

DEAR SISTER – I concluded my last letter at Cologne, and almost immediately after despatching it we proceeded on our journey. Our expectations of the beauty of our course along the Rhine had been raised to a high pitch, and, as is invariably, I think, the case, we experienced a disappointment. The country is rich and highly cultivated, appearing to produce everything that gladdens the heart of man in abundance, but an extensive plain spreads on each side the river, and the hills which border it are too distant for the beauties to be perceived, and not high enough to give much character to the landscape. The orchard grounds are all closely bordering on the villages, which thus appear like clumps of trees in a park ; or rather, as all the ground is under the spade or plough, and the colour of the soil predominates at present, like oases scattered in a sandy desert. The Rhine, too, seldom comes in view during this drive to Bonn, so that our expectations could not have had a more complete set down.

A few miles after passing Bonn the scene improves. The hills on each side draw nearer to each other, and, when viewed near, they are large enough to answer all the purposes of landscape. Their forms are extremely bold and varied, and, though apparently only rugged rock, they are clothed wherever they are accessible with vines, or such brushwood as affords props for the vines, the aspect more than the soil determining with what they are to be planted, for the vine seems to require little or no soil, and to grow luxuriantly on the shivers of the rock. Our road ran on the French side of the river, and had been made or improved at no very distant period. Large masses of rock had been blasted at almost every turn of the road, and neat, small stone bridges carry the traveller smoothly over the frequent gullies which the rains occasion ; but the roads themselves are in bad order, nothing having been done to them since the country fell into the hands of the Prussians, who are too busy with other matters at present.

But I have got from the rocks to the roads, and, though I am no hand at description, I cannot let you off from the landscape as yet. A prominent and most romantic feature in this scenery is the great number of old ruined castles, which are almost always placed upon projecting rocks, which appear nearly inaccessible, and are frequently precipitous on every side but one. Though from the winding of the river you seldom see more than two or three miles of it, yet there were often three or four of these strongholds of the ancient knighthood of the country in view at the same time, and, in the forty miles this scenery continued, we cannot have seen fewer than twenty-five or thirty of these interesting ruins. The towns are as frequent as the castles, and indeed they are generally connected together, the inhabitants of this country having collected themselves, in former lawless times, into villages in the plain at the foot of their lord's castle, who could thus afford them protection more certainly from bands of plunderers, or from his own neighbours, with some of whom he was generally in a state of hostility. These recollections, no doubt, enhance the interest excited by the beauty of the scenery, which to a reader of German history and German novels is what Rome and Athens are to the Etonian. Some of our Scotch party who visited Loch Katrine will understand this matter. As for me I have forgot the novels, and was never very well read in the history of Germany during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but I retained sufficient to make this classic ground to me.

We made an interesting acquaintance at Bonn with a Prince of Salm. We had been in the same quarters at Aix-la-Chapelle and at Cologne, and at the latter place, being discontented with our quarters, we had induced the landlord to give us the rooms which the Prince had written to engage. Fortunately he did not arrive till we had risen, and we readily quitted our bedroom for him to take his breakfast in. We kept the start of him to Bonn, where we secured the only saloon and the three best bedrooms, leaving him a very indifferent room to dine and sleep in, with his wife and child. We were at dinner when he arrived, and after taking our dessert and wine very leisurely, we bethought ourselves that it would be no great sacrifice to retire to one of our bedrooms, and leave him the saloon for dinner. We therefore made the offer, but rather late, and their table being already spread, they did not accept it.

The next morning, however, the Prince introduced himself to me – should, have done it the evening before but feared to incommode us – offered, as he had the start of us to-day, to order horses to be in readiness for us on the road, gave us information upon various subjects, and was very affable and *sans ceremonie*. He was nursing his child, a fine lad of about nine months old, whom I took to my wife and the children. The boy is called Alfred; he would speak Italian first, as his mother is an Italian, and always spoke to him in that language. We afterwards learnt from our servants that the Princess is niece of our arch-enemy Buonaparte, and we were much amused with having been kissing and dandling the little relation of the great Napoleon.

