand English of Enguerand de Coucy; keeping in check the four formidable enemies advancing from the four cardinal points. At Sempach, it beat the Duke of Austria; at Grandson, the Duke of Burgundy; at Chillon, the Duke of Savoy; at Novarre, the Duke of Milan! Remark also, that at Novarre, in 1513, the Duke of Milan was duke by the right of the sword, and called himself Louis XII., King of France. The Swiss nation has appended to a nail in its arsenals, over his peasant attire, and by the side of the fetters destined for him, the splendid caparisons of the conquered duke! Its archives boast the names of great citizens: first, William Tell; three champions of liberty, Pierre Colin, and Gundoldingen, who shed their blood upon the banner of their native town. Conrad Baumgarten, Scharnaethal, and Winkelried, who threw themselves upon the pikes of the enemy, like Quintus Curtius into the gulph. These men fought at Bellinzona for the inviolability of the soil; at Cappel, for the inviolability of their conscience. They lost Zwingli in 1534, but delivered Bonnivard in 1536, and have ever since maintained their ground, amidst the four great colossi of the continent, firm, solid, impenetrable,—a focus of civilization, affording an asylum to science, a refuge to thought, a barrier against unjust aggression, a prop to legitimate resistance. For six hundred years, in the centre of Europe, in an austere climate, but under the eye of a divine Providence, these mountancers, the worthy produce of such

mountains—like them, grave, cold, serene, submitted to necessity, jealous of their independence—have asserted, in the teeth of absolute monarchies, lazy aristocracies, and envious democracies, the first of rights, liberty, and fulfilled the first of duties, labour.

The river springs from between two walls of granite; and at Andeer, a Gaulic village, soon connects itself with the name of Charlemagne; at Coire, the ancient Curia, with that of Drusus; at Feldkirch with that of Massena. Then, as if consecrated for the destinies awaiting it by this triple baptism, German, Roman, and French, leaving the mind hesitating between its Greek etymology *Ῥῆϊν*, and its German etymology *Rinner*, both which signify to "flow," it clears both the forest and the mountain, attains the Lake of Constance, leaps down at Schaffhausen, and, touching the hindmost declivities of the Jura, coasts the Vosges, pierces the volcanic formation of the Taunus, traverses the plains of Friesland, bathes the low countries of Holland; and, having worked its toilsome way through rocks, highlands, lowlands, lavas, sands, and reeds, to the extent of two hundred and seventy-seven leagues,—having murmured its way through the great European ant-hill, cementing, as it were, the eternal quarrel between north and south,—having received twelve thousand estuaries, watered one hundred and fourteen towns, separated or divided eleven nations; with the history of thirty centuries mingled in its foam and murmuring in its waters; it discharges itself finally into the sea: a Protean river, the belt of empires, the limit of ambitions, the curb of conquerors, the serpent entwining a gigantic caduceus;

suspended over Europe by the god of commerce; the grace and ornament of the globe; a long and verdant tress, trailing from the Alps even to the shores of the great deep.

Thus then, by the ministry of three herdsmen and three streams, Switzerland and the Rhine have their beginning and origin in the same manner, and the same glorious mountains.

The Rhine assumes every aspect in turn; it is sometimes broad, sometimes narrow, sometimes muddy, sometimes transparent; rapid, and joyous with that boisterous joy which becomes all that is powerful. At Schaffhausen, it is a torrent; at Lanfen, a gulf; at Sickengen, a river; at St. Goar, a lake; at Leyden, a marsh.

Towards evening, as if about to rest for the night, it composes itself: a phenomenon rather apparent than real, and noticeable in all great bodies of water.

I have already stated that unity in variety is the principle of all perfect art. In this respect nature is the most accomplished of artists. Never does she abandon a form without having worked it through all its logarithms. No two things can be less similar than a tree and a river, but still they originate in the same generative principle. Examine in winter a tree deprived of leaves, and think you lay it flat on the ground. You will have the outline of a river, as seen by a bird's-eye view. The trunk will be the river, the main branches the estuaries, the lesser the rivulets, the lateral the torrents, brooks, and springs, the extension of the root the embouchure. All rivers, seen upon a geographical map, are trees which sometimes bear their

fruits or cities at the extremity of their branches ; sometimes in their forks, as nests ; while their confluents and affluents imitate, according to the inclination of their currents, or nature of the ground, the different branchings of various vegetable species, which have their shoots more or less wide from their stem, according to the special form of their sap, or thickness of their wood.

It is remarkable that, considering the Rhine in this manner, the idea of royalty attached to that magnificent river is perfectly justified.

The Y of almost all the tributaries of the Rhine, the Murg, the Neckar, the Main, the Lahn, the Moselle, and the Aar have an angle of ninety degrees : Bingen, Niederlahnstein, Coblenz are in right angles. If in your mind you raise upon the soil the immense geometrical outline of the Rhine, with all its rivulets and estuaries, it describes the configuration of the oak ; the innumerable rivulets into which it breaks, as it reaches the sea, being so many roots or fibres.

The portion presenting the greatest cause for admiration of this far-famed river, for the geologist, the historian, and the poet, is between Bingen and Königswinter, where it traverses from east to west the black mass of volcanic formations, which the Romans designated as the Alps of the Catti.

This is the famous journey from Mayence to Cologne, which most tourists "get through" in fourteen hours in long summer days. In this manner, the eye scarcely dwells upon the Rhine. To see river scenery to perfection, you should go

against the stream. I was exactly one month going from Cologne to Mayence.

