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Excursions along the banks of the Rhine

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London, 1843

Letter XV.

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

LETTER XV.

THE RHINE.

St. Goar, August 17.

I HAVE often told you how fond I am of rivers. Ideas float upon their current as well as merchandise. For everything in creation has its specific duty. Rivers, like gigantic trumpets, announce to the ocean the beauty of the earth, the fertility of the plains, the splendor of cities, and the glory of mankind.

But, above all rivers, I love the Rhine, which I beheld for the first time a year ago, in passing over the bridge of boats at Kehl. Night was set in, and as the carriage was proceeding at a walk, I remember to have experienced a profound respect in traversing the venerable river. Long had I wished to behold it. It is never without emotion that I enter into communication, I had well nigh said into communion, with those grand objects in nature, which have also played a great part in history. Moreover, objects the most discrepant present to me I know not what strange affinities and harmony.

Do you remember, my dear friend, our journey from the Rhone to the Valserine, in 1825, in our agreeable tour to Switzerland—one of the pleasantest recollections of my life? We were then

but twenty years of age. Do you remember, I say, with what ferocious rage the Rhone flung itself into the gulf, while the frail bridge trembled under our feet? From the moment of that visit the Rhone has always been typified in my mind as a tiger, while the Rhine equally reminds me of a lion.

The evening on which I saw the Rhine for the first time, this idea presented itself more strongly than ever to my mind. I contemplated long and earnestly this proud and noble river, impetuous without fury,—wild, but majestic. It was swollen and magnificent when I crossed it, even so as to wave its yellow mane, or, as Boileau hath it, its “muddy beard,” against the bridge of boats.

The two banks had vanished in the twilight; its roar was subdued, yet powerful. There was something in the strength and dignity of the stream that reminded me of the ocean itself. Yes, my dear friend, the Rhine is a noble river,—at once feudal, republican, and imperial; a noble union of French and German. The whole history of Europe may be considered under two points of view, in this river of warriors and thinkers,—this throbbing artery which revivifies the proud pulses of France,—this ominous murmurer which promotes the reveries of *Almaine*.

The Rhine combines every quality a river can exhibit. The rapidity of the Rhone, the breadth of the Loire, the rocks of the Meuse, the sinuosity of the Seine, the translucency of the Somme, the historical reminiscences of the Tiber, the regal dignity of the Danube, the mysterious influence of the Nile, the golden sands of the glittering streams of the

New World, the phantoms and legends of some Asiatic stream.

Before history took pen in hand, perhaps before man existed to afford matter for history, where the Rhine now flows, smoked and flamed a double chain of volcanoes; the extinction of which deposited on the soil two strata of lava and basalt in parallels, like two prolonged walls. At the same epoch, the gigantic crystallizations, which constitute the mountains, were in process of formation; and the alluvial formations, which constitute the secondary mountains, were in process of desiccation. The monstrous mass we call the Alps was gradually refrigerating, the snows were accumulating on its brow,—of which, two great thaws served to inundate the earth; the one on the northern declivity, overflowing the plains, was intercepted by the double barrier of the extinguished volcanoes, and turned towards the ocean; the other, flowing from the western declivity, rushed from mountain to mountain, passed the basis of that other volcanic mass we call the Ardèche, and discharged itself into the Mediterranean. The first of these inundations, in short, formed the Rhine; the second, the Rhône.

The first tribe recorded by history as gathering towards the Rhine, is that great semi-savage family called the Celts, and which Rome entitled the Gauls. "*Qui ipsorum lingua Celtæ, nostra vero Galli vocantur,*" says Cæsar. The Rauraci settled themselves nearest the source; the Moguntii nearest the mouth. The Romans next appear upon the scene. Cæsar passed the Rhine; Drusus built his fifty citadels; the consul Munatius Plancus began

the building of a city on the northern extremity of the Jura; Martius Vipsanius Agrippa established a fortress at the disemboguing of the Main, and a colony before Tuitium. The senator Antony founded under Nero a settlement near the Batavian Sea, and the whole Rhine was now submitted to the sway of Rome.

When the twenty-second legion, which had encamped in the olive-fields, the scene of our Saviour's cross and passion, returned from the siege of Jerusalem, Titus despatched it to the Rhine; and this Roman legion continued the work of Martius Agrippa. A city seemed necessary to the conquerors, for the purpose of uniting the Melibocus with the Taunus; and Moguntiacum, planned by Martius, was constructed by the legion, and afterwards enlarged by Trajan, and embellished by Adrian.

