

VII

CARLSRUHE, 30th October 1815.

MY DEAR SISTER-This day week we recommenced our journey, but our progress has not been very great. We only proceeded the first day to Darmstadt, a stage of fifteen miles, and whether we had not given William sufficient time to recruit, or the sharp wind which came on during the ride gave him fresh cold, we found him too feverish to proceed the next day, and the weather becoming again unfavourable, we found ourselves under the necessity of staying five days at Darmstadt. We begin already to give up the idea of reaching Switzerland, and I had taken two or three rambles in looking out for lodgings. My wife and I had even fixed upon a house where we had eight rooms on the first story, remise, stables, etc., and had made out our list of furniture, which is here hired separate at so much a month-a shilling a month for a chest of drawers, three shillings for a dozen chairs, and so on-the apartments furnished would have stood about £2 a week. But fortunately our boy cheered up again, and the weather becoming more promising, we resolved upon a fresh trial. Yesterday we got to Heidelberg after a pleasant drive through a very interesting country, but the beauty of which is gone by for this season. Heidelberg itself is most romantically situated, and must in the summer season be delightful. It is placed on the banks of the Neckar, where the river emerges from a mountainous district into the plain which borders the Rhine. The hills all about it are covered with wood to the summits, mostly chestnut woods, and many of the heights are crowned with the now deserted in castles of the ancient and independent nobility, this very much resembling the banks of the Rhine betwixt Bonn and Mayence.

Skinner and I climbed up to the old ruined castle of Heidelberg before breakfast, and thought ourselves richly repaid for our exertions by the beauty of the view, as well as the interest of the ruin itself, though we could not extract a drop of wine from the great vat to refresh us after our fatiguing walk, as it happened to be empty. Notwithstanding the morning was misty, we determined to go on, in hopes the day might clear up ; but our hopes were in vain, it was a thorough wet day, and a very harassing one, as we feared to let in the air from without, and were thus forced to keep the carriage at Pine Pitch. Our young folks, however, have relished their supper, and are now fast asleep. I hope we shall be able to continue our progress by gentle degrees. To-morrow, if the weather makes amends for its unkindness to-day, we shall advance to Rastadt, fifteen miles, as a sort of half rest after this day's fatigue. But having conducted you to Carlsruhe, I will take leave of you for the present, and report progress in a day or two.

FREYBURG, 2nd November 1815.

The day we left_ Carlsruhe proving fine, we were induced to push on a stage beyond Rastadt, but we got by this means into a poor little town, where our accommodations were very indifferent, very cold, very dirty, very- I don't know what. My wife was not well and felt the want of comfort very sensibly. A glass of hot wine, however, cheered her, and she got reconciled to her situation.

In the morning I perceived our host, hostess, and all the children were as fine as clothes could make them, which I ascribed to their wish to appear well before their quality guests; but I found soon after by the same smartness prevailing out of doors that some other cause must be in play. My wife solved the riddle by appealing to her almanac, which showed that the compliment was meant for All Saints. The mixture of the sects in this country is singular, sometimes a town is half Catholic, half Lutheran – sometimes Lutheran and Calvinist, some times Calvinist and Catholic. One sect occupies the church, another the steeple, or both have service in the same building. One town is wholly Lutheran, the next you come to wholly Catholic, and as far as I can learn, no spirit of jealousy or animosity shows itself.

But to return to my journal of our proceedings. Our advance beyond Rastadt had thrown us out of our projected arrangements, and another fine day tempting us – to make the most of it, we passed Offenburg, where we should have been tolerably lodged, and proceeded on to Kenzingen, where, though the outward appearance was better than the evening before, the real inconveniences were greater. Had we pushed on again to-day we should have passed this town, where we are very comfortably quartered, and should have got into a worse hobble than ever. We therefore stopped for the day at two o'clock and dined comfortably, admitting the superiority of the continental cooks at every fresh dish we tasted, and clearing the favourites to the crumbs. So much good eating requires moisture in proportion, and we contrived to dispose of three bottles, except about half of one, reserved to take hot at night, after the approved recipe of the former evening. The children have borne both the travelling and the eating and drinking very

¹ Comprising pages 46 - 58

well. William's appetite is returning, and I flatter myself his strength also, but he is very thin, and we look anxiously for the end of our journey, and to get into a winter habitation. Tomorrow, if the day is fine, we expect to be on Swiss ground, and perhaps it may be necessary to stay a day at Basel, as we shall only get in there late in the evening, and shall have to engage carriers' horses for the rest of the journey, as no posting system is arranged in that country. Three days, if there is nothing to detain us, will then see us at Yverdun, where we expect to find accounts of all our English friends.