From Mayence to Bingen, as from Königswinter to Cologne, there are seven or eight leagues of beautifully cultivated plains, with happy villages on the banks of the river. But, as I told you before, the great enthrallment of the Rhine begins at Bingen, by the Rupertsberg and Niederwald, two mountains of schist and slate, ending at Königswinter, at the foot of the seven mountains.

There all is beautiful. The perpendicular ridges of the two banks are reflected in the deep mirrors beneath. The vine is cultivated on every spot of available ground, like the olive in Provence. Wherever the most trifling prominence can catch the rays of the sun, thither does the peasant carry up baskets of earth, which he secures by uncemented stones, to retain the soil, and allow the water to ooze away. By way of precaution, that the rains may not wash away the soil, the vinedresser covers it with broken slate, so that the vine on these cliffs, like the olive in the Mediterranean, grows suspended in projecting consoles, above the head of the traveller, like flowerpots out of an attic window. Every declivity is clothed with vines.

On the whole it is an ungrateful culture. For ten years past the vintage has been spare. In many places, more particularly at St. Goarhausen, in Nassau, the cultivation of the vine is abandoned.

The projecting rocks which follow the varying undulations of its banks, generally of a crescent form, and fringed with the vines stretching from

rock to rock, seem so many garlands suspended along the iron-bound walls of the Rhine.

In winter, when the vines and the soil assume the same black hue, these small terraces, of a dirty grey colour, seem like large spiders'-webs, suspended one above the other, across the angles of deserted buildings, a species of unseemly hammock for the collection of dust.

At every turn of the river, you find a group of houses or villages, and above them, some decaying donjon or citadel. The cities and villages, with their sharp gables, turrets, and steeples, resemble at a distance a barbed arrow, the point towards the base of the mountain.

Sometimes the villages lengthen out along the shore like a tail, with groups of laughing washer-women, and children gambolling on the banks; and here and there, the goats browse upon the willow shoots. The houses on the Rhine appear like slated helmets, placed on the edge of the stream: the frame-work picked out in red and blue upon the white stucco, is the prevailing ornament. Several of these villages, such as those of Bergheim and Mondorf, near Cologne, are inhabited by salmon-fishers and basket-makers; and on fine summer days present an animated spectacle. The basket-maker sits weaving his willows before his door, the fisherman mending his nets in his boat, and the purple grapes cluster over their heads upon the vines. Everything in the universe accomplishes the task allotted for it by the Creator: the stars above—mankind below. The towns have a more stirring and complete aspect; among them are Bingen, Oberwesel, St. Goar,

Neuwied, Andernach, Linz, with its square towers, besieged by Charles the Bold in 1476, having, opposite, Sinzig, built by Sentius to defend the embouchure of the Aar. Then Boppard, the ancient Bodobriga, a fort of Drusus, a royal fief of the Frank kings, an Imperial burgh, proclaimed at the same time as Oberwesel, of the bailiwick of Trèves, a charming old city, possessing an idol in its church, above which two Roman steeples, connected by a bridge, resemble two huge oxen yoked together.

I remarked at the gate of the town as you go up the river, an interesting ruined apsis. This is Caub, the city of the Palatines. Then comes Braubach, named in a charta of 933, fief of the Counts Arnstein of Lahngau; an Imperial city under Rodolph in 1279, a domain of the Counts of Katznellenbogen 1283; accruing to Hesse in 1473; to Darmstadt, in 1632, and in 1802 to Nassau.

Braubach, communicating with the baths of the Taunus, is charmingly situated at the foot of a high rock, crested by Marksburg, the castle of which is now a state prison. No marquis but must have his page; and the Duke of Nassau has the impertinence to pretend to prisoners of state! A royal luxury!

Twelve thousand six hundred habitants, in eleven hundred houses; a bridge of thirty-six boats, built in 1819, across the Rhine; a stone bridge of fourteen arches upon the Moselle, upon the very foundations raised about 1311, by the Archbishop Baldwio, by means of an ample sale of indulgences; the celebrated fort of Ehrenbreitstein, surrendered to the French the 27th January 1799, after a block-

ade during which the besieged paid three francs for a cat, and thirty sous per pound for horseflesh; a well one hundred and eighty feet deep, dug by the Margrave John of Baden; the square of the arsenal, where formerly stood the famous culverine the Griffin, which carried one hundred and sixty pounds, and weighed twenty thousand; an old Franciscan convent, converted into an hospital in 1804; a Roman Nôtre Dame, restored in the Pompadour style, and painted pink; the church of St. Florin, converted into a magazine for forage by the French, and now a Protestant church, which is likewise painted pink; St. Castor, a collegiate church, embellished with a portal in 1805; and with all this, no public library: such is the town which the French writers call *Coblentz*, out of politeness to the Germans, and the Germans *Coblence*, out of courtesy to the French.

In the first instance a Roman camp; a royal court under the Franks; an Imperial residence until Louis of Bavaria; a city belonging to the Counts of Arnstein until 1250, and dating from Arnold II. to the Archbishops of Trèves; vainly besieged in 1688 by Vauban and Louis XIV. in person; Coblentz was taken by the French in 1794, and surrendered to the Prussians in 1815. For my part I did not enter the town. I was dismayed by so many pink churches. As a military point, Coblentz is important; its three fortresses showing fronts in all directions. The Chartreuse sweeps the road to Mayence; the Petersberg protects the road [of Trèves and Cologne; while the fort of Ehrenbreitstein watches over the Rhine and the road to Nassau.

