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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-The lake of Constanz and islands of Mainau and Reichenau

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or simpletonic quality which English young gentlemen delight to denominate as "verdant," and that often their acknowledged *savans* devote their whole lives to the study of the most frivolous subjects.

Once we were introduced to a German *Weiser*, who, a Teutonic friend assured us, bore a high reputation in the Rhenish provinces. We naturally begged to be informed to what point of science he directed his attention. Was it Astronomy, we wondered, by which he sought to fathom the infinite ocean of space? Or was it Geology that he studied, in order to read the wondrous story of creation graven on the everlasting tablets of the rocks? Or was it Physiology that he was striving to unriddle, so as to get even a glimpse into the profound mysteries of life and organism? or Chemistry? or Mechanics? or Botany?

No! it was none of these. Neither the stars, nor the rocks, nor the flowers, nor human life interested him: only—*Cockchafers!*

He was, we were assured, the greatest "*Coleopterist*"—or rather cockchaferist, in all the world.

Interpolated Rhenish Scenes.

(14.)

THE LAKE OF CONSTANZ AND ISLANDS OF MAINAU AND REICHENAU.

The Lake of Constanz (Germ. *Boden See*) and the Lake of Leman are the two frontier-lakes of Switzerland, and that of Constanz performs for the Rhine the same process of filtration as that of Leman effects for the Rhone. The Rhine

enters the Boden See at a little below the point called *Rhein-eck* (Rhine corner)—where it has formed an extensive delta by the accumulation of deposits—and flows out under the walls of the city of Constanz into an arm or branch of the lake itself, called the *Unter See* (lower lake).

The Constanz Lake is about 220 square miles in superficial extent, and 120 miles in circumference. Its form resembles that of the stump of an old tree, with a double branch or fork protruding from it at the end by Constanz—the northern branch or prolongation bearing the name of the *Ueberlingen See*, while the southern one is called, as we have said, the *Unter-* (or *Zeller-*) *See*.

Its extreme length measured S.E. and N.W. from *Bregenz* to *Ludwigshafen*, at the end of the Ueberlingen See, is about 40 miles;* the distance from Constanz to Bregenz being about 30 miles. Its greatest breadth, on the other hand, between Rorschach and Friedrichshafen is about 10 miles, while from Friedrichshafen to Romanshorn it is only 7 miles wide.†

* These figures are given vaguely, because all the authorities agree to differ on the subject. M'Culloch, in his "Geographical Dictionary," gives 34 miles as the length of the lake, but does not state *from* and *to* what points the measurement is taken. Murray, however, makes it 44 miles long from Bregenz to Constanz only (!); whilst Herr Ottman Schönhuth—the most reliable authority—makes the entire length from Bregenz to Ludwigshafen only 16 stunden, which is equal to 8 German miles or 37½ English miles.

† The times taken by the steamboats to traverse the lake are as follow:—

From Constanz to	Lindau	3 hours
,, ,,	Rorschach	2½ ,,
,, ,,	Friedrichshafen	1½ ,,
,, ,,	Meersburg	½ ,,
,, ,,	Ueberlingen	1½ ,,
From Lindau to	Rorschach	2 ,,
,, ,,	Friedrichshafen	1½ ,,
,, ,,	Meersburg	5 ,,
From Friedrichshafen to	Rorschach	1½ ,,
,, ,, ,,	Romanshorn	1 ,,
,, ,, ,,	Meersburg	1¼ ,,
From Meersburg to	Ueberlingen	1 ,,
,, ,,	Ludwigshafen	1 ,,

But though smaller in superficial extent than the Lake of Geneva, it exceeds it in the volume of its water, being upwards of 300 yards in depth at its most profound point; the Ueberlingen prolongation, however, has a depth of but 500 feet, while the branch called the Unter- (or Zeller-) See, measures only 60 feet of water at its deepest part, and is fordable at others.

The elevation of the lake is between 1200 and 1300 feet above the level of the sea, and yet it seldom freezes: it has, indeed, being covered with ice but five times in the last six centuries; viz. in the years 1277, 1560, 1573, 1695, and 1829–30.

