Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

Digitale Sammlung der Badischen Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

The upper Rhine

the scenery of its banks and the manners of its people

Mayence to the lake of Constance

Mayhew, Henry

London, 1858

[Text]

urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-161475

Visual Library

gaze upon the Salisbury plains of Dutch metal and stagey paintings than we are set thinking on the wretched paltry tricks which are termed the "external aids" of the religion with which they are connected.

How long, we wonder, will it be before Romanists will perceive, that if converts are to be caught like insects by glitter, the very love of the glare which allures them must ultimately destroy them also? How long will they continue to connect with the worship of the All-Wise the same trashy pageantry as we dedicate merely to the honour of a Lord Mayor? How long will they believe that which is an inward and spiritual grace to be nothing but an outward piece of stage effect and display; or that the reverence of mere gewgaw can be acceptable to Him who taught that Solomon arrayed in all his glory was not comparable to a simple lily of the field? How long, indeed, will the great lesson of Protestantism be wasted on Papists, and priests persist in degrading Religion down to the muck and mire of the world; or in using that which should serve to wean men from earthly things and treasures, that "moth and rust corrode," as a showy snare and instrument of mere worldly power?

Scarcely a Domkirche exists in Rhineland but is half ruins, half scaffolding-poles—the choir crumbling to decay before the towers have been built—and missionaries sent begging from door to door for funds to complete edifices that are tumbling to pieces at one end quicker than the money can be raised to finish them at the other. Such is the case with the Dom at Köln; so it is, too, at Oppenheim; and a like condition obtains at Speier.

No sooner do we set foot on the planted kind of park that surrounds the Kaiserdom than we hear the clink of the mason's chisel, and find the principal entrance latticed rudely

over with scaffold-poles. But here the anomaly of some half-score masons chipping away at fresh blocks, in the hope of removing one day the scaffolding from the face of the at-last-perfect edifice, strikes the visitor the more forcibly from the fact of Speier having been the site of the great "Protest" from which the Reformed creed derives its name. The mind cannot help thinking of the stolidity of the bigot priests who hope, despite such protest, to see their flashy temples once more complete in all the cunning of their ancient pomp, and who believe it to be still possible to hoodwink the world into a superstitious faith in the power of the very fallible "infallible" gentleman at Rome.

Considered as a work of art, rather than an "external aid" to religion, the interior of the Imperial Cathedral (though devoid of all architectural embellishment, and originally depending for its effect on its simplicity and vastness, for it is nearly 450 feet long and 180 feet wide) is now so thoroughly Germanesque in its decorations as to be, at least, curious if not pleasing.*

* The exterior of the Cathedral (see engraving) has little to recommend it, except the two tall square towers at the end next the Rhine, and the semicircular choir—the sole remains of the original building. These towers are in the Byzantine or Romanesque style, with stunted steeples, as it were, raised on quadrilateral gables, and remind one strongly of those of the *Pfarr-kirche* at Andernach, or St. Castor at Coblenz; while the rounded chancel, with its arcade-like cornice of small Romanesque arches, is much in the style of St. Gereon at Köln.

At one side of the glacis-like grounds surrounding the Domkirche, and which formerly constituted the cathedral cemetery, is a curious grotto-like or rock-work mound, set on a six-sided pedestal, as it were, and surrounded with isolated buttress-like columns, that stand at each angle of the hexagonal base. This is called the "*Oehlberg*" (*Mount of Olives*). The huge blocks of stones of which the mound is composed are carved over in places with leaves and flames, lizards and serpents, &c., and piled up to a point on one side; there being a narrow ledge-like pathway cut in the stones, and winding round the pile from the base to the top. Lying about the mound are the remains of statues, but in so headless and limbless a condition, that in their *torsi* state it is impossible to guess to whom they refer. The guide-

The chancel is literally one large sheet of gold, and on this are painted huge frescoes, representing the principal events in the Virgin's life, by one of the finest of the modern German masters, Jean Schraudolph. Along either side of the nave, too, and between the upper arches, there are frescoes depicting incidents in the history of the Saviour. The cupola, again, is decorated with frescoes, on a gold ground, of the "Lamb

books, however, assert that these truncated figures represent the sleeping disciples, and number among them the torso of Jesus Christ. This singular heap is said to be the remains of a chapel that was erected in 1411 in the centre of the ancient "cloister" of St. Germain (long since destroyed), and which was intended to represent the garden of Gethsemane and the capture of the Saviour.