As a landscape, Coblenz has been too much extolled, especially if compared with other cities on the Rhine, which few either visit or speak of. Ehrenbreitstein, once a splendid ruin, is now a gloomy citadel, forming a sorry crown to a magnificent rock. The real crowns of the mountains were the ancient strongholds, of which every tower represented a fleuron. Some of these Rhenish cities possess inestimable treasures of art and archeology. The most ancient and greatest masters abound in their galleries. Domenichinos, Carracci, Guercinos, Jordaens, Snyders, Laurente Sciarpellonis are to be seen at Mayence.

The works of Augustin Braun, William de Cologne, Rubens, Albert Durer, Mesquida, are at Cologne. Holbein, Lucas of Leyden, Lucas Cranach, Scorel, Raphael, and the sleeping Venus of Titian, are at Darmstadt. Coblenz possesses the complete works of Albert Durer, four pages excepted. Mayence has the psalter of 1439; Cologne had formerly the famous missal of the castle of Drachenfels, illuminated in the twelfth century, but it is now lost. She has, however, preserved the precious letters of Leibnitz addressed to the Jesuit de Brosse.

These beautiful cities and charming villages are mingled with the wildest features of nature. Mists hover in the valleys, while the clouds, suspended on the hills, seem to be waiting for the choice of a breeze. Gloomy Druidical forests recede into the mountains, amid the distant haze, and huge birds of prey soar under a fantastic sky, pertaining to the two climates separated by the Rhine; now dazzling

with sunshine like an Italian sky, then foggy and overcast like that of Greenland. The bank rugged, the lava blue, the basalt black, the dust of mica and quartz prevails everywhere. Violent and sudden fissures abound, while the rocks inspire one with the idea of flat-nosed giants. Ridges of slate, in leaves as thin as silk, glitter in the sun, or resemble the huge backs of wild boars. The aspect of the whole river is striking and extraordinary. It is evident that nature, in forming the Rhine, had premeditated a desert, which man has converted into a street. In the time of the Romans and the barbarous ages, it was the *street* of soldiers. In the middle ages, as the river was hemmed in by ecclesiastical states, from its source to its embouchure, by the Abbot of St. Gall, the Prince-bishop of Constance, the Prince-bishop of Basle, the Prince-bishop of Strasburg, the Prince-bishop of Spire, the Prince-bishop of Worms, the Archbishop-electors of Mayence, the Archbishop-electors of Trèves and of Cologne, Rhine was called the street of the priests. In the present day, it has become the street of the merchants. The traveller who ascends the river sees all as it were advancing towards him, and the spectacle is much finer. Every moment some new object passes you, sometimes a barge so crowded with peasants that it is frightful to behold; especially if on a Sunday, when these right good Catholics, governed by Hugonot rulers, must travel far in search of mass. Then the steam-boat, with its streamers, or one of the two-masted craft, with its cargo piled in the centre, descending the Rhine; the pilot with his vigilant eye, the active sailors, a woman

chattering at the cabin-door; and in the midst of the merchandize the sailors' chest, blue, green, or red. Or you see strings of horses on the bank, towing heavily-laden barges, or a little high-arched boat, bravely dragged by a single horse, just as an ant carries off a defunct beetle.

Suddenly the river doubles upon itself, and you discover an immense raft from Namedy, majestically descending. Three hundred sailors man this monstrous craft; long oars, fore and aft, simultaneously strike the waters; a slaughtered ox hangs hooked to the stern, while a living one turns round the post to which he is lashed, lowing to the herd he sees grazing on the shore. The padroon nimbly mounts and descends from his station, the tri-coloured flag floats above, the smoke circles out of the sailors' huts, in fact, a whole village floats upon this prodigious platform of wood. Yet these immense rafts are, in comparison with the ancient craft of the Rhine, as a three-decker to a sloop. The drags or rafts of former times,—made up, like those of to-day, of ship-building timber, bound together at their extremities by joists called *bunds-parren*, and secured together with osier twists and iron cramps,—carried fifteen or eighteen habitations, ten or twelve boats laden with oars and rigging, were manned with a thousand rowers, drew eight feet of water, were seventy feet broad, and nine hundred long, *viz.* the length of ten first-rate pines of the Murg, that are tied end to end.

Around the central raft, and moored to it by means of a trunk of a tree, serving at once as a bridge and cable, floated, in order to steady her

course, as well as to diminish the chances of stranding, ten or twelve small sized rafts, about eighty feet long, called by some *knice*, by others *anhänge*.

On one side of the great raft there was a clear way, leading from a spacious tent to the house of the padroon, a kind of wooden palace. The kitchen smoked incessantly, and a vast cauldron bubbled night and day. Morning and evening, the pilot hoisted up a basket suspended from a pole, which was the signal for meals, and the crew, to the number of one thousand, assembled with their wooden spoons. These drags or rafts consumed in one voyage eight tuns of wine, six hundred hogsheads of beer, forty sacks of pulse, twelve thousand pounds of cheese, fifteen hundred pounds of butter, ten thousand of smoked meat, twenty thousand fresh, and fifty thousand pounds of bread. They took with them a flock of sheep and a butcher. Each of these rafts was worth about eighty thousand pounds sterling.

It is difficult to imagine how such an island can float from Narny to Dordrecht, dragging its archipelago of islets through all the rapids, rocks, and gulfs abounding in the Rhine. The wrecks were frequent, and the proverb ran, that the speculator in rafts should have three capitals; one on the Rhine, the second on shore, and the third in his pocket. The art of piloting these monsters was rarely possessed by more than one man in a generation; and at the end of the last century, it was the secret of a master bargeman of Rudesheim, called the old "Jung." Jung having departed this life, the secret seems to have died with its master.