Sometimes, when the snow is melting rapidly in the summer—and from other causes not yet explained—the waters of the lake rise several feet (upwards of six or eight) in a day. The liquid contents, however, are, as a rule, the smallest in the winter time, and the greatest in summer. (See footnote, p. 312.) Numerous small streams augment the body of water poured in by the Rhine, and contribute, in a measure, to fill up the basin of the Lake.

The wind which is the most dangerous to boats upon the Lake is that which comes from the south, and is called by the Swiss, "*Föhn.*" The danger arises not only from the suddenness with which it bursts over the water, but to the "ground swell," which at such times is considerably increased. This ground-swell is termed "*Ruhos,*" and is a phenomenon peculiar to the Lakes of Constanz and Geneva: it consists in a sudden rising or commotion of the water—occasionally without any wind to stir it—which at such times is thrown up against the banks with considerable force. The approach of the *ruhos* is always indicated by a whitish-grey fog, followed by thick black clouds.

The lake abounds in fish, of which 25 species have been enumerated, and these are usually caught with nets.

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Its coasts traverse five European states; viz. Austria (in the province of Vorarlberg), Bavaria, Wirtemburg, Baden, and Switzerland (in the Cantons of St. Gall and Thurgau); the latter nation, indeed, possesses the whole of the southern coast, with the exception of the town of Constanz. The principal cities on its banks are Bregenz in Austria, Lindau in Bavaria, Friedrichshafen in Wirtemburg, Meersburg and Constanz in Baden, Romanshorn Arbon and Rorschach in Switzerland.

The original name of the Boden See was "*Lacus Brigantinus*," and the part of the Lake between Bregenz and Lindau called the "*Bregenzer See*" to this day. Towards the end of the ninth century, however, it obtained the title of "*Lacus Potamicus*," or *Podamicus*, and this was afterwards corrupted into *Bodamer See*, *Bodmer See*, *Bodam See*, and finally to *Boden See*. At the end of the lacustrine branch called the *Ueberlingen See*, there is a town still bearing the name of *Bodmann*, and some persons doubt whether this gave its name to, or derived it from, the Lake.

The first mention of this Lake is under the title of *Lacus Brigantinus*, during the reign of Augustus, who sent his stepson Claudius Drusus, as well as his eldest son, Tiberius Nero, to subdue the South German tribes, who were making incursions into the Roman territories. Tiberius advanced through the Gallic provinces, and Drusus up the Rhine, and on meeting at Arbon they beheld the Lake for the first time. Tiberius is said to have fitted out a fleet and sailed over the Lake, landing on an island which some suppose to have been *Reichenau*; but which others, with more probability, affirm to have been *Lindau*.

At this time three savage tribes dwelt upon the banks: (1), the *Helvetians*, who occupied the southern or Swiss bank of the

Lake, and came originally from the canton of St. Gall; (2), the *Rhætians*, occupying the whole of the south-eastern banks by Rorschach, and who were formerly an important race in Italy, and inhabited, under the name of Etruscans, the country between the Tiber and the Apennines; and (3), the *Vindelicians*, (the Augsburgers) who possessed the greater part of the northern banks by Bregenz and Lindau, and originally came, it is said, from Illyria. Under the Romans, the Swiss bank of the lake was called "*Rhætia prima*," and the Swabian (or Baden) bank, "*Rhætia secunda*."

The Romans not only greatly improved the country, but taught the people how to cultivate the land, and planted the first fruit-trees on the banks. At Arbon (anciently called "*Arbor felix*") the first Roman castle was built upon the shore. The Romans remained in the neighbourhood till the middle of the third century, when the Alemanni appeared upon the banks and overran the country, being afterwards joined by the Suevi (Swabians). Both of these tribes settled on the borders of the Lake, and continued in possession of the country until the end of the fifth century, when they were conquered by the Franks and became the subjects of King Clovis.

The Lake has but few picturesque charms in comparison with those of Geneva or Lucerne. Its banks are flat, or at best but slightly sloping, and (except at the end, by Bregenz, where the Vorarlberg mountains are seen looming like a long, low cloud, just above the horizon) it is devoid of any peculiarly Alpine features. Indeed, the sight of the country round about Constanz seldom fails to disappoint the visitor, who comes there elate with the notion of getting his first peep at Swiss scenery. He finds, however, merely a huge pool of blue water, environed with landscapes that by no means

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equal those of either the lochs of Scotland or the Cumberland lakes in beauty.