Near the Oehlberg is a large and rude stone bowl, big as a baptismal font, and not unlike the basin of an old dried-up and spoutless fountain. This is the ancient "*Domnapf*" (the cathedral bowl or cup), and formerly stood in front of the Dom, as a mark to indicate the division between the episcopal territory and that of the city. In olden times, the newly-elected bishops, after having promised to respect the privileges of the town and the rights of the citizens, used to have this bowl filled with wine, and the burghers drank from it to the health of the prelate.

At the end of the Domkirche, towards the Rhine, stands a tall square tower by itself, with battlemented corners, and seeming like one of the ancient gateways to the city. This passes by the name of the "*Heiden-thurmchen*" (the Heathen's Turret), and the base of it is said to be of Roman construction, it having originally formed part, perhaps, of the ancient temple of Mercury, on whose site the Kaiserdom is said to have been erected. The style of the upper part of the tower, however, would indicate that it had, in the middle ages, been converted into one of the gates of the old town-walls, the remains of which may still be seen girding the cathedral, and with the little ditch-like river Speier trickling (as you see it in the accompanying print) along one side of them.

The "*Antiken-halle*" (Hall of Antiquities), standing on the opposite side of the cathedral grounds to the Mount of Olives, is a small, guard-house-like building, with its ancient treasures ranged under a little railed-in colonnade. Here are old fragments of once square pillars, with the corners chipped off, and broken capitals to columns, and noseless marble busts, and bas-reliefs, with the principal figures deprived, like Roman Miss Biffins, of hands and feet. There are also small statues in red-stone, in the Chelsea-pensioner-like, armless-and-legless style of ancient remains; and Roman tiles and pots, besides lamps, and glass vessels, spear-heads and sword-blades, and eagles that once belonged to Roman legions, together with an infinity of architectural and archæological relics, sufficient to drive a gentleman from the Antiquarian Society, or Wardour Street, fairly out of his senses with delight. These constitute the Roman remains found in Rhenish Bavaria, chiefly at Rheinzabern.

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK
Baden-Württemberg

immolated and triumphant;" whilst at the north and south choirs (where there are more frescoes) the subjects chosen are, respectively, St. Bernard preaching the crusade at Speier, and the Martyrdom of St. Stephen. These paintings took, even with the aid of five assistants, eight years to complete. The figures in the majority of them are larger than life, and outlined in that peculiar, hard style, which belongs to theatrical cut-pieces and German painting.

The inner walls of the Dom are painted a rich brown colour, thickly striped with gold, and with gilt capitals to the columns; while the roof is a bright blue, "picked out" with golden stars.

On either side of the stone-canopied altar, in the centre of the transept, between the nave and the choir, are two gigantic statues—the one to the right representing Rudolph of Hapsburg seated on a green marble pedestal, with his sword in his hand and his helmet at his feet; and the other to the left being the figure of Adolph of Nassau in armour, kneeling on a Byzantine sarcophagus of black marble, which rests on four winged lions. This is by Ohmacht, and was erected by the Duke of Nassau; whilst that of Rudolph of Hapsburg is the work of Schwanthaler of Munich, and was set up by the King of Bavaria.

Speier is indeed the St. Denis of Germany, where the Emperors were for many years interred. The site of the Imperial vault is still pointed out, and here once reposed the bones of no less than eight of the German monarchs: Conrad II., Henry III., IV., and V., Philip of Suabia, Rudolph of Hapsburg, Adolph of Nassau, and Albert of Austria. The French troops, however, in 1689, set fire to the Cathedral, and broke open and plundered the Imperial vault, so that it is difficult to say to whom belong the few bones that still remain.