I must here notice a curious fact. This twenty-second legion was that which brought Crescentius, the first who preached the word of Christ in the Rheingau, and established the new religion. God had decreed that the same blindness which pulled down the last stone of the Temple upon the Jordan, should lay the first stone of that on the Rhine!

After Trajan and Adrian came Julian, who founded a fortress on the confluence of the Rhine and the Moselle; after Julian, Valentinian, who erected castles on the two extinct volcanoes which we now call the Lauenberg and Stromberg. Thus in the course of a few centuries was founded and consolidated in that important line of Roman colonies, Vinicella, Altavilla, Lorca, Trajani Castrum, Ver-

salia, Mola Romanorum, Turris Alba, Victoria, Bodboriga, Antoniacum, Senticum, Rigodulum, Tulpetum, Broilum, which begins at the Cornu Romanorum, at the Lake of Constance, and descends the Rhine, inclining upon Augusta, which is Basle; upon Argentina, which is Strasbourg; upon Moguntiacum, now Mayence; upon Confluentia, now Coblenz; upon Colonia Agrippa, now Cologne; and unites itself, near the sea, to Trajectum-ad-Mosam, now Maestricht, and Trajectum-ad-Rhenum, which is Utrecht.

The Rhine now became Roman. Henceforward it was only the river which watered the farther Helvetic province, the first and second Germany, the first Belgian and Batavian provinces. The bearded Gaul of the north, who about the third century came to stare at the Gaul of Milan in his toga, and the Gaul of Lyons, was subdued and tamed. The Roman castles of the left bank held in awe those of the right; and the legionary, clad in cloth of Trèves and armed with a partisan of Tongres, had only to watch from the summit of his rocks the war-chariot of the Germans, a rolling-tower with scythe-armed wheels, and a pole bristled with lances, drawn by oxen, and having a castle to contain ten archers, which sometimes ventured on the other side of the Rhine, as far as under the balista of the fortresses of Drusus.

Those irresistible incursions of the northern hordes towards the regions of the south, which are repeated at certain climacteric epochs of the age of nations, under the name of invasion of the Barbarians,

eventually overpowered Rome, at the predestined moment of her conversion.

The granite barriers and military strongholds of the Rhine were overthrown by this human inundation; and about the sixteenth century the rocky heights of the Rhine were as fully crested with Roman remains as in the present day we see them with the ruins of feudal times.

Charlemagne restored these ruins, rebuilt the fortresses, and so opposed the old German hordes, re-appearing under different names—the Boemans, Abodrites, Welebates, and Sarabes; he constructed at Mayence (where his wife Fastrada was buried) a bridge upon stone piles, which they say can still be seen when the waters are low; rebuilt the aqueduct of Bonn; repaired the Roman roads of Victoria, now Neuwied; of Baccharia, now Bacharach; of Vincella, now Winkel; of Thronus Bacchi, now Traubach; and constructed for himself, from the remains of Julian's baths, a palace, the Saal, at Nieder Ingelheim. In spite, however, of his genius and power, the efforts of Charlemagne served only to galvanise a skeleton. Rome was now nothing more than a dead body.

It was essential that the new physiognomy of the Rhine should be full of youth and vigour. Already, as I before mentioned, under the Roman yoke an unnoticed grain of seed had fallen in the Rheingau. Christianity, that eagle from the throne of God, having begun to extend its wings, had deposited among the rocks of the Rhine an egg containing the germ of a new world. In imitation of Crescentius, who about the year 70 evangelized the Taunus, St. Apollonarius had visited Rigomagum; St. Goar had

preached at Bacchiara; St. Martin, bishop of Tours, had catechized at Confluentia; St. Maternus, previous to departing for Tongres, had abided at Cologne; St. Eucharius had established himself in a hermitage in the forest of Trèves, in which also St. Gezelin had struggled for three years, on the summit of a column, with a statue of Diana, which he at length overcame and cast down by the severity of his countenance.