After a time, however, the distant Alps begin to make their appearance; and on a bright clear day, towards the end of the autumn, the summits of the higher mountains may be seen with their cap of snow, white and billowy as cumulus-clouds; while the fertility of the Swiss and German shores serves, with the fresh colours of the vegetation, to compensate for their level character.

Then the Lake itself is always a more or less pleasing object—with the busy steamers traversing its surface, and the sound of the paddle-wheels for ever pulsing like a heart across the broad expanse of water, and the little pleasure-boats dancing in the distant light like summer insects; while the mirror-like surface of the immense pool seems as if scratched here and there with the long trail of the passing boats, and the grey-brown plume of smoke from some far-off steamer hangs over the water like an enormous wraith of cobweb in the air.

Then there are the lovely nights, when the moon converts the entire lake into one large plate of burnished silver; and the villages on the opposite shore are like so many knots of fire-flies, with their many lights; and the distant hills seem like monster spectres in the sky. Occasionally, at such times, when the night-breeze is chilled with its sweep across the Alpine snow, as well as the broad expanse of water over which it has to travel, the sirocco pours its warm and pleasant breath—sudden as a burst of sunlight—upon the cheek, touching it with exquisite softness, and feeling as beautifully tepid as if the frame had been steeped, all of an instant, in a bath of new milk. At the upper part of the Lake, where the expanse is narrowed, the sirocco has considerable force, and bursts so abruptly over the water that it becomes dangerous to small

boats. But at the Constanz end its strength is spent; and there it sweeps along most deliciously warm, and yet as bracingly fresh, as a spring-day. In Italy, however, the same breeze produces great laziness, owing to its extreme heat; though by the time it reaches Constanz it is so cooled by the Alpine snows and lakes which it passes over by the way, that it is at once pleasant and refreshing as cows' breath.

The Lake steamers, of which there are about a dozen, make Sunday excursions to the Island of Mainau,—or Meinau, as it is often called,—where there is usually a band and a dance at the insular "*Caffé u. Weinwirthschaft*," for the delight of the folk from the surrounding shores.

There are, strictly speaking, three islands in the Lake of Constanz. The first of these is Lindau, which is rather a city built up in the middle of the water than a patch of insulated land, and is situate at the upper or eastern end of the Lake. The other islands, however, belong respectively to the lacustrine branches, termed the Ueberlinger and the Unter See—the island of *Mainau* being situate at a short distance from the mouth of the former, and that of *Reichenau* set in the middle of the latter.

The entire surface of Mainau is but 125 square acres in extent; the island containing merely a palace, a tavern, and a farm. The name Main-au is said to signify, literally, fine pasture-land; for in the 16th century the island was called "*Mayen-aue;*" that is to say, May-meadows or pleasure-fields.

According to tradition, the Lord of Bodmann originally possessed the island, and his daughter, when it came to be her property, gave it to her lover, who was one of the Knights of the German Order. But the chronicles of Reichenau tell a different tale, showing that it formerly belonged to the monks of *that* island, and that they assigned it to the

Knights of Langenstein, who in their turn made it over to the Knights of the Teutonic Order; for in the archives of Reichenau there is a record, to the effect that the Knight Arnold of Langenstein and his four sons gave Mainau, in 1293, as a free gift to the Teutonic Order of Knights, upon the consideration of their paying 20lbs. of wax as a tribute, every Candlemas, to the Bishop of Constanz.

In 1647 the Swedes, under Gustavus Wrangel, bombarded Mainau with seventeen ships; and on gaining possession of it, found property upon the island to the value of nearly half a million of money. Till 1806, Mainau was the Exchequer of the Order of German Knights.

By the treaty of Presburg the island was assigned to the Grand Duke of Baden, who subsequently sold it to Prince Esterhazy; but it is now the property of the Duke of Hamilton, who married the Princess of Baden.