The little outhouse-like chapel of St. Afra (a mere fragment

of the original building) is comparatively plain, with red sandstone pillars, being ornamented with only a gold niche or shell at the end. This is a peculiarly interesting spot, from its having long been the resting-place of the unburied body of the excommunicated Henry IV.—him who was the first royal rebel against the despotic power of the Pope, and whose touching story we read piece-meal, with all the vividness of associated scenery, as we ascend the banks of the Rhine. First we see in the hedge-like walls of the ruined stronghold of Hammerstein, the mountain spot where formerly the crown and royal robes of the German Empire were kept, and where the old monarch was imprisoned by Henry V., his usurper-son, till he consented to renounce them in the youth's favour. Again, at the castle of Marksburg, we behold the cramped dungeon-cell in which the Emperor was previously immured, and where he used to sit hour after hour, envying the liberty of the stream below as he watched through his prison-bars the bright waters dancing in the sunbeams. Farther on, we gaze upon the rude crumbling pile of Klopp at Bingen—another prison-house of the ill-fated, or rather ill-treated king—who, having been enticed up to Mainz by the feigned penitence of his traitor-son, had hardly clasped the rebellious boy in forgiveness to his bosom before the guards of the Papal conspirators and bigot prelates burst into the chamber, and tearing the imperial robes from his shoulders, cast him from the throne into a cell. And here, at Speier, we witness as it were the last scene of the eventful tragedy—the crowning act of the Papal spite, wreaked even against the corpse of the heart-broken monarch—the wretched rotting body itself persecuted for years after the poor unhappy soul had been worried out of it!

The ecclesiastic history connected with Speier is almost as interesting to English minds as that of Worms, and as we

follow in the Rhenish castles of Hammerstein, Marksburg, and Klopp, the several scenes in the history of the first Anti-Papal King, so with the neighbouring Rhenish cathedrals of Worms and Speier are linked the capital events of the great Protestant rising headed by the "heresiarch" monk, Martin Luther.

At Worms the first act as it were of the drama of the Reformation was played, and concluded with the mere empty railing of the Emperor's Edict, placing the heretic Luther under the ban of the Empire, and forbidding all persons to grant him or his adherents either asylum, food, or protection.* This was mere "sound and fury, signifying

* The signing of this edict was postponed till some twenty days after Luther's defence of his doctrines, and was executed by the Emperor, after mass, at Worms Cathedral. "It was a great festival," we are told, "and Charles V. went in state to the Domkirche. When the religious ceremonies were over, and a crowd of people still thronged the sanctuary, Alexander, the Papal Nuncio, robed in all the insignia of his dignity, approached Charles V. He held in his hand two copies of the edict against Luther, one in Latin, the other in German, and, kneeling before his Imperial Majesty, entreated him to affix to them his signature and the seal of the empire. It was at the moment when the sacrifice had been offered, when the incense still filled the temple, and while the sacred chants were re-echoing through its long-drawn aisles, that the destruction of the enemy of Rome was to be sealed. The Emperor, assuming a very gracious air, took the pen and wrote his name. Alexander withdrew in triumph, immediately sent the decree to the printers, and forwarded it to every part of Christendom." It ran as follows:—

"The Almighty having confided to us (Charles V.), for the defence of His holy faith, more kingdoms and greater authority than He has ever given to any of our predecessors, we purpose by every means in our power to prevent our holy empire from being polluted by any heresy:

"The Augustine Monk, Martin Luther, notwithstanding our exhortation, has rushed like a madman on our holy Church, and attempted to destroy it, by books overflowing with blasphemy . . . . . In a word, not to mention his many other evil practices, this man (who is in truth not a man, but Satan himself under the form of a man, and dressed in a monk's frock,) has collected into one stinking slough all the vilest heresies of past times, and has added to them new ones of his own:

"We have, therefore, dismissed from our presence this Luther, whom all pious

nothing," and in no way respected. The Evangelical Elector, John of Saxony, however, had caused Luther to be carried off on his return from the Diet, and concealed him in the castle of Wartburg, near Eisenbach. Here, in his island of Patmos as he called it, Luther remained for a year, writing treatises against "confession," the "mass," monastic vows and priestly celibacy; and afterwards returned to Wittenberg, where he occupied himself with his translation of the Bible—a work that has done almost as much for the German language as it has for religion.

