

Mark Twain

# A Tramp Abroad



Марк Твен

**A Tramp Abroad**

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The book details a journey by the author, with his friend Harris (a character created for the book, and based on his closest friend, Joseph Twichell), through central and southern Europe. While the stated goal of the journey is to walk most of the way, the men find themselves using other forms of transport as they traverse the continent.

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# A Tramp Abroad

## by Mark Twain

### Chapter I

One day it occurred to me that it had been many years since the world had been afforded the spectacle of a man adventurous enough to undertake a journey through Europe on foot. After much thought, I decided that I was a person fitted to furnish to mankind this spectacle. So I determined to do it. This was in March, 1878.

I looked about me for the right sort of person to accompany me in the capacity of agent, and finally hired a Mr. Harris for this service.

It was also my purpose to study art while in Europe. Mr. Harris was in sympathy with me in this. He was as much of an enthusiast in art as I was, and not less anxious to learn to paint. I desired to learn the German language; so did Harris.

Toward the middle of April we sailed in the *Holsatia*, Captain Brandt, and had a very pleasant trip, indeed.

After a brief rest at Hamburg, we made preparations for a long pedestrian trip southward in the soft spring weather, but at the last moment we changed the program, for private reasons, and took the express-train.

We made a short halt at Frankfort-on-the-Main, and found it an interesting city. I would have liked to visit the birthplace of Guttenberg, but it could not be done, as no memorandum of the site of the house has been kept. So we spent an hour in the Goethe mansion instead. The city permits this house to belong to private parties, instead of gracing and dignifying herself with the honor of possessing and protecting it.

Frankfort is one of the sixteen cities which have the distinction of being the place where the following incident occurred. Charlemagne, while chasing the Saxons (as *he* said), or being chased by them (as *they* said), arrived at the bank of the river at dawn, in a fog. The enemy were either before him or behind him; but in any case he wanted to get across, very badly. He would have given anything for a guide, but none was to be had. Presently he saw a deer, followed by her young, approach the water. He watched her, judging that she would seek a ford, and he was right. She waded over, and the army followed. So a great Frankish victory or defeat was gained or avoided; and in order to commemorate the episode, Charlemagne commanded a city to be built there, which he named Frankfort – the ford of the Franks. None of the other cities where this event happened were named for it. This is good evidence that Frankfort was the first place it occurred at.

Frankfort has another distinction – it is the birthplace of the German alphabet; or at least of the German word for alphabet – *Buchstaben*. They say that the first movable types were made on birch sticks—*Buchstabe*—hence the name.

I was taught a lesson in political economy in Frankfort. I had brought from home a box containing a thousand very cheap cigars. By way of experiment, I stepped into a little shop in a queer old back street, took four gaily decorated boxes of wax matches and three cigars, and laid down a silver piece worth 48 cents. The man gave me 43 cents change.

In Frankfort everybody wears clean clothes, and I think we noticed that this strange thing was the case in Hamburg, too, and in the villages along the road. Even in the narrowest and poorest and most ancient quarters of Frankfort neat and clean clothes were the rule. The little children of both sexes were nearly always nice enough to take into a body's lap. And as for the uniforms of the soldiers, they were newness and brightness carried to perfection. One could never detect a smirch or a grain

of dust upon them. The street-car conductors and drivers wore pretty uniforms which seemed to be just out of the bandbox, and their manners were as fine as their clothes.

In one of the shops I had the luck to stumble upon a book which has charmed me nearly to death. It is entitled *the legends of the Rhine from Basle to Rotterdam*, by F. J. Kiefer; translated by L. W. Garnham, B.A.

All tourists *mention* the Rhine legends – in that sort of way which quietly pretends that the mentioner has been familiar with them all his life, and that the reader cannot possibly be ignorant of them – but no tourist ever *tells* them. So this little book fed me in a very hungry place; and I, in my turn, intend to feed my reader, with one or two little lunches from the same larder. I shall not mar Garnham's translation by meddling with its English; for the most toothsome thing about it is its quaint fashion of building English sentences on the German plan – and punctuating them accordingly to no plan at all.

In the Chapter devoted to "Legends of Frankfort," I find the following:

"The knave of Bergen"

"In Frankfort at the Romer was a great mask-ball, at the coronation festival, and in the illuminated saloon, the clanging music invited to dance, and splendidly appeared the rich toilets and charms of the ladies, and the festively costumed Princes and Knights. All seemed pleasure, joy, and roguish gaiety, only one of the numerous guests had a gloomy exterior; but exactly the black armor in which he walked about excited general attention, and his tall figure, as well as the noble propriety of his movements, attracted especially the regards of the ladies.

Who the Knight was? Nobody could guess, for his Vizier was well closed, and nothing made him recognizable. Proud and yet modest he advanced to the Empress; bowed on one knee before her seat, and begged for the favor of a waltz with the Queen of the festival. And she allowed his request. With light and graceful steps he danced through the long saloon, with the sovereign who thought never to have found a more dexterous and excellent dancer. But also by the grace of his manner, and fine conversation he knew to win the Queen, and she graciously accorded him a second dance for which he begged, a third, and a fourth, as well as others were not refused him. How all regarded the happy dancer, how many envied him the high favor; how increased curiosity, who the masked knight could be.

"Also the Emperor became more and more excited with curiosity, and with great suspense one awaited the hour, when according to mask-law, each masked guest must make himself known. This moment came, but although all other unmasked; the secret knight still refused to allow his features to be seen, till at last the Queen driven by curiosity, and vexed at the obstinate refusal; commanded him to open his Vizier.

He opened it, and none of the high ladies and knights knew him. But from the crowded spectators, 2 officials advanced, who recognized the black dancer, and horror and terror spread in the saloon, as they said who the supposed knight was. It was the executioner of Bergen. But glowing with rage, the King commanded to seize the criminal and lead him to death, who had ventured to dance, with the queen; so disgraced the Empress, and insulted the crown. The culpable threw himself at the Emperor, and said—

"Indeed I have heavily sinned against all noble guests assembled here, but most heavily against you my sovereign and my queen. The Queen is insulted by my haughtiness equal to treason, but no punishment even blood, will not be able to wash out the disgrace, which you have suffered by me. Therefore oh King! allow me to propose a remedy, to efface the shame, and to render it as if not done. Draw your sword and knight me, then I will throw down my gauntlet, to everyone who dares to speak disrespectfully of my king."

"The Emperor was surprised at this bold proposal, however it appeared the wisest to him; 'You are a knave,' he replied after a moment's consideration, 'however your advice is good, and displays

prudence, as your offense shows adventurous courage. Well then,' and gave him the knight-stroke 'so I raise you to nobility, who begged for grace for your offense now kneels before me, rise as knight; knavish you have acted, and Knave of Bergen shall you be called henceforth,' and gladly the Black knight rose; three cheers were given in honor of the Emperor, and loud cries of joy testified the approbation with which the Queen danced still once with the Knave of Bergen."

## Chapter II

### Heidelberg

We stopped at a hotel by the railway-station. Next morning, as we sat in my room waiting for breakfast to come up, we got a good deal interested in something which was going on over the way, in front of another hotel. First, the personage who is called the *portier* (who is not the *porter*, but is a sort of first-mate of a hotel) appeared<sup>1</sup> at the door in a spick and span new blue cloth uniform, decorated with shining brass buttons, and with bands of gold lace around his cap and wristbands; and he wore white gloves, too.

He shed an official glance upon the situation, and then began to give orders. Two women-servants came out with pails and brooms and brushes, and gave the sidewalk a thorough scrubbing; meanwhile two others scrubbed the four marble steps which led up to the door; beyond these we could see some men-servants taking up the carpet of the grand staircase. This carpet was carried away and the last grain of dust beaten and banged and swept out of it; then brought back and put down again. The brass stair-rods received an exhaustive polishing and were returned to their places. Now a troop of servants brought pots and tubs of blooming plants and formed them into a beautiful jungle about the door and the base of the staircase. Other servants adorned all the balconies of the various stories with flowers and banners; others ascended to the roof and hoisted a great flag on a staff there. Now came some more chamber-maids and retouched the sidewalk, and afterward wiped the marble steps with damp cloths and finished by dusting them off with feather brushes. Now a broad black carpet was brought out and laid down the marble steps and out across the sidewalk to the curbstone. The *portier* cast his eye along it, and found it was not absolutely straight; he commanded it to be straightened; the servants made the effort – made several efforts, in fact – but the *portier* was not satisfied. He finally had it taken up, and then he put it down himself and got it right.

At this stage of the proceedings, a narrow bright red carpet was unrolled and stretched from the top of the marble steps to the curbstone, along the center of the black carpet. This red path cost the *portier* more trouble than even the black one had done. But he patiently fixed and refixed it until it was exactly right and lay precisely in the middle of the black carpet. In New York these performances would have gathered a mighty crowd of curious and intensely interested spectators; but here it only captured an audience of half a dozen little boys who stood in a row across the pavement, some with their school-knapsacks on their backs and their hands in their pockets, others with arms full of bundles, and all absorbed in the show. Occasionally one of them skipped irreverently over the carpet and took up a position on the other side. This always visibly annoyed the *portier*.

Now came a waiting interval. The landlord, in plain clothes, and bareheaded, placed himself on the bottom marble step, abreast the *portier*, who stood on the other end of the same steps; six or eight waiters, gloved, bareheaded, and wearing their whitest linen, their whitest cravats, and their finest swallow-tails, grouped themselves about these chiefs, but leaving the carpet-way clear. Nobody moved or spoke any more but only waited.

In a short time the shrill piping of a coming train was heard, and immediately groups of people began to gather in the street. Two or three open carriages arrived, and deposited some maids of honor and some male officials at the hotel. Presently another open carriage brought the Grand Duke of Baden, a stately man in uniform, who wore the handsome brass-mounted, steel-spiked helmet of the army on his head. Last came the Empress of Germany and the Grand Duchess of Baden in a closed carriage; these passed through the low-bowing groups of servants and disappeared in the hotel, exhibiting to us only the backs of their heads, and then the show was over.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A

It appears to be as difficult to land a monarch as it is to launch a ship.

But as to Heidelberg. The weather was growing pretty warm, – very warm, in fact. So we left the valley and took quarters at the Schloss Hotel, on the hill, above the Castle.

Heidelberg lies at the mouth of a narrow gorge – a gorge the shape of a shepherd's crook; if one looks up it he perceives that it is about straight, for a mile and a half, then makes a sharp curve to the right and disappears. This gorge – along whose bottom pours the swift Neckar – is confined between (or cloven through) a couple of long, steep ridges, a thousand feet high and densely wooded clear to their summits, with the exception of one section which has been shaved and put under cultivation. These ridges are chopped off at the mouth of the gorge and form two bold and conspicuous headlands, with Heidelberg nestling between them; from their bases spreads away the vast dim expanse of the Rhine valley, and into this expanse the Neckar goes wandering in shining curves and is presently lost to view.

Now if one turns and looks up the gorge once more, he will see the Schloss Hotel on the right perched on a precipice overlooking the Neckar – a precipice which is so sumptuously cushioned and draped with foliage that no glimpse of the rock appears. The building seems very airily situated. It has the appearance of being on a shelf half-way up the wooded mountainside; and as it is remote and isolated, and very white, it makes a strong mark against the lofty leafy rampart at its back.

This hotel had a feature which was a decided novelty, and one which might be adopted with advantage by any house which is perched in a commanding situation. This feature may be described as a series of glass-enclosed parlors *clinging to the outside of the house*, one against each and every bed-chamber and drawing-room. They are like long, narrow, high-ceiled bird-cages hung against the building. My room was a corner room, and had two of these things, a north one and a west one.

From the north cage one looks up the Neckar gorge; from the west one he looks down it. This last affords the most extensive view, and it is one of the loveliest that can be imagined, too. Out of a billowy upheaval of vivid green foliage, a rifle-shot removed, rises the huge ruin of Heidelberg Castle<sup>2</sup>, with empty window arches, ivy-mailed battlements, moldering towers – the Lear of inanimate nature – deserted, discrowned, beaten by the storms, but royal still, and beautiful. It is a fine sight to see the evening sunlight suddenly strike the leafy declivity at the Castle's base and dash up it and drench it as with a luminous spray, while the adjacent groves are in deep shadow.

Behind the Castle swells a great dome-shaped hill, forest-clad, and beyond that a nobler and loftier one. The Castle looks down upon the compact brown-roofed town; and from the town two picturesque old bridges span the river. Now the view broadens; through the gateway of the sentinel headlands you gaze out over the wide Rhine plain, which stretches away, softly and richly tinted, grows gradually and dreamily indistinct, and finally melts imperceptibly into the remote horizon.

I have never enjoyed a view which had such a serene and satisfying charm about it as this one gives.

The first night we were there, we went to bed and to sleep early; but I awoke at the end of two or three hours, and lay a comfortable while listening to the soothing patter of the rain against the balcony windows. I took it to be rain, but it turned out to be only the murmur of the restless Neckar, tumbling over her dikes and dams far below, in the gorge. I got up and went into the west balcony and saw a wonderful sight. Away down on the level under the black mass of the Castle, the town lay, stretched along the river, its intricate cobweb of streets jeweled with twinkling lights; there were rows of lights on the bridges; these flung lances of light upon the water, in the black shadows of the arches; and away at the extremity of all this fairy spectacle blinked and glowed a massed multitude of gas-jets which seemed to cover acres of ground; it was as if all the diamonds in the world had been spread out there. I did not know before, that a half-mile of sextuple railway-tracks could be made such an adornment.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B

One thinks Heidelberg by day – with its surroundings – is the last possibility of the beautiful; but when he sees Heidelberg by night, a fallen Milky Way, with that glittering railway constellation pinned to the border, he requires time to consider upon the verdict.

One never tires of poking about in the dense woods that clothe all these lofty Neckar hills to their tops. The great deeps of a boundless forest have a beguiling and impressive charm in any country; but German legends and fairy tales have given these an added charm. They have peopled all that region with gnomes, and dwarfs, and all sorts of mysterious and uncanny creatures. At the time I am writing of, I had been reading so much of this literature that sometimes I was not sure but I was beginning to believe in the gnomes and fairies as realities.

One afternoon I got lost in the woods about a mile from the hotel, and presently fell into a train of dreamy thought about animals which talk, and *kobolds*, and enchanted folk, and the rest of the pleasant legendary stuff; and so, by stimulating my fancy, I finally got to imagining I glimpsed small flitting shapes here and there down the columned aisles of the forest. It was a place which was peculiarly meet for the occasion. It was a pine wood, with so thick and soft a carpet of brown needles that one's footfall made no more sound than if he were treading on wool; the tree-trunks were as round and straight and smooth as pillars, and stood close together; they were bare of branches to a point about twenty-five feet above-ground, and from there upward so thick with boughs that not a ray of sunlight could pierce through. The world was bright with sunshine outside, but a deep and mellow twilight reigned in there, and also a deep silence so profound that I seemed to hear my own breathings.

When I had stood ten minutes, thinking and imagining, and getting my spirit in tune with the place, and in the right mood to enjoy the supernatural, a raven suddenly uttered a horse croak over my head. It made me start; and then I was angry because I started. I looked up, and the creature was sitting on a limb right over me, looking down at me. I felt something of the same sense of humiliation and injury which one feels when he finds that a human stranger has been clandestinely inspecting him in his privacy and mentally commenting upon him. I eyed the raven, and the raven eyed me. Nothing was said during some seconds. Then the bird stepped a little way along his limb to get a better point of observation, lifted his wings, stuck his head far down below his shoulders toward me and croaked again – a croak with a distinctly insulting expression about it. If he had spoken in English he could not have said any more plainly than he did say in raven, “Well, what do *you* want here?” I felt as foolish as if I had been caught in some mean act by a responsible being, and reprov'd for it. However, I made no reply; I would not bandy words with a raven. The adversary waited a while, with his shoulders still lifted, his head thrust down between them, and his keen bright eye fixed on me; then he threw out two or three more insults, which I could not understand, further than that I knew a portion of them consisted of language not used in church.

I still made no reply. Now the adversary raised his head and called. There was an answering croak from a little distance in the wood – evidently a croak of inquiry. The adversary explained with enthusiasm, and the other raven dropped everything and came. The two sat side by side on the limb and discussed me as freely and offensively as two great naturalists might discuss a new kind of bug. The thing became more and more embarrassing. They called in another friend. This was too much. I saw that they had the advantage of me, and so I concluded to get out of the scrape by walking out of it. They enjoyed my defeat as much as any low white people could have done. They craned their necks and laughed at me (for a raven *can* laugh, just like a man), they squalled insulting remarks after me as long as they could see me. They were nothing but ravens – I knew that – what they thought of me could be a matter of no consequence – and yet when even a raven shouts after you, “What a hat!” “Oh, pull down your vest!” and that sort of thing, it hurts you and humiliates you, and there is no getting around it with fine reasoning and pretty arguments.

Animals talk to each other, of course. There can be no question about that; but I suppose there are very few people who can understand them. I never knew but one man who could. I knew he could, however, because he told me so himself. He was a middle-aged, simple-hearted miner who had lived

in a lonely corner of California, among the woods and mountains, a good many years, and had studied the ways of his only neighbors, the beasts and the birds, until he believed he could accurately translate any remark which they made. This was Jim Baker. According to Jim Baker, some animals have only a limited education, and some use only simple words, and scarcely ever a comparison or a flowery figure; whereas, certain other animals have a large vocabulary, a fine command of language and a ready and fluent delivery; consequently these latter talk a great deal; they like it; they are so conscious of their talent, and they enjoy “showing off.” Baker said, that after long and careful observation, he had come to the conclusion that the blue-jays were the best talkers he had found among birds and beasts. Said he:

“There’s more *to* a blue-jay than any other creature. He has got more moods, and more different kinds of feelings than other creatures; and, mind you, whatever a blue-jay feels, he can put into language. And no mere commonplace language, either, but rattling, out-and-out book-talk – and bristling with metaphor, too – just bristling! And as for command of language – why *you* never see a blue-jay get stuck for a word. No man ever did. They just boil out of him! And another thing: I’ve noticed a good deal, and there’s no bird, or cow, or anything that uses as good grammar as a blue-jay. You may say a cat uses good grammar. Well, a cat does – but you let a cat get excited once; you let a cat get to pulling fur with another cat on a shed, nights, and you’ll hear grammar that will give you the lockjaw. Ignorant people think it’s the *noise* which fighting cats make that is so aggravating, but it ain’t so; it’s the sickening grammar they use. Now I’ve never heard a jay use bad grammar but very seldom; and when they do, they are as ashamed as a human; they shut right down and leave.

“You may call a jay a bird. Well, so he is, in a measure – but he’s got feathers on him, and don’t belong to no church, perhaps; but otherwise he is just as much human as you be. And I’ll tell you for why. A jay’s gifts, and instincts, and feelings, and interests, cover the whole ground. A jay hasn’t got any more principle than a Congressman. A jay will lie, a jay will steal, a jay will deceive, a jay will betray; and four times out of five, a jay will go back on his solemnest promise. The sacredness of an obligation is such a thing which you can’t cram into no bluejay’s head. Now, on top of all this, there’s another thing; a jay can out-swear any gentleman in the mines. You think a cat can swear. Well, a cat can; but you give a blue-jay a subject that calls for his reserve-powers, and where is your cat? Don’t talk to *me*—I know too much about this thing; in the one little particular of scolding – just good, clean, out-and-out scolding – a blue-jay can lay over anything, human or divine. Yes, sir, a jay is everything that a man is. A jay can cry, a jay can laugh, a jay can feel shame, a jay can reason and plan and discuss, a jay likes gossip and scandal, a jay has got a sense of humor, a jay knows when he is an ass just as well as you do – maybe better. If a jay ain’t human, he better take in his sign, that’s all. Now I’m going to tell you a perfectly true fact about some blue-jays.”

