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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-Schaffhausen

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members of his family that little Fritz, their playmate—who was known to have the best collection of "*Schmetterlings*" (butterflies) in the school—had died suddenly that morning.

"And who'll have his butterflies?" cried the Professor's youngest son, an urchin of eight years old.

Interpolated Rhenish Scenes.

(12.)

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

This picturesque old town is situate on the right bank of the Rhine, a little above the long line of rapids and falls which render the river unnavigable between Schaffhausen and Basel; and though it is the capital of the Canton to which it gives its name, it has more of the character of the gate, or *entrance* to Switzerland, than that of an integrant portion of the country itself.

It still bears, indeed, every appearance of an old Suabian imperial city, for not only are its streets marked with many of the quaint forms of mediæval architecture (the town having for ages escaped the ravage of fire), but the language, costumes, and manners, as well as the easy and peaceful disposition of its people, are all akin to those of its neighbours located in the towns throughout the Black Forest.

The origin of Schaffhausen dates as far back as the 8th century, when a small colony of boatmen, we are told, settled in the place, and constructed some boat-sheds, or *skiff-houses*, as rude dépôts for the cargoes of the vessels coming from the Lake of Constanz, and which had to be discharged here-

abouts owing to the proximity of the Rhine Falls. To this circumstance the town is said to owe its name.

Schaffhausen was at first only a hamlet, then it rose to be a small market-town, and when Count Eberhart de Nellenburg had founded and richly endowed the renowned Abbey of All Saints in its vicinity, it was elevated (in the 13th century) to the dignity of an Imperial city, the Abbot exercising sovereign authority over the place. Schaffhausen was then enclosed within walls, and continued to increase in power, and its inhabitants in wealth, under the ecclesiastical dominion.

A hundred years later, the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria mortgaged the city to Austria; but the citizens redeemed their independence by themselves paying the money for which their town had been pawned. A few years later, again, it entered into a treaty with the Helvetic Confederation, and becoming the ally of the Swiss in many a battle, was ultimately, in the year 1501, incorporated among the Federal States as the 12th Canton.

During the wars of the French Revolution, the French and the Austrians occupied it by turns, and when Napoleon established himself as Mediator of the Helvetic Confederation, its constitution and privileges were revised and modified like those of the other cantons.

Thus it continued till the year 1831, when its government was finally settled upon a more liberal and extended basis.

It now contains an industrious population of 7500 souls, and is the seat of considerable trade; though it is but little resorted to, except as a halting-place for travellers and visitors to the neighbouring Rhine Falls—there being few objects in the town itself worthy of notice.

The antique architecture of Schaffhausen, indeed, forms its main point of attraction; for the city is distinguished above

almost every town in Switzerland by the mediæval character of its houses, its gates, and its citadel.

The streets, with the exception of the *Vorder-Stadt*, are mostly dark, from the broad projecting eaves which slant down before the upper windows like monstrous eye-shades. The houses are generally narrow and tall, while the majority have several storeys of bastion-like oriel windows, with the sign of the house carved on a central tablet, and their walls covered with ornamental stucco-work, while their transoms and mullions are decorated with carvings. Some of the buildings at the corners of the streets have long semi-octagonal rondels, reaching from the top to the bottom of the house, and with pyramidal roofs after the fashion of the turret seen flanking the walls of the castle on the hill in the engraving.

Others, especially the old *Zünfte* (or guilds), have very handsome antique door-ways, pillared and porched, elaborately sculptured over, and with quaint verses graven on the lintels. The *Schmiede-zunft*, nearly opposite the "*Krone*" *Gasthof*, in the *Vorder-gasse*, is a curious specimen of such middle-age work—rich as the carving of an old oaken altar-piece.

A little above this, in the same street or lane, is an enormous gabled house, the front of which is frescoed all over. This is styled "*Zum Ritter*," and has allegorical figures of Immortality and Fame painted between the lower windows, and heads of M. T. Cicero and some other Roman gentlemen above, whilst between the attic casements there is a figure of Quintus Curtius on horseback, leaping headlong down into the street.

Many other houses, also, have their fronts illustrated with frescoes. A butcher's shop has a figure of Justice, holding a bright pair of scales, painted on the walls, and another by the *Vor-stadt* is decorated with a gigantic figure styled *Zum*

Raufer (the bully); while others again have painted cornices to their doors and windows. Most of these houses bear the date of 1600 on their walls. The Vorder-gasse, though narrow and badly paved, has an exceedingly quaint and picturesque air.