In the meantime the "heresy" of the Reformation was growing on all sides, so that at length the Emperor Charles V. determined upon a visit to Rome, in order to consult with the Pope, and then to return to Germany for the purpose of restraining the unbelievers, and enforcing the Edict of Worms.

and sensible men must deem a madman, or one possessed by the devil; and we enjoin, that on the expiration of his safe-conduct immediate recourse be had to effectual measures to check his furious rage:

"For this reason, under pain of the penalties due to the crime of high treason, we forbid you (all electors, princes, prelates, and others,) to harbour the said Luther, after the appointed term shall have expired, or to conceal him, to give him food or drink, or to furnish him, by word or deed, publicly or secretly, with any kind of succour whatever. We enjoin you, moreover, to seize him, or cause him to be seized, wherever you may find him, to bring him before us without any delay, or to keep him in safe custody until you have learned from us in what manner you are to act towards him, and have received the reward due to your labours in so holy a work.

"As for his adherents, you will apprehend them, confine them, and confiscate their property.

"And as for his writings, ... you will burn them, or utterly destroy them in any other manner.

"As for the authors, poets, printers, painters, buyers or sellers of placards or pictures against the Pope or the Church, you will sieze them, body and goods, and deal with them according to your good pleasure.

"And if any person, whatever be his dignity, shall dare act in contradiction to the decree of our Imperial Majesty, we order him to be placed under the ban of the empire.

"Let every man behave according to this decree."

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK
Baden-Württemberg

The last summons, it was arranged, was to be addressed to the heretics by the Diet of Speier, which was to take place on the 25th June, 1526.

On the opening of this Diet, the first step of the Evangelical princes, after entering the town, was "to ask," say the historians, "for a place of worship." The Bishop of Speier, Count-Palatine of the Rhine, having indignantly refused the strange request, the princes complained of it, as an act of injustice, and ordered their ministers to preach daily in the halls of their palaces, which were immediately filled by an immense crowd from the city and the country, amounting to many thousands.

In vain, on the feast-days, did Ferdinand, the ultramontane princes, and the bishops, assist in the pomps of the Roman worship in the Kaiserdom; the simple Gospel preached in the Protestant vestibules engrossed all hearers, and the tawdry pageant of the mass was celebrated in an empty church.

All the followers of the Evangelical princes in those days wore, embroidered on their right sleeves, the initials V. D. M. I. Æ., that is to say: "VERBUM DEI MANET IN ÆTERNUM" (the Word of God endureth for ever). The same inscription might be read on the escutcheons of the Lutheran princes suspended over their hotels.

In every part of the city, too, hawkers were selling Christian pamphlets, written in Latin and in German, and ornamented with engravings, in which the errors of Rome were vigorously attacked. One of these books was entitled, "*The Papacy with its Members, painted and described by Doctor Luther;*" and in it figured the Pope, the Cardinals, and all the religious orders, exceeding sixty, each with their costumes and descriptions in verse.

But in the interval between the summoning and assembling of the Diet, Pope Clement VII., whom Charles was about to

visit, had, with a strange infatuation, suddenly turned against the monarch; whereupon Charles turned as abruptly towards the Evangelical princes: "Let us suspend the Edict of Worms," he then wrote to his brother; "let us bring back Luther's partisans by mildness, and, by a good counsel, cause the triumph of Evangelical truth."

What, then, was to be done? The Edict of Worms could neither be repealed nor carried into execution. So strange a predicament led of necessity to the desired solution —Religious Liberty.

"In one place," said the deputies of the cities, "the ancient ceremonies (of the Church) have been preserved; in another they have been abolished; and both parties think they are right. Let us allow every man to do as he think fit until a council shall re-establish the desired unity of all by the Word of God."

The "recess" of the Diet, dated the 27th of August, 1526, decreed, therefore, that a national free council should be convoked within a year; that they should request the Emperor to return speedily to Germany; and that, until then, each State should behave in its own territory in such a manner as to be able to render an account to God and to the Emperor.

Thus matters continued—the Reformation still increasing, under the authority of the law as it were—until the 29th June, 1528, when a peace between the heads of the German Empire and of the Roman Church was concluded at Barcelona, based on the destruction of heresy; and in November of the same year another Diet was convoked to meet at Speier, on the 21st February, 1529.

