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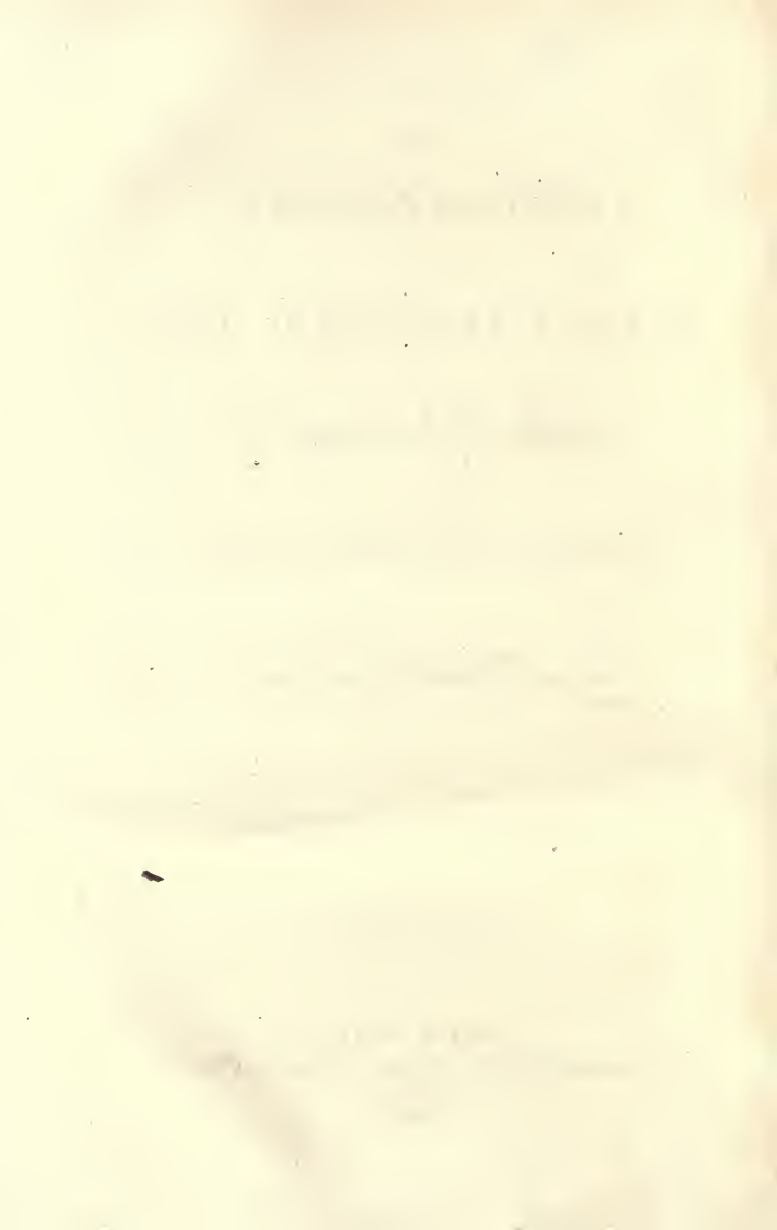
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THE  
HEIDENMAUER;  
OR,  
THE BENEDICTINES.

A Legend of the Rhine.

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER.

"From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy,  
Have I not seen what human things could do?"

*Byron.*

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME

NEW EDITION.

NEW YORK:  
STRINGER AND TOWNSEND

1856.

STEARNS & COMPANY

NEW YORK

1882

HEIDENMAUER

HEIDENMAUER.

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NEW YORK

## INTRODUCTION.

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“I shall crave your forbearance a little; may be, I will call upon you anon, for some advantage to yourself”

