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The upper Rhine

the scenery of its banks and the manners of its people

Mayence to the lake of Constance

Mayhew, Henry

London, 1858

Interpolated Rhenish Scenes-Freiburg

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Finally, we learn, "that well-to-do merchants and manufacturers," &c. (though their grandfathers, maybe, had their ears cropped for giving short weight), are, among others, to be denominated "Most *high-born* Sirs."

So necessary, too, are the professional titles considered by the supreme Snob of an authority from whom we quote, that he tells us, "if the family or birth-titles were to be abolished, still the professional ones *must* be retained, in order to show the occupations to which the people belong." So that, even among informed Germans, there is a vulgar belief extant, that it is impossible for society to be carried on without indulging in such absurdities as giving even to the editor of a paltry provincial newspaper the Chrononhotonthologos-like appellation of "HERR HERAUSGEBER-DER-COBLENZER-PAPILLOTE LANGSAMKUTSCHE."

Interpolated Rhenish Scenes.

(7.)

FREIBURG.

"By a remarkable symmetry," says a French topographer of the Rhine, "the extremities of the Grand Duchy of Baden are occupied by two towns, famous alike for their relics, their wars, and their colleges,—*Heidelberg* (once the capital of the Palatinate), and *Freiburg*, (formerly the *Haupt-Stadt* of Breisgau)."

Between these distant points lie the cities of Carlsruhe and Baden-Baden; the former being the "*Badische-Hauptstadt*," and built with the same unpicturesque eye to "system" as Mannheim—with the blocks of houses arranged in the form of a half wheel, like the wings of a model prison; and the latter

being celebrated for its lovely environs, its fashionable company, its splendid *Trink-halle* and *Conversations-haus*, as well as its far-famed gaming-tables; or, in other words (if we may be allowed so strong an expression), being the most perfect "hell upon earth."

The city of Freiburg stands some dozen miles from the Rhine side, nestled in one of the prettiest spots on the outskirts of the Black Forest. It is set, as it were, at the crown of the large prairie known as the valley of the Dreisam, and ringed in by the jagged mountain chain of the Schwarz-wald, the steep green sides of which rise like an enormous earthwork immediately at the back of the town, while the "*Kaiserstuhl*" towers far away in front of it; so that, seen from a distance, the dark mountain escarpments form, as it were, a fine foil to the beauties of the graceful red spire of the Münster, whilst the silver ribbon of the pretty little river comes sparkling across the broad velvet plains in a bright zigzag line.

Excepting the Cathedral and the old *Kaufhaus*, Freiburg, despite its ancient origin, has but few relics to interest the stranger; for, as usual, the French have repeatedly laid waste the town, more particularly in the Thirty Years' War, during which it was taken and sacked by the troops of the "God-gifted" Louis XIV.: again, in 1713, it was besieged by the same sanguinary power under Villars; once more in 1745; and finally rased almost to the ground in 1747 by the aforesaid lively nation, under the command of Maréchal de Coigny.

The city, it seems, was founded by the Princes of Zähringen, the ancestors of the reigning family of Baden, and for three centuries formed part of the Austrian Empire; the whole of the province of Breisgau having formerly been styled "Anterior Austria." Towards the close of the 17th century, however, it was ceded to the French at the peace of Nimegen, but was

given back to Austria at the peace of Ryswyk. After that it was twice recaptured by the French, and twice more made over to the Austrians by different treaties. In 1806, however, at the peace of Presburg, it was transferred to its original possessors, the Grand Dukes of Baden—to whom it at present belongs.

The construction of the town itself has little worthy of remark, with the exception that the streets (which are mostly broad and trottoired, and in places bordered with a kind of mosaic pavement, done in black and white pebbles) are generally channeled by "runlets" of the Dreisam river, or rather brook. These runlets are boarded over, and are like large mill-shoots sunk in the ground, "affording," says the author of one of the French Guide-books—with a fine national love of gutters,—"a refreshing coolness during summer," (to say nothing of winter,) "and contributing greatly to the cleanliness" (and let us add, sloppiness) "of the place."

But far better, and infinitely more pleasing to the eye than these "runlets," are the street-fountains of Freiburg, which are erected at intervals along the principal thoroughfares—a pretty enough custom, borrowed from the neighbouring Swiss. Some of these fountains are in the very best taste—more especially the one at that part of the Kaiser-strasse which is intersected by the Münster-gasse. This reminds the English visitor somewhat of the crosses in many of our old towns, being in the fretted Gothic style, and consisting of a small telescopic rhomboidal pillar, ornamented with statues at the thicker part of the shaft and statuettes at the thinner, and with the figures set in gabled niches, while the crown of the column finishes in a fine porch-like four-sided pinnacle, that serves as a canopy for the smaller and upper images. To these fountains come men and women, carrying huge wooden grape-tubs (in shape

like chiffonier-baskets) strapped to their back, and having filled these with the spring-water, wend their way with their heavy liquid load, bending their bodies almost double.