At the present day, twenty-five steamers navigate the Rhine; nineteen boats of the Cologne Company, known by their black and white chimneys, sail betwixt Strasburg and Dusseldorf; and six boats of this latter city, with tri-coloured chimneys, between Mayence and Rotterdam. This immense navigation communicates with Switzerland by means of the steamers from Strasburg to Basle, and with England by those of Rotterdam.

The old Rhenish navigation, by means of sailing vessels, still remains in contrast with that of steam. The rapid and elegant steam-boats, bearing the colours of ten nations, England, Prussia, Nassau, Hesse, Baden and Holland, dash along under the names of *Ludwig*, *Gross Herzog von Hessen*, *Königin Victoria*, *Herzog von Nassau*, *Prinzessinn Marian*, *Gross Herzog von Baden*, *Stadt Manheim*, and *Stadt Coblenz*. The sailing vessels have less proud and assuming names; *i.e.* *Pius*, *Columbus*, *Amor*, *Sancta Maria*, *Gratia Dei*. The steamers are gilt and varnished; the sailing vessels pitched. The former is a speculation, the latter an austere and God-fearing navigation. The one relies upon the proud invention of man, and demands the aid of the elements; the other looks to Providence, and prays for their propitiation. This antithesis, in action, is constantly meeting and confronting on the Rhine. The contrast expresses, with a singular force of reality, the two-fold spirit of our times; a Present, which is the daughter of a pious Past, and the mother of an operative Future.

Forty-nine green islands, in which smoke issues from houses hid in tufts of flowers, affording deli-

cious havens and charming retreats, are scattered along the Rhine from Cologne to Mayence. Each of these has some peculiar history. Graupenwerth, where the Dutch constructed a fort named the Priest's Cap: Pfaffenmüth, a fort which the Spaniards retook and named Isabella. Graswerth, the "*Isle of Grass*," where John Philip of Reichenberg wrote his "*Antiquitates Saynensès*." Niederwerth, once so rich with the dotations of the Margrave Archbishop John II. Urmitzer Insel, known to Cæsar; and Nonnenswerth, famous for the loves of Roland the Brave.

The traditions of the banks correspond with those of the islands; permit me to touch upon a few, and we will return more circumstantially to this interesting subject. Every shadow that falls from one side of the river produces a corresponding one on the other. The coffin of St. Nizza, granddaughter of Louis le Debonnaire, is at Coblentz; the tomb of St. Ida, cousin of Charles Martel, is at Cologne. St. Hildegarda left at Eubingen the ring given to her by St. Bernard, with this device, "I love to suffer." Siegbert is the last King of Austrasia who inhabited Andernach. St. Geneviève lived at Frauenkirch, in the woods, close by a mineral spring, near which now stands a commemorative chapel; her husband resided at Altsimmern.

Schinderhannes devastated the valley of the Nahe; and it was there that he one day amused himself by forcing the Jews to take off all their shoes, then heaping them up indiscriminately, insisted upon their putting them on again. The Jews hobbled away, much to the amusement of "John the Flayer." Pre-

vious to Schinderhannes, this beautiful valley belonged to Louis, the Black Duke of Deux Ponts.

When the traveller has passed Coblenz, and leaves behind him the pretty islet of Oberwerth, where I know not what white building has replaced the abbey of the Noble Ladies of St. Magdalen, the embouchure of the Lahn arrests the eye, a charming spot! On the waterside, behind a multitude of craft moored to the shore, rise the two crumbling steeples of Johanniskirch, reminding one of Jumiéges. To the right, above the Castle of Capellen, upon a ridge of rocks, is Stolzenfels, the vast and magnificent fortress where the Elector Werner studied his almuchabala; and to the left, on the Lahn, at the verge of the horizon, the clouds and the sun intermingle with the gloomy ruins of Lahneck, fraught with mystery for the historian, and obscurity for the antiquary.

On either side of the Lahn are two charming towns, Niederlahnstein and Oberlahnstein, connected with each other by an avenue of trees, which seem to exchange smiles and salutations.

At a good stone's throw from the eastern gate of Oberlahnstein, which exhibits a black line of embattled walls, a chapel of the fourteenth century peeps out from among the fruit-trees, surmounted by a small cupola. In this chapel were deposited the remains of the Emperor Wenceslas. It was in this village church, in the year of Our Lord 1400, that the four Electors, John of Nassau, Archbishop of Mayence; Frederick of Saarwerden, Archbishop of Cologne; Werner of Kœnigstein, Archbishop of Trèves; and Rupert III., Count Palatine, solemnly

proclaimed the downfall of Wenzel, Emperor of Germany. Wenceslas was at the same time weak and wicked, a drunkard, and ferocious in his cups. He ordered all priests to be drowned who did not reveal to him the secrets of the confessional. Though doubting the fidelity of his wife, he confided in her advice, and was influenced by her opinions, which proved a source of anxiety to Rome: for his wife was Sophia of Bavaria, and John Huss was her confessor; who, propagating the doctrines of Wickliff, sapped the Holy Seat of the sovereign pontiff, who struck down the emperor in return.

It was at the instigation of His Holiness, that the three archbishops convoked the Count Palatine. The Rhine then governed Germany. These four alone were able to put down the emperor, and afterwards name in his place the only one of them who was not a churchman, Count Rupert, who had no doubt long expected the event, but proved worthy of his destiny.

You perceive that in her high tutelage of kings and kingdoms, the power of Rome had sometimes a wholesome influence.