*Measure for Measure.*

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CONTRARY to a long-established usage, a summer had been passed within the walls of a large town; but, the moment of liberation arrived, the bird does not quit its cage with greater pleasure, than that with which post-horses were commanded. We were four in a light travelling calèche, which strong Norman cattle transported merrily towards their native province. For a time we quitted Paris, the queen of modern cities, with its tumults and its order; its palaces and its lanes; its elegance and its filth; its restless inhabitants and its stationary politicians; its theories and its practices; its riches and its poverty; its gay and its sorrowful; its rentiers and its patriots; its young liberals and its old illiberals; its three estates and its equality; its delicacy of speech and its strength of conduct; its government of the people and its people of no government; its bayonets and its moral force; its science and its ignorance; its amusements and its revolutions; its resistance that goes backward, and its movement that stands still; its milliners, its philosophers, its opera-dancers, its poets, its fiddlers, its bankers, and its cooks. Although so long enthralled within the barriers, it was not easy to quit Paris, entirely without regret—Paris, which every stranger censures and every stranger seeks; which moralists abhor and imitate; which causes the heads of the old to shake, and the hearts of the young to beat;—Paris, the centre of so much that is excellent, and of so much that cannot be named!

That night we laid our heads on rustic pillows, far from the French capital. The succeeding day we snuffed the air of the sea. Passing through Artois and French Flanders, on the fifth morning we entered the new kingdom of Belgium, by the historical and respectable towns of Douai, and Tournai, and

Ath. At every step we met the flag which flutters over the pavilion of the Thuilleries, and recognized the confident air and swinging gait of French soldiers. They had just been employed in propping the crumbling throne of the house of Saxe. To us they seemed as much at home as when they lounged on the Quai d'Orsay.

There was still abundant evidence visible at Brussels, of the fierce nature of the struggle that had expelled the Dutch. Forty-six shells were sticking in the side of a single building of no great size, while ninety-three grape-shot were buried in one of its pilasters! In our own rooms, too, there were fearful signs of war. The mirrors were in fragments, the walls broken by langrage, the wood-work of the beds was pierced by shot, and the furniture was marked by rude encounters. The trees of the park were mutilated in a thousand places, and one of the little Cupids, that we had left laughing above the principal gate three years before, was now maimed and melancholy, whilst its companion had altogether taken flight on the wings of a cannon-ball. Though dwelling in the very centre of so many hostile vestiges, we happily escaped the sight of human blood; for we understood from the obliging Swiss who presides over the hotel, that his cellars, at all times in repute, were in more than usual request during the siege. From so much proof we were left to infer, that the Belgians had made stout battle for their emancipation, one sign at least that they merited to be free.

Our road lay by Louvain, Thirlemont, Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Juliers, to the Rhine. The former of these towns had been the scene of a contest between the hostile armies, the preceding week. As the Dutch had been accused of unusual excesses in their advance, we looked out for the signs. How many of these marks had been already obliterated, we could not well ascertain; but those which were still visible gave us reason to think that the invaders did not merit all the opprobrium they had received. Each hour, as life advances, am I made to see how capricious and vulgar is the immortality conferred by a newspaper!

It would be injustice to the ancient Bishopric of Liège to pass its beautiful scenery without a comment. The country

possesses nearly every requisite for the milder and more rural sort of landscape ;—isolated and innumerable farm-houses, herds in the fields, living hedges, a waving surface, and a verdure to rival the emerald. By a happy accident, the road runs for miles on an elevated ridge, enabling the traveller to enjoy these beauties at his ease.

At Aix-la-Chapelle we bathed, visited the relics, saw the scene of so many coronations of emperors of more or less renown, sat in the chair of Charlemagne, and went our way.

The Rhine was an old acquaintance. A few years earlier, I had stood upon the sands, at Katwyck, and watched its periodical flow into the North Sea, by means of sluices made in the short reign of the good King Louis, and, the same summer, I had bestrode it, a brawling brook, on the icy side of St. Gothard. We had come now to look at its beauties in its most beautiful part, and to compare them, so far as native partiality might permit, with the well-established claims of our own Hudson.

Quitting Cologne, its exquisite but incomplete cathedral, with the crane that has been poised on its unfinished towers five hundred years, its recollections of Rubens and his royal patroness, we travelled up the stream so leisurely as to examine all that offered, and yet so fast as to avoid the hazard of satiety. Here we met Prussian soldiers, preparing, by mimic service, for the more serious duties of their calling. Lancers were galloping, in bodies, across the open fields; videttes were posted, the cocked pistol in hand, at every hay-stack; while couriers rode, under the spur, from point to point, as if the great strife, which is so menacingly preparing, and which sooner or later must come, had actually commenced. As Europe is now a camp, these hackneyed sights scarce drew a look aside. We were in quest of the interest which nature, in her happier humors, bestows.