## Chapter III

### Baker's Blue-jay Yarn

“When I first begun to understand jay language correctly, there was a little incident happened here. Seven years ago, the last man in this region but me moved away. There stands his house – been empty ever since; a log house, with a plank roof – just one big room, and no more; no ceiling – nothing between the rafters and the floor. Well, one Sunday morning I was sitting out here in front of my cabin, with my cat, taking the sun, and looking at the blue hills, and listening to the leaves rustling so lonely in the trees, and thinking of the home away yonder in the states, that I hadn’t heard from in thirteen years, when a blue-jay lit on that house, with an acorn in his mouth, and says, ‘Hello, I reckon I’ve struck something.’ When he spoke, the acorn dropped out of his mouth and rolled down the roof, of course, but he didn’t care; his mind was all on the thing he had struck. It was a knot-hole in the roof. He cocked his head to one side, shut one eye and put the other one to the hole, like a possum looking down a jug; then he glanced up with his bright eyes, gave a wink or two with his wings – which signifies gratification, you understand – and says, ‘It looks like a hole, it’s located like a hole – blamed if I don’t believe it *is* a hole!’

“Then he cocked his head down and took another look; he glances up perfectly joyful, this time; winks his wings and his tail both, and says, ‘Oh, no, this ain’t no fat thing, I reckon! If I ain’t in luck! – Why it’s a perfectly elegant hole!’ So he flew down and got that acorn, and fetched it up and dropped it in, and was just tilting his head back, with the heavenliest smile on his face, when all of a sudden he was paralyzed into a listening attitude and that smile faded gradually out of his countenance like breath off’n a razor, and the queerest look of surprise took its place. Then he says, ‘Why, I didn’t hear it fall!’ He cocked his eye at the hole again, and took a long look; raised up and shook his head; stepped around to the other side of the hole and took another look from that side; shook his head again. He studied a while, then he just went into the Details – walked round and round the hole and spied into it from every point of the compass. No use. Now he took a thinking attitude on the comb of the roof and scratched the back of his head with his right foot a minute, and finally says, ‘Well, it’s too many for *me*, that’s certain; must be a mighty long hole; however, I ain’t got no time to fool around here, I got to “tend to business”; I reckon it’s all right – chance it, anyway.’

“So he flew off and fetched another acorn and dropped it in, and tried to flirt his eye to the hole quick enough to see what become of it, but he was too late. He held his eye there as much as a minute; then he raised up and sighed, and says, ‘Confound it, I don’t seem to understand this thing, no way; however, I’ll tackle her again.’ He fetched another acorn, and done his level best to see what become of it, but he couldn’t. He says, ‘Well, I never struck no such a hole as this before; I’m of the opinion it’s a totally new kind of a hole.’ Then he begun to get mad. He held in for a spell, walking up and down the comb of the roof and shaking his head and muttering to himself; but his feelings got the upper hand of him, presently, and he broke loose and cussed himself black in the face. I never see a bird take on so about a little thing. When he got through he walks to the hole and looks in again for half a minute; then he says, ‘Well, you’re a long hole, and a deep hole, and a mighty singular hole altogether – but I’ve started in to fill you, and I’m damned if I *don’t* fill you, if it takes a hundred years!’

“And with that, away he went. You never see a bird work so since you was born. He laid into his work like a nigger, and the way he hove acorns into that hole for about two hours and a half was one of the most exciting and astonishing spectacles I ever struck. He never stopped to take a look anymore – he just hove ’em in and went for more. Well, at last he could hardly flop his wings, he was so tuckered out. He comes a-dropping down, once more, sweating like an ice-pitcher, dropped his acorn in and says, ‘*now* I guess I’ve got the bulge on you by this time!’ So he bent down for a look. If you’ll believe me, when his head come up again he was just pale with rage. He says, ‘I’ve shoveled

acorns enough in there to keep the family thirty years, and if I can see a sign of one of 'em I wish I may land in a museum with a belly full of sawdust in two minutes!

“He just had strength enough to crawl up on to the comb and lean his back agin the chimbley, and then he collected his impressions and begun to free his mind. I see in a second that what I had mistook for profanity in the mines was only just the rudiments, as you may say.

“Another jay was going by, and heard him doing his devotions, and stops to inquire what was up. The sufferer told him the whole circumstance, and says, 'Now yonder's the hole, and if you don't believe me, go and look for yourself.' So this fellow went and looked, and comes back and says, 'How many did you say you put in there?' 'Not any less than two tons,' says the sufferer. The other jay went and looked again. He couldn't seem to make it out, so he raised a yell, and three more jays come. They all examined the hole, they all made the sufferer tell it over again, then they all discussed it, and got off as many leather-headed opinions about it as an average crowd of humans could have done.

“They called in more jays; then more and more, till pretty soon this whole region 'peared to have a blue flush about it. There must have been five thousand of them; and such another jawing and disputing and ripping and cussing, you never heard. Every jay in the whole lot put his eye to the hole and delivered a more chuckle-headed opinion about the mystery than the jay that went there before him. They examined the house all over, too. The door was standing half open, and at last one old jay happened to go and light on it and look in. Of course, that knocked the mystery galley-west in a second. There lay the acorns, scattered all over the floor.. He flopped his wings and raised a whoop. 'Come here!' he says, 'Come here, everybody; hang'd if this fool hasn't been trying to fill up a house with acorns!' They all came a-swooping down like a blue cloud, and as each fellow lit on the door and took a glance, the whole absurdity of the contract that that first jay had tackled hit him home and he fell over backward suffocating with laughter, and the next jay took his place and done the same.

“Well, sir, they roosted around here on the housetop and the trees for an hour, and guffawed over that thing like human beings. It ain't any use to tell me a blue-jay hasn't got a sense of humor, because I know better. And memory, too. They brought jays here from all over the United States to look down that hole, every summer for three years. Other birds, too. And they could all see the point except an owl that come from Nova Scotia to visit the Yo Semite, and he took this thing in on his way back. He said he couldn't see anything funny in it. But then he was a good deal disappointed about Yo Semite, too.”

## Chapter IV

### Student Life

The summer semester was in full tide; consequently the most frequent figure in and about Heidelberg was the student. Most of the students were Germans, of course, but the representatives of foreign lands were very numerous. They hailed from every corner of the globe – for instruction is cheap in Heidelberg, and so is living, too. The Anglo-American Club, composed of British and American students, had twenty-five members, and there was still much material left to draw from.

Nine-tenths of the Heidelberg students wore no badge or uniform; the other tenth wore caps of various colors, and belonged to social organizations called “corps.” There were five corps, each with a color of its own; there were white caps, blue caps, and red, yellow, and green ones. The famous duel-fighting is confined to the “corps” boys. The “*Kneip*” seems to be a specialty of theirs, too. Kneips are held, now and then, to celebrate great occasions, like the election of a beer king, for instance. The solemnity is simple; the five corps assemble at night, and at a signal they all fall loading themselves with beer, out of pint-mugs, as fast as possible, and each man keeps his own count – usually by laying aside a *lucifer* match for each mug he empties.

The election is soon decided. When the candidates can hold no more, a count is instituted and the one who has drank the greatest number of pints is proclaimed king. I was told that the last beer king elected by the corps – or by his own capabilities – emptied his mug seventy-five times. No stomach could hold all that quantity at one time, of course – but there are ways of frequently creating a vacuum, which those who have been much at sea will understand.

One sees so many students abroad at all hours, that he presently begins to wonder if they ever have any working-hours. Some of them have, some of them haven't. Each can choose for himself whether he will work or play; for German university life is a very free life; it seems to have no restraints. The student does not live in the college buildings, but hires his own lodgings, in any locality he prefers, and he takes his meals when and where he pleases. He goes to bed when it suits him, and does not get up at all unless he wants to. He is not entered at the university for any particular length of time; so he is likely to change about. He passes no examinations upon entering college. He merely pays a trifling fee of five or ten dollars, receives a card entitling him to the privileges of the university, and that is the end of it. He is now ready for business – or play, as he shall prefer. If he elects to work, he finds a large list of lectures to choose from. He selects the subjects which he will study, and enters his name for these studies; but he can skip attendance.

The result of this system is, that lecture-courses upon specialties of an unusual nature are often delivered to very slim audiences, while those upon more practical and every-day matters of education are delivered to very large ones. I heard of one case where, day after day, the lecturer's audience consisted of three students – and always the same three. But one day two of them remained away. The lecturer began as usual—

“Gentlemen,” —then, without a smile, he corrected himself, saying—

“Sir,” —and went on with his discourse.

It is said that the vast majority of the Heidelberg students are hard workers, and make the most of their opportunities; that they have no surplus means to spend in dissipation, and no time to spare for frolicking. One lecture follows right on the heels of another, with very little time for the student to get out of one hall and into the next; but the industrious ones manage it by going on a trot. The professors assist them in the saving of their time by being promptly in their little boxed-up pulpits when the hours strike, and as promptly out again when the hour finishes. I entered an empty lecture-room one day just before the clock struck. The place had simple, unpainted pine desks and benches for about two hundred persons.

About a minute before the clock struck, a hundred and fifty students swarmed in, rushed to their seats, immediately spread open their notebooks and dipped their pens in ink. When the clock began to strike, a burly professor entered, was received with a round of applause, moved swiftly down the center aisle, said "Gentlemen," and began to talk as he climbed his pulpit steps; and by the time he had arrived in his box and faced his audience, his lecture was well under way and all the pens were going. He had no notes, he talked with prodigious rapidity and energy for an hour – then the students began to remind him in certain well-understood ways that his time was up; he seized his hat, still talking, proceeded swiftly down his pulpit steps, got out the last word of his discourse as he struck the floor; everybody rose respectfully, and he swept rapidly down the aisle and disappeared. An instant rush for some other lecture-room followed, and in a minute I was alone with the empty benches once more.

Yes, without doubt, idle students are not the rule. Out of eight hundred in the town, I knew the faces of only about fifty; but these I saw everywhere, and daily. They walked about the streets and the wooded hills, they drove in cabs, they boated on the river, they sipped beer and coffee, afternoons, in the Schloss gardens. A good many of them wore colored caps of the corps. They were finely and fashionably dressed, their manners were quite superb, and they led an easy, careless, comfortable life. If a dozen of them sat together and a lady or a gentleman passed whom one of them knew and saluted, they all rose to their feet and took off their caps. The members of a corps always received a fellow-member in this way, too; but they paid no attention to members of other corps; they did not seem to see them. This was not a discourtesy; it was only a part of the elaborate and rigid corps etiquette.

There seems to be no chilly distance existing between the German students and the professor; but, on the contrary, a companionable intercourse, the opposite of chilliness and reserve. When the professor enters a beer-hall in the evening where students are gathered together, these rise up and take off their caps, and invite the old gentleman to sit with them and partake. He accepts, and the pleasant talk and the beer flow for an hour or two, and by and by the professor, properly charged and comfortable, gives a cordial good night, while the students stand bowing and uncovered; and then he moves on his happy way homeward with all his vast cargo of learning afloat in his hold. Nobody finds fault or feels outraged; no harm has been done.

It seemed to be a part of corps etiquette to keep a dog or so, too. I mean a corps dog – the common property of the organization, like the corps steward or head servant; then there are other dogs, owned by individuals.

On a summer afternoon in the Castle gardens, I have seen six students march solemnly into the grounds, in single file, each carrying a bright Chinese parasol and leading a prodigious dog by a string. It was a very imposing spectacle. Sometimes there would be as many dogs around the pavilion as students; and of all breeds and of all degrees of beauty and ugliness. These dogs had a rather dry time of it; for they were tied to the benches and had no amusement for an hour or two at a time except what they could get out of pawing at the gnats, or trying to sleep and not succeeding. However, they got a lump of sugar occasionally – they were fond of that.

It seemed right and proper that students should indulge in dogs; but everybody else had them, too – old men and young ones, old women and nice young ladies. If there is one spectacle that is unpleasanter than another, it is that of an elegantly dressed young lady towing a dog by a string. It is said to be the sign and symbol of blighted love. It seems to me that some other way of advertising it might be devised, which would be just as conspicuous and yet not so trying to the proprieties.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the easy-going pleasure-seeking student carries an empty head. Just the contrary. He has spent nine years in the gymnasium, under a system which allowed him no freedom, but vigorously compelled him to work like a slave. Consequently, he has left the gymnasium with an education which is so extensive and complete, that the most a university can do for it is to perfect some of its profounder specialties. It is said that when a pupil leaves the gymnasium, he not only has a comprehensive education, but he *knows* what he knows – it is not befogged with

uncertainty, it is burnt into him so that it will stay. For instance, he does not merely read and write Greek, but speaks it; the same with the Latin. Foreign youth steer clear of the gymnasium; its rules are too severe. They go to the university to put a mansard roof on their whole general education; but the German student already has his mansard roof, so he goes there to add a steeple in the nature of some specialty, such as a particular branch of law, or diseases of the eye, or special study of the ancient Gothic tongues. So this German attends only the lectures which belong to the chosen branch, and drinks his beer and tows his dog around and has a general good time the rest of the day. He has been in rigid bondage so long that the large liberty of the university life is just what he needs and likes and thoroughly appreciates; and as it cannot last forever, he makes the most of it while it does last, and so lays up a good rest against the day that must see him put on the chains once more and enter the slavery of official or professional life.

## Chapter V

### At the Students' Dueling-Ground

One day in the interest of science my agent obtained permission to bring me to the students' dueling-place. We crossed the river and drove up the bank a few hundred yards, then turned to the left, entered a narrow alley, followed it a hundred yards and arrived at a two-story public house; we were acquainted with its outside aspect, for it was visible from the hotel. We went upstairs and passed into a large whitewashed apartment which was perhaps fifty feet long by thirty feet wide and twenty or twenty-five high. It was a well-lighted place. There was no carpet. Across one end and down both sides of the room extended a row of tables, and at these tables some fifty or seventy-five students<sup>3</sup> were sitting.

Some of them were sipping wine, others were playing cards, others chess, other groups were chatting together, and many were smoking cigarettes while they waited for the coming duels. Nearly all of them wore colored caps; there were white caps, green caps, blue caps, red caps, and bright-yellow ones; so, all the five corps were present in strong force. In the windows at the vacant end of the room stood six or eight, narrow-bladed swords with large protecting guards for the hand, and outside was a man at work sharpening others on a grindstone.

He understood his business; for when a sword left his hand one could shave himself with it.

It was observable that the young gentlemen neither bowed to nor spoke with students whose caps differed in color from their own. This did not mean hostility, but only an armed neutrality. It was considered that a person could strike harder in the duel, and with a more earnest interest, if he had never been in a condition of comradeship with his antagonist; therefore, comradeship between the corps was not permitted. At intervals the presidents of the five corps have a cold official intercourse with each other, but nothing further. For example, when the regular dueling-day of one of the corps approaches, its president calls for volunteers from among the membership to offer battle; three or more respond – but there must not be less than three; the president lays their names before the other presidents, with the request that they furnish antagonists for these challengers from among their corps. This is promptly done. It chanced that the present occasion was the battle-day of the Red Cap Corps. They were the challengers, and certain caps of other colors had volunteered to meet them. The students fight duels in the room which I have described, *two days in every week during seven and a half or eight months in every year*. This custom had continued in Germany two hundred and fifty years.

To return to my narrative. A student in a white cap met us and introduced us to six or eight friends of his who also wore white caps, and while we stood conversing, two strange-looking figures were led in from another room. They were students panoplied for the duel. They were bareheaded; their eyes were protected by iron goggles which projected an inch or more, the leather straps of which bound their ears flat against their heads were wound around and around with thick wrappings which a sword could not cut through; from chin to ankle they were padded thoroughly against injury; their arms were bandaged and re-bandaged, layer upon layer, until they looked like solid black logs. These weird apparitions had been handsome youths, clad in fashionable attire, fifteen minutes before, but now they did not resemble any beings one ever sees unless in nightmares. They strode along, with their arms projecting straight out from their bodies; they did not hold them out themselves, but fellow-students walked beside them and gave the needed support.

There was a rush for the vacant end of the room, now, and we followed and got good places. The combatants were placed face to face, each with several members of his own corps about him

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C

to assist; two seconds, well padded, and with swords in their hands, took their stations; a student belonging to neither of the opposing corps placed himself in a good position to umpire the combat; another student stood by with a watch and a memorandum-book to keep record of the time and the number and nature of the wounds; a gray-haired surgeon was present with his lint, his bandages, and his instruments.

After a moment's pause the duelists saluted the umpire respectfully, then one after another the several officials stepped forward, gracefully removed their caps and saluted him also, and returned to their places. Everything was ready now; students stood crowded together in the foreground, and others stood behind them on chairs and tables. Every face was turned toward the center of attraction.

The combatants were watching each other with alert eyes; a perfect stillness, a breathless interest reigned. I felt that I was going to see some wary work. But not so. The instant the word was given, the two apparitions sprang forward and began to rain blows down upon each other with such lightning rapidity that I could not quite tell whether I saw the swords or only flashes they made in the air; the rattling din of these blows as they struck steel or paddings was something wonderfully stirring, and they were struck with such terrific force that I could not understand why the opposing sword was not beaten down under the assault. Presently, in the midst of the sword-flashes, I saw a handful of hair skip into the air as if it had lain loose on the victim's head and a breath of wind had puffed it suddenly away.

The seconds cried "Halt!" and knocked up the combatants' swords with their own. The duelists sat down; a student official stepped forward, examined the wounded head and touched the place with a sponge once or twice; the surgeon came and turned back the hair from the wound – and revealed a crimson gash two or three inches long, and proceeded to bind an oval piece of leather and a bunch of lint over it; the tally-keeper stepped up and tallied one for the opposition in his book.

Then the duelists took position again; a small stream of blood was flowing down the side of the injured man's head, and over his shoulder and down his body to the floor, but he did not seem to mind this. The word was given, and they plunged at each other as fiercely as before; once more the blows rained and rattled and flashed; every few moments the quick-eyed seconds would notice that a sword was bent – then they called "Halt!" struck up the contending weapons, and an assisting student straightened the bent one.

The wonderful turmoil went on – presently a bright spark sprung from a blade, and that blade broken in several pieces, sent one of its fragments flying to the ceiling. A new sword was provided and the fight proceeded. The exercise was tremendous, of course, and in time the fighters began to show great fatigue. They were allowed to rest a moment, every little while; they got other rests by wounding each other, for then they could sit down while the doctor applied the lint and bandages. The law is that the battle must continue fifteen minutes if the men can hold out; and as the pauses do not count, this duel was protracted to twenty or thirty minutes, I judged. At last it was decided that the men were too much wearied to do battle longer. They were led away drenched with crimson from head to foot. That was a good fight, but it could not count, partly because it did not last the lawful fifteen minutes (of actual fighting), and partly because neither man was disabled by his wound. It was a drawn battle, and corps law requires that drawn battles shall be re-fought as soon as the adversaries are well of their hurts.

During the conflict, I had talked a little, now and then, with a young gentleman of the White Cap Corps, and he had mentioned that he was to fight next – and had also pointed out his challenger, a young gentleman who was leaning against the opposite wall smoking a cigarette and restfully observing the duel then in progress.

My acquaintanceship with a party to the coming contest had the effect of giving me a kind of personal interest in it; I naturally wished he might win, and it was the reverse of pleasant to learn that he probably would not, because, although he was a notable swordsman, the challenger was held to be his superior.

The duel presently began and in the same furious way which had marked the previous one. I stood close by, but could not tell which blows told and which did not, they fell and vanished so like flashes of light. They all seemed to tell; the swords always bent over the opponents' heads, from the forehead back over the crown, and seemed to touch, all the way; but it was not so – a protecting blade, invisible to me, was always interposed between. At the end of ten seconds each man had struck twelve or fifteen blows, and warded off twelve or fifteen, and no harm done; then a sword became disabled, and a short rest followed whilst a new one was brought. Early in the next round the White Corps student got an ugly wound on the side of his head and gave his opponent one like it. In the third round the latter received another bad wound in the head, and the former had his under-lip divided. After that, the White Corps student gave many severe wounds, but got none of the consequence in return. At the end of five minutes from the beginning of the duel the surgeon stopped it; the challenging party had suffered such injuries that any addition to them might be dangerous. These injuries were a fearful spectacle, but are better left undescribed. So, against expectation, my acquaintance was the victor.

## Chapter VI

The third duel was brief and bloody. The surgeon stopped it when he saw that one of the men had received such bad wounds that he could not fight longer without endangering his life.

