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**A Picturesque Tour Along The Rhine, From Mentz To
Cologne**

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The Rheingau

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THE RHEINGAU.

Hier auch stand die Natur, streuend mit reicher Hand
 Ueber Thäler und Hüh'n lebende Schönheit hin
 Mit verweilendem Tritte,
 Das Gefilde zu schmücken, still.

KLOPSTOCK.

Here Nature stood still, strewing with lavish hand
 Her living beauty over hills and vallies,
 With lingering step
 Adorning the landscape.

THIS paradise, like the region of Naples, may be styled a portion of heaven fallen down to the earth. The majestic Rhine lingers in his course through it, and in honour of it, forms nine verdant islands. The solemn Taunus throws his woody arms around it, to protect it from the rough and boisterous north. Vine-covered hills, fields and meadows, and human dwellings, are intermingled most agreeably; and in this Elysium, we fly from place to place in an overpowering ecstasy, which defies description. Hallgarten*, a village in the forest†, with its Hyndelberg adorned with vines, lies in a charming situation close to the wood-covered heights. The well-preserved equestrian castle‡ of Volrats (Volrades, Folratz), a family which still continues to flourish, has a most picturesque appearance amidst its soft hills, behind the beautifully enthroned Johannesberg. Further back, the ruins of the burg of Scharfenstein, on a rocky vine-covered mountain, towers above the wooded

* Formerly called Hargartdun (Hargartshill), originally a hunting-seat, but as early as 1250 a flourishing little village, *villula*.

† *Wald-flecken*.—*Flecken* meant originally any farm-house or hamlet, with the fields belonging to it; but it now means a place holding a middle rank between a village and a town, and where the trades of towns are carried on. Fritsch defines it *oppidum sine muris*; a distinction hardly intelligible in this country in the present day, where the greatest cities are without walls.—*Trans.*

‡ *Ritter-schloss*, a castle belonging to a knight or chevalier.—*Trans.*

valley of Kiderich. The mild vineyards stretch sweetly round the golden Marktbrunner Stralenberg down to a narrow causeway (which is throughout protected by an old railing, but not by a parapet wall,) between Erbach and Hattenheim, where the important frontier fountain (Grenz-Mark-Brünnchen) pours itself with a pleasing murmur into a sand-stone basin (in the chapel, fitted up with elegant seats, erected in honour of it in the celebrated vintage-year 1811), in order that travellers may refresh themselves with the water as well as the wine of Mark-Brunn. A beautiful range of vine-hills again follows; we approach the Johannesberg, the Rothenberg (so called from the red colour of its soil), and the Niederwald, and every thing assumes a more gay and southern appearance. The highway, which is frequently too broad for the valuable soil through which it passes, and which was formerly laid out under the mild episcopal sceptre, runs with a gentle slope along the right bank of the river. A road, of five leagues in length, from Schierstein, the commencement of the modern Rheingau, to Rüdesheim, comes in contact with eight other places; namely, Walluf, Elfeld, Erbach, Hattenheim, Oesterich, Mittelheim, Winkel, and Geisenheim, most of which are surrounded by beautiful country-seats, presenting a series of the most agreeable pictures to the delighted eye, and putting the friend of antiquity in mind of the villas of the Romans. Geisenheim, the streets of which are still unpaved, and which may be considered as a large village, has something distinguished and solemn about it in this respect. The Rhine between this place and Galsheim is more than half a league in breadth, which is the greatest breadth it ever attains between Basle and Holland, and the green-coloured majestic stream has now all the appearance of a lake. The Rheingau formerly commenced at Nieder-Walluf, and extended to Lorchhausen; from thence it ran behind Rüdesheim, past the White Tower, along the Hinterwald, as far as Mapperhof and Mapperthurm, and then crossed the height between Raventhal and Schlangenbad, descending to the Klinge, where its old frontier tower still stands. Five strong bulwarks* towered

* That at Walluf, called the *Back-ofen* (Baker's oven), was carried off some years ago.