The steam-boat to Mainau leaves Constanz at one o'clock every Sunday throughout the season, calling at Meersburg by the way, and allowing the passengers some two-hours' stay on the island itself. The boat in which we went (and remember, saintly reader, that even the Puritanical Scotch Member of Parliament danced on the Sabbath directly he got on the other side of the Channel) carried a small cargo of apparent working people, and petty tradesmen, and servants, besides a heavy sprinkling of soldiers (exclusive of the military band on board),—all bent on a holiday trip, the fare there and back being but sixpence, second class.

The day was a lovely autumn one, and the snow-capped tips of the Vorarlberg hills at the upper end of the Lake were tinted half yellow with the rich warm sunlight. The line of the mountain-chain, too, lengthened as we beat across the Lake; and the round dome of the Sentis came out grandly with its faint powdering here and there of early autumn

snow. We could see, too, the crooked back of the "*Altmann* (Old Man), and the jagged line of the "*Kurfürsten*" hills (the "Prince Elector" mountains—so called from there being seven of them in number), as well as the tall cone of the "*Kamor*." These were the principal peaks of the "Appenzeller Alps;" but to the right of them stretched the fine diadem-like line of the "Bernese Alps," and to the left undulated the billowy chain of the "Tyrolese Alps;" whilst in front of the taller hills—which seemed almost as though modelled out of the white clouds themselves—there ran a long dark screen of a lesser mountain-chain, that contrasted magnificently with the bright silver peaks of the higher Alps behind. The Lake itself was the colour of blue tempered steel, and as its little waves danced in the sun-beams it shone with all the golden metallic colouring of a mackarel's back.

In less than half-an-hour we were at Meersburg, a town that, in the distance, seemed like a city of white marble palaces terracing a steep hill-side. On nearing the shore, however, the marble palaces dwindled into buildings more like large white-washed workhouses and barracks. One of these we learnt was the "*Seminar*" (town school) of the place, but another proved to be a real palace, whilst the remainder were the prisons and customs-offices of the town. Here was a small pier with a tiny harbour, and this our steamer entered, while the band played and drew the Sunday-folk to the quay, like bees swarming at the sound of a gong. In a few moments afterwards the boat, with a heavy addition to its human cargo, steamed out of the haven again, while the boys ran shouting along to the end of the pier to see the vessel go by.

Not long after this the island of Mainau began to grow and grow, rising, as it were, from out the water; and a few more twirls of the paddles brought us alongside the little square stone tank there doing duty for a haven. High on top of the

island mound was seen a French-looking palace, (formerly the Commandery of the Knights of the Teutonic Order); the façade of which reminded one of St. Cloud, with the exception that it was striped with red sandstone pillars, and at the end towards Lindau there was a chapel-like building; whilst in front of the palace a broad stone terrace jutted out somewhat after the fashion of the "Altan" at Heidelberg, and this was dotted with persons watching the holiday-makers land.

Once on shore, the island was found to be like a garden with its careful cultivation; and after ascending the pathway round one corner of the pretty patch of earth we came to an archway, where stood the money-taker with a soup-plate, demanding twopence of each person who entered.

At the back of the palace a long range of outhouses had been converted into a *Gasthof*, and here were bowered seats at the end of a garden. Hither the people came to drink their "*neu Wein*" (see p. 365) and "*halbe Portione Caffé*," while the military band that had landed with the passengers played waltzes and mazourkas at intervals, and the girls danced with their sergeants and sweethearts.

Round the palace stretched pretty-enough gardens, and at the rear were orchards, and meadows, and crops that told of the luxuriant soil. Behind the palace, towards Constanz, the land shelved gradually down to the water-side, and here was a narrow bridge, scarcely wider than the gangway from a steamer's floating-pier, connecting the island with the neighbouring shore. From its extreme narrowness the bridge had the appearance of an interminable raised rope-walk.

The view of the Alps from the terrace and gardens at Mainau is very fine, commanding as the balcony does the entire sweep of the Lake from one end to the other.

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The palace contains little that is peculiar except the "*Wappen*," or escutcheons of the Knights-Commander of the Teutonic Order—a work that was recently executed for Prince Esterhazy.