The fourth duel was a tremendous encounter; but at the end of five or six minutes the surgeon interfered once more: another man so severely hurt as to render it unsafe to add to his harms. I watched this engagement as I watched the others – with rapt interest and strong excitement, and with a shrink and a shudder for every blow that laid open a cheek or a forehead; and a conscious paling of my face when I occasionally saw a wound of a yet more shocking nature inflicted. My eyes were upon the loser of this duel when he got his last and vanquishing wound – it was in his face and it carried away his – but no matter, I must not enter into details. I had but a glance, and then turned quickly, but I would not have been looking at all if I had known what was coming. No, that is probably not true; one thinks he would not look if he knew what was coming, but the interest and the excitement are so powerful that they would doubtless conquer all other feelings; and so, under the fierce exhilaration of the clashing steel, he would yield and look after all. Sometimes spectators of these duels faint – and it does seem a very reasonable thing to do, too.

Both parties to this fourth duel were badly hurt so much that the surgeon was at work upon them nearly or quite an hour – a fact which is suggestive. But this waiting interval was not wasted in idleness by the assembled students. It was past noon, therefore they ordered their landlord, downstairs, to send up hot beefsteaks, chickens, and such things, and these they ate, sitting comfortable at the several tables, whilst they chatted, disputed and laughed. The door to the surgeon's room stood open, meantime, but the cutting, sewing, splicing, and bandaging going on in there in plain view did not seem to disturb anyone's appetite. I went in and saw the surgeon labor awhile, but could not enjoy; it was much less trying to see the wounds given and received than to see them mended; the stir and turmoil, and the music of the steel, were wanting here – one's nerves were wrung by this grisly spectacle, whilst the duel's compensating pleasurable thrill was lacking.

Finally the doctor finished, and the men who were to fight the closing battle of the day came forth. A good many dinners were not completed, yet, but no matter, they could be eaten cold, after the battle; therefore everybody crowded forth to see. This was not a love duel, but a "satisfaction" affair. These two students had quarreled, and were here to settle it. They did not belong to any of the corps, but they were furnished with weapons and armor, and permitted to fight here by the five corps as a courtesy. Evidently these two young men were unfamiliar with the dueling ceremonies, though they were not unfamiliar with the sword. When they were placed in position they thought it was time to begin – and then did begin, too, and with a most impetuous energy, without waiting for anybody to give the word. This vastly amused the spectators, and even broke down their studied and courtly gravity and surprised them into laughter. Of course the seconds struck up the swords and started the duel over again. At the word, the deluge of blows began, but before long the surgeon once more interfered – for the only reason which ever permits him to interfere – and the day's war was over. It was now two in the afternoon, and I had been present since half past nine in the morning. The field of battle was indeed a red one by this time; but some sawdust soon righted that. There had been one duel before I arrived. In it one of the men received many injuries, while the other one escaped without a scratch.

I had seen the heads and faces of ten youths gashed in every direction by the keen two-edged blades, and yet had not seen a victim wince, nor heard a moan, or detected any fleeting expression which confessed the sharp pain the hurts were inflicting. This was good fortitude, indeed. Such endurance is to be expected in savages and prize-fighters, for they are born and educated to it; but to find it in such perfection in these gently bred and kindly natured young fellows is matter for surprise. It was not merely under the excitement of the sword-play that this fortitude was shown; it was shown

in the surgeon's room where an uninspiring quiet reigned, and where there was no audience. The doctor's manipulations brought out neither grimaces nor moans. And in the fights it was observable that these lads hacked and slashed with the same tremendous spirit, after they were covered with streaming wounds, which they had shown in the beginning.

The world in general looks upon the college duels as very farcical affairs: true, but considering that the college duel is fought by boys; that the swords are real swords; and that the head and face are exposed, it seems to me that it is a farce which had quite a grave side to it. People laugh at it mainly because they think the student is so covered up with armor that he cannot be hurt. But it is not so; his eyes and ears are protected, but the rest of his face and head are bare. He can not only be badly wounded, but his life is in danger; and he would sometimes lose it but for the interference of the surgeon. It is not intended that his life shall be endangered. Fatal accidents are possible, however. For instance, the student's sword may break, and the end of it fly up behind his antagonist's ear and cut an artery which could not be reached if the sword remained whole. This has happened, sometimes, and death has resulted on the spot. Formerly the student's armpits were not protected – and at that time the swords were pointed, whereas they are blunt, now; so an artery in the armpit was sometimes cut, and death followed. Then in the days of sharp-pointed swords, a spectator was an occasional victim – the end of a broken sword flew five or ten feet and buried itself in his neck or his heart, and death ensued instantly. The student duels in Germany occasion two or three deaths every year, now, but this arises only from the carelessness of the wounded men; they eat or drink imprudently, or commit excesses in the way of overexertion; inflammation sets in and gets such a headway that it cannot be arrested. Indeed, there is blood and pain and danger enough about the college duel to entitle it to a considerable degree of respect.

All the customs, all the laws, all the details, pertaining to the student duel are quaint and naïve. The grave, precise, and courtly ceremony with which the thing is conducted, invests it with a sort of antique charm.

This dignity and these knightly graces suggest the tournament, not the prize-fight. The laws are as curious as they are strict. For instance, the duelist may step forward from the line he is placed upon, if he chooses, but never back of it. If he steps back of it, or even leans back, it is considered that he did it to avoid a blow or contrive an advantage; so he is dismissed from his corps in disgrace. It would seem natural to step from under a descending sword unconsciously, and against one's will and intent – yet this unconsciousness is not allowed. Again: if under the sudden anguish of a wound the receiver of it makes a grimace, he falls some degrees in the estimation of his fellows; his corps are ashamed of him: they call him “hare foot,” which is the German equivalent for chicken-hearted.

## Chapter VII

In addition to the corps laws, there are some corps usages which have the force of laws.

Perhaps the president of a corps notices that one of the membership who is no longer an exempt – that is a freshman – has remained a sophomore some little time without volunteering to fight; some day, the president, instead of calling for volunteers, will *appoint* this sophomore to measure swords with a student of another corps; he is free to decline – everybody says so – there is no compulsion. This is all true – but I have not heard of any student who *did* decline; to decline and still remain in the corps would make him unpleasantly conspicuous, and properly so, since he knew, when he joined, that his main business, as a member, would be to fight. No, there is no law against declining – except the law of custom, which is confessedly stronger than written law, everywhere.

The ten men whose duels I had witnessed did not go away when their hurts were dressed, as I had supposed they would, but came back, one after another, as soon as they were free of the surgeon, and mingled with the assemblage in the dueling-room. The white-cap student who won the second fight witnessed the remaining three, and talked with us during the intermissions. He could not talk very well, because his opponent's sword had cut his under-lip in two, and then the surgeon had sewed it together and overlaid it with a profusion of white plaster patches; neither could he eat easily, still he contrived to accomplish a slow and troublesome luncheon while the last duel was preparing. The man who was the worst hurt of all played chess while waiting to see this engagement. A good part of his face was covered with patches and bandages, and all the rest of his head was covered and concealed by them.

It is said that the student likes to appear on the street and in other public places in this kind of array, and that this predilection often keeps him out when exposure to rain or sun is a positive danger for him. Newly bandaged students are a very common spectacle in the public gardens of Heidelberg. It is also said that the student is glad to get wounds in the face, because the scars they leave will show so well there; and it is also said that these face wounds are so prized that youths have even been known to pull them apart from time to time and put red wine in them to make them heal badly and leave as ugly a scar as possible. It does not look reasonable, but it is roundly asserted and maintained, nevertheless; I am sure of one thing – scars are plenty enough in Germany, among the young men; and very grim ones they are, too. They crisscross the face in angry red welts, and are permanent and ineffaceable.

Some of these scars are of a very strange and dreadful aspect; and the effect is striking when several such accent the milder ones, which form a city map on a man's face; they suggest the "burned district" then. We had often noticed that many of the students wore a colored silk band or ribbon diagonally across their breasts. It transpired that this signifies that the wearer has fought three duels in which a decision was reached – duels in which he either whipped or was whipped – for drawn battles do not count.<sup>4</sup> After a student has received his ribbon, he is "free"; he can cease from fighting, without reproach – except some one insult him; his president cannot appoint him to fight; he can volunteer if he wants to, or remain quiescent if he prefers to do so. Statistics show that he does *not* prefer to remain quiescent. They show that the duel has a singular fascination about it somewhere, for these free men, so far from resting upon the privilege of the badge, are always volunteering. A corps student told me it was of record that Prince Bismarck fought thirty-two of these duels in a single summer term when he was in college. So he fought twenty-nine after his badge had given him the right to retire from the field.

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<sup>4</sup> From my diary. – Dined in a hotel a few miles up the Neckar, in a room whose walls were hung all over with framed portrait-groups of the Five Corps; some were recent, but many antedated photography, and were pictured in lithography – the dates ranged back to forty or fifty years ago. Nearly every individual wore the ribbon across his breast. In one portrait-group representing (as each of these pictures did) an entire Corps, I took pains to count the ribbons: there were twenty-seven members, and twenty-one of them wore that significant badge.

The statistics may be found to possess interest in several particulars. Two days in every week are devoted to dueling. The rule is rigid that there must be three duels on each of these days; there are generally more, but there cannot be fewer. There were six the day I was present; sometimes there are seven or eight. It is insisted that eight duels a week – four for each of the two days – is too low an average to draw a calculation from, but I will reckon from that basis, preferring an understatement to an overstatement of the case. This requires about four hundred and eighty or five hundred duelists a year – for in summer the college term is about three and a half months, and in winter it is four months and sometimes longer. Of the seven hundred and fifty students in the university at the time I am writing of, only eighty belonged to the five corps, and it is only these corps that do the dueling; occasionally other students borrow the arms and battleground of the five corps in order to settle a quarrel, but this does not happen every dueling-day.<sup>5</sup> Consequently eighty youths furnish the material for some two hundred and fifty duels a year. This average gives six fights a year to each of the eighty. This large work could not be accomplished if the badge-holders stood upon their privilege and ceased to volunteer.

Of course, where there is so much fighting, the students make it a point to keep themselves in constant practice with the foil. One often sees them, at the tables in the Castle grounds, using their whips or canes to illustrate some new sword trick which they have heard about; and between the duels, on the day whose history I have been writing, the swords were not always idle; every now and then we heard a succession of the keen hissing sounds which the sword makes when it is being put through its paces in the air, and this informed us that a student was practicing. Necessarily, this unceasing attention to the art develops an expert occasionally. He becomes famous in his own university, his renown spreads to other universities. He is invited to Gottingen, to fight with a Gottingen expert; if he is victorious, he will be invited to other colleges, or those colleges will send their experts to him. Americans and Englishmen often join one or another of the five corps. A year or two ago, the principal Heidelberg expert was a big Kentuckian; he was invited to the various universities and left a wake of victory behind him all about Germany; but at last a little student in Strasburg defeated him. There was formerly a student in Heidelberg who had picked up somewhere and mastered a peculiar trick of cutting up under instead of cleaving down from above. While the trick lasted he won in sixteen successive duels in his university; but by that time observers had discovered what his charm was, and how to break it, therefore his championship ceased.

A rule which forbids social intercourse between members of different corps is strict. In the dueling-house, in the parks, on the street, and anywhere and everywhere that the students go, caps of a color group themselves together. If all the tables in a public garden were crowded but one, and that one had two red-cap students at it and ten vacant places, the yellow-caps, the blue-caps, the white caps, and the green caps, seeking seats, would go by that table and not seem to see it, nor seem to be aware that there was such a table in the grounds. The student by whose courtesy we had been enabled to visit the dueling-place, wore the white cap – Prussian Corps. He introduced us to many white caps, but to none of another color. The corps etiquette extended even to us, who were strangers, and required us to group with the white corps only, and speak only with the white corps, while we were their guests, and keep aloof from the caps of the other colors. Once I wished to examine some of the swords, but an American student said, “It would not be quite polite; these now in the windows all have red hilts or blue; they will bring in some with white hilts presently, and those you can handle freely.” When a sword was broken in the first duel, I wanted a piece of it; but its hilt was the wrong color, so it was considered best and politest to await a properer season.

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<sup>5</sup> They have to borrow the arms because they could not get them elsewhere or otherwise. As I understand it, the public authorities, all over Germany, allow the five Corps to keep swords, but do not allow them to use them. This law is rigid; it is only the execution of it that is lax.

It was brought to me after the room was cleared, and I will now make a “life-size” sketch of it by tracing a line around it with my pen, to show the width of the weapon. The length of these swords is about three feet, and they are quite heavy. One’s disposition to cheer, during the course of the duels or at their close, was naturally strong, but corps etiquette forbade any demonstrations of this sort. However brilliant a contest or a victory might be, no sign or sound betrayed that any one was moved. A dignified gravity and repression were maintained at all times.

When the dueling was finished and we were ready to go, the gentlemen of the Prussian Corps to whom we had been introduced took off their caps in the courteous German way, and also shook hands; their brethren of the same order took off their caps and bowed, but without shaking hands; the gentlemen of the other corps treated us just as they would have treated white caps – they fell apart, apparently unconsciously, and left us an unobstructed pathway, but did not seem to see us or know we were there. If we had gone thither the following week as guests of another corps, the white caps, without meaning any offense, would have observed the etiquette of their order and ignored our presence.

[How strangely are comedy and tragedy blended in this life! I had not been home a full half-hour, after witnessing those playful sham-duels, when circumstances made it necessary for me to get ready immediately to assist personally at a real one – a duel with no effeminate limitation in the matter of results, but a battle to the death. An account of it, in the next Chapter, will show the reader that duels between boys, for fun, and duels between men in earnest, are very different affairs.]

## Chapter VIII

### The Great French Duel

Much as the modern French duel is ridiculed by certain smart people, it is in reality one of the most dangerous institutions of our day. Since it is always fought in the open air, the combatants are nearly sure to catch cold. M. Paul de Cassagnac, the most inveterate of the French duelists, had suffered so often in this way that he is at last a confirmed invalid; and the best physician in Paris has expressed the opinion that if he goes on dueling for fifteen or twenty years more – unless he forms the habit of fighting in a comfortable room where damp and draughts cannot intrude – he will eventually endanger his life. This ought to moderate the talk of those people who are so stubborn in maintaining that the French duel is the most health-giving of recreations because of the open-air exercise it affords. And it ought also to moderate that foolish talk about French duelists and socialist-hated monarchs being the only people who are immoral.

But it is time to get at my subject. As soon as I heard of the late fiery outbreak between M. Gambetta and M. Fourtou in the French Assembly, I knew that trouble must follow. I knew it because a long personal friendship with M. Gambetta revealed to me the desperate and implacable nature of the man. Vast as are his physical proportions, I knew that the thirst for revenge would penetrate to the remotest frontiers of his person.

I did not wait for him to call on me, but went at once to him. As I had expected, I found the brave fellow steeped in a profound French calm. I say French calm, because French calmness and English calmness have points of difference.

He was moving swiftly back and forth among the debris of his furniture, now and then staving chance fragments of it across the room with his foot; grinding a constant grist of curses through his set teeth; and halting every little while to deposit another handful of his hair on the pile which he had been building of it on the table.

He threw his arms around my neck, bent me over his stomach to his breast, kissed me on both cheeks, hugged me four or five times, and then placed me in his own arm-chair. As soon as I had got well again, we began business at once.

I said I supposed he would wish me to act as his second, and he said, "Of course." I said I must be allowed to act under a French name, so that I might be shielded from obloquy in my country, in case of fatal results. He winced here, probably at the suggestion that dueling was not regarded with respect in America. However, he agreed to my requirement. This accounts for the fact that in all the newspaper reports M. Gambetta's second was apparently a Frenchman.

First, we drew up my *principal's* will. I insisted upon this, and stuck to my point. I said I had never heard of a man in his right mind going out to fight a duel without first making his will. He said he had never heard of a man in his right mind doing anything of the kind. When he had finished the will, he wished to proceed to a choice of his "last words." He wanted to know how the following words, as a dying exclamation, struck me:

"I die for my God, for my country, for freedom of speech, for progress, and the universal brotherhood of man!"

I objected that this would require too lingering a death; it was a good speech for a consumptive, but not suited to the exigencies of the field of honor. We wrangled over a good many ante-mortem outbursts, but I finally got him to cut his obituary down to this, which he copied into his memorandum-book, purposing to get it by heart:

"*I die that France might live.*"

I said that this remark seemed to lack relevancy; but he said relevancy was a matter of no consequence in last words, what you wanted was thrill.

The next thing in order was the choice of weapons. My principal said he was not feeling well, and would leave that and the other details of the proposed meeting to me. Therefore I wrote the following note and carried it to M. Fourtou's friend:

Sir: M. Gambetta accepts M. Fourtou's challenge, and authorizes me to propose Plessis-Piquet as the place of meeting; tomorrow morning at daybreak as the time; and axes as the weapons.

I am, sir, with great respect,

Mark Twain.

M. Fourtou's friend read this note, and shuddered. Then he turned to me, and said, with a suggestion of severity in his tone:

"Have you considered, sir, what would be the inevitable result of such a meeting as this?"

"Well, for instance, what *would* it be?"

"Bloodshed!"

"That's about the size of it," I said. "Now, if it is a fair question, what was your side proposing to shed?"

I had him there. He saw he had made a blunder, so he hastened to explain it away. He said he had spoken jestingly. Then he added that he and his principal would enjoy axes, and indeed prefer them, but such weapons were barred by the French code, and so I must change my proposal.

I walked the floor, turning the thing over in my mind, and finally it occurred to me that Gatling-guns at fifteen paces would be a likely way to get a verdict on the field of honor. So I framed this idea into a proposition.

But it was not accepted. The code was in the way again. I proposed rifles; then double-barreled shotguns; then Colt's navy revolvers. These being all rejected, I reflected awhile, and sarcastically suggested brickbats at three-quarters of a mile. I always hate to fool away a humorous thing on a person who has no perception of humor; and it filled me with bitterness when this man went soberly away to submit the last proposition to his principal.

He came back presently and said his principal was charmed with the idea of brickbats at three-quarters of a mile, but must decline on account of the danger to disinterested parties passing between them. Then I said:

"Well, I am at the end of my string, now. Perhaps *you* would be good enough to suggest a weapon? Perhaps you have even had one in your mind all the time?"

His countenance brightened, and he said with alacrity:

"Oh, without doubt, monsieur!"

So he fell to hunting in his pockets – pocket after pocket, and he had plenty of them – muttering all the while, "Now, what could I have done with them?"

At last he was successful. He fished out of his vest pocket a couple of little things which I carried to the light and ascertained to be pistols. They were single-barreled and silver-mounted, and very dainty and pretty. I was not able to speak for emotion. I silently hung one of them on my watch-chain, and returned the other. My companion in crime now unrolled a postage-stamp containing several cartridges, and gave me one of them. I asked if he meant to signify by this that our men were to be allowed but one shot apiece. He replied that the French code permitted no more. I then begged him to go and suggest a distance, for my mind was growing weak and confused under the strain which had been put upon it. He named sixty-five yards. I nearly lost my patience. I said:

"Sixty-five yards, with these instruments? Squirt-guns would be deadlier at fifty. Consider, my friend, you and I are banded together to destroy life, not make it eternal."

But with all my persuasions, all my arguments, I was only able to get him to reduce the distance to thirty-five yards; and even this concession he made with reluctance, and said with a sigh, "I wash my hands of this slaughter; on your head be it."

There was nothing for me but to go home to my old lion-heart and tell my humiliating story. When I entered, M. Gambetta was laying his last lock of hair upon the altar. He sprang toward me, exclaiming:

“You have made the fatal arrangements – I see it in your eye!”

“I have.”

His face paled a trifle, and he leaned upon the table for support. He breathed thick and heavily for a moment or two, so tumultuous were his feelings; then he hoarsely whispered:

“The weapon, the weapon! Quick! what is the weapon?”

“This!” and I displayed that silver-mounted thing. He cast but one glance at it, then swooned ponderously to the floor.

When he came to, he said mournfully:

“The unnatural calm to which I have subjected myself has told upon my nerves. But away with weakness! I will confront my fate like a man and a Frenchman.”