immediately above the principal passes. The *Cometia Rinégowe* (Rinagouwe) was an archiepiscopal fief; but the Rheingau itself was an estate dedicated to the support of the archiepiscopal table, and became at last a domain of the electorate of Mentz. From the favour in which the archbishops were held by the Carolingians and the Othos, this inestimable jewel came by degrees into their hands. The Rheingau was formerly a free Salic possession, and was originally divided into the Upper and Lower Bounds (*Gemarkung*); the former comprehending the district along the mountains, and the latter the district along the banks of the river. It was next divided into Rhine townships and Forest townships (*Rheinflecken und Waldflecken*); and beyond its line of defence, into Forest villages and cantons (*ortschaften*) of the bailiwick of Hohenstein, over which the electorate of Mentz possessed a criminal jurisdiction. These villages and cantons also took part in the district assemblies on the island of Lützel. This hospitable territory was protected on the forest side by a frontier intrenchment, consisting of hedges and underwood tangled and plashed together, a species of barricado called *gebück*, which enabled its defenders in the Thirty Years war to arrest the cause of the Evangelical heroes, till Bernard of Weimar came and broke through the pass at the Klinge.

In the stirring and vigorous times of the middle ages, the inhabitants of the Rheingau were exposed to frequent feuds. In the thirteenth century they still had their particular *gaugraves*. In the tenth century, this noble tract of country was acquired for the holy chair of Mentz by Hatto I. administrator of the Empire under Louis the Child; by the Archbishop William his brother, and more particularly by Hatto II. under the Emperor Otho II. It was soon afterwards completely united with it by Willigis, the first arch-chancellor of the Empire*; and the place of the *gaugraves* (*comites Rinckgaugiae, de Rinégowe*) was then supplied by vicegerents (*vice domini*). The inhabitants of the Rheingau had their separate constitution, defensive

* Willigis was not the first elector, but Gerhard I. who participated in the election of Count Richard of Cornwall (in Oppenheim) as German king.

institutions, liberties, and privileges, without the confirmation of which they would not pay homage to a new ruler. Additional rights and liberties were conferred on them by the Archbishop Adolphus II. whom they assisted in 1462 against Diether and the citizens of Mentz. They were also exempted from all feudal services and compulsory military duty. They have a common saying among them, that "the air of the Rheingau makes a man free." The old national maxim of Germany, "What we were not consulted in, that will we not assist in executing," was peculiarly in force among them. According to the descriptions of former times, the Rheingau was "a free, obedient, incomparable portion of the territory of the church of Mentz." In return for the immunities respecting markets and customs which they enjoyed, the inhabitants of the Rheingau preserved, from the year 1200, the right of defence of the town of Mentz, a right which they still exercised in 1792.

The Rheingau, in old times, consisted of twenty-eight cantons, and two bailiwicks, Elfeld and Rüdesheim. Nieder-Walluf, so called from the Waldaffa, a mountain-stream, was its port. This place occurs in documents as far back as 789 and 860, as a Carolingian domain belonging to the kings-hundred. (Schierstein, *Scerstein*, was in like manner a *prædium regium* in the eleventh century). Many of the towns or villages (*flecken*) are surrounded with walls; and Elfeld received in 1332 municipal privileges and freedom of trade from the Emperor Louis the Bavarian. Here the Emperor Günther von Schwarzburg, who was poisoned, fell sick in 1349; and here he concluded a treaty with Charles IV. his crafty adversary. Balduin von Trier, administrator of the electorate of Mentz, built its burg* in 1330. It was often, as well as Ehrenfels and Scharfenstein, the residence of the Archbishops of Mentz, and a place of refuge for the clergy. A printing-office was established here about the year 1460, by Bechtermünze, an assistant of Gutenberg. From an inscription on a stone found at this place, which is ascribed to the Romans, but which may perhaps

* In a fire which broke out in this burg in 1339, the greatest number and the most important of the documents of the Rheingau, from the eighth to the thirteenth century, became the prey of the flames.