The bull fulminated against Wenceslas rested upon six points; the four principal of which were—first, the dilapidation of the domain; secondly, the schism in the church; thirdly, the civil wars of the empire; fourthly, having allowed dogs to sleep in his room!

In spite of this warning, John Huss persisted, and so did Rome.

“Rather than yield,” said John Huss, “I would be cast into the sea, with a millstone round my

neck." Having unsheathed the sword of the spirit, he fought, body to body, with the Pope. Then, when summoned by the council, he went alone and unprotected to meet his destiny. *Venimus sine salvo conductu*. You know the sequel, which took place July 6th, 1415.

Time, which gnaws into all which is flesh or surface, reducing facts to the state of a corpse, exposes to view all the fibres of history. To him who reflects, thanks to this laying bare, upon the providential construction of the events of those dark times, the deposition of Wenceslas is but the prologue to a tragedy of which the stake at Constance is the catastrophe.

Opposite this chapel, on the opposite bank, stood, till within the last half century, the seat of royalty, the Königstuhl, which was seventeen German feet high, and twenty-four in diameter; being an octagonal platform of stone, supported by seven stone pillars, and an eighth larger one in the centre; symbolical of the emperor among the seven electors.

Seven stone chairs corresponded with the seven pillars, above which they were placed, in a circle, and facing each other. The eighth front of this octagon looked towards the south, and was occupied by a flight of steps, in all fourteen, two for each elector. Everything was typical, and had a meaning, in this venerable edifice.

Behind each chair, upon each of the octagonal fronts, were sculptured the arms of the seven electors. The Lion of Bohemia; the Crossed Swords of Brandenburg; Saxony, with an Eagle *argent* on

gules; the Palatinate, which bore a Lion *argent*; Trèves, which bore *argent* with a Cross of *gules*; Cologne, which bore *argent* with a Cross *sable*; and Mayence bearing *gules*, with a Silver Wheel. These escutcheons, of which the gildings and emblazonments were impaired by the sun and rain, formed the sole ornament of the granite throne.

There it was, that seated upon these stone chairs, simple yet august, the ancient electors decided who should be Emperor of Germany! Later, this primitive custom was discontinued, and the electors, increased to nine by the accession of Bavaria and Brunswick, assembled round the leather-covered table of Frankfurt.

The seven princes who sat round this throne were powerful, and at the head of the Holy Roman Empire. They preceded, in the Imperial procession, the four dukes, the four archmarshals, the four landgraves, the four burgraves, the four great counts of war, the four abbots, the four boroughs, the four knights, the four cities, four villages, four hamlets, four marquises, four lords, four mountains, four barons, the four chief huntsmen, four offices of Suabia, and the four men of the household.

Before each of them was borne, by his particular marshal, a richly embellished sword. They called the other princes the "crowned heads," and themselves, the "crowned hands." The Golden Bull compared them with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit—the seven hills of Rome—the seven branches of Solomon's candlestick.

Among them, the electoral quality took precedence

of the royal; the Archbishop of Mayence walked by the side of the emperor, the King of Bohemia to the right of the archbishop. Their fame stood so high, that the peasants of Weser, in Switzerland, still call the seven summits of their lake the "Sieben Churfürsten," or Seven Electors.

The Königstuhl has disappeared as well as the electors. Four stones mark the place of the throne, but nothing the place of those who sat thereon.

In the sixteenth century, when it became the custom to name the emperor at Frankfort, sometimes in the hall of the Rœmer, sometimes in the chapel of the conclave of St. Bartholomew, the election became a more complicated ceremony. The etiquette of Spain prevailed, as the most formally severe. From the morning of the day of election, the gates of the city were closed; the drums beat to arms, the alarm-bell rang, the electors,—clothed in scarlet and gold, trimmed with ermine, the seculars wearing the electoral cap, the archbishops the scarlet mitre,—received the solemn oath of the magistrate of the city, that he was responsible for their mutual security—the one from being surprised by the other.

This form observed, they tendered their oaths to the Archbishop of Mayence, who then performed mass; they took their places upon chairs of black velvet; the marshal closed the wicket, and forthwith they proceeded to the election. However secure the wickets, the notaries and chancellors found means of access. At last, the "*very reverend*" being agreed with the "*very illustrious*," the King of the

Romans was named ; the princes arose from their chairs ; and while the presentation was made to the people at the window of the Rømer, one of the suffragans of Mayence performed at the church of St. Bartholomew a *Te Deum* with a triple choir, composed of the organs of the church, the trumpets of the electors, and the trumpets of the emperor.

All this was accomplished to the sound of the great bells of the towers, and the great guns of the bastions, which were mad for joy,—says the curious manuscript which details the coronation of Mathias II.