He rose to his feet, and assumed an attitude which for sublimity has never been approached by man, and has seldom been surpassed by statues. Then he said, in his deep bass tones:

“Behold, I am calm, I am ready; reveal to me the distance.”

“Thirty-five yards.”...

I could not lift him up, of course; but I rolled him over, and poured water down his back. He presently came to, and said:

“Thirty-five yards – without a rest? But why ask? Since murder was that man’s intention, why should he palter with small details? But mark you one thing: in my fall the world shall see how the chivalry of France meets death.”

After a long silence he asked:

“Was nothing said about that man’s family standing up with him, as an offset to my bulk? But no matter; I would not stoop to make such a suggestion; if he is not noble enough to suggest it himself, he is welcome to this advantage, which no honorable man would take.”

He now sank into a sort of stupor of reflection, which lasted some minutes; after which he broke silence with:

“The hour – what is the hour fixed for the collision?”

“Dawn, tomorrow.”

He seemed greatly surprised, and immediately said:

“Insanity! I never heard of such a thing. Nobody is abroad at such an hour.”

“That is the reason I named it. Do you mean to say you want an audience?”

“It is no time to bandy words. I am astonished that M. Fourtou should ever have agreed to so strange an innovation. Go at once and require a later hour.”

I ran downstairs, threw open the front door, and almost plunged into the arms of M. Fourtou’s second. He said:

“I have the honor to say that my principal strenuously objects to the hour chosen, and begs you will consent to change it to half past nine.”

“Any courtesy, sir, which it is in our power to extend is at the service of your excellent principal. We agree to the proposed change of time.”

“I beg you to accept the thanks of my client.” Then he turned to a person behind him, and said, “You hear, M. Noir, the hour is altered to half past nine.” Whereupon M. Noir bowed, expressed his thanks, and went away. My accomplice continued:

“If agreeable to you, your chief surgeons and ours shall proceed to the field in the same carriage as is customary.”

“It is entirely agreeable to me, and I am obliged to you for mentioning the surgeons, for I am afraid I should not have thought of them. How many shall I want? I supposed two or three will be enough?”

“Two is the customary number for each party. I refer to ‘chief’ surgeons; but considering the exalted positions occupied by our clients, it will be well and decorous that each of us appoint several consulting surgeons, from among the highest in the profession. These will come in their own private carriages. Have you engaged a hearse?”

“Bless my stupidity, I never thought of it! I will attend to it right away. I must seem very ignorant to you; but you must try to overlook that, because I have never had any experience of such a swell duel as this before. I have had a good deal to do with duels on the Pacific coast, but I see now that they were crude affairs. A hearse – sho! we used to leave the elected lying around loose, and let anybody cord them up and cart them off that wanted to. Have you anything further to suggest?”

“Nothing, except that the head undertakers shall ride together, as is usual. The subordinates and mutes will go on foot, as is also usual. I will see you at eight o’clock in the morning, and we will then arrange the order of the procession. I have the honor to bid you a good day.”

I returned to my client, who said, “Very well; at what hour is the engagement to begin?”

“Half past nine.”

“Very good indeed. Have you sent the fact to the newspapers?”

“Sir! If after our long and intimate friendship you can for a moment deem me capable of so base a treachery—”

“Tut, tut! What words are these, my dear friend? Have I wounded you? Ah, forgive me; I am overloading you with labor. Therefore go on with the other details, and drop this one from your list. The bloody-minded Fourtou will be sure to attend to it. Or I myself – yes, to make certain, I will drop a note to my journalistic friend, M. Noir—”

“Oh, come to think of it, you may save yourself the trouble; that other second has informed M. Noir.”

“H’m! I might have known it. It is just like that Fourtou, who always wants to make a display.”

At half past nine in the morning the procession approached the field of Plessis-Piquet in the following order: first came our carriage – nobody in it but M. Gambetta and myself; then a carriage containing M. Fourtou and his second; then a carriage containing two poet-orators who did not believe in God, and these had *Ms.* funeral orations projecting from their breast pockets; then a carriage containing the head surgeons and their cases of instruments; then eight private carriages containing consulting surgeons; then a hack containing a coroner; then the two hearses; then a carriage containing the head undertakers; then a train of assistants and mutes on foot; and after these came plodding through the fog a long procession of camp followers, police, and citizens generally. It was a noble turnout, and would have made a fine display if we had had thinner weather.

There was no conversation. I spoke several times to my principal, but I judge he was not aware of it, for he always referred to his note-book and muttered absently, “I die that France might live.”

Arrived on the field, my fellow-second and I paced off the thirty-five yards, and then drew lots for choice of position. This latter was but an ornamental ceremony, for all the choices were alike in such weather. These preliminaries being ended, I went to my principal and asked him if he was ready. He spread himself out to his full width, and said in a stern voice, “Ready! Let the batteries be charged.”

The loading process was done in the presence of duly constituted witnesses. We considered it best to perform this delicate service with the assistance of a lantern, on account of the state of the weather. We now placed our men.

At this point the police noticed that the public had massed themselves together on the right and left of the field; they therefore begged a delay, while they should put these poor people in a place of safety.

The request was granted.

The police having ordered the two multitudes to take positions behind the duelists, we were once more ready. The weather growing still more opaque, it was agreed between myself and the

other second that before giving the fatal signal we should each deliver a loud whoop to enable the combatants to ascertain each other's whereabouts.

I now returned to my principal, and was distressed to observe that he had lost a good deal of his spirit. I tried my best to hearten him. I said, "Indeed, sir, things are not as bad as they seem. Considering the character of the weapons, the limited number of shots allowed, the generous distance, the impenetrable solidity of the fog, and the added fact that one of the combatants is one-eyed and the other cross-eyed and near-sighted, it seems to me that this conflict need not necessarily be fatal. There are chances that both of you may survive. Therefore, cheer up; do not be downhearted."

This speech had so good an effect that my principal immediately stretched forth his hand and said, "I am myself again; give me the weapon."

I laid it, all lonely and forlorn, in the center of the vast solitude of his palm. He gazed at it and shuddered. And still mournfully contemplating it, he murmured in a broken voice:

"Alas, it is not death I dread, but mutilation."

I heartened him once more, and with such success that he presently said, "Let the tragedy begin. Stand at my back; do not desert me in this solemn hour, my friend."

I gave him my promise. I now assisted him to point his pistol toward the spot where I judged his adversary to be standing, and cautioned him to listen well and further guide himself by my fellow-second's whoop. Then I propped myself against M. Gambetta's back, and raised a rousing "Whoop-ee!" This was answered from out the far distances of the fog, and I immediately shouted:

"One – two – three—*fire!*"

Two little sounds like *spit! Spit!* broke upon my ear, and in the same instant I was crushed to the earth under a mountain of flesh. Bruised as I was, I was still able to catch a faint accent from above, to this effect:

"I die for... for... perdition take it, what *is* it I die for?... oh, yes—*France!* I die that France may live!"

The surgeons swarmed around with their probes in their hands, and applied their microscopes to the whole area of M. Gambetta's person, with the happy result of finding nothing in the nature of a wound. Then a scene ensued which was in every way gratifying and inspiring.

The two gladiators fell upon each other's neck, with floods of proud and happy tears; that other second embraced me; the surgeons, the orators, the undertakers, the police, everybody embraced, everybody congratulated, everybody cried, and the whole atmosphere was filled with praise and with joy unspeakable.

It seems to me then that I would rather be a hero of a French duel than a crowned and sceptered monarch.

When the commotion had somewhat subsided, the body of surgeons held a consultation, and after a good deal of debate decided that with proper care and nursing there was reason to believe that I would survive my injuries. My internal hurts were deemed the most serious, since it was apparent that a broken rib had penetrated my left lung, and that many of my organs had been pressed out so far to one side or the other of where they belonged, that it was doubtful if they would ever learn to perform their functions in such remote and unaccustomed localities. They then set my left arm in two places, pulled my right hip into its socket again, and re-elevated my nose. I was an object of great interest, and even admiration; and many sincere and warm-hearted persons had themselves introduced to me, and said they were proud to know the only man who had been hurt in a French duel in forty years.

I was placed in an ambulance at the very head of the procession; and thus with gratifying *'eclat* I was marched into Paris, the most conspicuous figure in that great spectacle, and deposited at the hospital.

The cross of the Legion of Honor has been conferred upon me. However, few escape that distinction.

Such is the true version of the most memorable private conflict of the age.

I have no complaints to make against any one. I acted for myself, and I can stand the consequences.

Without boasting, I think I may say I am not afraid to stand before a modern French duelist, but as long as I keep in my right mind I will never consent to stand behind one again.

## Chapter IX

One day we took the train and went down to Mannheim to see “King Lear” played in German. It was a mistake. We sat in our seats three whole hours and never understood anything but the thunder and lightning; and even that was reversed to suit German ideas, for the thunder came first and the lightning followed after.

The behavior of the audience was perfect. There were no rustlings, or whisperings, or other little disturbances; each act was listened to in silence, and the applauding was done after the curtain was down. The doors opened at half past four, the play began promptly at half past five, and within two minutes afterward all who were coming were in their seats, and quiet reigned. A German gentleman in the train had said that a Shakespearian play was an appreciated treat in Germany and that we should find the house filled. It was true; all the six tiers were filled, and remained so to the end – which suggested that it is not only balcony people who like Shakespeare in Germany, but those of the pit and gallery, too.

Another time, we went to Mannheim and attended a shivaree – otherwise an opera – the one called “Lohengrin.” The banging and slamming and booming and crashing were something beyond belief. The racking and pitiless pain of it remains stored up in my memory alongside the memory of the time that I had my teeth fixed.

There were circumstances which made it necessary for me to stay through the four hours to the end, and I stayed; but the recollection of that long, dragging, relentless season of suffering is indestructible. To have to endure it in silence, and sitting still, made it all the harder. I was in a railed compartment with eight or ten strangers, of the two sexes, and this compelled repression; yet at times the pain was so exquisite that I could hardly keep the tears back.

At those times, as the howlings and wailings and shrieking of the singers, and the ragings and roarings and explosions of the vast orchestra rose higher and higher, and wilder and wilder, and fiercer and fiercer, I could have cried if I had been alone. Those strangers would not have been surprised to see a man do such a thing who was being gradually skinned, but they would have marveled at it here, and made remarks about it no doubt, whereas there was nothing in the present case which was an advantage over being skinned.

There was a wait of half an hour at the end of the first act, and I could have gone out and rested during that time, but I could not trust myself to do it, for I felt that I should desert to stay out. There was another wait of half an hour toward nine o’clock, but I had gone through so much by that time that I had no spirit left, and so had no desire but to be let alone.

I do not wish to suggest that the rest of the people there were like me, for, indeed, they were not. Whether it was that they naturally liked that noise, or whether it was that they had learned to like it by getting used to it, I did not at the time know; but they did like it – this was plain enough. While it was going on they sat and looked as rapt and grateful as cats do when one strokes their backs; and whenever the curtain fell they rose to their feet, in one solid mighty multitude, and the air was snowed thick with waving handkerchiefs, and hurricanes of applause swept the place. This was not comprehensible to me. Of course, there were many people there who were not under compulsion to stay; yet the tiers were as full at the close as they had been at the beginning. This showed that the people liked it.

It was a curious sort of a play. In the manner of costumes and scenery it was fine and showy enough; but there was not much action. That is to say, there was not much really done, it was only talked about; and always violently. It was what one might call a narrative play. Everybody had a narrative and a grievance, and none were reasonable about it, but all in an offensive and ungovernable state. There was little of that sort of customary thing where the tenor and the soprano stand down by the footlights, warbling, with blended voices, and keep holding out their arms toward each other and

drawing them back and spreading both hands over first one breast and then the other with a shake and a pressure – no, it was every rioter for himself and no blending. Each sang his indictive narrative in turn, accompanied by the whole orchestra of sixty instruments, and when this had continued for some time, and one was hoping they might come to an understanding and modify the noise, a great chorus composed entirely of maniacs would suddenly break forth, and then during two minutes, and sometimes three, I lived over again all that I suffered the time the orphan asylum burned down.

We only had one brief little season of heaven and heaven's sweet ecstasy and peace during all this long and diligent and acrimonious reproduction of the other place. This was while a gorgeous procession of people marched around and around, in the third act, and sang the Wedding Chorus. To my untutored ear that was music – almost divine music. While my seared soul was steeped in the healing balm of those gracious sounds, it seemed to me that I could almost re-suffer the torments which had gone before, in order to be so healed again. There is where the deep ingenuity of the operatic idea is betrayed. It deals so largely in pain that its scattered delights are prodigiously augmented by the contrasts. A pretty air in an opera is prettier there than it could be anywhere else, I suppose, just as an honest man in politics shines more than he would elsewhere.

I have since found out that there is nothing the Germans like so much as an opera. They like it, not in a mild and moderate way, but with their whole hearts. This is a legitimate result of habit and education. Our nation will like the opera, too, by and by, no doubt. One in fifty of those who attend our operas likes it already, perhaps, but I think a good many of the other forty-nine go in order to learn to like it, and the rest in order to be able to talk knowingly about it. The latter usually hum the airs while they are being sung, so that their neighbors may perceive that they have been to operas before. The funerals of these do not occur often enough.

A gentle, old-maidish person and a sweet young girl of seventeen sat right in front of us that night at the Mannheim opera. These people talked, between the acts, and I understood them, though I understood nothing that was uttered on the distant stage. At first they were guarded in their talk, but after they had heard my agent and me conversing in English they dropped their reserve and I picked up many of their little confidences; no, I mean many of *her* little confidences – meaning the elder party – for the young girl only listened, and gave assenting nods, but never said a word. How pretty she was, and how sweet she was! I wished she would speak. But evidently she was absorbed in her own thoughts, her own young-girl dreams, and found a dearer pleasure in silence. But she was not dreaming sleepy dreams – no, she was awake, alive, alert, she could not sit still a moment. She was an enchanting study. Her gown was of a soft white silky stuff that clung to her round young figure like a fish's skin, and it was rippled over with the gracefulest little fringy films of lace; she had deep, tender eyes, with long, curved lashes; and she had peachy cheeks, and a dimpled chin, and such a dear little rosebud of a mouth; and she was so dove-like, so pure, and so gracious, so sweet and so bewitching. For long hours I did mightily wish she would speak. And at last she did; the red lips parted, and out leaps her thought – and with such a guileless and pretty enthusiasm, too: “Auntie, I just *know* I've got five hundred fleas on me!”

That was probably over the average. Yes, it must have been very much over the average. The average at that time in the Grand Duchy of Baden was forty-five to a young person (when alone), according to the official estimate of the home secretary for that year; the average for older people was shifty and indeterminable, for whenever a wholesome young girl came into the presence of her elders she immediately lowered their average and raised her own. She became a sort of contribution-box.

This dear young thing in the theater had been sitting there unconsciously taking up a collection. Many a skinny old being in our neighborhood was the happier and the restfuller for her coming.

In that large audience, that night, there were eight very conspicuous people. These were ladies who had their hats or bonnets on. What a blessed thing it would be if a lady could make herself conspicuous in our theaters by wearing her hat.

It is not usual in Europe to allow ladies and gentlemen to take bonnets, hats, overcoats, canes, or umbrellas into the auditorium, but in Mannheim this rule was not enforced because the audiences were largely made up of people from a distance, and among these were always a few timid ladies who were afraid that if they had to go into an anteroom to get their things when the play was over, they would miss their train. But the great mass of those who came from a distance always ran the risk and took the chances, preferring the loss of a train to a breach of good manners and the discomfort of being unpleasantly conspicuous during a stretch of three or four hours.

## Chapter X

Three or four hours. That is a long time to sit in one place, whether one be conspicuous or not, yet some of Wagner's operas bang along for six whole hours on a stretch! But the people sit there and enjoy it all, and wish it would last longer. A German lady in Munich told me that a person could not like Wagner's music at first, but must go through the deliberate process of learning to like it – then he would have his sure reward; for when he had learned to like it he would hunger for it and never be able to get enough of it. She said that six hours of Wagner was by no means too much. She said that this composer had made a complete revolution in music and was burying the old masters one by one. And she said that Wagner's operas differed from all others in one notable respect, and that was that they were not merely spotted with music here and there, but were *all* music, from the first strain to the last. This surprised me. I said I had attended one of his insurrections, and found hardly *any* music in it except the Wedding Chorus. She said "Lohengrin" was noisier than Wagner's other operas, but that if I would keep on going to see it I would find by and by that it was all music, and therefore would then enjoy it. I *could* have said, "But would you advise a person to deliberately practice having a toothache in the pit of his stomach for a couple of years in order that he might then come to enjoy it?" But I reserved that remark.

This lady was full of the praises of the head-tenor who had performed in a Wagner opera the night before, and went on to enlarge upon his old and prodigious fame, and how many honors had been lavished upon him by the princely houses of Germany. Here was another surprise. I had attended that very opera, in the person of my agent, and had made close and accurate observations. So I said:

"Why, madam, *my* experience warrants me in stating that that tenor's voice is not a voice at all, but only a shriek – the shriek of a hyena."

"That is very true," she said; "he cannot sing now; it is already many years that he has lost his voice, but in other times he sang, yes, divinely! So whenever he comes now, you shall see, yes, that the theater will not hold the people. JAWOHL *bei Gott!* his voice is WUNDERSCHOEN in that past time."

I said she was discovering to me a kindly trait in the Germans which was worth emulating. I said that over the water we were not quite so generous; that with us, when a singer had lost his voice and a jumper had lost his legs, these parties ceased to draw. I said I had been to the opera in Hanover, once, and in Mannheim once, and in Munich (through my authorized agent) once, and this large experience had nearly persuaded me that the Germans *preferred* singers who couldn't sing. This was not such a very extravagant speech, either, for that burly Mannheim tenor's praises had been the talk of all Heidelberg for a week before his performance took place – yet his voice was like the distressing noise which a nail makes when you screech it across a window-pane. I said so to Heidelberg friends the next day, and they said, in the calmest and simplest way, that that was very true, but that in earlier times his voice *had* been wonderfully fine. And the tenor in Hanover was just another example of this sort. The English-speaking German gentleman who went with me to the opera there was brimming with enthusiasm over that tenor. He said:

"*Ach Gott!* a great man! You shall see him. He is so celebrate in all Germany – and he has a pension, yes, from the government. He not obliged to sing now, only twice every year; but if he not sing twice each year they take him his pension away."

Very well, we went. When the renowned old tenor appeared, I got a nudge and an excited whisper:

"Now you see him!"

But the "celebrate" was an astonishing disappointment to me. If he had been behind a screen I should have supposed they were performing a surgical operation on him. I looked at my friend – to my great surprise he seemed intoxicated with pleasure, his eyes were dancing with eager delight.

When the curtain at last fell, he burst into the stormiest applause, and kept it up – as did the whole house – until the afflictive tenor had come three times before the curtain to make his bow. While the glowing enthusiast was swabbing the perspiration from his face, I said:

“I don’t mean the least harm, but really, now, do you think he can sing?”

“Him? *No! Gott Im Himmel, aber*, how he has been able to sing twenty-five years ago?” [Then pensively.] “*Ach*, no, *now* he not sing any more, he only cry. When he think he sing, now, he not sing at all, no, he only make like a cat which is unwell.”

Where and how did we get the idea that the Germans are a stolid, phlegmatic race? In truth, they are widely removed from that. They are warm-hearted, emotional, impulsive, enthusiastic, their tears come at the mildest touch, and it is not hard to move them to laughter. They are the very children of impulse. We are cold and self-contained, compared to the Germans. They hug and kiss and cry and shout and dance and sing; and where we use one loving, petting expression, they pour out a score. Their language is full of endearing diminutives; nothing that they love escapes the application of a petting diminutive – neither the house, nor the dog, nor the horse, nor the grandmother, nor any other creature, animate or inanimate.

In the theaters at Hanover, Hamburg, and Mannheim, they had a wise custom. The moment the curtain went up, the light in the body of the house went down. The audience sat in the cool gloom of a deep twilight, which greatly enhanced the glowing splendors of the stage. It saved gas, too, and people were not sweated to death.