At Trèves many Christians died the death of martyrs in the court of the palace of the Roman prefect of Gaul, and their ashes, thrown to the winds, became seed, and fructified. During the passage of the Barbarians, however, the ground on which it had fallen was fated to remain barren. On the contrary, there occurred a prodigious landslip in the path of civilization. The chain of tradition was snapped asunder; and in the chasm history lost sight of men and events. The predominant personages of this gloomy period traversed the Rhine like shadows, barely allowing a moment's reflection of their fantastic and evanescent shades to depict itself in the stream.

To the historical era of the Rhine succeeded the epoch of the supernatural.

The imagination of man, like nature, allows of no vacuum. Where the sound of the human noise becomes silent, nature awakens the song of birds, agitates the leaves of the forests, and animates the thousand murmurs of solitude. Where historical truth is at fault, imagination comes to its aid. In place of the substance of history, we have the shadows of romance. Fiction begins to vegetate,

thrive, insinuate itself and flourish in the crevices of the ruins of time; like thorns and gentians in those of some ruined palace. Civilization, like the sun, has her alternate nights and days; her plenitudes and eclipses. She must both rise and set, to produce a perfect day.

No sooner, therefore, had the dawn of civilization shed its light upon the Taunus, than the warbling and twittering of innumerable legends and fables became audible upon the banks of the Rhine. Every remote distance, brightened by glimpses of this glimmering light, discovered multitudes of supernatural forms and pleasing phantoms, while the more gloomy parts appeared haunted by frightful demons.

Beside the Roman remains rose those beautiful Saxon and Gothic castles, built of basaltic stone, now in ruins; while a whole population of imaginary beings, created by the solitary visions of beautiful dames and valiant knights, took possession of the Rheingau; Oreads, who took to the woods; Undines, who took to the rivers; Gnomes, who were said to dwell in the bowels of the earth; the Striker, or Sprite of the Rocks; the Black Huntsman, riding over the thicket, mounted upon a sixteen-horned stag; the maiden of the Black Marsh; the six maidens of the Red Marsh; Wodan, the ten-handed god; the starling, who expounds enigmas; the crow, who croaked his prophecies; the magpie, who related the history of her grandmother; the marmouset of the Zeitelmoos; Everard with the beard, who came to the aid of princes who had lost their way in the chace; and Sigfried the horned, who attacked dra-

gons in their dens. The devil laid the first stone of Teufelstein, and placed his ladder at Teufelsleiter. He even dared to preach publicly at Gernsbach, in the Black Forest; but God deigned to erect on the opposite bank of the river, facing the Teufelskauzel, the Pulpit of the Angels!

While the Seven Mountains were overrun with monsters, hydras, and gigantic spectres, at the other extremity of the chain, the biting wind of the Wisper blew over from Bingen clouds of old fairies of the size of grasshoppers.

The Scandinavian mythology, engrafting itself in these valleys upon the legends of the saints, produced strange results—the fanciful efflorescence of the human imagination. The Drachenfels had, under other names, their Tarascus and St. Martha. The double fable of Echo and Hylas identified itself with the formidable rock of Lurley. The virgin serpent crept about in the vaults of Augst. Hatto, the wicked bishop, was devoured in his tower by his subjects, transformed into rats. The seven scornful sisters of Schoenberg were transformed into rocks; and the Rhine then possessed its maidens, as the Meuse its “ladies.” The demon Urian crossed the Rhine at Dusseldorf, carrying upon his back, doubled in two like a miller’s sack, the hill he bore away from the sea-shore at Leyden, in order to swamp Aix-la-Chapelle; but exhausted by fatigue, and deceived by an old woman, he stupidly dropped it at the gates of the imperial city, where, to this day, it is called Loosberg.

At this period, which would present to us an abyss of obscurity, but for certain magic sparks

flitting here and there in the darkness, rocks, woods, and valleys would almost appear to have been peopled only by apparitions. Illusions, prodigies, demon hunts, infernal castles, sound of harps in the thickets, melodious songs by invisible syrens, and frightful shouts of laughter by mysterious beings, are of common occurrence. Human heroes become almost as fantastic as supernatural beings. Cuno of Sayn, Sybo of Lorch, "Strong Sword," Griso the pagan, Attich, duke of Alsace, Thassilo, duke of Bavaria, Anthysis, duke of the Franks, Samo, king of the Vandals, according to legends and traditions, must have wandered about half-mad in these bewildering woods, seeking and bemoaning their loves, fair princesses with charming names, such as Geld, Garlinda, Liba, Williswinda, or Schonetta. All these adventures, half romance and half reality, are described by the legends as perpetually coming and going, lost towards evening in impenetrable forests, breaking down the trees and brambles, like the Knight of Death of Albert Durer, under the tramp of their huge horses, followed by giant greyhounds, stared at by the insects in the branches, and in the dark accosting some black charcoal-burner seated by his fire, who proves to be Satan throwing into his cauldron the souls of sinners.