We benefited considerably by the attention of our avant-courier, and the next day had the opportunity of

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<sup>1</sup> Comprising pages 30 - 45

returning the compliment, for though they were earlier risers than we were, they happened to have left something at their inn for which they had to wait on the road, by which means we passed them and kept ahead the whole day. They generally arrived at the Post before we got off, when the Prince always came and renewed the intercourse, showing occasionally great mortification that he could make nothing of my wife. He said he was coming forward in a few days to Frankfurt, and would call upon us there, but we have seen nothing of him, and as we hope to get off on Monday morning we probably shall not see him again. He is about twenty-eight, very handsome and quite the gentleman, no show of pride, nor did he seem to think he was condescending. He was communicative about his own affairs, was going to buy an estate on the Rhine, and was taking his wife to look at the house, though it was almost quite dark when we passed it.

We shall make a shorter stay at this place than we intended, for having unwittingly stumbled upon the autumn fair, we find the town brim full, and have been obliged to put up with second or third rate accommodation. To add to our comfort we have "Bartholomew fair" before our windows, – a live sea-lion, a man without arms, wax figures, round-about, rope-dancers, a fat girl (beats Mrs. Wilkinson Whitehead, by her own account, on paper, for we have not seen her), with various other curiosities – barrel-organs, pan-pipes, Turkish music, drums and trumpets going on uninterruptedly from ten in the morning to nine at night, – and unfortunately my wife appears to-day (23rd) to have taken somewhere a very bad cold, she has a swelled face attended with violent pain in the face and head, so as to indispose her generally. Tomorrow being a day of rest she will at least be free from the noisy annoyances, and we flatter ourselves that she may be sufficiently recovered to travel on Monday; if she should not we can never abide this rattle, and must seek other quarters. (24th) The bulletin is not more favourable on the whole than yesterday, the pain is not quite so violent, but the face is swelled beyond recognition. The complaint seems similar to the violent attack your good husband had some time ago, but it is not toothache, the pains have been in all parts of the head, in the teeth amongst the rest, but these now ail nothing. We gave up the idea of travelling on Monday, and submit again to "Bartholomew fair," which opened afresh this afternoon at five. The shops, however, remain shut for the day, and a fine of a hundred dollars hangs *in terrorem* over the head of every one who sells the most trifling article on this day.

The difference is striking; on the other side of the Rhine all shops are open as on week-days. My wife thinks I have said nothing of the beauty of the Rhine. We were all enchanted, and thought all our inconveniences amply repaid, and that it was worth the labour of the journey from England if only to see the Rhine.

(25th) My wife continues much the same, but with less pain; we have, however, called in the doctor, and are now taking his prescriptions. We thought it Erysipelas, he called it the Rose – probably the same thing. Bed and gentle perspiration are the means of cure resorted to. (28th Sept.) Ellen is better, but still an invalid. On the 26th she kept her bed, the two last days she has sat up. Our doctor says we may travel on Saturday, but we shall not attempt it till Monday for fear of a relapse. He, however, assures us that this complaint is merely accidental, and the effect of cold, and not liable to recur, as we had feared.

Yesterday I had a visit from the Prince, who came and sat an hour with me. We talked over the politics of the times, and the effects of the changes now supposed to be arranging, the campaign in Russia (where the Prince was with his contingent in the Rhenish confederation), and the present situation of the different members of the Buonapartian family. He took no notice of his own connection, and I am inclined to think it is a mistake, for I see his wife named in a German court calendar – "Rossi." I went to return his call this morning, but he was gone out, and I left my card.

The other day I met with a Riga acquaintance; we were never very intimate and had not seen each other for fifteen years. He met me on the dark stair of our hotel, and recognised me immediately, from which I gladly infer that I am still a young man. This evening he sat with us a good while, talking over our Riga acquaintance, etc.

(30th Sept.) After two more days of pain the swelling in Ellen's face has suppurated and opened, so that we now look shortly for the return of health, and the resumption of our journey. The fine weather we have had lately has not had the same effect on us which it has on most people. We should not have grumbled at rain, hail, or snow. To put on time Skinner has got a bad cold; but as if he was aware it was time to prepare for travelling, he seems to have half shaken it off again. Our stay of a fortnight has not enabled us to see much of Frankfurt, and we have not delivered some of our letters of introduction, conscious that we could not avail ourselves of any civilities that might be shown us.