When I saw “King Lear” played, nobody was allowed to see a scene shifted; if there was nothing to be done but slide a forest out of the way and expose a temple beyond, one did not see that forest split itself in the middle and go shrieking away, with the accompanying disenchanting spectacle of the hands and heels of the impelling impulse – no, the curtain was always dropped for an instant – one heard not the least movement behind it – but when it went up, the next instant, the forest was gone. Even when the stage was being entirely reset, one heard no noise. During the whole time that “King Lear” was playing the curtain was never down two minutes at any one time. The orchestra played until the curtain was ready to go up for the first time, then they departed for the evening. Where the stage waits never reach two minutes there is no occasion for music. I had never seen this two-minute business between acts but once before, and that was when the “*Shaughraun*” was played at Wallack’s.

I was at a concert in Munich one night, the people were streaming in, the clock-hand pointed to seven, the music struck up, and instantly all movement in the body of the house ceased – nobody was standing, or walking up the aisles, or fumbling with a seat, the stream of incomers had suddenly dried up at its source. I listened undisturbed to a piece of music that was fifteen minutes long – always expecting some tardy ticket-holders to come crowding past my knees, and being continuously and pleasantly disappointed – but when the last note was struck, here came the stream again. You see, they had made those late comers wait in the comfortable waiting-parlor from the time the music had begun until it was ended.

It was the first time I had ever seen this sort of criminals denied the privilege of destroying the comfort of a house full of their betters. Some of these were pretty fine birds, but no matter, they had to tarry outside in the long parlor under the inspection of a double rank of liveried footmen and waiting-maids who supported the two walls with their backs and held the wraps and traps of their masters and mistresses on their arms.

We had no footmen to hold our things, and it was not permissible to take them into the concert-room; but there were some men and women to take charge of them for us. They gave us checks for them and charged a fixed price, payable in advance – five cents.

In Germany they always hear one thing at an opera which has never yet been heard in America, perhaps – I mean the closing strain of a fine solo or duet. We always smash into it with an earthquake of applause. The result is that we rob ourselves of the sweetest part of the treat; we get the whiskey, but we don’t get the sugar in the bottom of the glass.

Our way of scattering applause along through an act seems to me to be better than the Mannheim way of saving it all up till the act is ended. I do not see how an actor can forget himself and portray hot passion before a cold still audience. I should think he would feel foolish. It is a pain to me to this day, to remember how that old German Lear raged and wept and howled around the stage, with never a response from that hushed house, never a single outburst till the act was ended. To me there was something unspeakably uncomfortable in the solemn dead silences that always followed this old person's tremendous outpourings of his feelings. I could not help putting myself in his place – I thought I knew how sick and flat he felt during those silences, because I remembered a case which came under my observation once, and which – but I will tell the incident:

One evening on board a Mississippi steamboat, a boy of ten years lay asleep in a berth – a long, slim-legged boy, he was, encased in quite a short shirt; it was the first time he had ever made a trip on a steamboat, and so he was troubled, and scared, and had gone to bed with his head filled with impending snaggings, and explosions, and conflagrations, and sudden death. About ten o'clock some twenty ladies were sitting around about the ladies' saloon, quietly reading, sewing, embroidering, and so on, and among them sat a sweet, benignant old dame with round spectacles on her nose and her busy knitting-needles in her hands. Now all of a sudden, into the midst of this peaceful scene burst that slim-shanked boy in the brief shirt, wild-eyed, erect-haired, and shouting, "Fire, fire! *Jump and run, the boat's afire and there ain't A minute to lose!*" All those ladies looked sweetly up and smiled, nobody stirred, the old lady pulled her spectacles down, looked over them, and said, gently:

"But you mustn't catch cold, child. Run and put on your breast-pin, and then come and tell us all about it."

It was a cruel chill to give to a poor little devil's gushing vehemence. He was expecting to be a sort of hero – the creator of a wild panic – and here everybody sat and smiled a mocking smile, and an old woman made fun of his bugbear. I turned and crept away – for I was that boy – and never even cared to discover whether I had dreamed the fire or actually seen it.

I am told that in a German concert or opera, they hardly ever encore a song; that though they may be dying to hear it again, their good breeding usually preserves them against requiring the repetition.

Kings may encore; that is quite another matter; it delights everybody to see that the King is pleased; and as to the actor encored, his pride and gratification are simply boundless. Still, there are circumstances in which even a royal encore—

But it is better to illustrate. The King of Bavaria is a poet, and has a poet's eccentricities – with the advantage over all other poets of being able to gratify them, no matter what form they may take. He is fond of opera, but not fond of sitting in the presence of an audience; therefore, it has sometimes occurred, in Munich, that when an opera has been concluded and the players were getting off their paint and finery, a command has come to them to get their paint and finery on again. Presently the King would arrive, solitary and alone, and the players would begin at the beginning and do the entire opera over again with only that one individual in the vast solemn theater for audience. Once he took an odd freak into his head. High up and out of sight, over the prodigious stage of the court theater is a maze of interlacing water-pipes, so pierced that in case of fire, innumerable little thread-like streams of water can be caused to descend; and in case of need, this discharge can be augmented to a pouring flood. American managers might want to make a note of that. The King was sole audience. The opera proceeded, it was a piece with a storm in it; the mimic thunder began to mutter, the mimic wind began to wail and sigh, and the mimic rain to patter. The King's interest rose higher and higher; it developed into enthusiasm. He cried out:

"It is very, very good, indeed! But I will have real rain! Turn on the water!"

The manager pleaded for a reversal of the command; said it would ruin the costly scenery and the splendid costumes, but the King cried:

"No matter, no matter, I will have real rain! Turn on the water!"

So the real rain was turned on and began to descend in gossamer lances to the mimic flower-beds and gravel walks of the stage. The richly dressed actresses and actors tripped about singing bravely and pretending not to mind it. The King was delighted – his enthusiasm grew higher. He cried out:

“Bravo, bravo! More thunder! more lightning! turn on more rain!”

The thunder boomed, the lightning glared, the storm-winds raged, the deluge poured down. The mimic royalty on the stage, with their soaked *satins* clinging to their bodies, slopped about ankle-deep in water, warbling their sweetest and best, the fiddlers under the eaves of the stage sawed away for dear life, with the cold overflow spouting down the backs of their necks, and the dry and happy King sat in his lofty box and wore his gloves to ribbons applauding.

“More yet!” cried the King; “more yet – let loose all the thunder, turn on all the water! I will hang the man that raises an umbrella!”

When this most tremendous and effective storm that had ever been produced in any theater was at last over, the King’s approbation was measureless. He cried:

“Magnificent, magnificent! *Encore!* Do it again!”

But the manager succeeded in persuading him to recall the encore, and said the company would feel sufficiently rewarded and complimented in the mere fact that the encore was desired by his Majesty, without fatiguing him with a repetition to gratify their own vanity.

During the remainder of the act the lucky performers were those whose parts required changes of dress; the others were a soaked, bedraggled, and uncomfortable lot, but in the last degree picturesque. The stage scenery was ruined, trap-doors were so swollen that they wouldn’t work for a week afterward, the fine costumes were spoiled, and no end of minor damages were done by that remarkable storm.

It was a royal idea – that storm – and royally carried out. But observe the moderation of the King; he did not insist upon his encore. If he had been a gladsome, unreflecting American opera-audience, he probably would have had his storm repeated and repeated until he drowned all those people.

## Chapter XI

The summer days passed pleasantly in Heidelberg. We had a skilled trainer, and under his instructions we were getting our legs in the right condition for the contemplated pedestrian tours; we were well satisfied with the progress which we had made in the German language<sup>6</sup> and more than satisfied with what we had accomplished in art. We had had the best instructors in drawing and painting in Germany – Haemmerling, Vogel, Mueller, Dietz, and Schumann. Haemmerling taught us landscape-painting. Vogel taught us figure-drawing, Mueller taught us to do still-life, and Dietz and Schumann gave us a finishing course in two specialties – battle-pieces and shipwrecks. Whatever I am in Art I owe to these men. I have something of the manner of each and all of them; but they all said that I had also a manner of my own, and that it was conspicuous. They said there was a marked individuality about my style – insomuch that if I ever painted the commonest type of a dog, I should be sure to throw a something into the aspect of that dog which would keep him from being mistaken for the creation of any other artist. Secretly I wanted to believe all these kind sayings, but I could not; I was afraid that my masters' partiality for me, and pride in me, biased their judgment. So I resolved to make a test. Privately, and unknown to any one, I painted my great picture, "Heidelberg Castle Illuminated"—my first really important work in oils – and had it hung up in the midst of a wilderness of oil-pictures in the Art Exhibition, with no name attached to it. To my great gratification it was instantly recognized as mine. All the town flocked to see it, and people even came from neighboring localities to visit it. It made more stir than any other work in the Exhibition. But the most gratifying thing of all was, that chance strangers, passing through, who had not heard of my picture, were not only drawn to it, as by a lodestone, the moment they entered the gallery, but always took it for a "Turner."

Apparently nobody had ever done that. There were ruined castles on the overhanging cliffs and crags all the way; these were said to have their legends, like those on the Rhine, and what was better still, they had never been in print. There was nothing in the books about that lovely region; it had been neglected by the tourist, it was virgin soil for the literary pioneer.

Meantime the knapsacks, the rough walking-suits and the stout walking-shoes which we had ordered, were finished and brought to us. A Mr. X and a young Mr. Z had agreed to go with us. We went around one evening and bade good-by to our friends, and afterward had a little farewell banquet at the hotel. We got to bed early, for we wanted to make an early start, so as to take advantage of the cool of the morning.

We were out of bed at break of day, feeling fresh and vigorous, and took a hearty breakfast, then plunged down through the leafy arcades of the Castle grounds, toward the town. What a glorious summer morning it was, and how the flowers did pour out their fragrance, and how the birds did sing! It was just the time for a tramp through the woods and mountains.

We were all dressed alike: broad slouch hats, to keep the sun off; gray knapsacks; blue army shirts; blue overalls; leathern gaiters buttoned tight from knee down to ankle; high-quarter coarse shoes snugly laced. Each man had an opera-glass, a canteen, and a guide-book case slung over his shoulder, and carried an alpen-stock in one hand and a sun-umbrella in the other. Around our hats were wound many folds of soft white muslin, with the ends hanging and flapping down our backs – an idea brought from the Orient and used by tourists all over Europe. Harris carried the little watch-like machine called a "pedometer," whose office is to keep count of a man's steps and tell how far he has walked. Everybody stopped to admire our costumes and give us a hearty "Pleasant march to you!"

When we got downtown I found that we could go by rail to within five miles of Heilbronn. The train was just starting, so we jumped aboard and went tearing away in splendid spirits. It was agreed

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D for information concerning this fearful tongue.

all around that we had done wisely, because it would be just as enjoyable to walk *down* the Neckar as up it, and it could not be needful to walk both ways. There were some nice German people in our compartment. I got to talking some pretty private matters presently, and Harris became nervous; so he nudged me and said:

“Speak in German – these Germans may understand English.”

I did so, it was well I did; for it turned out that there was not a German in that party who did not understand English perfectly. It is curious how widespread our language is in Germany. After a while some of those folks got out and a German gentleman and his two young daughters got in. I spoke in German of one of the latter several times, but without result. Finally she said:

“*Ich VERSTEHE nur Deutsch und ENGLISHE*,”—or words to that effect. That is, “I don’t understand any language but German and English.”

And sure enough, not only she but her father and sister spoke English. So after that we had all the talk we wanted; and we wanted a good deal, for they were agreeable people. They were greatly interested in our customs; especially the alpen-stocks, for they had not seen any before. They said that the Neckar road was perfectly level, so we must be going to Switzerland or some other rugged country; and asked us if we did not find the walking pretty fatiguing in such warm weather. But we said no.

We reached Wimpfen – I think it was Wimpfen – in about three hours, and got out, not the least tired; found a good hotel and ordered beer and dinner – then took a stroll through the venerable old village. It was very picturesque and tumble-down, and dirty and interesting. It had queer houses five hundred years old in it, and a military tower 115 feet high, which had stood there more than ten centuries. I made a little sketch of it. I kept a copy, but gave the original to the Burgomaster.

I think the original was better than the copy, because it had more windows in it and the grass stood up better and had a brisker look. There was none around the tower, though; I composed the grass myself, from studies I made in a field by Heidelberg in Haemmerling’s time. The man on top, looking at the view, is apparently too large, but I found he could not be made smaller, conveniently. I wanted him there, and I wanted him visible, so I thought out a way to manage it; I composed the picture from two points of view; the spectator is to observe the man from about where that flag is, and he must observe the tower itself from the ground. This harmonizes the seeming discrepancy.

Near an old cathedral, under a shed, were three crosses of stone – moldy and damaged things, bearing life-size stone figures. The two thieves were dressed in the fanciful court costumes of the middle of the sixteenth century, while the Saviour was nude, with the exception of a cloth around the loins.

We had dinner under the green trees in a garden belonging to the hotel and overlooking the Neckar; then, after a smoke, we went to bed. We had a refreshing nap, then got up about three in the afternoon and put on our panoply. As we tramped gaily out at the gate of the town, we overtook a peasant’s cart, partly laden with odds and ends of cabbages and similar vegetable rubbish, and drawn by a small cow and a smaller donkey yoked together. It was a pretty slow concern, but it got us into Heilbronn before dark – five miles, or possibly it was seven.

We stopped at the very same inn which the famous old robber-knight and rough fighter Goetz von Berlichingen, abode in after he got out of captivity in the Square Tower of Heilbronn between three hundred and fifty and four hundred years ago. Harris and I occupied the same room which he had occupied and the same paper had not quite peeled off the walls yet. The furniture was quaint old carved stuff, full four hundred years old, and some of the smells were over a thousand. There was a hook in the wall, which the landlord said the terrific old Goetz used to hang his iron hand on when he took it off to go to bed. This room was very large – it might be called immense – and it was on the first floor; which means it was in the second story, for in Europe the houses are so high that they do not count the first story, else they would get tired climbing before they got to the top. The wallpaper was a fiery red, with huge gold figures in it, well smirched by time, and it covered all the doors. These doors fitted so snugly and continued the figures of the paper so unbrokenly, that when

they were closed one had to go feeling and searching along the wall to find them. There was a stove in the corner – one of those tall, square, stately white porcelain things that looks like a monument and keeps you thinking of death when you ought to be enjoying your travels. The windows looked out on a little alley, and over that into a stable and some poultry and pig yards in the rear of some tenement-houses. There were the customary two beds in the room, one in one end, the other in the other, about an old-fashioned brass-mounted, single-barreled pistol-shot apart. They were fully as narrow as the usual German bed, too, and had the German bed's ineradicable habit of spilling the blankets on the floor every time you forgot yourself and went to sleep.

A round table as large as King Arthur's stood in the center of the room; while the waiters were getting ready to serve our dinner on it we all went out to see the renowned clock on the front of the municipal buildings.

## Chapter XII

The RATHHAUS, or municipal building, is of the quaintest and most picturesque Middle-Age architecture. It has a massive portico and steps, before it, heavily balustraded, and adorned with life-sized rusty iron knights in complete armor. The clock-face on the front of the building is very large and of curious pattern. Ordinarily, a gilded angel strikes the hour on a big bell with a hammer; as the striking ceases, a life-sized figure of Time raises its hour-glass and turns it; two golden rams advance and butt each other; a gilded cock lifts its wings; but the main features are two great angels, who stand on each side of the dial with long horns at their lips; it was said that they blew melodious blasts on these horns every hour – but they did not do it for us. We were told, later, that they blew only at night, when the town was still.

Within the RATHHAUS were a number of huge wild boars' heads, preserved, and mounted on brackets along the wall; they bore inscriptions telling who killed them and how many hundred years ago it was done. One room in the building was devoted to the preservation of ancient archives. There they showed us no end of aged documents; some were signed by Popes, some by Tilly and other great generals, and one was a letter written and subscribed by Goetz von Berlichingen in Heilbronn in 1519 just after his release from the Square Tower.

This fine old robber-knight was a devoutly and sincerely religious man, hospitable, charitable to the poor, fearless in fight, active, enterprising, and possessed of a large and generous nature. He had in him a quality of being able to overlook moderate injuries, and being able to forgive and forget mortal ones as soon as he had soundly trounced the authors of them. He was prompt to take up any poor devil's quarrel and risk his neck to right him. The common folk held him dear, and his memory is still green in ballad and tradition. He used to go on the highway and rob rich wayfarers; and other times he would swoop down from his high castle on the hills of the Neckar and capture passing cargoes of merchandise. In his memoirs he piously thanks the Giver of all Good for remembering him in his needs and delivering sundry such cargoes into his hands at times when only special *providences* could have relieved him. He was a doughty warrior and found a deep joy in battle. In an assault upon a stronghold in Bavaria when he was only twenty-three years old, his right hand was shot away, but he was so interested in the fight that he did not observe it for a while. He said that the iron hand which was made for him afterward, and which he wore for more than half a century, was nearly as clever a member as the fleshy one had been. I was glad to get a facsimile of the letter written by this fine old German Robin Hood, though I was not able to read it. He was a better artist with his sword than with his pen.

We went down by the river and saw the Square Tower. It was a very venerable structure, very strong, and very ornamental. There was no opening near the ground. They had to use a ladder to get into it, no doubt.

We visited the principal church, also – a curious old structure, with a tower-like spire adorned with all sorts of grotesque images. The inner walls of the church were placarded with large mural tablets of copper, bearing engraved inscriptions celebrating the merits of old Heilbronn worthies of two or three centuries ago, and also bearing rudely painted *effigies* of themselves and their families tricked out in the queer costumes of those days. The head of the family sat in the foreground, and beyond him extended a sharply receding and diminishing row of sons; facing him sat his wife, and beyond her extended a low row of diminishing daughters. The family was usually large, but the perspective bad.

Then we hired the hack and the horse which Goetz von Berlichingen used to use, and drove several miles into the country to visit the place called WEIBERTREU – Wife's Fidelity I suppose it means. It was a feudal castle of the Middle Ages. When we reached its neighborhood we found it was beautifully situated, but on top of a mound, or hill, round and tolerably steep, and about two hundred

feet high. Therefore, as the sun was blazing hot, we did not climb up there, but took the place on trust, and observed it from a distance while the horse leaned up against a fence and rested. The place has no interest except that which is lent it by its legend, which is a very pretty one – to this effect:

### **The Legend.**

In the Middle Ages, a couple of young dukes, brothers, took opposite sides in one of the wars, the one fighting for the Emperor, the other against him. One of them owned the castle and village on top of the mound which I have been speaking of, and in his absence his brother came with his knights and soldiers and began a siege. It was a long and tedious business, for the people made a stubborn and faithful defense. But at last their supplies ran out and starvation began its work; more fell by hunger than by the missiles of the enemy. They by and by surrendered, and begged for charitable terms. But the beleaguering prince was so incensed against them for their long resistance that he said he would spare none but the women and children – all men should be put to the sword without exception, and all their goods destroyed. Then the women came and fell on their knees and begged for the lives of their husbands.

“No,” said the prince, “not a man of them shall escape alive; you yourselves shall go with your children into houseless and friendless banishment; but that you may not starve I grant you this one grace, that each woman may bear with her from this place as much of her most valuable property as she is able to carry.”

Very well, presently the gates swung open and out filed those women carrying their *husbands* on their shoulders. The besiegers, furious at the trick, rushed forward to slaughter the men, but the Duke stepped between and said:

“No, put up your swords – a prince’s word is inviolable.”

When we got back to the hotel, King Arthur’s Round Table was ready for us in its white drapery, and the head waiter and his first assistant, in swallow-tails and white cravats, brought in the soup and the hot plates at once.

Mr. X had ordered the dinner, and when the wine came on, he picked up a bottle, glanced at the label, and then turned to the grave, the melancholy, the sepulchral head waiter and said it was not the sort of wine he had asked for. The head waiter picked up the bottle, cast his undertaker-eye on it and said:

“It is true; I beg pardon.” Then he turned on his subordinate and calmly said, “Bring another label.”