The country we have passed over these last three days very much resembles that betwixt Darmstadt and Carlsruhe. A range of high grounds, sometimes rising into stupendous mountains, and generally clothed -to the summits with fine wood, runs parallel with the Rhine at about the distance of fifteen to twenty-five miles. The plain between them is nearly level and highly cultivated, having more the appearance of a continued kitchen garden kept beautifully clean than of fields-for there are no enclosures. The road runs at or near the foot of the mountains, and never brings us within view of the river, but we discern in the distance a similar range of hills on the other side of it, the outlines of which seem to indicate that they are not less grand and romantic than those the beauties of which we have close before us, and which have repeatedly enraptured us, though they have lost much of their richness and leafy honours during our unfortunate detention in Frankfurt. We enjoy, however, thankfully what we have, and do not repine at anything we may have lost, since we have our invalids we hope, in a state of improving convalescence.

Both my wife and myself feel much pleased with, and obliged to Skinner, for his patience and good-humour during a detention that must be highly mortifying to him, Previous to our arrival at Frankfurt he frequently showed his anxiety to get into Switzerland, the beauties of which he was desirous of seeing before the winter sets in, and during two or three little stoppages it was apparent that he regretted the delay. But from the moment that indisposition detain us, and that his prospects of seeing much of that country grew daily less and less, and I may say at last completely died away for little I believe is to be seen there till the summer is pretty well advanced, beyond which time he scarce expects to stay with us-from the time that illness stopped our progress he has never shown the least symptom of discontent or impatience, nor manifested any anxiety about Switzerland. Our situation has generally been such as to require the sacrifice of many conveniences, which we parents have a pleasure in giving up to add to the comfort of our invalid, but which any other person would scarce think necessary or reasonable, and thus it is that we feel grateful to Skinner for his cheerful, good-humoured resignation.

BASEL, 4th November 1815.

Yesterday morning the weather was so bad that after much hesitation and wavering we resolved to stay the day at Freyburg towards eleven o'clock a more favourable moment induced us to make a half day's journey to a station, where we were told we should find good accommodation. But when we got there we found the house occupied with bricklayers, and plasterers, making alterations, and were under the necessity of proceeding, though the weather hardened upon us.

The roads began to be heavy with the rains, some steep hills delayed us considerably, and when at length we reached the gates of Basel we had near three-quarters of an hour to wait before the keys could be brought from the commandant's house. We pleased ourselves, however, with the idea of finding warm rooms awaiting us, which we had had an opportunity of, bespeaking the day before. But guess our mortification after all these troubles to find our rooms, which had been in readiness by three o'clock in the afternoon, had been given away when we were not yet forthcoming at eight After some bustle, and taking our coffee in the empty *table-d'hôte* room, we got our rooms, and beds well aired, our children put into them, and we then sat down to drink Cornelius² health in hot wine. If it did him as much good as it did us, he will have been wonderfully improved by it.

To-day we have taken a drive to see the fortress of Huningen, now nearly a heap of ruins. An immense number of people were employed upon the works, and daily portions are blown up. We were shown a bastion which was to be blown up at three o'clock to-day, and we all determined to listen for the report ; but we were so busy blowing up a good dinner that I never thought of it till I came to mention it to you. The children are all asleep beside us, preparing for an early departure to-morrow morning.

Four days is to see us at Yverdun, where I hope we may be quickly successful in getting into permanent quarters. We are tired of inns, the best of which are unpleasant at this late season.

I shall now despatch my letter, and I hope that in a few days you will learn either from me, or my wife to some of our Kirkham friends, that we are at length arrived at the point at which we have so long been aiming. We are certainly on many accounts too late in the season, but we have been delayed by circumstances which it was

² An elder brother, blind from early childhood and died **unmarried**.

impossible to foresee or guard against.-Our best love to all our dear friends. Adieu, your affectionate brother,

THO. LANGTON.

YVERDUN, *8th November 1815.*

When I left Basel at eight o'clock on the 5th the Post Office was not open, and I was obliged to pocket my letter again, nor have I had any opportunity of getting quit of it before our arrival here to dinner. We

have had frost ever since we left Basalso sharp as to inspire us all with a little dread of a Swiss winter. The weather however, has been favourable to our progress and the sky has been clear as we could wish it, allowing us to have good vision: of the higher Alps in the distance, as we] as of the beauties of the country through which we have been passing. We have bees highly delighted, and if it were not almost a sacrilege to speak of the impressions made by a first view of Switzerland in the fag en(of a letter, I should expend my spare paper in vain attempts to describe them.

You will be better pleased to learn that we have arrived safe and well at Yverdun with which place, however, 'we are as yet too little acquainted to be able to judge whether it will suit us. The situation is low, but the environs appear agreeablethis lake is beautiful. As first impression have often a powerful influence on the judgemeet, it may perhaps be worth while to mention that we have got into the most comfortable inn we have seen since we left

England. William appears perfectly well, though as yet very thin ; the others are pretty much as usual. Your letter of the 23rd was there before us, and gave us great pleasure, but my wife has been much disap- pointed by having no accounts from Miss Currer, which she had confidently anticipated. We had heard from her at Frankfurt. Two of our nieces have written on the same day with yourself, which is rather ill-contrived of them, but so agreeable are all accounts from distant friends, that we should not have found fault if the number had been doubled. We hope to hear soon from some others.-Love and adieu.