be Carolingian, it appears that Elfeld was called *Alta Villa*: it was also called in German *Alter Weiler**. The Carolingians had also a royal court at Elfeld. Altville, with the upper part of the Rheingau, was acquired by the archbishopric of Mentz under the Emperor Otho I. The villages (*flecken*) of Erbach, Mittelheim, and Oesterich, had already their separate churches in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. Hattenheim was still a little village (*villula*) about the year 1069, and was then called Haternheim, from Hatto, a count of the Rheingau, and not from its being a *villa Hattonis* of the Archbishops Hatto I. and II.† Oesterich and Mittelheim were old village-colonies from Winkel, and in ecclesiastical communion with them. Oesterich was burnt in 1635 by the Swedes, and immediately afterwards by the Bavarians, and again in 1688 by the French. The old village (*flecken*) of Langen-Winkel, which well deserves to be called *long*‡, runs along the foot of the Johannesberg, and abounds with beautiful country-seats. It was formerly called Weinzell (*Vincella, Vinicella*), and was perhaps a Roman wine-store, and afterwards, under the Carolingians, a depôt for the wine brought from Weinsheim, on the opposite bank. The learned Archbishop Hraban (Rhabanus Maurus) frequently took up his abode in this beautiful nook of earth, where he died in 856, extolled as a benefactor of the poor. Whether the old walls of a granary now belonging to Volrats (the floor of which was extolled as a wonder, from its power to resist the attacks of mice,) are the remains of the domestic chapel of Rhabanus, or belonged to the Rheingraves and Sovereign Lords de Winkela, or to the Barons de Grifencle (Griffin-claw), has not been historically ascertained. The Klingebach from Marienthal, a stream issuing

* *Weiler*, from *villare*, in barbarous Latin, a hamlet, and *flar*, also derived from *villare*, and afterwards changed to *lar*, occur frequently as a termination of names of places.—*Trans.* •

† The ancestors of the family von Langwerth, now residing at Elfeld (the only Protestant family of the nobility of the former electorate of Mentz), called themselves lords (*herren*) von Hattenheim; and a burg situated there belonged to them.

‡ *Lang* is the German for long.—*Trans.*

out of the delightful dell of Johannes, falls into the Rhine at Bartolmä, where Count Richolf founded a church dedicated to St. Bartholomew, and an hospital for leprous Crusaders, in the year 1109. This stream was in old times called Hunnenklingen, a name which had reference to a passage of the Huns at this place. The convent of Marienthal was first occupied by Kogelherren (an order which had its particular rules laid down by Gerard de Groot), afterwards by Capuchins, and lastly by Jesuits. Service is now performed there, but only on the festival-days of the Virgin. Geisenheim presents objects of a different description to the inquiring eye of the traveller. The country-seat of the illustrious and politic Elector John Philip*, where, in 1653†, the austere philosopher Leibnitz and the pious enthusiast Holzhauser of Bingen, held conferences with a view to the union of the Catholic and Protestant churches (conferences remarkable for the contrast which they exhibited, but which led to nothing), is still standing here, and has a most venerable appearance. Geisenheim (Giesenheim, and also Gysinheim), so called from two neighbouring islands in the Rhine bearing the name of Gisen, occurs in documents of so early a date as 779 and 788; but it is not mentioned in any document as producing wine before the ninth and tenth centuries: the Rothenberg there may, however, have been planted with vines under the Carolingians. Bishop Otwin of Hildesheim purchased a mansion with vineyards in Geisenheim, in the year 954. Here flourished the noble families de Gysinheim; and here was the first seat of the old Rhinegraves, where they were rewarded by the Empire with the duty on pepper. Count Trautwein (Drutwin) had a country-house at Gysinheim, which he sold in the year 1019. The Swedes and Bavarians, and the French under Turenne, destroyed this place, which was formerly of considerable importance.

* His father was buried in the church of this place, and he himself erected in it a beautiful monument to his memory.