At the same time he slid the present label off with his hand and laid it aside; it had been newly put on, its paste was still wet. When the new label came, he put it on; our French wine being now turned into German wine, according to desire, the head waiter went blandly about his other duties, as if the working of this sort of miracle was a common and easy thing to him.

Mr. X said he had not known, before, that there were people honest enough to do this miracle in public, but he was aware that thousands upon thousands of labels were imported into America from Europe every year, to enable dealers to furnish to their customers in a quiet and inexpensive way all the different kinds of foreign wines they might require.

We took a turn around the town, after dinner, and found it fully as interesting in the moonlight as it had been in the daytime. The streets were narrow and roughly paved, and there was not a sidewalk or a street-lamp anywhere. The dwellings were centuries old, and vast enough for hotels. They widened all the way up; the stories projected further and further forward and aside as they ascended, and the long rows of lighted windows, filled with little bits of panes, curtained with figured white muslin and adorned outside with boxes of flowers, made a pretty effect.

The moon was bright, and the light and shadow very strong; and nothing could be more picturesque than those curving streets, with their rows of huge high gables leaning far over toward

each other in a friendly gossiping way, and the crowds below drifting through the alternating blots of gloom and mellow bars of moonlight. Nearly everybody was abroad, chatting, singing, romping, or massed in lazy comfortable attitudes in the doorways.

In one place there was a public building which was fenced about with a thick, rusty chain, which sagged from post to post in a succession of low swings. The pavement, here, was made of heavy blocks of stone. In the glare of the moon a party of barefooted children were swinging on those chains and having a noisy good time. They were not the first ones who have done that; even their great-great-grandfathers had not been the first to do it when they were children. The strokes of the bare feet had worn grooves inches deep in the stone flags; it had taken many generations of swinging children to accomplish that.

Everywhere in the town were the mold and decay that go with antiquity, and evidence of it; but I do not know that anything else gave us so vivid a sense of the old age of Heilbronn as those foot-worn grooves in the paving-stones.

## Chapter XIII

When we got back to the hotel I wound and set the pedometer and put it in my pocket, for I was to carry it next day and keep record of the miles we made. The work which we had given the instrument to do during the day which had just closed had not fatigued it perceptibly.

We were in bed by ten, for we wanted to be up and away on our tramp homeward with the dawn. I hung fire, but Harris went to sleep at once. I hate a man who goes to sleep at once; there is a sort of indefinable something about it which is not exactly an insult, and yet is an insolence; and one which is hard to bear, too. I lay there fretting over this injury, and trying to go to sleep; but the harder I tried, the wider awake I grew. I got to feeling very lonely in the dark, with no company but an undigested dinner. My mind got a start by and by, and began to consider the beginning of every subject which has ever been thought of; but it never went further than the beginning; it was touch and go; it fled from topic to topic with a frantic speed. At the end of an hour my head was in a perfect whirl and I was dead tired, fagged out.

The fatigue was so great that it presently began to make some head against the nervous excitement; while imagining myself wide awake, I would really doze into momentary unconsciousness, and come suddenly out of it with a physical jerk which nearly wrenched my joints apart – the delusion of the instant being that I was tumbling backward over a precipice. After I had fallen over eight or nine precipices and thus found out that one half of my brain had been asleep eight or nine times without the wide-awake, hard-working other half suspecting it, the periodical unconsciousnesses began to extend their spell gradually over more of my brain-territory, and at last I sank into a drowse which grew deeper and deeper and was doubtless just on the very point of being a solid, blessed dreamless stupor, when – what was that?

My dulled faculties dragged themselves partly back to life and took a receptive attitude. Now out of an immense, a limitless distance, came a something which grew and grew, and approached, and presently was recognizable as a sound – it had rather seemed to be a feeling, before. This sound was a mile away, now – perhaps it was the murmur of a storm; and now it was nearer – not a quarter of a mile away; was it the muffled rasping and grinding of distant machinery? No, it came still nearer; was it the measured tramp of a marching troop? But it came nearer still, and still nearer – and at last it was right in the room: it was merely a mouse gnawing the woodwork. So I had held my breath all that time for such a trifle.

Well, what was done could not be helped; I would go to sleep at once and make up the lost time. That was a thoughtless thought. Without intending it – hardly knowing it – I fell to listening intently to that sound, and even unconsciously counting the strokes of the mouse's nutmeg-grater. Presently I was deriving exquisite suffering from this employment, yet maybe I could have endured it if the mouse had attended steadily to his work; but he did not do that; he stopped every now and then, and I suffered more while waiting and listening for him to begin again than I did while he was gnawing. Along at first I was mentally offering a reward of five – six – seven – ten – dollars for that mouse; but toward the last I was offering rewards which were entirely beyond my means. I close-reefed my ears – that is to say, I bent the flaps of them down and furled them into five or six folds, and pressed them against the hearing-orifice – but it did no good: the faculty was so sharpened by nervous excitement that it was become a microphone and could hear through the overlays without trouble.

My anger grew to a frenzy. I finally did what all persons before me have done, clear back to Adam, – resolved to throw something. I reached down and got my walking-shoes, then sat up in bed and listened, in order to exactly locate the noise. But I couldn't do it; it was as allocatable as a cricket's noise; and where one thinks that that is, is always the very place where it isn't. So I presently hurled a shoe at random, and with a vicious vigor. It struck the wall over Harris's head and fell down on him; I had not imagined I could throw so far. It woke Harris, and I was glad of it until I found he was not

angry; then I was sorry. He soon went to sleep again, which pleased me; but straightway the mouse began again, which roused my temper once more. I did not want to wake Harris a second time, but the gnawing continued until I was compelled to throw the other shoe.

This time I broke a mirror – there were two in the room – I got the largest one, of course. Harris woke again, but did not complain, and I was sorrier than ever. I resolved that I would suffer all possible torture before I would disturb him a third time.

The mouse eventually retired, and by and by I was sinking to sleep, when a clock began to strike; I counted till it was done, and was about to drowse again when another clock began; I counted; then the two great RATHHAUS clock angels began to send forth soft, rich, melodious blasts from their long trumpets. I had never heard anything that was so lovely, or weird, or mysterious – but when they got to blowing the quarter-hours, they seemed to me to be overdoing the thing. Every time I dropped off for the moment, a new noise woke me. Each time I woke I missed my coverlet, and had to reach down to the floor and get it again.

At last all sleepiness forsook me. I recognized the fact that I was hopelessly and permanently wide awake. Wide awake, and feverish and thirsty. When I had lain tossing there as long as I could endure it, it occurred to me that it would be a good idea to dress and go out in the great square and take a refreshing wash in the fountain, and smoke and reflect there until the remnant of the night was gone.

I believed I could dress in the dark without waking Harris. I had banished my shoes after the mouse, but my slippers would do for a summer night. So I rose softly, and gradually got on everything – down to one sock. I couldn't seem to get on the track of that sock, any way I could fix it. But I had to have it; so I went down on my hands and knees, with one slipper on and the other in my hand, and began to paw gently around and rake the floor, but with no success. I enlarged my circle, and went on pawing and raking. With every pressure of my knee, how the floor creaked! and every time I chanced to rake against any article, it seemed to give out thirty-five or thirty-six times more noise than it would have done in the daytime. In those cases I always stopped and held my breath till I was sure Harris had not awakened – then I crept along again. I moved on and on, but I could not find the sock; I could not seem to find anything but furniture. I could not remember that there was much furniture in the room when I went to bed, but the place was alive with it now – especially chairs – chairs everywhere – had a couple of families moved in, in the mean time? And I never could seem to *glance* on one of those chairs, but always struck it full and square with my head. My temper rose, by steady and sure degrees, and as I pawed on and on, I fell to making vicious comments under my breath.

Finally, with a venomous access of irritation, I said I would leave without the sock; so I rose up and made straight for the door – as I supposed – and suddenly confronted my dim spectral image in the unbroken mirror. It startled the breath out of me, for an instant; it also showed me that I was lost, and had no sort of idea where I was. When I realized this, I was so angry that I had to sit down on the floor and take hold of something to keep from lifting the roof off with an explosion of opinion. If there had been only one mirror, it might possibly have helped to locate me; but there were two, and two were as bad as a thousand; besides, these were on opposite sides of the room. I could see the dim blur of the windows, but in my turned-around condition they were exactly where they ought not to be, and so they only confused me instead of helping me.

I started to get up, and knocked down an umbrella; it made a noise like a pistol-shot when it struck that hard, slick, carpetless floor; I grated my teeth and held my breath – Harris did not stir. I set the umbrella slowly and carefully on end against the wall, but as soon as I took my hand away, its heel slipped from under it, and down it came again with another bang. I shrunk together and listened a moment in silent fury – no harm done, everything quiet. With the most painstaking care and nicety, I stood the umbrella up once more, took my hand away, and down it came again.

I have been strictly reared, but if it had not been so dark and solemn and awful there in that lonely, vast room, I do believe I should have said something then which could not be put into a Sunday-school book without injuring the sale of it. If my reasoning powers had not been already sapped dry

by my harassments, I would have known better than to try to set an umbrella on end on one of those glassy German floors in the dark; it can't be done in the daytime without four failures to one success. I had one comfort, though – Harris was yet still and silent – he had not stirred.

The umbrella could not locate me – there were four standing around the room, and all alike. I thought I would feel along the wall and find the door in that way. I rose up and began this operation, but raked down a picture. It was not a large one, but it made noise enough for a panorama. Harris gave out no sound, but I felt that if I experimented any further with the pictures I should be sure to wake him. Better give up trying to get out. Yes, I would find King Arthur's Round Table once more – I had already found it several times – and use it for a base of departure on an exploring tour for my bed; if I could find my bed I could then find my water pitcher; I would quench my raging thirst and turn in. So I started on my hands and knees, because I could go faster that way, and with more confidence, too, and not knock down things. By and by I found the table – with my head – rubbed the bruise a little, then rose up and started, with hands abroad and fingers spread, to balance myself. I found a chair; then a wall; then another chair; then a sofa; then an alpen-stock, then another sofa; this confounded me, for I had thought there was only one sofa. I hunted up the table again and took a fresh start; found some more chairs.

It occurred to me, now, as it ought to have done before, that as the table was round, it was therefore of no value as a base to aim from; so I moved off once more, and at random among the wilderness of chairs and sofas – wandering off into unfamiliar regions, and presently knocked a candlestick and knocked off a lamp, grabbed at the lamp and knocked off a water pitcher with a rattling crash, and thought to myself, "I've found you at last – I judged I was close upon you." Harris shouted "murder," and "thieves," and finished with "I'm absolutely drowned."

The crash had roused the house. Mr. X pranced in, in his long night-garment, with a candle, young Z after him with another candle; a procession swept in at another door, with candles and lanterns – landlord and two German guests in their nightgowns and a chambermaid in hers.

I looked around; I was at Harris's bed, a Sabbath-day's journey from my own. There was only one sofa; it was against the wall; there was only one chair where a body could get at it – I had been revolving around it like a planet, and colliding with it like a comet half the night.

I explained how I had been employing myself, and why. Then the landlord's party left, and the rest of us set about our preparations for breakfast, for the dawn was ready to break. I glanced furtively at my pedometer, and found I had made 47 miles. But I did not care, for I had come out for a pedestrian tour anyway.

## Chapter XIV

When the landlord learned that I and my agents were artists, our party rose perceptibly in his esteem; we rose still higher when he learned that we were making a pedestrian tour of Europe.

He told us all about the Heidelberg road, and which were the best places to avoid and which the best ones to tarry at; he charged me less than cost for the things I broke in the night; he put up a fine luncheon for us and added to it a quantity of great light-green plums, the pleasantest fruit in Germany; he was so anxious to do us honor that he would not allow us to walk out of Heilbronn, but called up Goetz von Berlichingen's horse and cab and made us ride.

I made a sketch of the turnout. It is not a Work, it is only what artists call a "study"—a thing to make a finished picture from. This sketch has several blemishes in it; for instance, the wagon is not traveling as fast as the horse is. This is wrong. Again, the person trying to get out of the way is too small; he is out of perspective, as we say. The two upper lines are not the horse's back, they are the reins; there seems to be a wheel missing – this would be corrected in a finished Work, of course. This thing flying out behind is not a flag, it is a curtain. That other thing up there is the sun, but I didn't get enough distance on it. I do not remember, now, what that thing is that is in front of the man who is running, but I think it is a haystack or a woman. This study was exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1879, but did not take any medal; they do not give medals for studies.

We discharged the carriage at the bridge. The river was full of logs – long, slender, barkless pine logs – and we leaned on the rails of the bridge, and watched the men put them together into rafts. These rafts were of a shape and construction to suit the crookedness and extreme narrowness of the Neckar. They were from fifty to one hundred yards long, and they gradually tapered from a nine-log breadth at their sterns, to a three-log breadth at their bow-ends. The main part of the steering is done at the bow, with a pole; the three-log breadth there furnishes room for only the steersman, for these little logs are not larger around than an average young lady's waist. The connections of the several sections of the raft are slack and pliant, so that the raft may be readily bent into any sort of curve required by the shape of the river.

The Neckar is in many places so narrow that a person can throw a dog across it, if he has one; when it is also sharply curved in such places, the raftsmen has to do some pretty nice snug piloting to make the turns. The river is not always allowed to spread over its whole bed – which is as much as thirty, and sometimes forty yards wide – but is split into three equal bodies of water, by stone dikes which throw the main volume, depth, and current into the central one. In low water these neat narrow-edged dikes project four or five inches above the surface, like the comb of a submerged roof, but in high water they are overflowed. A hatful of rain makes high water in the Neckar, and a basketful produces an overflow.

There are dikes abreast the Schloss Hotel, and the current is violently swift at that point. I used to sit for hours in my glass cage, watching the long, narrow rafts slip along through the central channel, grazing the right-bank dike and aiming carefully for the middle arch of the stone bridge below; I watched them in this way, and lost all this time hoping to see one of them hit the bridge-pier and wreck itself sometime or other, but was always disappointed. One was smashed there one morning, but I had just stepped into my room a moment to light a pipe, so I lost it.

While I was looking down upon the rafts that morning in Heilbronn, the daredevil spirit of adventure came suddenly upon me, and I said to my comrades:

"I am going to Heidelberg on a raft. Will you venture with me?"

Their faces paled a little, but they assented with as good a grace as they could. Harris wanted to cable his mother – thought it his duty to do that, as he was all she had in this world – so, while he attended to this, I went down to the longest and finest raft and hailed the captain with a hearty "Ahoy, shipmate!" which put us upon pleasant terms at once, and we entered upon business. I said

we were on a pedestrian tour to Heidelberg, and would like to take passage with him. I said this partly through young Z, who spoke German very well, and partly through Mr. X, who spoke it peculiarly. I can *understand* German as well as the maniac that invented it, but I *talk* it best through an interpreter.

The captain hitched up his trousers, then shifted his quid thoughtfully. Presently he said just what I was expecting he would say – that he had no license to carry passengers, and therefore was afraid the law would be after him in case the matter got noised about or any accident happened. So I *chartered* the raft and the crew and took all the responsibilities on myself.

With a rattling song the starboard watch bent to their work and hove the cable short, then got the anchor home, and our bark moved off with a stately stride, and soon was bowling along at about two knots an hour.

Our party were grouped amidships. At first the talk was a little gloomy, and ran mainly upon the shortness of life, the uncertainty of it, the perils which beset it, and the need and wisdom of being always prepared for the worst; this shaded off into low-voiced references to the dangers of the deep, and kindred matters; but as the gray east began to redden and the mysterious solemnity and silence of the dawn to give place to the joy-songs of the birds, the talk took a cheerier tone, and our spirits began to rise steadily.

Germany, in the summer, is the perfection of the beautiful, but nobody has understood, and realized, and enjoyed the utmost possibilities of this soft and peaceful beauty unless he has voyaged down the Neckar on a raft. The motion of a raft is the needful motion; it is gentle, and gliding, and smooth, and noiseless; it calms down all feverish activities, it soothes to sleep all nervous hurry and impatience; under its restful influence all the troubles and *vexations* and sorrows that harass the mind vanish away, and existence becomes a dream, a charm, a deep and tranquil ecstasy. How it contrasts with hot and perspiring pedestrianism, and dusty and deafening railroad rush, and tedious jolting behind tired horses over blinding white roads!

We went slipping silently along, between the green and fragrant banks, with a sense of pleasure and contentment that grew, and grew, all the time. Sometimes the banks were overhung with thick masses of willows that wholly hid the ground behind; sometimes we had noble hills on one hand, clothed densely with foliage to their tops, and on the other hand open levels blazing with poppies, or clothed in the rich blue of the corn-flower; sometimes we drifted in the shadow of forests, and sometimes along the margin of long stretches of velvety grass, fresh and green and bright, a tireless charm to the eye. And the birds! – they were everywhere; they swept back and forth across the river constantly, and their jubilant music was never stilled.

It was a deep and satisfying pleasure to see the sun create the new morning, and gradually, patiently, lovingly, clothe it on with splendor after splendor, and glory after glory, till the miracle was complete. How different is this marvel observed from a raft, from what it is when one observes it through the dingy windows of a railway-station in some wretched village while he munches a petrified sandwich and waits for the train.

## Chapter XV

### Down The River

Men and women and cattle were at work in the dewy fields by this time. The people often stepped aboard the raft, as we glided along the grassy shores, and gossiped with us and with the crew for a hundred yards or so, then stepped ashore again, refreshed by the ride.

Only the men did this; the women were too busy. The women do all kinds of work on the continent. They dig, they hoe, they reap, they sow, they bear monstrous burdens on their backs, they shove similar ones long distances on wheelbarrows, they drag the cart when there is no dog or lean cow to drag it – and when there is, they assist the dog or cow. Age is no matter – the older the woman the stronger she is, apparently. On the farm a woman's duties are not defined – she does a little of everything; but in the towns it is different, there she only does certain things, the men do the rest. For instance, a hotel chambermaid has nothing to do but make beds and fires in fifty or sixty rooms, bring towels and candles, and fetch several tons of water up several flights of stairs, a hundred pounds at a time, in prodigious metal pitchers. She does not have to work more than eighteen or twenty hours a day, and she can always get down on her knees and scrub the floors of halls and closets when she is tired and needs a rest.

As the morning advanced and the weather grew hot, we took off our outside clothing and sat in a row along the edge of the raft and enjoyed the scenery, with our sun-umbrellas over our heads and our legs dangling in the water.

Every now and then we plunged in and had a swim. Every projecting grassy cape had its joyous group of naked children, the boys to themselves and the girls to themselves, the latter usually in care of some motherly dame who sat in the shade of a tree with her knitting. The little boys swam out to us, sometimes, but the little maids stood knee-deep in the water and stopped their splashing and frolicking to inspect the raft with their innocent eyes as it drifted by. Once we turned a corner suddenly and surprised a slender girl of twelve years or upward, just stepping into the water. She had not time to run, but she did what answered just as well; she promptly drew a lithe young willow bough athwart her white body with one hand, and then contemplated us with a simple and untroubled interest. Thus she stood while we glided by. She was a pretty creature, and she and her willow bough made a very pretty picture, and one which could not offend the modesty of the most fastidious spectator. Her white skin had a low bank of fresh green willows for background and effective contrast – for she stood against them – and above and out of them projected the eager faces and white shoulders of two smaller girls.

Toward noon we heard the inspiriting cry, —

“Sail ho!”

“Where away?” shouted the captain.

“Three points off the weather bow!”

We ran forward to see the vessel. It proved to be a steamboat – for they had begun to run a steamer up the Neckar, for the first time in May. She was a tug, and one of a very peculiar build and aspect. I had often watched her from the hotel, and wondered how she propelled herself, for apparently she had no propeller or paddles. She came churning along, now, making a deal of noise of one kind or another, and aggravating it every now and then by blowing a hoarse whistle. She had nine keel-boats hitched on behind and following after her in a long, slender rank. We met her in a narrow place, between dikes, and there was hardly room for us both in the cramped passage. As she went grinding and groaning by, we perceived the secret of her moving impulse. She did not drive herself up the river with paddles or propeller, she pulled herself by hauling on a great chain. This chain is laid in the bed of the river and is only fastened at the two ends. It is seventy miles long. It comes in over the boat's bow, passes around a drum, and is payed out astern. She pulls on that chain, and so

drags herself up the river or down it. She has neither bow or stern, strictly speaking, for she has a long-bladed rudder on each end and she never turns around. She uses both rudders all the time, and they are powerful enough to enable her to turn to the right or the left and steer around curves, in spite of the strong resistance of the chain. I would not have believed that that impossible thing could be done; but I saw it done, and therefore I know that there is one impossible thing which *can* be done. What miracle will man attempt next?