Another peculiarity of the Schaffhausen streets is that most of the inns have a kind of flourished swan's head (such as is seen at the beginning of copy-books) executed in iron-work, and holding, as it projects from the wall, a modelled sign of the *Gasthof*—either a huge brass crown, for instance, or a black bird in a hoop, according as the tavern is styled the "*Krone*" or the "*Raaben.*"

The gateways and old rampart-walls surrounding the city are likewise peculiar—being in a good state of preservation. But by the time the traveller has ascended the Rhine as far as Schaffhausen he will have had such a glut of city walls and gates—beginning, indeed, at Köln, and including Linz, Oberwesel, Bacharach, Eltfeld, and a host of tumble-down old places—that he will hardly care to cross his door-step to see the most picturesque barbican on the banks of the river. Besides, to tell the truth, the *Mühlen-thor,* and *Ober-thor,* and *Schwaben-thor* of Schaffhausen, differ but little from the multitude of square turrets that we have now seen and described so often, and are barely tolerable after the sight of the beautiful *Spahlen-Thor* at Basel. Further, one finds at Schaffhausen the same dried-up and planted moats, and the same row of houses built against the rampart walls, as is visible at every other old German town.

The scene represented in the engraving gives as characteristic a peep at Schaffhausen as could be well chosen. The spectator is supposed to be standing on the bridge crossing the

Rhine. Immediately before him, cresting the dumpy hill, is seen the old fort-like citadel or castle of *Unnoth*, with its thick ring of walls set with tall bastion towers, and its covered viaduct-like way sloping down the hill-side to the houses beneath.

This castle is said to be of Roman foundation; the present building, however, was not finished till the year 1564, when it was erected, the story runs, in order to give occupation to the poor during a famine. Here, a century before the present fort was constructed, Frederick Duke of Tyrol shielded Pope John XXIII. from the wrath of the Council of Constanz, in 1415; an act for which he was put under the ban of the Empire.

Just below the castle is an open Platz at the end of the bridge, with a light Gothic fountain in the centre. The walls of the house with the castellated or "Burgundian" gable, shown in the engraving, are decorated with frescoes of knights holding banners; and facing this, at the opposite end of the Platz (but not visible in the print), is the large colonnaded *Zoll-ämt*, or Custom-house, with its arcade littered with barrels and cases. Then, beside the crane jutting over the quay, lies the green steamer—the "*Concordia*," or the "*Maximilian*," or the "*Boden*"—waiting to carry the next batch of tourists to Constanz. Here, too, facing the river, are generally to be seen the Swiss diligences loading in front of the little inn called the "*zum goldenen Schiff*" (the Golden Ship), and near this stands the mansion-like Customs-office, with its oriel windows and long-winded title—"*Schweizerisch Eidgenossenchaft Hauptzollstadte Schaffhausen.*"

Looking in the opposite direction, we see the sharp spire tipping the four-gabled tower of the Münster, and piercing, as it were, through the mass of surrounding roofs. This stands in the *Hinter-gasse*, or Back Lane, and was originally

part of the Abbey of All Saints, the edifice itself dating as far back as the 11th century. It is not only remarkable for its antiquity, but for being a pure specimen of the Byzantine or round-arch style of architecture; and, though hardly handsome, makes up in massiveness what it wants in beauty. The other square tower seen in the print belongs to *St. Johannes-kirche;* this is in the Front Lane, or *Vorder-gasse*, and is said to be the largest church in Switzerland.

The houses beside the water are rudish structures, built on the river walls, and have much the look of the buildings flanking some of the more quiet Dutch canals. The greater number of these are tanneries, and have brown leathern skins hanging, either over their wooden balconies or out of their windows.

A little way farther down the river than is visible in the print, the water is striped with the tops of the mill-dams, and the surface white with the fretting of the current past its many impediments.

The bridge itself is one of ordinary construction, but stands in the place of a celebrated wooden one—burnt, of course, by the French in 1799—which was of a single-arch span, though the breadth of the river is here upwards of 350 feet, the architect having been a poor Swiss carpenter named Grubenmann.

The costumes of the people are those mostly of the *Schwarz-wald*—a mere sleeveless bodice being worn, and the hair dressed in long plaited tails behind. The picturesque though lazy ox-wagon still constitutes the principal traffic of the streets—even though Schaffhausen, from its many surrounding mills, has a more busy aspect than the majority of the Rhenish towns.

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