Upon the Königstuhl, the thing was, in my idea, done more simply, and therefore with more grandeur. The electors ascended the platform by the fourteen steps, each of which was one foot high, and took their places in their chairs of stone ; the people of Rhens, kept back by the men at arms, surrounding the Imperial seat. Then the Archbishop of Mayence, standing up, said : “ Most generous princes, the Holy Empire is masterless.” Then sang he the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, and the Archbishops of Cologne and Trèves the usual collects. The chaunt over, the seven electors tendered their oaths, the seculars with their hands upon the gospel, the ecclesiastics with their hands upon their hearts ; a beautiful and touching distinction, meaning that the heart of every churchman should be a mirror of the Gospel. After the oath, they stood together in a circle, conversing in an under voice ; when suddenly the archbishop rose, stretched his arms forth to heaven, and cried aloud to the people the name

of the temporal chief of Christendom. Then the marshal of the empire planted the Imperial standard on the banks of the Rhine, and the people shouted "*Vivat rex!*"

Before Lothaire II., elected the 11th of September 1125, the same eagle, the golden eagle, figured upon the banner of the Empire of the East, and upon that of the Emperor of the West. But the rosy sky of the south was reflected in one, and the frozen sky of the north in the other. The banner of the East was red, the banner of the West blue. Lothaire substituted the colours of his house, *or* and sable; and the golden eagle upon a blue field was replaced upon the Imperial banner by a black eagle upon a gold field. But at the end of the fifteenth century, upon the fall of the Greek Empire, the Germanic eagle remained master of the field; and, desiring to represent the two empires looking towards both east and west, assumed two heads.

This, however, was not the first apparition of the double-headed eagle. It is seen sculptured upon a soldier's shield on Trajan's column; and if the monk Attaich, and the traditions of Urstitius can be believed, Rodolph of Hapsburg wore it embroidered upon his bosom, the 26th of August, 1278, at the battle of Marchefeld.

When the banner was planted upon the banks of the Rhine, in honour of the new emperor, and blown about by the wind, the people chose to infer presages of good or evil from its folds. In 1346, when the electors, urged on by Pope Clement VI., proclaimed from the Königstuhl Charles, Margrave of

Moravia, King of the Romans, though Louis still lived, at the cry of "*Vivat rex!*" the Imperial banner fell into the Rhine, and was lost!

Fifty-four years later, in 1400, the fatal omen was justified. Wenceslas, son of Charles, was deposed. With the fall of this banner fell, too, the house of Luxemburg; which, after Charles and Wenceslas, gave but one emperor to the throne,—Sigismund. From this time the House of Austria predominated.

Leaving behind you the Königstuhl, thrown down, as a relic of the feudal times, by the French Revolution, you ascend towards Braubach, pass Boppart, Welmich, St. Goar, Oberwesel; when suddenly, to the left, appears, much like the roof of some giant's castle, a vast slate rock, surmounted by an enormous tower, which seems to disgorge, as from a huge chimney, the chill vapours of the cloud. At the foot of this rock, close by the river, is a pretty town grouped round a Roman church with a spire, its fronts all exposed to the south. In the midst of the Rhine, before the town, often veiled by the fogs of the river, is an oblong edifice standing upon a rock level with the water; both its extremities cutting the stream like the prow or poop of a ship, and the low windows imitating the portholes, while upon the lower basement is a quantity of iron work, resembling the grapples and anchors. Small projections are suspended, as it were, from the sides of this strange building; upon which, like the streamers from masts, numerous weathercocks revolve upon pointed pinnacles.

The tower is Gutenfels; the town, Caub; and

the stone-built ship, eternally floating upon the Rhine, is the Palatine-palace called the Pfalz.

I have already mentioned the Pfalz. The entrance to this palace, built upon a block of marble called the Rock of the Counts Palatine, was, by means of a ladder, connected with a drawbridge which still exists. There were dungeons for prisoners of state; and a small chamber, in which the Countesses Palatine were compelled to await the hour of their confinement, without any other resource of amusement than that of visiting a well in the cellar, the water of which, though under the level of the river, was not that of the Rhine.

The Pfalz, which belongs to the Duke of Nassau, is now abandoned. No princely cradle rocks upon its flags, no royal moan troubles its gloomy vaults. There remains nothing but the mysterious well. Alas! a drop of water filtering through a rock is of greater duration than the blood of a royal race!

The Pfalz is the neighbour of the Königstuhl; so that the Rhine might at once behold the birth of a Count Palatine, and the creation of an emperor.

From the Taunus to the Seven Mountains, on the stupendous precipices hemming in the Rhine on either side, fourteen castles defended the right bank: Ehrenfels, Fursteneck, Gutenfels, Rineck, the Katz, the Mäusethurm, Liebenstein and Sternberg, (called the Brothers), Markusberg, Philipsberg, Lahneck, Sayn, Hammerstein, and Okenfels. On the left bank were fifteen: Vogtsberg, Reichenstein, Rhein-stein, Falkenberg, Sonneck, Heimberg, Furstenberg, Stahleck, Schöenberg, Rheinfels, Rheinberg,

Stolzenfels, Rheineck, and Rolandseck; in all, twenty-nine half-decayed fortresses, which oppose the memories of the Rhinegraves to that of the volcanos; bastions of war to bastions of lava, and completing the formidable and severe outline of the hills.

Four of these castles were built in the eleventh century. Ehrenfels by Archbishop Siegfried; Stahleck by the Counts Palatine; Sayn, by Frederick I., Count of Sayn, conqueror of the Moors of Spain; and Hammerstein, by Otho, Count of Veteravia. Two were built in the twelfth century; Gutenfels, by the Counts of Nuringen; Rolandseck, by Archbishop Arnold II., in 1149. Two in the thirteenth century; Furstemberg, by the Palatines; and Rheinfels, in 1219, by Thierry III., Count of Katzenellenbogen. Four in the fourteenth century; Vogtsberg, in 1340, by a Falkenstein; Fursteneck, in 1348, by the Archbishop Henri III. The Katz, in 1388, by the Count of Katzenellenbogen; and the Mäusethurm, ten years after, by a Falkenstein. One only dates from the sixteenth century; Philipsberg, built about 1568, or 1571, by the Landgrave Philip the Young.