In other traditions, naked nymphs present to the traveller caskets filled with jewels. Sometimes, little old men appear to them, restoring their sister, bride, or daughter, whom they find upon a mountain sleeping on a bed of moss, in some grotto dazzling with crystals, shells, and coral; at other

times there appears some powerful dwarf, who, according to the old poems, "speaks with the utterance of a giant."

Among these chimerical heroes, we occasionally find some man of flesh and blood, such as Charlemagne and Roland. Charlemagne at all ages, child, youth, or old man, is a favourite with these ballad-mongers.

Some legends pretend that he was born at a miller's in the Black Forest; and that Roland, instead of dying at Roncesvalles, from the onset of a whole army, expired of love upon the Rhine, before the convent of Nonnenswerth. At a later period, the emperor Otho, Frederick Barbarossa, and Adolphus of Nassau, appear in the Rhenish tradition. These well-known names, intermingled with the marvellous of fiction, arise from glimpses of history breaking through the ruins and rubbish with which it is numbered; the stones of the old structure appearing here and there, in spite of the mantle of verdure by which it is overgrown. At length, like the clouds of a storm, the shadows disperse. Fiction gives way to truth. A new day is dawning. Civilization revives, and history recovers her self-possession in company more refined.

Four men assemble from four different parts of Germany, and from time to time, near a stone upon the left bank of the Rhine, under a row of trees betwixt Rhens and Kapellen, and seated upon this stone make and unmake the Emperors of Germany. These are the Electors of the Rhine; and the stone, their seat of royalty, is called the Königstuhl.

The place selected by them is midway in the

valley of the Rhine. Rhens, which belongs to the Elector of Cologne, views towards the west, on the left, Kapellen, belonging to the Elector of Trèves, and to the north, on the right bank, on one side Oberlahnstein, belonging to the Electorate of Mayence, and on the other, Braubach, to the Elector Palatine. In an hour each Elector is able to reach the Königstuhl from his own territories.

Every year, on the second day of Whitsuntide, the chief burgesses of Coblentz and Rhens used to assemble at this spot on pretence of diversion, and discuss mysterious things amongst themselves; a commencement of civic combination tending to sap like a mole the foundation of the formidable Germanic edifice; the immortal and eternal conspiracy of the little against the great, and most audaciously working its way at the very foot of the Königstuhl, under the very shade of the Imperial throne of feudality! Near the same spot, in the electoral palace of Stolzenfels, which overlooks the small town of Kapellen, now a splendid ruin, Werner, archbishop of Cologne, maintained, from 1380 to 1418, a host of alchemists, who, though they made no gold, effected, in seeking the philosopher's stone, some of the earliest discoveries in chemistry. So that in a very brief lapse of time, a spot now almost overlooked was for Imperial Germany the successive cradle of democracy and science.

From this period the Rhine assumed a character at once military and religious. Monasteries were founded, and the churches on the declivities connect the villages on the river side with the strongholds on the mountain top; a striking image, demon-

strating at every turn of the Rhine the appropriate position of a minister of God in human society.

The ecclesiastical princes multiplied the edifices in the Rheingau, in imitation of the Roman prefects a thousand years before. Archbishop Baldwin of Trèves built the church of Oberwessel; Archbishop Henry of Wittingen built the bridge of Coblentz across the Moselle; Archbishop Walram of Juliers consecrated by a magnificent cross of stone the Roman ruins and volcanic formation of Godersberg; both being rather suspected of witchcraft. Temporal and spiritual sovereignty was united in these princes, as in the Pope. Hence a double jurisdiction, governing both soul and body, not limited, as in secular states, by the benefit of clergy. John de Barnich, the chaplain of St. Goar, having poisoned at the communion table a Countess Katzenellenbogen, the Elector of Cologne first excommunicates him as his bishop; then as his prince, orders him to be burnt alive. On the other hand, the Elector Palatine is deeply impressed with the necessity of resisting the encroachments of the three Archbishops of Cologne, Trèves, and Mayence; and the Countesses Palatine maintain the dignity of their sovereignty, by bringing their children into the world in the Pfalz, a tower built before Caub, in the centre of the bed of the Rhine.