† The precise date of this conference I have no means of ascertaining, but it could not be 1653, as Leibnitz, who was born in 1645, was then only seven years old.—*Trans.*

In the beginning of the Reformation, the inhabitants of the Rheingau were ardently disposed towards a change of religion. Deceived by the spirit of the times, they assembled, in the year 1525, on the hill of Wacholder, at Elfeld, and resolved to have equal rights with the nobles, or to force the nobles to pay the same taxes with themselves; an object which has at length been attained in our days. The war of the Boors contributed to inspire them with this resolution, but they were soon re-converted by the result of it, with the aid of the clergy, and on that occasion they lost their states. Seven convents, which as spiritual fortresses had for centuries defended this heavenly region, Tiefenthal, Eberbach, Gottesthal, Eubingen, Marienthal, Aulhausen*, and Noth-Gottes, were suppressed, one after another, some years ago. The situation of Gottesthal (*Vallis Dei*), lately a convent of Cistercian nuns, and prior to 1220 a *monasterium fratrum et sororum*, is exceedingly sweet, and highly calculated to inspire religious meditation: its ruins, in a narrow verdant glen, surrounded by vines and alders, seem to mourn over the mountain-stream. Close to it is a number of mineral springs; but the shady trees which it once possessed have disappeared. Solitary paths lead from thence to the Steinberg, which consists of seventy-five acres of vineyard and twenty-five acres of woodland, and which, with the farm-house belonging to it, are inclosed by a stone wall. The most valuable wine is made on this property, which originally belonged to the convent of Eberbach, but is now a ducal domain, appropriated to the supply of this precious wine.

The convent itself, a noble structure, at the foot of the Rabenkopf, surrounded with picturesque woods and verdant meadows, is highly deserving of a visit. The appearance of this monument of ancient conventual piety, built in the most elevated style, is well calculated to excite our wonder.

* The Forest village of Aulhausen (Ulinhusen) was founded by Ullners or Häfners (Ullnern oder Häfnern*).

* *Häfner* or *häfner*, a name only known in particular parts of Germany, is a person who deals in wine-lees and ale-grounds; or, according to Frisch, a person *qui coemit faces vini et cerevisiæ, easque in usum suum vertit.*—*Trans.*

This convent, which was founded by the enthusiastic crusade-preacher St. Bernard, under the Archbishop Adelbert I.*, in 1131, still appears an object of importance, and justly claims our attention in its present ruined and altered state. St. Bernard, it is said, met a friendly boar in the wood, which, with its snout, drew a plan of the church on the spot where it was first built. It seems it was first erected on the hill, but invisible spirits transported the stones, with the boar, to the present site. We now see along the walled rivulet of Eberbach, the first church of the convent, when it had scarcely yet received its form, supported by fourteen beautiful columns; in two rows (an edifice now converted into a receptacle for wine); and near to it the gloomy original convent, which, by rich and pious donations and savings made by the order, was gradually followed by a conventual palace, an hospital, and a splendid temple. In the centre of this temple there was a small tower, and it was also adorned with many altars and monuments: those of Gerlach and Adolphus I.†, Archbishops of Mentz, are still to be seen. The significant statues of St. Bernard fix the attention of the traveller in several places. In the edifice which was formerly the abbey, we find portraits of the different abbots. This spacious edifice, surrounded by a strong wall, once a rich abbey, is now transformed into a correction-house and lunatic asylum. Ten splendid columns, with various capitals, are ranged

* The archbishop gave for this purpose the tract of woodland called Hobe, possessed by the convent of Augustine monks* at Mittelheim, which was suppressed in 1130, but of which the possessions were again separated from the Bischoffsberg, and given to the Bernardine monks.

† Several others, with figures in stone of the Counts of Nassau, were taken from the choir of the Counts (*Grafen-Chore*), and deposited in the new burg at Biebrich.

* In the original, *Augustiner-Canonic*, i. e. *Conventus canonicorum qui secundum regulam vivunt*. In the Roman church *canonicus* denotes a lay priest possessing a prebend in a collegiate church, of whom a canon is the representative in the present English church; or a member of an order of monks who follow the rule of St. Augustine, and are in some measure to be considered as lay priests, though they observe certain regulations, and live in common. Luther, for instance, was a *canonicus* of this last description at the breaking out of the Reformation.—*Trans.*

between the thirty empty cells. In 1631, Oxenstiern had at first his winter-quarters in this convent, and the edifice close beside the great church was erected by his orders.