Four of the citadels upon the left bank, Reichenstein, Rheinstein, Falkenberg, and Sonneck, were destroyed by Rodolph of Hapsburg; another, the Rolandseck, by the Emperor Henri V.; five by Louis XIV. in 1689; Fursteneck, Stahleck, Schönberg, Stolzenfels, and Hammerstein; one by Napoleon, the Rheinfels; another by fire, Rheineck; and another by the *bande noire*, Gutenfels.

It is not known who built Reichenstein, Rheinstein, Falkenberg, Stolzenfels, Rheineck, and Markusberg, restored in 1644, by Jean, Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt.

It is not known who demolished Vogtsberg, (the ancient stronghold of some devoted lord, as the name indicates,) Ehrenfels, Fursteneck, Sayn, the Katz, or the Mäusethurm. There is still a profound mystery concerning the manors of Heinberg, Rheinberg, Liebenstein, Sternberg, Lahneck, and Okenfels; no one knows who built or who destroyed them. Nothing can be stronger in the full light of history, than the obscurity amid which, about the year 1400, one perceives the tumultuous confederation of the Rhenish Hanse against their lords; or further still, through the obscurity of the twelfth century, the formidable phantom of Barbarossa exterminating the burgraves. Several of these ancient fortresses, of which the history is lost, are half Roman, and half Carlovingian.

There is less obscurity in the traditions of most of the other ruins, and their chronicles may be traced here and there in the old monastic registers. Stahleck, which is above Bacharach, and said to be founded by the Huns, was the death-scene of Herman, in the twelfth century. The Hohenstanfens, the Guelphs and the Wittelsbachs, resided there in turns; and it was besieged and taken eight times, from 1620 to 1640.

Schöenberg, from which issued the family of Belmont, and the legend of the "Seven Sisters," was the birthplace of that great general, Frederick of

Schœnberg, whose singular destiny it was to establish the Braganzas, and precipitate the fall of the Stuarts.

The Rheinfels assisted the towns of the Rhine in 1225, and Marshal Tallard in 1692; but surrendered to the French Republic, in 1794.

The Stolzenfels was the residence of the Archbishops of Trèves. At Rheineck died the last count of that name, in 1544, Canon-custodian of the Cathedral of Trèves. Hammerstein was the scene of the differences of the Counts of Veteravia and the Archbishops of Mayence; the check of the Emperor Henry II., in 1017; the flight of Henry IV., in 1105; of the Thirty Years' War; the passage of the Swedes and Spaniards; and the devastation of the French, in 1689. It was disgracefully sold for a hundred crowns, in 1823!

Gutenfels, the sentry-box of Gustavus Adolphus; the retreat of the beautiful Countess Guda, and the amorous Emperor Richard, was four times besieged, in 1504 and 1642, by the Imperialists. It was sold in 1289 by Garnier de Munzenberg, to the Elector Palatine, Louis the Severe, for two hundred thousand marks of silver; and degraded in 1807, to the price of six hundred francs.

This long and double series of edifices, at once poetical and historical, bearing inscribed on their brows all the epochs and legends of the Rhine, commences before Bingen with the castle of Ehrenfels to the right, and the Mäusethurm to the left, ending at Kœnigswinter, by Rolandseck to the left, and Drachenfels to the right. A striking symbolism merits observation, in the opposition of the

immense ivy-clothed arcade of Rolandseck, to the cavern of the dragon subdued by Sigefried le Cornu, and the Mäusethurm to Ehrenfels; fable and history mutually contemplating each other's features.

I only mention here the castles reflected on the Rhine which meet the eye of every traveller. But penetrate the recesses of the mountains, and you will find ruins at every step. In the valley of the Wisper, upon the right bank, in a walk of a few leagues, I found seven; the Rheinberg, a castle of the counts of Rhingau, hereditary grand carvers of the Holy Empire, extinct in the seventeenth century; a formidable fortress, a source of much terror formerly to the important town of Lorch. Among the briars, Waldeck; on the mountain, at the summit of a rock of schist, close by a spring of mineral water, the Saurberg, built in 1536, by Robert Count Palatine, and sold for one thousand florins, during the war of Bavaria, by the Elector Philip, to Philip de Kronberg, his marshal; Heppenheff, destroyed no one knows how; Kammerberg, belonging to the domain of Mayence; Nollig, an ancient *castrum*, of which there remains a tower; Sareck, hid in the forest opposite the convent of Winsbach, just like the knight placed opposite the priest in the communities of yore. Now both castle and convent, priest and knight, have vanished, the forest and the communities being alone susceptible of annual renewal.

Explore the Seven Mountains, and you will detect by their masonry, half hid under the weeds, six castles, and one abbey; the Drachenfels, demolished by Henry V.; the Lowenberg, the refuge of Bucer

and Melanethon, and the shelter, after their marriage, of Agnes de Mansfeld and the Archbishop Guebhard; the Nonnenstromberg and the Oelberg, built by Valentinian in 368; and the Hemmerich, the manor of the bold knights of Heinsberg, who waged war against the Electors of Cologne.

In the plain near Mayence is Frauenstein, dating from the twelfth century; Scharfenstein, an archiepiscopal fief; Greifenklau, built in 1350.

Towards Cologne stands the admirable Godesberg! But whence its name of Godesberg? Is it from Goding, or Woden, the ten-handed monster, once adored by the Ubians? No etymologist has solved the question. Whatever it may be, nature made Godesberg a volcano; the Emperor Julian, in 362, made it his camp; and Archbishop Theodoric, in 1210, a castle; the Elector Frederick, in 1375, a fortress; the Elector of Bavaria in 1593, a ruin; and the last Elector of Cologne, Maximilian Francis, turned it into a vineyard.