Amidst these developments, simultaneous or successive, of the Prince Electors, the orders of chivalry established themselves on the Rhine. The Teutonic Order installed itself at Mayence, within sight of the Taunus; whilst at Trèves, within sight of the Seven Mountains, the Knights of Rhodes formed

a settlement at Martinshof. From Mayence the Teutonic Order ramified as far as Coblentz, which became one of its commanderships. The Templars, already masters of Courgenay and Porentruy in the see of Basle, obtained Boppard and St. Goar on the Rhine, and Traubach, between the Rhine and the Moselle. This is the same Traubach so famous for its wines, the *Thronus Bacchi* of the Romans, afterwards the property of Pierre Flotte, of whom Pope Boniface observed, that "he was lame in body and blind of mind."

While bishops, princes, and knights were laying their foundations, commerce also established its colonies. Many minor towns sprang up, in imitation of Coblentz upon the Moselle, and Mayence upon the Main, at the confluence of the rivers, and the estuaries of torrents which discharge themselves into the Rhine from the numerous valleys of the Hunsruck and Hohenruck, from the crests of Hammerstein, and the Seven Mountains. Bingen was founded on the Nähe; Niederlahnstein, on the Lahn; Engers, upon the Sayn; Irllich, on the Wied; Linz, opposite the Aar; Rheindorf, on the Mahrbachs; and Berghein, on the Sieg.

Still, throughout the epoch which separates the ecclesiastical rule from the feudal, the commanderships of the Knights Templars, and the bailiwicks of commons, the nature of the country had served to create a multitude of minor Seigneuries. From the Lake of Constance to the Seven Mountains, every elevation on the banks of the Rhine had its castle or burg, and burgrave or boroughreeve. These formidable Barons of the Rhine, the sturdy produce

of a hard and savage nature, nestling among briars, and cradled amid basaltic columns, secure in their battlemented holds, and served by their dependents on bended knees, like the emperor himself, men of prey, partaking of the eagle and the owl, though powerful only in their narrow communities, were there all-powerful in commanding hill and dale, raising troops, beating up the highways, enforcing tolls, despoiling the traders on their way from Dusseldorf or St. Gall, barring the river with their chain, and bidding defiance to the neighbouring towns whenever they presumed to remonstrate.

In this wise did the Burgrave of Ockenfels provoke the important town of Linz; and the knight Hausner de Hegau, the imperial city of Kaufbeuern. Occasionally, in these singular contests, the cities, confiding little in their own strength, implored the aid of the emperor; a measure sure to provoke the scorn of the burgrave, who appeared at the next patronal festival of the town, in the lists of the city, mounted upon his miller's ass.

During the devastating wars of Adolphus of Nassau, and Didier of Isembourg, several of the knights having strongholds on the Taurus had the audacity to pillage the suburbs of Mayence, under the very eyes of two pretenders disputing the government of the city; such being their manner of observing neutrality. The Rhenish burgrave fought neither for Nassau nor Isembourg, but for himself.

It was not till the reign of Maximilian, when the great captain of the Holy Roman Empire, George of Frundsberg, destroyed the last of these burghs, Hohenkraehen, that this turbulent race became

suppressed; for those who, in the beginning of the tenth century, were heroic burgraves, had ended in the sixteenth by becoming mere banditti.

Meanwhile the present progress of events, which for years afterwards assumed no palpable form, was accomplishing mighty things for the Rhine. Under shelter of the very sails of commerce, an heretical spirit in matters of religion, and a freedom of inquiry and opinion, floated up and down this great river; upon which, it would seem, that every modification of human thought was to find a passage. One might imagine that the soul of Tanquelin, who in the twelfth century preached against the supremacy of the Pope before the Cathedral of Antwerp, escorted by two thousand armed followers with the pomp and ceremonial of a king, had returned up the Rhine after his death, and inspired John Huss in his house at Constance, and, from the Alps, descended the Rhône, and incited Doucet in the county of Avignon. Huss was burnt, and Doucet drawn and quartered. The hour of Luther had not yet struck. According to the almighty will of Providence, there are men destined to pluck the ripe fruit—others, the unripe.