The day after our arrival, whilst we were yet stout, we dined with a Mr. Koch, a partner of Messrs. Gogel, to whom we had letters. We met about half a dozen gentlemen, all of whom spoke English, and to make it the more agreeable, Mrs. Koch also could talk English. In the evening she took us, children and all, to her box at the opera, where the music and the bustle of the piece amused the young folks, though they knew nothing of the language. The day was pleasantly spent by all the party, and as one of the party assured me the old Hock would never do any one

harm, how much soever they might drink, I took a good portion: whether the wine is weaker or the bottles smaller I don't know, but Skinner and I contrive to finish one bottle regularly, and I don't find it irritate my nerves as the Port and Madeira used to do. One of the party at Mr. Koch's was an Englishman going, like ourselves, into Switzerland with his son, for the purpose of education. He meant to place him at Lausanne, and should then return immediately to England through France. The boy appeared to be about fifteen or sixteen years old.

Our departure is now fixed provisionally for Wednesday the 4th October, and I flatter myself nothing further will occur to delay it. We have, however, to-day (2nd Oct.) a change of the weather, which for the last week has been delightful. It rains, or rather drizzles, with symptoms of continuance, but perhaps it may only lay the dust for us. I shall not despatch my letter till the eve of our setting out, that you may learn with what auspices this second act of our journey begins.

In consequence of my wife's illness we are later than laid down in the scheme I left with you, but I think you will find, with this exception, that we have not deviated much from it.

Remember us affectionately to all our friends at Kirkham, and to my Aunt Hankinson<sup>2</sup>. Adieu, my dear sister, yours most affectionately, **THO. LANGTON.**

(11 the Oct.) And I must still date from Frankfurt. Our horses were ordered for the 4th, but the evening before, we were necessitated to give up our intention, for William had such strong symptoms of feverish cold, that a longer stay became inevitable. It has been of longer continuance than the former attacks, and has much reduced him. The fever seems now giving way, and he has been out of bed to-day for the first time these five days. The weather indeed has been so sharp, and our rooms are so cold and airy, that bed is the only warm place we can find, and the only proper place for an invalid. I had some thought of giving up the idea of proceeding into Switzerland this winter, conceiving that William, when reinstated, would require a week or ten days to recruit before travelling, and that the season would then be too late for that country, especially when one would have to seek about for a home. I consulted our physician on the subject, but he has encouraged me not to give up my plan. He gives us the strongest assurances that William will soon be well, and that a couple of days afterwards we may safely travel. We are again, therefore, looking forward towards Yverdun, where we hope to find letters from our friends in Lancashire. We are not yet in a situation to form any idea of the time when we may leave this place; but when we do; we hope to reach the end of our journey in about ten days, for we shall not travel fast, and shall avoid both the early morning and the evening air. This has been a distressing affair to us, for the fever held on so long we were often seriously alarmed, and though we were on the whole pleased with our physician, yet we knew little of him, and he nothing of us and our constitutions. He is of Mr. Parkinson's sect, and not fond of giving much physic, but a great friend of water-gruel and bed. I sometimes thought a more decided and spirited procedure might have cut the fever short, but upon the whole the resemblance to our old friend, your neighbour, is very agreeable to my feelings. William is now so much better that I indulge the hope of soon seeing him wholly re-established. It is not well, however, to be too sanguine. I shall despatch this letter to-morrow morning, and before we leave Frankfurt my wife will address some one of her Kirkham friends, from whom you will hear the further progress of our invalid.

This place continues in a bustle, or rather it is more lively than in the height of the fair. The town and all the inns are crammed with Russian troops and Russian officers on their return homewards. Four or five days ago the Grand-Duchess of Oldenburg arrived here, and now the Russian troops do not pass silently through the place, but we have every day two or three regiments marching through in parade. Officers' lodgings are in view of our windows, so that we see all the parade. The Russian headquarters are now here, and Barclay-de-Tolly, the Commander-in-Chief. The Emperor we are not to see, he is gone to take a turn in Switzerland, from whence he goes by another road to Berlin.

(Thursday, 12th Oct.) William has again had a good night, and little or no remains of fever; the doctor says he only wants to recruit a little. Skinner's cold is gone, my wife is as well as usual, the other children very well, but fretted from the weather and want of exercise. I suffer a little in the same way, but am well, for which all the party are thankful as well as myself, for I am as yet the sheet-anchor. But William is already half our interpreter in French, and is catching German insensibly. Skinner studies away, but our detention here has prevented his making as much of the time as might have been done if we had foreseen its duration from the first.— Adieu, my dear sister; we all join in the most affectionate remembrances to all. Yours ever, **THO. LANGTON.**

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<sup>2</sup>His father's sister, second wife of John Hankinson of Preston.