The ancient castles on the Rhine, colossal landmarks left by the feudal sway on its banks, fertilizes the landscape with food for the imagination. Mute witnesses of days of yore, they have been the scene of all sorts of events and histories. They stand there, eternal scenic embellishments of the mighty drama which, for ten centuries past, has been played upon the Rhine; having witnessed (the most ancient at least,) the entrances and exits, under the dispensation of Providence, of these mighty and formidable actors—Pepin, who ceded cities to the pope; Charlemagne, clad in a woollen shirt and doublet of otter skin, leaning upon the old deacon, Pierre de

Pise, and caressing with his colossal hand the elephant Abulabaz; Otho the Lion, shaking his fair mane; the Margrave of Italy, Azzo, bearing the banner of triumphant angels, at the battle of Merseberg; Henri le Boiteux, Conrad the Old, and Conrad the Young; Henry the Black, who imposed four German popes on Rome; Rodolph of Saxony, bearing on his crown, the papal hexameter, "*Petra dedit Petro, Petrus diadema Rudolpho*;" Godfrey of Bouillon, who thrust the spear of the Imperial banner into the heart of the enemies of the empire; and Henry V., who rode up the flight of steps before the church of St. Peter's at Rome.

Not an historical personage figuring in the history of Germany, but his profile has been defined upon those venerable walls. The old duke Welf; Albert the Bear; St. Bernard; Barbarossa, who mistook the hand in holding the stirrup for the pope; the Archbishop of Cologne, Rainald, who tore away the fringe from the Carocium of Milan; Richard Cœur de Lion; William of Holland; Frederick II., that gentle emperor with the Grecian face, the friend of poets like Augustus, and friend of caliphs like Charlemagne, studying in his tent, where a golden sun and a silver moon marked the hours and seasons. They beheld the monk Christian, who preached the gospel to the peasants of Prussia; Herman Salza, first grand master of the Teutonic Order, a great builder of cities; Ottocar, King of Bohemia; Frederick of Baden; and Conradin of Suabia, decapitated at sixteen years of age. Louis V., Landgrave of Thuringia, and husband of St. Elizabeth; Frederick le Mordu, who bore upon

his cheek the mark of his mother's despair; Rodolph of Hapsburg, who mended his own grey jerkin. They echoed the device of Eberhard, Count of Wurtemberg; "Glory to God! war to the world!" and afforded shelter to Sigismund, whose justice weighed discreetly, but struck rashly; Louis V., the last emperor excommunicated by the Holy See; and Frederick III., the last emperor crowned at Rome. They heard Petrarch reproving Charles IV. for not having remained at Rome more than a day, exclaiming to him, "What would your ancestors, the Cæsars say, if they met you on the Alps, your face downcast, and your back turned towards Italy?" They beheld, furious and humiliated, the German Achilles, Albert of Brandenburg, after his reverse at Nuremberg; and the Burgundian Achilles, Charles the Bold, after the fifty-six assaults of Neuss; and, on the other hand, they witnessed the passage, in litters drawn by mules, of the western bishops proceeding, in 1415, to the council of Constance, to judge John Huss—in 1431, to the council of Basle to depose Eugene IV.—and, in 1519, to the diet of Worms, to interrogate Luther.

They also saw, floating upon the Rhine, between Oberwesel and Bacharach, the fair hair and pale body of St. Werner, a poor child martyred by the Jews, and thrown into the Rhine in 1287. They saw the velvet coffin of Mary of Burgundy brought from Vienna to Bruges, she dying of a fall from her horse while at the diversion of hawking; the hideous horde of Magyars; the murmurs of the Moguls imprisoned by Henry the Pious in the 13th century; the cry of the Hussites, who would have reduced all the cities of the earth to five; the threats of Procope le Gros, and Procope le Petit; the alarum of the Turks, ascending the Danube after the taking of Constantinople; the iron cage in which John of Leyden was chained up between

his chancellor Krechtling and his headsman Knipperdolling; the youthful Charles V., with the word "*nondum*" glittering in diamonds upon his shield; Wallenstein, waited on by sixty noble pages; Tilly, in a green satin coat, upon his little grey horse; Gustavus Adolphus, threading the mazes of the Thuringian forest; the fury of Louis XIV.; the rage of Frederick II.; the anger of Napoleon:—all the fearful things which successively have caused Europe to quake have fallen like lightning upon these old and crumbling walls.

These glorious strongholds received the counter-shock of the Swiss destroying the ancient cavalry at Sempach, and of the great Condé destroying the antique infantry at Rocroy. They have heard the splintering of scaling-ladders, the bubbling of pitch, and the roaring of cannon. The lansquenets, those valets of the lance; the hedgehog line so fatal to squadrons; the sturdy blows of Sickingen the valiant knight; the well-planned assaults of Burtenbach, the great captain; they saw all these, braved all, underwent all.

Now, melancholy at night, when the moon throws over their spectre its pale mantle; still more melancholy in the midday sun, redounding with glory, and fame, yet oppressive with weariness and ennui; worn down by time, sapped by man, casting their shadows upon the vines which diminish under them year by year; they let fall the past, stone by stone, into the Rhine, and date after date, into oblivion!

Oh noble towers! Oh poor old paralytic giants! Oh defeated knights! Behold! a steamer, crowded with shopkeepers and their traffic, spouts out its fumes into your faces, and ye have neither an arm nor a voice to uplift in self-defence

THE END.