"Never did the sacerdotal party appear in the Diet, we are told, in such numbers, or so powerful and decided, as then."

On the 5th March, Ferdinand, who was the President of

the Diet, the Dukes of Bavaria, and lastly, the archiepiscopal Electors of Mentz and Trèves, entered the gates of Speier, surrounded by a numerous armed escort. On the 13th March came John the Elector of Saxony, attended only by Melancthon and Agricola. But the Lutheran Philip of Hesse, faithful to his character, entered the city on the 18th March, to the sound of trumpets, and with two thousand horsemen.

The divergence of men's minds soon became manifest. A Papist did not meet a Lutheran in the street without casting angry glances at him, and secretly threatening him with perfidious machinations. The Elector-Palatine passed the Saxons without appearing to know them; and although John of Saxony was the most important of the Princes-Elector, none of the chiefs of the opposite party visited him.

On the assembling of the Diet, the Papal party called for the execution of the Edict of Worms, 1521; and the Evangelical party demanded, on the contrary, the maintenance of the Edict of Speier, 1526.

But the majority of the members of the Diet, rejecting the demands both of the priests and the Lutherans, came to a resolution, on the 15th of March, 1529, that "every religious innovation should continue to be interdicted in the places where the Edict of Worms had been carried out."

A declaration, however, was drawn up on the 19th April by the Elector of Saxony and his allies, and this declaration was the famous "*Protest*" that henceforward gave the name of "*Protestant*" to the renovated Church*—a protest which raised the power of the conscience above that of the ma-

* This Protest was as follows:—

"Dear Lords, Commons, Uncles, and Friends,

* * * * * * *

"We cannot consent to the repeal of the last recess of Speier (1526), because it concerns the glory of God and the salvation of our souls, and in such matters we ought to have regard above all to the commandments of God, who is King of

gistrate, and the authority of the Word of God above that of a mere Church—the great Bill of Religious Rights as it were—the Magna Charta of the Conscience.

These memorable Diets were held at the ancient imperial palace of Speier, called *Retscher* (probably a corruption of "*Hradschin*," the name of the castle of Prague) and of which now only an old half-hidden wall exists by the side of the bare Methodist-chapel-like Protestant Church in the "Enge Gasse" (Narrow Lane).

Nor is the civic history of Speier less eventful than the part it has played in the ecclesiastical revolutions of the world.

kings and Lord of lords, each of us rendering him account for himself, without caring the least in the world about 'majority' or 'minority.'

* * * * * * *

"Adhesion to your doctrine . . . . . would be to act against our conscience . . . . . to deny our Lord Jesus Christ, to reject His Holy Word, and thus give Him just reason to deny us in turn before His Father, as He has threatened.

"What! shall *we* ratify this edict? Shall *we* assert that when Almighty God calls a man to His knowledge, this man cannot however receive the knowledge of God? Oh! of what deadly backslidings should we not thus become the accomplices, not only among *our* subjects, but also among *yours!*

"For this reason we reject the yoke that is imposed upon us.

"Moreover, ... seeing that there is no sure doctrine but such as is conformable to the Word of God; that the Lord forbids the teaching of any other doctrine; that each text of the Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts; and that this holy book is in all things necessary for the Christian, easy of understanding, and calculated to scatter the darkness: we are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of His only Word, such as it is contained in the biblical books of the Old and New Testament, without adding anything thereto that may be contrary to it. This Word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us.

"For these reasons, most dear lords, uncles, cousins, and friends, we earnestly entreat you to weigh carefully our grievances and our motives. If you do not yield to our request, we PROTEST, by these presents, before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Saviour, and who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures, that we, for us and for our people, neither consent nor adhere, in any manner whatsoever, to the proposed decree in anything that is contrary to God, to His Holy Word, to our right conscience, to the salvation of our souls, and to the last decree of Speier."

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK
Baden-Württemberg

The Romans are said to have founded the city, and when Tacitus wrote it formed one of the strongest defences as well the most splendid of all the towns on the banks of the Rhine. It was called by them "*Augusta Nemetum*" and "*Noviomagus*," but later, "*Spira*."