Some of the town-gates, moreover, are sufficiently peculiar to claim a line or two of notice. These are merely tall square turrets, like the towers to our village churches, standing alone in the roadway, and with a little arched entrance below.

St. Martin's Thor, at the end of Kaiser-strasse, has a large rude fresco on its front of the saint on horseback, habited as a Roman knight, giving his cloak to an old man who is lying on the ground. Underneath this is a "*Denkmal*" inscription, recording that the gate was erected to commemorate the fighting of the men of Freiburg, "*für Kaiser und Vaterland*," against the French, on July 7th, 1796.

The *Schwaben Thor*, on the other hand, stands at the end of the *Pfaffen-gasse* by the *Oberlinden*, and leads to the Castle Hill, immediately behind the town. The walls of this gate are decorated with a crude painting of a peasant, with a wagon and six horses laden with casks of wine. Some of the townsfolk tell you that these represent the first butts of wine brought from the Black Forest after a seven-years' war. Others, on the contrary, assert that it depicts the vintners bringing their offerings towards the building of the Cathedral.

But the capital ornament of Freiburg is the magnificent Münster, or Cathedral; and which is the more wonderful, as being the one large Gothic Dom-kirche in Germany that is not only free from scaffolding-poles, but has its towers in a perfect state; or, more marvellous still, has escaped destruction from both fire and war.

The Münster is said to have been founded by Conrad III. of Zähringen, in 1122; but the finer parts of the building—such as the tower and west front and porch—are a century

older; whilst the choir—which is far inferior in elegance—dates from the year 1513.

The structure is of red-stone, but the name of the architect is lost, though it is supposed that Erwin of Steinbach (he who built Strasburg Münster) may have been his pupil; and some fancy that the plans for the older portions of the Freiburg Cathedral were based upon the design of Basel, which dates from the year 1013.

Assuredly, the open spire of the more primitive Swiss Dom may have suggested that of Freiburg, while Freiburg in its turn (especially as the village of Steinbach—Erwin's native place—is not many miles from the ancient capital of Breisgau) may have furnished the idea of that of Strasburg; though beyond the fact of each of the triad of Münsters having an octagonal turret based on a square tower, and being surmounted by a perforated steeple, there is no resemblance whatever in the buildings.

The main beauty of Strasburg, to our mind, consists in the elaborately sculptured and open cage, as it were, of stone trellising over the western front: and the slender spiral tubes of stone breaking the octagonal form of the turret. The open and graduated spire itself, we must confess, has hardly the same charm to our eye as it has to the generality of people, and we are inclined to believe that it is the difficulty of the mere mason's work that makes persons mistake a fine bit of engineering for choice architectural taste.

Certainly the spire of Strasburg is by no means so open and elegant as that of Freiburg, whilst Basel, on the other hand (were it not for its having been the original of this crowning grace to ecclesiastical architecture), would hardly bear comparison with the Breisgau Münster; for whilst the light struggles with difficulty through the pin-hole-like perforations of the Swiss steeple, it streams in large dabs of blue

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Baden-Württemberg

through the red-stone lace-work, as it were, of the Freiburg Dom-kirche.

We saw this same Freiburg Dom by moonlight, and a grander, and yet prettier sight, never charmed the senses.

It was one of those autumn evenings, when the clearness of the sky smacks of the coming winter. The cold blue-grey vault of the firmament was literally cloudless, and sparkled so intensely with the dense crowd of constellations, that the heavens seemed to be positively frosted over with what astronomers call "star-dust;" while the broad phosphorescent band of the Milky Way glittered with its millions of worlds as thickly as the sea by night with its countless animalcules.

The moon was newly risen, and hung like a bright silver shield just above the mountain chain, that, wrapped in a deep black mist of shade, appeared like monster masses of black marble, while the beams slanted down from behind their summits and fell upon the earth white as hoar-frost, so that the house-tops and street-fountains appeared to be half covered with snow.