The first inscription upon this is "FRATER RUDOLPH VON SCHAFFUS, COMMANDEUR, AO 1264;" the *Wappen* itself being headed—

VERZEICHNISS
DER SCHILD UND WAPPEN
DEREN HOCHWÜRDIGE
HERREN COMANDEURS
STADTHALTERS-HAUS COMANDEURS UND HOFMEISTERS
DER REICHS COMANDE
MAYNAU.

The last inscription on the *Wappen* is as follows:—

CON : JOS : SIG : CARL
REICH V. REICHENSTEIN BROMBACH
COMANDEUR AO 1805.

The island of *Reichenau*, of which a view is given in the vignette to the title-page of this book, is situate, as we have said, in the "Under Lake," as it is called in German—in contradistinction to the Upper (Ueberlinger) branch of the water.

This is considerably larger than Mainau, being 3½ miles long, and upwards of 2 miles broad, so that it is nearly the size of Sark in the British Channel. It boasts three distinct villages or hamlets—one called *Oberzell* (Upper Cell), situate at the end of the island by Constanz, and containing some 300 inhabitants; another, at the opposite extremity, named *Unterzell* (Under Cell), with a population of 150; and the

third, styled *Mittelzell* (Middle Cell), numbering as many as 1000 souls.

The earliest mention of this island is in the eighth century, when it belonged to an Austrian land-steward ("*landvogt*") of the name of Zintlas, after whom it was then called "*Zintlas-au.*" At this period it seems to have been a wilderness, and infested by lizards and snakes. Zintlas, however, persuaded the Bishop Pirminius to allow a Kloster to be established upon it; immediately after which, we are assured, the reptiles all disappeared from its shores, and the desert became a garden—the island being then so highly cultivated as to obtain for it the name of *Reiche-Aue* (rich pasture-land).

The Kloster of Reichenau, up to the middle of the 14th century, was one of the wealthiest and most renowned, while its schools and scholars ranked as the most learned, in all Germany. During 1350–1400, however, the monastery grew poor, as the monks became depraved; and in the 16th century it was assigned to the Bishop of Constanz.

The island at the present day displays little or no traces of its former monastic greatness, or even superior culture. It is approached from the Baden side of the Rhine by a long narrow shoal-bank, planted on either side with poplars, and having a small bridge (like the gangway over a moat) at the end near the island.

The island itself is a long oval in form, and rises to a mound-like height in the centre. This part is called the "*Hohenwart*" (the high look-out), and has a belvidere built upon it at the cost of Herr Hofrath von Seyfried, whose rondelled residence is seen close by.

The principal objects worthy of notice on the island are the old Münster Kirche in the Middle-zell, and the ruins of the Castle of "*Schopfeln*" (*Scopula*) in the Upper-zell.

The Münster was built in the year 806 by Abbot Hatto I.,

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and contains some carvings of the 15th century, as well as some primitive German pictures, and a number of relics (including a tooth of the Evangelist St. Mark!), together with some mediæval communion services.

The castle of Schopfeln, on the other hand, which immediately adjoins the bridge, is said to have been the residence of the Abbots of Reichenau, and to have afforded an asylum to fugitives in the olden times. Nothing now remains of the Burg but a mere hedge of walls. Its destruction was brought about, we are told, by the Provost Mangold having thrust out, with his own fingers, the eyes of some Constanz fishermen who had intruded on the island,—an act of cruelty which so incensed the Constanzers, that they came down in a body and rased not only the castle, but several of the monastic residences, to the ground.

¶ i.

Ignorant Superstition—"Holy Coat" of Trèves—Educational Test—The Dumb Press of Germany.

But, so that we may neither unduly humiliate the Rhenish people nor exalt our own, let us test the relative wisdom of the two races in a still more convincing manner. The Great Exhibition of 1851, it is well known, was open for rather better than 23 weeks, or altogether 144 days, and was visited during that time by upwards of six million people: so that the average number of attendants was more than 40,000 per diem. The "Holy Coat of Trèves," on the other hand, was exhibited in the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Helen at Trier, in 1844 (after an interval of 34 years), and was viewed by 1,100,000 pilgrims in eight weeks, which