A Roman temple to Mercury, we are told, existed on the present site of the Domkirche, and the heathen shrine was originally converted into a Christian Church by Dagobert II. Conrad II. (called the Salic) founded the present Cathedral, in 1027, as a place of burial for himself and his Imperial successors.

In the time of Charlemagne, Speier became the seat of the Germanic Diet, and the ancient Franconian and Suabian kings made it their place of residence, raising it to the dignity of a free city of the Empire.

In 1111, Henry V. granted it the monopoly of the carrying-trade up and down the Rhine, and it then became the centre of a flourishing commerce. The citizens had conferred upon them, at the same time, the right of destroying any baronial castle which might be built within three miles of their gates.

During the middle ages, Speier was alternately the scene of Imperial festivity within its walls, and of violent feuds and battles without—the citizens being then as well versed in the use of arms as in the arts of trade, and battling at one time with some neighbouring town, and at another issuing forth to punish the rapacity of some feudal baron who had plundered their merchants on the high-road. Occasionally, too, Speier was besieged by the collective armies of the barons and cities with whom they had been at war, and though the united force against them, at one time, numbered 20,000 men, the enemy was repulsed, history tells us, by the bravery of its citizens.

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK Baden-Württemberg

Nor did these struggles between the citizens and the "robber-nobles" cease until the enactment of the celebrated Edict abolishing the right of private warfare (*Faust-recht*—literally, "club-law"); and after that time the Imperial Chamber (*Reichs-Kammergericht*), for enforcing the mandate, sat at Speier for upwards of 200 years.

But the town was no sooner freed from the disaster of private warfare than it became the prey of foreign enemies. In the 14th century the population of Speier, like that of Worms, was nearly 30,000, which is about threefold what it is at the present day. In the 17th century, however, the trade and prosperity of the city began to decay; and in the year 1689 its ruin was completed by the French, during the "*Mordbrenner Kreig*" (Incendiary War) of the "Orleans succession."

The town then fell into the hands of the French, who commanded the people to betake themselves, within six days, to Alsace, Lorraine, or Burgundy, and not to recross the Rhine, upon pain of death. At the expiration of the term, one of the French provosts, the story runs, entered the city, followed by forty executioners, having a gallows and a wheel, the emblems of their profession, embroidered on their dress. By these officers the people were driven out of the city by the roll of the drum, like a horde of criminals. Then, at the orders of the French Commander, Montclair, piles of combustibles were stacked in the houses and fired, so that the "seven-and-forty streets" of which Speier was then composed, were quickly in flames. The houses continued burning for three days and three nights, during which time miners were engaged in blowing up the stronger walls and cloisters, in order that not a stone of the place might be left standing.

The enemy had promised to respect the Cathedral, and the citizens had, therefore, filled it with their goods previous to

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK Baden-Württemberg

quitting the neighbourhood; but the French, instead of fulfilling their pledge, first plundered the goods, and then used them as fuel for the destruction of the edifice. It was at this period that the ancient cupola, nave, and choir, were destroyed, and the two towers alone left standing out of six that formerly graced the pile. It was at the same time, too, that the graves of the Emperors were broken open, and their bones scattered abroad; and though before this siege the city boasted five suburbs enclosed within its ramparts, and no less than 13 gates, and 64 towers of defence provided with artillery—all of these, with the exception of the ancient gate called the "*Altpörtel*," were levelled with the dust, the town remaining for many years a mere heap of rubbish.

This ancient gateway still stands at the end of *Maximilian Strasse*, and is merely a huge square turret, tunnelled, as it were, with an archway at its base, and surmounted by a tall roof, that reminds one forcibly of the immense slate pyramids piled on top of the wings of the Tuilleries.

After the destruction of the town in 1689, Speier was long before it was rebuilt; and even when the city was reared anew, it never regained its former prosperity; but was in the year 1794 again attacked by the French army, who, after six different assaults, carried it once more by storm, and re-enacted all the brutal scenes that their compatriots had perpetrated in the preceding century.

In the year 1816 Speier came into the possession of the King of Bavaria, and at his cost principally the Cathedral has been since restored.

BLB BADISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK Baden-Württemberg