We met many big keel-boats on their way up, using sails, mule power, and profanity – a tedious and laborious business. A wire rope led from the foretopmast to the file of mules on the tow-path a hundred yards ahead, and by dint of much banging and swearing and urging, the detachment of drivers managed to get a speed of two or three miles an hour out of the mules against the stiff current. The Neckar has always been used as a canal, and thus has given employment to a great many men and animals; but now that this steamboat is able, with a small crew and a bushel or so of coal, to take nine keel-boats farther up the river in one hour than thirty men and thirty mules can do it in two, it is believed that the old-fashioned towing industry is on its death-bed. A second steamboat began work in the Neckar three months after the first one was put in service.

At noon we stepped ashore and bought some bottled beer and got some chickens cooked, while the raft waited; then we immediately put to sea again, and had our dinner while the beer was cold and the chickens hot. There is no pleasanter place for such a meal than a raft that is gliding down the winding Neckar past green meadows and wooded hills, and slumbering villages, and craggy heights graced with crumbling towers and battlements.

In one place we saw a nicely dressed German gentleman without any spectacles. Before I could come to anchor he had got underway. It was a great pity. I so wanted to make a sketch of him. The captain comforted me for my loss, however, by saying that the man was without any doubt a fraud who had spectacles, but kept them in his pocket in order to make himself conspicuous.

Below Hassmersheim we passed Hornberg, Goetz von Berlichingen's old castle. It stands on a bold elevation two hundred feet above the surface of the river; it has high vine-clad walls enclosing trees, and a peaked tower about seventy-five feet high. The steep hillside, from the castle clear down to the water's edge, is terraced, and clothed thick with grape vines. This is like farming a mansard roof. All the steeps along that part of the river which furnish the proper exposure, are given up to the grape. That region is a great producer of Rhine wines. The Germans are exceedingly fond of Rhine wines; they are put up in tall, slender bottles, and are considered a pleasant beverage. One tells them from vinegar by the label.

The Hornberg hill is to be tunneled, and the new railway will pass under the castle.

### **The cave of the spectre.**

Two miles below Hornberg castle is a cave in a low cliff, which the captain of the raft said had once been occupied by a beautiful heiress of Hornberg – the Lady Gertrude – in the old times. It was seven hundred years ago. She had a number of rich and noble lovers and one poor and obscure one, Sir Wendel Lobenfeld. With the native chuckleheadedness of the heroine of romance, she preferred the poor and obscure lover.

With the native sound judgment of the father of a heroine of romance, the von Berlichingen of that day shut his daughter up in his donjon keep, or his oubliette, or his culverin, or some such place, and resolved that she should stay there until she selected a husband from among her rich and noble lovers. The latter visited her and persecuted her with their *supplications*, but without effect, for her heart was true to her poor despised Crusader, who was fighting in the Holy Land. Finally, she resolved that she would endure the attentions of the rich lovers no longer; so one stormy night she escaped and went down the river and hid herself in the cave on the other side. Her father ransacked the country for her, but found not a trace of her. As the days went by, and still no tidings of her came,

his conscience began to torture him, and he caused proclamation to be made that if she were yet living and would return, he would oppose her no longer, she might marry whom she would. The months dragged on, all hope forsook the old man, he ceased from his customary pursuits and pleasures, he devoted himself to pious works, and longed for the deliverance of death.

Now just at midnight, every night, the lost heiress stood in the mouth of her cave, arrayed in white robes, and sang a little love ballad which her Crusader had made for her. She judged that if he came home alive the superstitious peasants would tell him about the ghost that sang in the cave, and that as soon as they described the ballad he would know that none but he and she knew that song, therefore he would suspect that she was alive, and would come and find her. As time went on, the people of the region became sorely distressed about the Specter of the Haunted Cave. It was said that ill luck of one kind or another always overtook any one who had the misfortune to hear that song. Eventually, every calamity that happened thereabouts was laid at the door of that music. Consequently, no boatmen would consent to pass the cave at night; the peasants shunned the place, even in the daytime.

But the faithful girl sang on, night after night, month after month, and patiently waited; her reward must come at last. Five years dragged by, and still, every night at midnight, the plaintive tones floated out over the silent land, while the distant boatmen and peasants thrust their fingers into their ears and shuddered out a prayer.

And now came the Crusader home, bronzed and battle-scarred, but bringing a great and splendid fame to lay at the feet of his bride. The old lord of Hornberg received him as his son, and wanted him to stay by him and be the comfort and blessing of his age; but the tale of that young girl's devotion to him and its pathetic consequences made a changed man of the knight. He could not enjoy his well-earned rest. He said his heart was broken, he would give the remnant of his life to high deeds in the cause of humanity, and so find a worthy death and a blessed reunion with the brave true heart whose love had more honored him than all his victories in war.

When the people heard this resolve of his, they came and told him there was a pitiless dragon in human disguise in the Haunted Cave, a dread creature which no knight had yet been bold enough to face, and begged him to rid the land of its desolating presence. He said he would do it. They told him about the song, and when he asked what song it was, they said the memory of it was gone, for nobody had been hardy enough to listen to it for the past four years and more.

Toward midnight the Crusader came floating down the river in a boat, with his trusty cross-bow in his hands. He drifted silently through the dim reflections of the crags and trees, with his intent eyes fixed upon the low cliff which he was approaching. As he drew nearer, he discerned the black mouth of the cave. Now – is that a white figure? Yes. The plaintive song begins to well forth and float away over meadow and river – the cross-bow is slowly raised to position, a steady aim is taken, the bolt flies straight to the mark – the figure sinks down, still singing, the knight takes the wool out of his ears, and recognizes the old ballad – too late! Ah, if he had only not put the wool in his ears!

The Crusader went away to the wars again, and presently fell in battle, fighting for the Cross. Tradition says that during several centuries the spirit of the unfortunate girl sang nightly from the cave at midnight, but the music carried no curse with it; and although many listened for the mysterious sounds, few were favored, since only those could hear them who had never failed in a trust. It is believed that the singing still continues, but it is known that nobody has heard it during the present century.

## Chapter XVI

### An Ancient Legend of the Rhine

The last legend reminds one of the “Lorelei”—a legend of the Rhine. There is a song called “The Lorelei.”

Germany is rich in folk-songs, and the words and airs of several of them are peculiarly beautiful – but “The Lorelei” is the people’s favorite. I could not endure it at first, but by and by it began to take hold of me, and now there is no tune which I like so well.

It is not possible that it is much known in America, else I should have heard it there. The fact that I never heard it there, is evidence that there are others in my country who have fared likewise; therefore, for the sake of these, I mean to print the words and music in this Chapter. And I will refresh the reader’s memory by printing the legend of the Lorelei, too. I have it by me in the *legends of the Rhine*, done into English by the wildly gifted Garnham, Bachelor of Arts. I print the legend partly to refresh my own memory, too, for I have never read it before.

#### The Legend.

Lore (two syllables) was a water nymph who used to sit on a high rock called the Ley or Lei (pronounced like our word *lie*) in the Rhine, and lure boatmen to destruction in a furious rapid which marred the channel at that spot. She so bewitched them with her plaintive songs and her wonderful beauty that they forgot everything else to gaze up at her, and so they presently drifted among the broken reefs and were lost.

In those old, old times, the Count Bruno lived in a great castle near there with his son, the Count Hermann, a youth of twenty. Hermann had heard a great deal about the beautiful Lore, and had finally fallen very deeply in love with her without having seen her. So he used to wander to the neighborhood of the Lei, evenings, with his Zither and “Express his Longing in low Singing,” as Garnham says. On one of these occasions, “suddenly there hovered around the top of the rock a brightness of unequaled clearness and color, which, in increasingly smaller circles thickened, was the enchanting figure of the beautiful Lore.

“An unintentional cry of Joy escaped the Youth, he let his Zither fall, and with extended arms he called out the name of the enigmatical Being, who seemed to stoop lovingly to him and beckon to him in a friendly manner; indeed, if his ear did not deceive him, she called his name with unutterable sweet Whispers, proper to love. Beside himself with delight the youth lost his Senses and sank senseless to the earth.”

After that he was a changed person. He went dreaming about, thinking only of his fairy and caring for naught else in the world. “The old count saw with affliction this *changement* in his son,” whose cause he could not divine, and tried to divert his mind into cheerful channels, but to no purpose. Then the old count used authority. He commanded the youth to betake himself to the camp. Obedience was promised. Garnham says:

“It was on the evening before his departure, as he wished still once to visit the Lei and offer to the Nymph of the Rhine his Sighs, the tones of his Zither, and his Songs. He went, in his boat, this time accompanied by a faithful squire, down the stream. The moon shed her silvery light over the whole country; the steep bank mountains appeared in the most fantastical shapes, and the high oaks on either side bowed their Branches on Hermann’s passing. As soon as he approached the Lei, and was aware of the surf-waves, his attendant was seized with an inexpressible Anxiety and he begged permission to land; but the Knight swept the strings of his Guitar and sang:

“Once I saw thee in dark night,  
In supernatural Beauty bright;  
Of Light-rays, was the Figure wove,  
To share its light, locked-hair strove.  
“Thy Garment color wave-dove  
By thy hand the sign of love,  
Thy eyes sweet enchantment,  
Raying to me, oh! enchantment.  
“O, wert thou but my sweetheart,  
How willingly thy love to part!  
With delight I should be bound  
To thy rocky house in deep ground.”

That Hermann should have gone to that place at all, was not wise; that he should have gone with such a song as that in his mouth was a most serious mistake. The Lorelei did not “call his name in unutterable sweet Whispers” this time. No, that song naturally worked an instant and thorough “*changement*” in her; and not only that, but it stirred the bowels of the whole afflicted region around about there – for—

“Scarcely had these tones sounded, everywhere there began tumult and sound, as if voices above and below the water. On the Lei rose flames, the Fairy stood above, at that time, and beckoned with her right hand clearly and urgently to the infatuated Knight, while with a staff in her left hand she called the waves to her service. They began to mount heavenward; the boat was upset, mocking every exertion; the waves rose to the gunwale, and splitting on the hard stones, the Boat broke into Pieces. The youth sank into the depths, but the squire was thrown on shore by a powerful wave.”

The bitterest things have been said about the Lorelei during many centuries, but surely her conduct upon this occasion entitles her to our respect. One feels drawn tenderly toward her and is moved to forget her many crimes and remember only the good deed that crowned and closed her career.

“The Fairy was never more seen; but her enchanting tones have often been heard. In the beautiful, refreshing, still nights of spring, when the moon pours her silver light over the Country, the listening shipper hears from the rushing of the waves, the echoing Clang of a wonderfully charming voice, which sings a song from the crystal castle, and with sorrow and fear he thinks on the young Count Hermann, seduced by the Nymph.”

Here is the music, and the German words by Heinrich Heine. This song has been a favorite in Germany for forty years, and will remain a favorite always, maybe.

I have a prejudice against people who print things in a foreign language and add no translation. When I am the reader, and the author considers me able to do the translating myself, he pays me quite a nice compliment – but if he would do the translating for me I would try to get along without the compliment.

If I were at home, no doubt I could get a translation of this poem, but I am abroad and can’t; therefore I will make a translation myself. It may not be a good one, for poetry is out of my line, but it will serve my purpose – which is, to give the unGerman young girl a jingle of words to hang the tune on until she can get hold of a good version, made by some one who is a poet and knows how to convey a poetical thought from one language to another.

## The Lorelei

I cannot divine what it meaneth,  
This haunting nameless pain:  
A tale of the bygone ages  
Keeps brooding through my brain:  
The faint air cools in the glooming,  
And peaceful flows the Rhine,  
The thirsty summits are drinking  
The sunset's flooding wine;  
The loveliest maiden is sitting  
High-throned in yon blue air,  
Her golden jewels are shining,  
She combs her golden hair;  
She combs with a comb that is golden,  
And sings a weird refrain  
That steeps in a deadly enchantment  
The list'ner's ravished brain:  
The doomed in his drifting shallop,  
Is tranced with the sad sweet tone,  
He sees not the yawning breakers,  
He sees but the maid alone:  
The pitiless billows engulf him! —  
So perish sailor and bark;  
And this, with her baleful singing,  
Is the Lorelei's gruesome work.

I have a translation by Garnham, Bachelor of Arts, in the *legends of the Rhine*, but it would not answer the purpose I mentioned above, because the measure is too nobly irregular; it don't fit the tune snugly enough; in places it hangs over at the ends too far, and in other places one runs out of words before he gets to the end of a bar. Still, Garnham's translation has high merits, and I am not dreaming of leaving it out of my book. I believe this poet is wholly unknown in America and England; I take peculiar pleasure in bringing him forward because I consider that I discovered him:

## The Lorelei

*Translated by L. W. Garnham, B.A.*

I do not know what it signifies.  
That I am so sorrowful?  
A fable of old Times so terrifies,  
Leaves my heart so thoughtful.  
The air is cool and it darkens,  
And calmly flows the Rhine;  
The summit of the mountain hearkens  
In evening sunshine line.  
The most beautiful Maiden entrances  
Above wonderfully there,  
Her beautiful golden attire glances,  
She combs her golden hair.  
With golden comb so lustrous,  
And thereby a song sings,  
It has a tone so wondrous,  
That powerful melody rings.  
The shipper in the little ship  
It effects with woe sad might;  
He does not see the rocky slip,  
He only regards dreaded height.  
I believe the turbulent waves  
Swallow the last shipper and boat;  
She with her singing craves  
All to visit her magic moat.

No translation could be closer. He has got in all the facts; and in their regular order, too. There is not a statistic wanting. It is as succinct as an invoice. That is what a translation ought to be; it should exactly reflect the thought of the original. You can't *sing* "Above wonderfully there," because it simply won't go to the tune, without damaging the singer; but it is a most clingly exact translation of *Dort OBEN wunderbar*—fits it like a blister. Mr. Garnham's reproduction has other merits – a hundred of them – but it is not necessary to point them out. They will be detected.

No one with a specialty can hope to have a monopoly of it. Even Garnham has a rival. Mr. X had a small pamphlet with him which he had bought while on a visit to Munich. It was entitled *A catalogue of pictures in the old PINACOTEK*, and was written in a peculiar kind of English. Here are a few extracts:

"It is not permitted to make use of the work in question to a publication of the same contents as well as to the pirated edition of it."

"An evening landscape. In the foreground near a pond and a group of white beeches is leading a footpath animated by travelers."

"A learned man in a cynical and torn dress holding an open book in his hand."

"St. Bartholomew and the Executioner with the knife to fulfil the martyr."

"Portrait of a young man. A long while this picture was thought to be Bindi Altoviti's portrait; now somebody will again have it to be the self-portrait of Raphael."

“Susan bathing, surprised by the two old man. In the background the *lapidation* of the condemned.”

(“*Lapidation*” is good; it is much more elegant than “stoning.”)

“St. Rochus sitting in a landscape with an angel who looks at his plague-sore, whilst the dog the bread in his mouth attends him.”

“Spring. The Goddess Flora, sitting. Behind her a fertile valley perfused by a river.”

“A beautiful bouquet animated by May-bugs, *etc.*”

“A warrior in armor with a gypseous pipe in his hand leans against a table and blows the smoke far away of himself.”

“A Dutch landscape along a navigable river which perfuses it till to the background.”

“Some peasants singing in a cottage. A woman lets drink a child out of a cup.”

“St. John’s head as a boy – painted in fresco on a brick.” (Meaning a tile.)

“A young man of the Riccio family, his hair cut off right at the end, dressed in black with the same cap. Attributed to Raphael, but the signation is false.”

“The Virgin holding the Infant. It is very painted in the manner of Sassoferrato.”

“A Larder with greens and dead game animated by a cook-maid and two kitchen-boys.”

However, the English of this catalogue is at least as happy as that which distinguishes an inscription upon a certain picture in Rome – to wit:

“Revelations-View. St. John in Patterson’s Island.”

But meanwhile the raft is moving on.

## Chapter XVII

A mile or two above Eberbach we saw a peculiar ruin projecting above the foliage which clothed the peak of a high and very steep hill. This ruin consisted of merely a couple of crumbling masses of masonry which bore a rude resemblance to human faces; they leaned forward and touched foreheads, and had the look of being absorbed in conversation. This ruin had nothing very imposing or picturesque about it, and there was no great deal of it, yet it was called the “Spectacular Ruin.”

### Legend of the “Spectacular ruin.”

The captain of the raft, who was as full of history as he could stick, said that in the Middle Ages a most prodigious fire-breathing dragon used to live in that region, and made more trouble than a tax-collector. He was as long as a railway-train, and had the customary impenetrable green scales all over him. His breath bred pestilence and conflagration, and his appetite bred famine. He ate men and cattle impartially, and was exceedingly unpopular. The German emperor of that day made the usual offer: he would grant to the destroyer of the dragon, any one solitary thing he might ask for; for he had a surplusage of daughters, and it was customary for dragon-killers to take a daughter for pay.

So the most renowned knights came from the four corners of the earth and retired down the dragon’s throat one after the other. A panic arose and spread. Heroes grew cautious. The procession ceased. The dragon became more destructive than ever. The people lost all hope of succor, and fled to the mountains for refuge.

At last *Sir Wissenschaft*, a poor and obscure knight, out of a far country, arrived to do battle with the monster. A pitiable object he was, with his armor hanging in rags about him, and his strange-shaped knapsack strapped upon his back. Everybody turned up their noses at him, and some openly jeered him. But he was calm. He simply inquired if the emperor’s offer was still in force. The emperor said it was – but charitably advised him to go and hunt hares and not endanger so precious a life as his in an attempt which had brought death to so many of the world’s most illustrious heroes.

But this tramp only asked—“Were any of these heroes men of science?” This raised a laugh, of course, for science was despised in those days. But the tramp was not in the least ruffled. He said he might be a little in advance of his age, but no matter – science would come to be honored, some time or other. He said he would march against the dragon in the morning. Out of compassion, then, a decent spear was offered him, but he declined, and said, “spears were useless to men of science.” They allowed him to sup in the servants’ hall, and gave him a bed in the stables.

When he started forth in the morning, thousands were gathered to see. The emperor said:

“Do not be rash, take a spear, and leave off your knapsack.”

But the tramp said:

“It is not a knapsack,” and moved straight on.

The dragon was waiting and ready. He was breathing forth vast volumes of sulphurous smoke and lurid blasts of flame. The ragged knight stole warily to a good position, then he unslung his cylindrical knapsack – which was simply the common fire-extinguisher known to modern times – and the first chance he got he turned on his hose and shot the dragon square in the center of his cavernous mouth. Out went the fires in an instant, and the dragon curled up and died.

This man had brought brains to his aid. He had reared dragons from the egg, in his laboratory, he had watched over them like a mother, and patiently studied them and experimented upon them while they grew. Thus he had found out that fire was the life principle of a dragon; put out the dragon’s fires and it could make steam no longer, and must die. He could not put out a fire with a spear, therefore he invented the extinguisher. The dragon being dead, the emperor fell on the hero’s neck and said:

“Deliverer, name your request,” at the same time beckoning out behind with his heel for a detachment of his daughters to form and advance. But the tramp gave them no observance. He simply said:

“My request is, that upon me be conferred the monopoly of the manufacture and sale of spectacles in Germany.”

The emperor sprang aside and exclaimed:

“This transcends all the impudence I ever heard! A modest demand, by my halidome! Why didn’t you ask for the imperial revenues at once, and be done with it?”

But the monarch had given his word, and he kept it. To everybody’s surprise, the unselfish monopolist immediately reduced the price of spectacles to such a degree that a great and crushing burden was removed from the nation. The emperor, to commemorate this generous act, and to testify his appreciation of it, issued a decree commanding everybody to buy this benefactor’s spectacles and wear them, whether they needed them or not.