This prudent general and greatest statesman of his age, who adhered so staunchly to the Scriptures, and without whom the peace of Westphalia would not have turned out so much to the honour of the Protestants, lived on the best terms with the good monks, whose habitation in war and in peace was the seat of hospitality. The holy and inspired Abbot Bernard de Clairvaux found here another Wormwood Valley (*Vallis Absinthialis*), and, with his industrious settlers, converted it into a more beautiful Rheingau-Hellthal (*Clara Vallis**). By means of these teachers of agriculture, whose pious songs often resounded through the hills and vallies around, the whole Rheingau soon assumed a new appearance. In those rude times, the monks of the orders of St. Benedict and St. Bernard were distinguished benefactors of mankind, and the cultivation of the soil and civilization in general were greatly indebted to them. The industrious monks of Eberbach, as early as the year 1160, exported their Steinberg wine; and shortly afterwards they conveyed it in their own waggons and vessels to Cologne, where they were peculiarly favoured, where they had a wine-cellar or warehouse (*cellarium*) of their own, and where, according to Father Bär, they were even possessed of a shipping station on the Rhine (*Rheinpforte*†) down to 1596. What they confided to Nature lives and renovates itself with her, while their other works have perished in the wreck of time. In front of this convent, now no

* *Vaux* or *vau*, from *vallis*, is a word of frequent occurrence in the *fabliaux* and other remains of the old French language, though now obsolete; and *Clairvaux* has the same signification with *Hellthal* in German, namely, Clear or Bright Valley. St. Bernard, Abbot de Clairvaux, was the reformer of the order of St. Benedict; and the monks of this reformed order were called Bernardines or Cistercians, from Cisteaux, in Latin *Cistertium*, in Burgundy, their most distinguished abbey in France.—*Trans.*

† *Rheinpforte*, literally Rhine-gate, means an entrance into the Rhine, and the context would lead us to suppose that it is here used in the signification of dock.—*Trans.*

longer the abode of monks, on the slope of a sweet slate-hill, still stands the renovated chapel of the pious founder, which is called Bernhards-Ruhe, with the following inscription:

Divus BERNARDUS fessos hic sarcini artus, juxta Eberbach nunc precibus ora celebrare viator stes:

and also the following affectionate German couplet:

Allhier es heisst BERNARDI Ruh

Lieb' geb' der Ruh* die Werk hinzu†.

This place is called BERNARD's Repose:

May love supply the means of repose!

Here we are reminded of the distich:

Bernardus valles, montes Benedictus amabat,

Oppida Franciscus, celebres Ignatius urbes‡.

The Gothic church of the Forest village (Waldflecken) of Kiderich (formerly called Ketercho, *Chetrecho*), with its painted windows, and the beautiful country-seat of an equestrian family, surprise us in the most agreeable manner in this sylvan recess. The burg of Scharfenstein, suspended over the village, was constructed in the twelfth century, and was an earlier residence of the Archbishops of Mentz than Ehrenfels. It had its burg-men, or joint defenders, who took their name from it, and who dwelt in separate burgs (*thalburgbaue*); but they became gradually extinct. One of these possessions came through inheritance into the hands of the Counts

* *Ruhe* in German signifies rest or repose, and is not unfrequently the termination of names of places; as for instance, *Karls* or *Carls-ruhe*, the Repose of Charles, &c.—*Trans.*

† Reichertshausen, a possession belonging to the convent of Eberbach, was, as early as the year 1162, according to a papal bull, the wine-warehouse (*cellarium super ripam Reni*) of the abbey; and the Draiserhof, close adjoining, was the boundary of the convent between Elfeld and Erbach.

‡ St. Bernard loved vallies, St. Benedict mountains, St. Francis villages, and St. Ignatius renowned cities. The latter no doubt thought he had made the best choice, but his successors were the first who suffered in consequence of it.

of Solms, and the ruins of the principal burg now belong to the Counts of Bassenheim. The foundations of a building, the name of which is still unknown, though it must also have been a burg, are to be seen on the Himmelreich, the wood-covered hill between Kiederich and Rauenthal, already mentioned in the description of Schlangenbad.