To see the Münster spire at such a time intercepting the rays, and the bright white light pouring through its stone meshes in broad luminous beams, was a sight never to be forgotten; for the finely-varied devices of the lattice-work shone out in all the deep contrast of light and shade, the pierced embroidery of the steeple seeming to be picked out with silver—here revealing some handsome trefoil design, there displaying the petal-shaped tracery of a Gothic window, and there the web-like mullions of a "*rosace.*"

Then, as the moon tipped the fretted rafters, as it were, of the spire with the chaste lustre of its rays, and lighted up the edges of the ornamented gables and pinnacles to the octagonal turret, the edifice seemed to bristle with a thousand icicles, as

if it had been some fairy-like piece of polar architecture that the icebergs are said occasionally to represent, while the unglazed long-lancet windows to the tower appeared to have their tracery filled with sheets of polished metal.

Indeed the Dom at Freiburg is a rare bit of architectural elegance. The porch to the front entrance is as finely carved almost as that of Strasburg—the ribs of its deep arch being embossed all over with statuettes, and the stained windows of the interior even more handsome and gorgeous perhaps than those of the Alsatian Münster, while the old carved screens and pulpits, and early German altar-pieces, with which the different chapels are ornamented, are rich bits of mediæval beauty.

The Münster Platz, or space round about the Cathedral, is worth visiting also, for the peculiarity of the costumes one sees congregated at the spot. This is the principal market-place, and the head-dresses of the peasants here are of the most peculiar character. Most of the women wear two huge black ribbon bows perched right on the crown of the head, each bow being spread out fan-shape, and the two together seeming like the enormous wings of a gigantic black butterfly that has settled on top of the skull. This is the true Margravia or Breisgau fashion—the Catholics wearing the bows embroidered with gold at the back, and the Protestants preferring them plain. Other women, again, have straw hats of a most masculine shape, poised as it were on the head, and bright red handkerchiefs tied over their ears, while long Swiss tails hang down the back in double Chinese fashion, and are tied with ribbon, that reaches literally down to the heels. One market-woman we saw had come out very strong in a bright red leather hat, and though in our "little village" she would have been mobbed, still, in the streets of the quiet Freiburg, she attracted not the least attention whatever. Then,

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again, the *Dames de la Halle* of Freiburg seem to have a violent passion for petticoats, and, not content with a single *unterrock*, or even two, delight in a whole quire of thick, plaited, linsey-wolsey things—a style of costume which has very much the appearance of a coachman's box-cape worn about the legs instead of the shoulders. Some young girls may be seen thus habited carrying large tin milk-cans strapped at their back.

The old *Kaufhaus* at the side of this market-place is *peculiar*, and that is all, for it is far from being either handsome or picturesque. It is merely a long, one-storied building, with a high roof castellated at the gables, and the front walls painted red, with a small arcade below. At either end of the first floor it has octagonal projections—huge battlements, as it were, like the quarter-galleries at the stern of the old-fashioned ships; and there is a row of statues set under pinnacled canopies between the several windows—the said statues being the size of life, and representative of Maximilian I., Philip I., Karl V., and Ferdinand I.

The statue of Bertholdus Schwarz, the Franciscan friar who is said to have discovered the *Schiess-pulver* (gunpowder) some fifty years after it was used in cannon by the Venetians, is in the *Franciscanner Platz* not far from the University. The figure is that of a monk, with shaven crown and frock, and with one hand resting on a book (the finger between the leaves), and the other supporting the chin, as if in thought. The "*pose*" is good and grand, and the expression that of one pondering over the probable results of the immense new power he is supposed to have discovered. The pedestal is set with bas-reliefs—one representing the monk at work with his crucibles and mortars beside a chemical furnace, and the other the friar startled with the explosion of the new compound. This statue is by Knittel, and in grey sand-stone, with a red

pedestal of the same material. It bears the following inscription:—

BERTHOLD SCHWARZ.
ERECTED IN THE YEAR 1853,
IN
COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTH CENTENARY
OF
THE DISCOVERY OF GUNPOWDER.

The precise date of the *German* discovery is stated at 1340; but since it is proven that the Venetians employed cannon in the year 1300, and the composition of the marvellous powder is, moreover, expressly described by our own Roger Bacon, in his treatise "*De Nullitate Magiæ*," which was published at Oxford in 1216, we cannot exactly admit the claims of the Franciscan monk to the invention.

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§ 2.

FEMININE HONOURS—LOW-BRED LOOK OF THE PRUSSIAN "EXCELLENCES" AND "MAGNIFICENCES"—FORMS OF POLITENESS—BOWING IN THE STREETS—IMPORTANCE OF THE "BLICK."

Burlesque as the Teutonic titulary forms may sound to Englishmen, still those applied to the wives and daughters of the so-called dignitaries are more "extravagansical;" for the titles of married women are the same as those of their husbands, even though the titular prefix of the latter be expressive