So originated the wide-spread custom of wearing spectacles in Germany; and as a custom once established in these old lands is imperishable, this one remains universal in the empire to this day. Such is the legend of the monopolist’s once stately and sumptuous castle, now called the “Spectacular Ruin.”

On the right bank, two or three miles below the Spectacular Ruin, we passed by a noble pile of castellated buildings overlooking the water from the crest of a lofty elevation. A stretch of two hundred yards of the high front wall was heavily draped with ivy, and out of the mass of buildings within rose three picturesque old towers. The place was in fine order, and was inhabited by a family of princely rank. This castle had its legend, too, but I should not feel justified in repeating it because I doubted the truth of some of its minor details.

Along in this region a multitude of Italian laborers were blasting away the frontage of the hills to make room for the new railway. They were fifty or a hundred feet above the river. As we turned a sharp corner they began to wave signals and shout warnings to us to look out for the explosions. It was all very well to warn us, but what could *we* do? You can’t back a raft upstream, you can’t hurry it downstream, you can’t scatter out to one side when you haven’t any room to speak of, you won’t take to the perpendicular cliffs on the other shore when they appear to be blasting there, too. Your resources are limited, you see. There is simply nothing for it but to watch and pray.

For some hours we had been making three and a half or four miles an hour and we were still making that. We had been dancing right along until those men began to shout; then for the next ten minutes it seemed to me that I had never seen a raft go so slowly. When the first blast went off we raised our sun-umbrellas and waited for the result. No harm done; none of the stones fell in the water. Another blast followed, and another and another. Some of the rubbish fell in the water just astern of us.

We ran that whole battery of nine blasts in a row, and it was certainly one of the most exciting and uncomfortable weeks I ever spent, either aship or ashore. Of course we frequently manned the poles and shoved earnestly for a second or so, but every time one of those spurts of dust and debris shot aloft every man dropped his pole and looked up to get the bearings of his share of it. It was very busy times along there for a while. It appeared certain that we must perish, but even that was not the bitterest thought; no, the abjectly unheroic nature of the death – that was the sting – that and the bizarre wording of the resulting obituary: “*Shot with A rock, on A raft.*” There would be no poetry written about it. None *could* be written about it. Example:

Not by war’s shock, or war’s shaft, —  
Shot, with a rock, on a raft.

No poet who valued his reputation would touch such a theme as that. I should be distinguished as the only “distinguished dead” who went down to the grave unsonneted, in 1878.

But we escaped, and I have never regretted it. The last blast was a peculiarly strong one, and after the small rubbish was done raining around us and we were just going to shake hands over our deliverance, a later and larger stone came down amongst our little group of pedestrians and wrecked an umbrella. It did no other harm, but we took to the water just the same.

It seems that the heavy work in the quarries and the new railway gradings is done mainly by Italians. That was a revelation. We have the notion in our country that Italians never do heavy work at all, but confine themselves to the lighter arts, like organ-grinding, operatic singing, and assassination. We have blundered, that is plain.

All along the river, near every village, we saw little station-houses for the future railway. They were finished and waiting for the rails and business. They were as trim and snug and pretty as they could be. They were always of brick or stone; they were of graceful shape, they had vines and flowers about them already, and around them the grass was bright and green, and showed that it was carefully looked after. They were a decoration to the beautiful landscape, not an offense. Wherever one saw a pile of gravel or a pile of broken stone, it was always heaped as trimly and exactly as a new grave or a stack of cannon-balls; nothing about those stations or along the railroad or the wagon-road was allowed to look shabby or be unornamental. The keeping a country in such beautiful order as Germany exhibits, has a wise practical side to it, too, for it keeps thousands of people in work and bread who would otherwise be idle and mischievous.

As the night shut down, the captain wanted to tie up, but I thought maybe we might make Hirschhorn, so we went on. Presently the sky became overcast, and the captain came aft looking uneasy. He cast his eye aloft, then shook his head, and said it was coming on to blow. My party wanted to land at once – therefore I wanted to go on. The captain said we ought to shorten sail anyway, out of common prudence. Consequently, the larboard watch was ordered to lay in his pole. It grew quite dark, now, and the wind began to rise. It wailed through the swaying branches of the trees, and swept our decks in fitful gusts. Things were taking on an ugly look. The captain shouted to the steersman on the forward log:

“How’s she landing?”

The answer came faint and hoarse from far forward:

“Nor’-east-and-by-nor’—east-by-east, half-east, sir.”

“Let her go off a point!”

“Aye-aye, sir!”

“What water have you got?”

“Shoal, sir. Two foot large, on the stabboard, two and a half scant on the labboard!”

“Let her go off another point!”

“Aye-aye, sir!”

“Forward, men, all of you! Lively, now! Stand by to crowd her round the weather corner!”

“Aye-aye, sir!”

Then followed a wild running and trampling and hoarse shouting, but the forms of the men were lost in the darkness and the sounds were distorted and confused by the roaring of the wind through the shingle-bundles. By this time the sea was running inches high, and threatening every moment to engulf the frail bark. Now came the mate, hurrying aft, and said, close to the captain’s ear, in a low, agitated voice:

“Prepare for the worst, sir – we have sprung a leak!”

“Heavens! where?”

“Right aft the second row of logs.”

“Nothing but a miracle can save us! Don’t let the men know, or there will be a panic and mutiny! Lay her in shore and stand by to jump with the stern-line the moment she touches. Gentlemen, I

must look to you to second my endeavors in this hour of peril. You have hats – go forward and bail for your lives!”

Down swept another mighty blast of wind, clothed in spray and thick darkness. At such a moment as this, came from away forward that most appalling of all cries that are ever heard at sea:

“*Man overboard!*”

The captain shouted:

“Hard a-port! Never mind the man! Let him climb aboard or wade ashore!”

Another cry came down the wind:

“Breakers ahead!”

“Where away?”

“Not a log’s length off her port fore-foot!”

We had groped our slippery way forward, and were now bailing with the frenzy of despair, when we heard the mate’s terrified cry, from far aft:

“Stop that dashed bailing, or we shall be aground!”

But this was immediately followed by the glad shout:

“Land aboard the starboard transom!”

“Saved!” cried the captain. “Jump ashore and take a turn around a tree and pass the bight aboard!”

The next moment we were all on shore weeping and embracing for joy, while the rain poured down in torrents. The captain said he had been a mariner for forty years on the Neckar, and in that time had seen storms to make a man’s cheek blanch and his pulses stop, but he had never, never seen a storm that even approached this one. How familiar that sounded! For I have been at sea a good deal and have heard that remark from captains with a frequency accordingly.

We framed in our minds the usual resolution of thanks and admiration and gratitude, and took the first opportunity to vote it, and put it in writing and present it to the captain, with the customary speech. We tramped through the darkness and the drenching summer rain full three miles, and reached “The Naturalist Tavern” in the village of Hirschhorn just an hour before midnight, almost exhausted from hardship, fatigue, and terror. I can never forget that night.

The landlord was rich, and therefore could afford to be crusty and disobliging; he did not at all like being turned out of his warm bed to open his house for us. But no matter, his household got up and cooked a quick supper for us, and we brewed a hot punch for ourselves, to keep off consumption. After supper and punch we had an hour’s soothing smoke while we fought the naval battle over again and voted the resolutions; then we retired to exceedingly neat and pretty chambers upstairs that had clean, comfortable beds in them with heirloom pillowcases most elaborately and tastefully embroidered by hand.

Such rooms and beds and embroidered linen are as frequent in German village inns as they are rare in ours. Our villages are superior to German villages in more merits, excellences, conveniences, and privileges than I can enumerate, but the hotels do not belong in the list.

“The Naturalist Tavern” was not a meaningless name; for all the halls and all the rooms were lined with large glass cases which were filled with all sorts of birds and animals, glass-eyed, ably stuffed, and set up in the most natural eloquent and dramatic attitudes. The moment we were abed, the rain cleared away and the moon came out. I dozed off to sleep while contemplating a great white stuffed owl which was looking intently down on me from a high perch with the air of a person who thought he had met me before, but could not make out for certain.

But young Z did not get off so easily. He said that as he was sinking deliciously to sleep, the moon lifted away the shadows and developed a huge cat, on a bracket, dead and stuffed, but crouching, with every muscle tense, for a spring, and with its glittering glass eyes aimed straight at him. It made Z uncomfortable. He tried closing his own eyes, but that did not answer, for a natural instinct kept making him open them again to see if the cat was still getting ready to launch at him – which she

always was. He tried turning his back, but that was a failure; he knew the sinister eyes were on him still. So at last he had to get up, after an hour or two of worry and experiment, and set the cat out in the hall. So he won, that time.

## Chapter XVIII

In the morning we took breakfast in the garden, under the trees, in the delightful German summer fashion. The air was filled with the fragrance of flowers and wild animals; the living portion of the menagerie of the “Naturalist Tavern” was all about us. There were great cages populous with fluttering and chattering foreign birds, and other great cages and greater wire pens, populous with quadrupeds, both native and foreign. There were some free creatures, too, and quite sociable ones they were. White rabbits went loping about the place, and occasionally came and sniffed at our shoes and shins; a fawn, with a red ribbon on its neck, walked up and examined us fearlessly; rare breeds of chickens and doves begged for crumbs, and a poor old tailless raven hopped about with a humble, shamefaced *mein* which said, “Please do not notice my exposure – think how you would feel in my circumstances, and be charitable.” If he was observed too much, he would retire behind something and stay there until he judged the party’s interest had found another object. I never have seen another dumb creature that was so morbidly sensitive. Bayard Taylor, who could interpret the dim reasonings of animals, and understood their moral natures better than most men, would have found some way to make this poor old chap forget his troubles for a while, but we have not his kindly art, and so had to leave the raven to his griefs.

After breakfast we climbed the hill and visited the ancient castle of Hirschhorn, and the ruined church near it. There were some curious old bas-reliefs leaning against the inner walls of the church – sculptured lords of Hirschhorn in complete armor, and ladies of Hirschhorn in the picturesque court costumes of the Middle Ages. These things are suffering damage and passing to decay, for the last Hirschhorn has been dead two hundred years, and there is nobody now who cares to preserve the family relics. In the chancel was a twisted stone column, and the captain told us a legend about it, of course, for in the matter of legends he could not seem to restrain himself; but I do not repeat his tale because there was nothing plausible about it except that the Hero wrenched this column into its present screw-shape with his hands – just one single wrench. All the rest of the legend was doubtful.

But Hirschhorn is best seen from a distance, down the river. Then the clustered brown towers perched on the green hilltop, and the old battlemented stone wall, stretching up and over the grassy ridge and disappearing in the leafy sea beyond, make a picture whose grace and beauty entirely satisfy the eye.

We descended from the church by steep stone stairways which curved this way and that down narrow alleys between the packed and dirty tenements of the village. It was a quarter well stocked with deformed, leering, unkempt and uncombed idiots, who held out hands or caps and begged piteously. The people of the quarter were not all idiots, of course, but all that begged seemed to be, and were said to be.

I was thinking of going by skiff to the next town, Necharsteinach; so I ran to the riverside in advance of the party and asked a man there if he had a boat to hire. I suppose I must have spoken High German – Court German – I intended it for that, anyway – so he did not understand me. I turned and twisted my question around and about, trying to strike that man’s average, but failed. He could not make out what I wanted. Now Mr. X arrived, faced this same man, looked him in the eye, and emptied this sentence on him, in the most glib and confident way: “Can man boat get here?”

The mariner promptly understood and promptly answered. I can comprehend why he was able to understand that particular sentence, because by mere accident all the words in it except “get” have the same sound and the same meaning in German that they have in English; but how he managed to understand Mr. X’s next remark puzzled me. I will insert it, presently. X turned away a moment, and I asked the mariner if he could not find a board, and so construct an additional seat. I spoke in the purest German, but I might as well have spoken in the purest Choctaw for all the good it did. The

man tried his best to understand me; he tried, and kept on trying, harder and harder, until I saw it was really of no use, and said:

“There, don’t strain yourself – it is of no consequence.”

Then X turned to him and crisply said:

“*Machen sie* a flat board.”

I wish my epitaph may tell the truth about me if the man did not answer up at once, and say he would go and borrow a board as soon as he had lit the pipe which he was filling.

We changed our mind about taking a boat, so we did not have to go. I have given Mr. X’s two remarks just as he made them. Four of the five words in the first one were English, and that they were also German was only accidental, not intentional; three out of the five words in the second remark were English, and English only, and the two German ones did not mean anything in particular, in such a connection.

X always spoke English to Germans, but his plan was to turn the sentence wrong end first and upside down, according to German construction, and sprinkle in a German word without any essential meaning to it, here and there, by way of flavor. Yet he always made himself understood. He could make those dialect-speaking raftsmen understand him, sometimes, when even young Z had failed with them; and young Z was a pretty good German scholar. For one thing, X always spoke with such confidence – perhaps that helped. And possibly the raftsmen’s dialect was what is called *platt-Deutsch*, and so they found his English more familiar to their ears than another man’s German. Quite indifferent students of German can read Fritz Reuter’s charming *platt-Deutsch* tales with some little facility because many of the words are English. I suppose this is the tongue which our Saxon ancestors carried to England with them. By and by I will inquire of some other philologist.

However, in the mean time it had transpired that the men employed to caulk the raft had found that the leak was not a leak at all, but only a crack between the logs – a crack that belonged there, and was not dangerous, but had been magnified into a leak by the disordered imagination of the mate. Therefore we went aboard again with a good degree of confidence, and presently got to sea without accident. As we swam smoothly along between the enchanting shores, we fell to swapping notes about manners and customs in Germany and elsewhere.

As I write, now, many months later, I perceive that each of us, by observing and noting and inquiring, diligently and day by day, had managed to lay in a most varied and opulent stock of misinformation. But this is not surprising; it is very difficult to get accurate details in any country. For example, I had the idea once, in Heidelberg, to find out all about those five student-corps. I started with the White Cap corps. I began to inquire of this and that and the other citizen, and here is what I found out:

1. It is called the Prussian Corps, because none but Prussians are admitted to it.
2. It is called the Prussian Corps for no particular reason. It has simply pleased each corps to name itself after some German state.
3. It is not named the Prussian Corps at all, but only the White Cap Corps.
4. Any student can belong to it who is a German by birth.
5. Any student can belong to it who is European by birth.
6. Any European-born student can belong to it, except he be a Frenchman.
7. Any student can belong to it, no matter where he was born.
8. No student can belong to it who is not of noble blood.
9. No student can belong to it who cannot show three full generations of noble descent.
10. Nobility is not a necessary qualification.
11. No moneyless student can belong to it.
12. Money qualification is nonsense – such a thing has never been thought of.

I got some of this information from students themselves – students who did not belong to the corps.

I finally went to headquarters – to the White Caps – where I would have gone in the first place if I had been acquainted. But even at headquarters I found difficulties; I perceived that there were things about the White Cap Corps which one member knew and another one didn't. It was natural; for very few members of any organization know *all* that can be known about it. I doubt there is a man or a woman in Heidelberg who would not answer promptly and confidently three out of every five questions about the White Cap Corps which a stranger might ask; yet it is a very safe bet that two of the three answers would be incorrect every time.

There is one German custom which is universal – the bowing courteously to strangers when sitting down at table or rising up from it. This bow startles a stranger out of his self-possession, the first time it occurs, and he is likely to fall over a chair or something, in his embarrassment, but it pleases him, nevertheless. One soon learns to expect this bow and be on the lookout and ready to return it; but to learn to lead off and make the initial bow one's self is a difficult matter for a diffident man. One thinks, "If I rise to go, and tender my bow, and these ladies and gentlemen take it into their heads to ignore the custom of their nation, and not return it, how shall I feel, in case I survive to feel anything." Therefore he is afraid to venture. He sits out the dinner, and makes the strangers rise first and originate the bowing. A table d'hôte dinner is a tedious affair for a man who seldom touches anything after the three first courses; therefore I used to do some pretty dreary waiting because of my fears. It took me months to assure myself that those fears were groundless, but I did assure myself at last by experimenting diligently through my agent. I made Harris get up and bow and leave; invariably his bow was returned, then I got up and bowed myself and retired.

Thus my education proceeded easily and comfortably for me, but not for Harris. Three courses of a table d'hôte dinner were enough for me, but Harris preferred thirteen.

Even after I had acquired full confidence, and no longer needed the agent's help, I sometimes encountered difficulties. Once at Baden-Baden I nearly lost a train because I could not be sure that three young ladies opposite me at table were Germans, since I had not heard them speak; they might be American, they might be English, it was not safe to venture a bow; but just as I had got that far with my thought, one of them began a German remark, to my great relief and gratitude; and before she got out her third word, our bows had been delivered and graciously returned, and we were off.

There is a friendly something about the German character which is very winning. When Harris and I were making a pedestrian tour through the Black Forest, we stopped at a little country inn for dinner one day; two young ladies and a young gentleman entered and sat down opposite us. They were pedestrians, too. Our knapsacks were strapped upon our backs, but they had a sturdy youth along to carry theirs for them. All parties were hungry, so there was no talking. By and by the usual bows were exchanged, and we separated.

As we sat at a late breakfast in the hotel at *Allerheiligen*, next morning, these young people entered and took places near us without observing us; but presently they saw us and at once bowed and smiled; not ceremoniously, but with the gratified look of people who have found acquaintances where they were expecting strangers. Then they spoke of the weather and the roads. We also spoke of the weather and the roads. Next, they said they had had an enjoyable walk, notwithstanding the weather. We said that that had been our case, too. Then they said they had walked thirty English miles the day before, and asked how many we had walked. I could not lie, so I told Harris to do it. Harris told them we had made thirty English miles, too. That was true; we had "made" them, though we had had a little assistance here and there.

After breakfast they found us trying to blast some information out of the dumb hotel clerk about routes, and observing that we were not succeeding pretty well, they went and got their maps and things, and pointed out and explained our course so clearly that even a New York detective could have followed it. And when we started they spoke out a hearty good-by and wished us a pleasant journey. Perhaps they were more generous with us than they might have been with native wayfarers because we were a forlorn lot and in a strange land; I don't know; I only know it was lovely to be treated so.

Very well, I took an American young lady to one of the fine balls in Baden-Baden, one night, and at the entrance-door upstairs we were halted by an official – something about Miss Jones's dress was not according to rule; I don't remember what it was, now; something was wanting – her back hair, or a shawl, or a fan, or a shovel, or something. The official was ever so polite, and ever so sorry, but the rule was strict, and he could not let us in. It was very embarrassing, for many eyes were on us. But now a richly dressed girl stepped out of the ballroom, inquired into the trouble, and said she could fix it in a moment. She took Miss Jones to the robing-room, and soon brought her back in regulation trim, and then we entered the ballroom with this benefactress unchallenged.

Being safe, now, I began to puzzle through my sincere but ungrammatical thanks, when there was a sudden mutual recognition – the benefactress and I had met at *Allerheiligen*. Two weeks had not altered her good face, and plainly her heart was in the right place yet, but there was such a difference between these clothes and the clothes I had seen her in before, when she was walking thirty miles a day in the Black Forest, that it was quite natural that I had failed to recognize her sooner. I had on *my* other suit, too, but my German would betray me to a person who had heard it once, anyway. She brought her brother and sister, and they made our way smooth for that evening.

Well – months afterward, I was driving through the streets of Munich in a cab with a German lady, one day, when she said:

“There, that is Prince Ludwig and his wife, walking along there.”

Everybody was bowing to them – cabmen, little children, and everybody else – and they were returning all the bows and overlooking nobody, when a young lady met them and made a deep courtesy.

“That is probably one of the ladies of the court,” said my German friend.

I said:

“She is an honor to it, then. I know her. I don't know her name, but I know *her*. I have known her at *Allerheiligen* and Baden-Baden. She ought to be an Empress, but she may be only a Duchess; it is the way things go in this way.”

If one asks a German a civil question, he will be quite sure to get a civil answer. If you stop a German in the street and ask him to direct you to a certain place, he shows no sign of feeling offended. If the place be difficult to find, ten to one the man will drop his own matters and go with you and show you.

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

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