The name *Ringau*, *Ringow*, or *Rheingau*, is certainly derived more naturally from *Rin*, the Rhine, than from the vallies (*auen*) inclosed within the stone-ring hills (*stein-ring-höhen*) of the Taunus; though it is also called *Rinegowee*, *Rinckgau*, and *Rinckgow**, especially in documents. The Upper Rheingau ran from Sulzbach on the mountain-road to the Maine (which is supposed to be the *Obringa* of Ptolemy); and the Under or Lower Rheingau extended formerly to Friedberg, and consequently included the Kings-Hundred and the Nitachgow or Niedgau. To the present Rheingau alone belongs the praise of still preserving the old name; which, however, from the power of custom, or for the sake of euphony, the inhabitants have deprived of its hiatus, and transformed into a neuter†.

This delightful land may have still appeared more beautiful and attractive to monks in the days when chivalry and monachism were in their bloom, when its romantic burgs, no longer the abodes of violence and rapine (*raub und feldelosen burgen*), and its hospitable convents kindly invited the weary traveller, who is now refreshed in peaceful country-seats.

The inhabitants of the Rheingau are kind, frank, hospitable, and, generally speaking, endowed with a certain innate hilarity, which well becomes them. As the

* *Ring* was in old times written *Krink* and *Rink*, as well as *Ring*. It may be proper to observe, that *Rink* and *Ring* are pronounced by most Germans, in the same manner as *thing* and *think* are by the common people of this country; so that the word is the same to the ear, though not to the eye.—*Trans.*

† The author means by hiatus the *r* in *Rheingau* following the *r* in the masculine definite article *der*, as *der Rheingau*. By making *Rheingau* neuter, it is *das Rheingau*.—*Trans.*

district was itself separated from the country adjacent by the Rhine and a trench, its inhabitants were in like manner a separate people. They yet form, as it were, only one family, especially the inhabitants of Rüdesheim, who are almost all related to each other*, and who seldom marry elsewhere. Persons when they meet greet each other with the words, " Good time!" which in a bad time sounded doubly grateful.

In former days, the festal peals of the baptized and consecrated May-bells sweetly echoed through the pleasant hills and vallies of the Rheingau, from the setting in of even to the dawn of morning, with the view of obtaining the blessing of Heaven on the labours of man in that season of hope, when he commits the source of his future subsistence to the bosom of the earth, and when, in the unsuspecting confidence of piety, he supposes the continuance or the failure of the bounty of nature may depend on the efficacy of his prayers. This ringing of bells has been prohibited here as well as elsewhere, on account of the disturbance which it occasioned by night; but the herb-wine retained its rights, and still continues to be as refreshing as Rhenish nectar.

The most delightful periods of the year in the Rheingau, and more particularly in Rüdesheim, are, that in which the vine puts forth its blossoms, when the whole country is filled with the most delightful fragrance; and autumn, when grapes of the very best quality invite to enjoyment. They are not trodden here, but beat; and we therefore drink the must without hesitation or disgust.

The same wild hubbub and idle discharge of fire-arms which take place elsewhere, are not to be heard in the Rheingau; but the men and women connected with the vine-cultivation, form processions with music and singing. A female is elected wine-matron in the bacchanalian procession at the end of the vintage. There are houses

* The watermen of Rüdesheim have from time immemorial been famed for their knowledge of the navigation of the Rhine, and at the same time for their roughness and covetousness; talents which would seem congenial with the violent element they belong to.

and vineyards of considerable value belonging to various old and new proprietors, especially in Geisenheim and Rüdesheim. This district, with respect to mildness of climate, may indisputably pass for the most southern zone of Germany. The road from Geisenheim to Rüdesheim is the most beautiful of the whole Rheingau; and a row of walnut and elm trees affords also that beneficent shade, which we so seldom meet with in this wine-region, where, in general, more attention is paid to the culture of the grape, than to that of fruit or ornamental trees. Viewed from an adjacent height, this enchanting tract of country appears before us like a carpet of delight, skilfully woven by the formative hand of Nature.

Und es breitet das Lustthal sich zu den Füßen, da schmücken

Goldne Saaten die Flur, goldne Trauben die Höhen.

Ort ist an Orte gereiht, hier baute sich froh der Mensch an,

Wo die Erde so gern lohnt das leichte Bemüh'n.

A vale of pleasance spreads beneath our feet;

The plains adorn'd with golden grain, the heights

With golden grapes. Village to village joins;

For where the earth the lightest toil rewards

With lavish hand, does man delight to build.