The sixteenth century approached. In the fourteenth century artillery was invented, not far from the Rhine, at Nuremberg; and in the fifteenth, on its very banks, printing. At Cologne, in 1400, was cast the famous culverine, fourteen feet long. In 1472 Vindelin of Spire had printed his Bible. A new world was now in embryo; and it is highly worthy of remark, that it was on the banks of the Rhine the two instruments employed by God in the great work of civilization sprang into existence—the

Catapult and the Book, the weapons of strength and of argument. The Rhine has obtained over the destinies of Europe a kind of providential influence. It is the great transversal entrenchment separating the south from the north. Providence created it for a frontier river, and man by means of fortresses converted the river into a wall of defence. The Rhine has beheld the face and reflected the shadow of all the illustrious warriors who, for the last thirty centuries, have ploughed the old Continent with their swords. Cæsar crossed the Rhine, approaching it from the South; Attila, in descending from the North. Clovis gained there his battle of Tolbiac; Charlemagne and Bonaparte have reigned over its shores. The emperor Frederick Barbarossa, the emperor Rodolphe of Hapsbourg, and the Palatine, Frederick I., were here great, formidable, and victorious. Gustavus Adolphus issued from the tower of Caub orders to his victorious army. Louis XIV. appeared on the banks of the Rhine; Enghien and Condé crossed its waters.

So, alas! did Turenne! Drusus lies under his marble slab at Mayence; Marceau under his, at Coblentz; and Hoche, at Andernach. The vigilant eye of history beholds two eagles soaring eternally over the memories of the Rhine—that of the Roman legions, and that of the legions of France.

Over this *Rhenus Superbus*, as the Romans called the beautiful river, have floated alternately the pontons bristling with lances, partisans, or bayonets; inundating Germany with the armies of Italy, Spain, and France; or serving to pour in hordes upon the ancient Roman dominions, the Gothic tribes still

emulating their sires of old. The pine-rafts of the Murg and St. Gall; the porphyry and serpentines of Basle; potash from Bingen; salt from Karlshall; leather from Stromberg; quicksilver from Lausberg; wines from Johannisberg and Bacharach; slates from Caub; salmon from Oberwesel; cherries from Salzig; charcoal from Boppart; tin-ware from Coblenz; glass-ware from the Moselle; forged iron from Bendorf; millstones and sandstone from Andernach; sheet-iron from Neuwied; mineral-waters from Antoniusstein; the cloths and pottery of Walldar; the red wines of Aar; copper and lead from Linz; freestone from Königswinter; woollens and silks from Cologne: all are consigned to its ready means of transport;—the majestic river gravely accomplishing the purposes of God, as a channel through Europe, whether for peace or war; hemmed in by a double range of hills, during the greater part of its course; clothed on the one bank with oak, on the other with vines; here, the emblem of strength, and there, of joy!

Homer knew nothing of the Rhine. In his time, it passed for one of the rivers situated in the gloomy country of the Cimmerians, where the rain is perpetual, and sunshine rare. Virgil pronounced it to be a frozen stream; the "*Frigora Rheni*." Shakspeare calls it the "Beautiful Rhine." For ourselves (till the Rhine shall form the absorbing political question of Europe), it is only a high road for the idlers and pleasure-hunters resorting to the bathing-places of Ems, Spa, and Baden.

Petrarch visited Aix-la-Chapelle, but I do not remember that he has alluded to the Rhine.

Geography, in its inflexible distribution of territory, according to the landmark of hill, valley, and stream, which all the Congresses in the world will never suffice to suppress, manifestly assigns the left bank of the Rhine to France. Divine Providence has thrice awarded to her *both banks*—under Pepin le Bref, Charlemagne, and Napoleon.

Pepin le Bref held supreme dominion on the Rhine. His empire comprised France, properly so called, excepting Aquitaine and Gascony; and Germany properly so called, as far as the Bavarian territory exclusively.

The empire of Charlemagne extended twice as far as that of Napoleon. It is true, and no less memorable, that Napoleon possessed three empires, or rather, was thrice an Emperor: directly and immediately of the empire of France; and, through his brothers, of Spain, Italy, Westphalia, and Holland, kingdoms which he had constituted outposts to the central empire; morally and by right of supremacy, of all Europe, which was beginning to form the mere basis of his prodigious power.

Thus computed, indeed, the Napoleonic empire was upon a par with that of Charlemagne.

Charlemagne, whose empire possessed the same centre and mode of extension as that of Napoleon, in addition to the inheritance of Pepin le Bref, annexed Saxony, as far as the Elbe; Germany, as far as the Saal; Esclavonia, as far as the Danube; Dalmatia, as far as the embouchures of the Cattaro; Italy, as far as Gaëta; Spain, as far as the Ebro, to its dominions. He halted in Italy only,

at the boundaries of the Beneventines and Greeks ; in Spain only at the frontiers of the Saracens.

When this immense concentration was disorganised in 843, Louis le Debonnaire being dead, and having already suffered the Saracens to recover their share in that portion of Spain contained betwixt the Ebro and the Llobregat, each of the three fractions of the empire sufficed to create an Emperor. Lothaire had Italy and a great triangular partition of Gaul ; Louis had Germany ; and Charles, France.

At a later period, in 855, when the first of three fractions in its turn divided itself from this morsel of the empire of Charlemagne, three more sovereignties were created. Louis had Italy ; Charles, Provence and Burgundy ; and Lothaire, Austrasia, thence called Lotharingia and Lorraine. The second portion, the kingdom of Louis the Germanic, breaking up, the larger portion formed the empire of Germany, while the remainder was parcelled out into counties, duchies, principalities, free cities, and the margraviates assigned to the guardians of the frontiers.

Lastly, when the third parcel, the state of Charles le Chauve, crumbled under the weight of years and princes, it sufficed for the creation of a king—the King of France ; of five sovereign dukes—those of Burgundy, Normandy, Brittany, Aquitaine, and Gascony ; of three sovereign counts—those of Champagne, Thoulouse, and Flanders.

Such emperors are Titans, who, for the moment, grasp the universe in their hands ; of which, when death unclenches the mighty hold, all falls to the ground.

The right bank of the Rhine may be said to have belonged to Napoleon as well as to Charlemagne. He never, however, projected a Duchy of the Rhine, as was frequently intended by minor politicians, during the prolonged struggle between the crown of France and that of the house of Austria. He was well aware that a longitudinal kingdom, not insular, is untenable; that it bends in two at the first shock. A principality must not content itself with simple order; the order of internal strength is requisite for the resistance and maintenance of states. With the exception of a few mutilations and agglomerations, the Emperor took the Confederation, such as geography had formed it, merely systematizing its organization. The Confederation must be able to show a front, either to the south or the north. As it was backed by France, Napoleon reversed its frontage. His policy was a hand which settled and unsettled empires with the strength of a giant and the sagacity of a chess-player. In strengthening the Rhenish princes the Emperor was promoting the influence of the crown of France, and diminishing that of the crown of Germany. The electors, converted into kings, and the margraves and landgraves into grand-dukes, gained, as regarded Russia and Austria, all that they lost as regarded France. They were kings for the Emperor of the North, though governors of provinces for Napoleon.

Thus the Rhine has four distinct phases, four varying physiognomies: the first, the antediluvian, and possibly pre-Adamite epoch of its volcanoes; secondly, the ancient historical epoch of contests

between Germany and Rome, bright with the glory of Cæsar ; thirdly, the epoch of Charlemagne ; fourthly, the modern historical epoch of contests betwixt France and Germany, illustrated by Napoleon ; for, do what you will to avoid the monotony of these glorious names—travel through history from beginning to end,—Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Napoleon are the great military time-marks which intercept your progress along the highway of the past.

And now to conclude with a single observation. The Rhine, a providential river, is not less a symbolical one. In its course, in its descent, in the countries it washes, it constitutes the type of that civilization which it has served to form, and will tend to complete. It flows from Constance to Rotterdam ; from the nest of the eagle, to the haunt of the herring ; from the city of popes, councils, and emperors, to that of burgomasters and merchants ; from the Alps to the ocean ;—just as human nature itself is forced to descend from lofty ideas, replete with immutable grandeur, to those of wider scope, variable, stormy, gloomy, useful, navigable, and unfathomable ; which undertake all things, maintain all things, fertilize all things, and engulf all things ; from theocracy to democracy ; from a great thing, to a thing still greater.