There were ruined castles, by scores; gray fortresses; abbeys, some deserted and others yet tenanted; villages and towns; the seven mountains; cliffs and vineyards. At every step we felt how intimate is the association between the poetry of Nature and that of art; between the hill-side with its falling turret, and the moral feeling that lends them interest.

Here was an island, of no particular excellence, but the walls of a convent of the middle ages crumbled on its surface. There was a naked rock, destitute of grandeur, and wanting in those tints which milder climates bestow, but a baronial hold tottered on its apex. Here Cæsar led his legions to the stream, and there Napoleon threw his corps d'armée on the hostile bank; this monument was to Hoche, and from that terrace the great Adolphus directed his battalions. Time is wanting to mellow the view of our own historical sites; for the sympathy that can be accumulated only by the general consent of mankind, has not yet clothed them with the indefinable colors of distance and convention.

In the mood likely to be created by a flood of such recollections, we pursued our way along the southern margin of this great artery of central Europe. We wondered at the vastness of the Rheinfels, admired the rare jewel of the ruined church at Baccarach, and marvelled at the giddy precipice on which a prince of Prussia even now dwells, in the eagle-like grandeur and security of the olden time. On reaching Mayence, the evening of the second day, we deliberately and, as we hoped, impartially compared what had just been seen, with that which is so well and so affectionately remembered.

I had been familiar with the Hudson from childhood. The great thoroughfare of all who journey from the interior of the state towards the sea, necessity had early made me acquainted with its windings, its promontories, its islands, its cities, and its villages. Even its hidden channels had been professionally examined, and time was when there did not stand an unknown seat on its banks, or a hamlet that had not been visited. Here then was the force of deep impressions to oppose to the influence of objects still visible.

To me it is quite apparent that the Rhine, while it frequently possesses more of any particular species of scenery, within a given number of miles, than the Hudson, has none of so great excellence. It wants the variety, the noble beauty, and the broad grandeur of the American stream. The latter, within the distance universally admitted to contain the finest parts of the Rhine, is both a large and a small river; it has its bays, its narrow passages among the meadows, its frowning gorges,

and its reaches resembling Italian lakes; whereas the most that can be said of its European competitor, is that all these wonderful peculiarities are feebly imitated. Ten degrees of a lower latitude supply richer tints, brighter transitions of light and shadow, and more glorious changes of the atmosphere, to embellish the beauties of our western clime. In islands, too, the advantage is with the Hudson, for, while those of the Rhine are the most numerous, those of the former stream are bolder, better placed, and, in every natural feature, of more account.

When the comparison between these celebrated rivers is extended to their artificial accessories, the result becomes more doubtful. The buildings of the older towns and villages of Europe seem grouped especially for effect, as seen in the distant view, though security was in truth the cause, while the spacious, cleanly, and cheerful villages of America must commonly be entered, to be appreciated. In the other hemisphere, the maze of roofs, the church-towers, the irregular faces of wall, and frequently the castle rising to a pinnacle in the rear, give a town the appearance of some vast and antiquated pile devoted to a single object. Perhaps the boroughs of the Rhine have less of this picturesque, or landscape effect, than the villages of France and Italy, for the Germans regard space more than their neighbors, but still are they less commonplace than the smiling and thriving little marts that crowd the borders of the Hudson. To this advantage must be added that which is derived from the countless ruins, and a crowd of recollections. Here, the superiority of the artificial auxiliaries of the Rhine ceases, and those of her rival come into the ascendant. In modern abodes, in villas, and even in seats, those of princes alone excepted, the banks of the Hudson have scarcely an equal in any region. There are finer and nobler edifices on the Brenta, and in other favored spots, certainly, but I know no stream that has so many that please and attract the eye. As applied to moving objects, an important feature in this comparison, the Hudson has perhaps no rival, in any river that can pretend to a picturesque character. In numbers, in variety of rig, in beauty of form, in swiftness and dexterity of handling, and in general grace and movement, this extra-

ordinary passage ranks amongst the first of the world. The yards of tall ships swing among the rocks and forests of the highlands, while sloop, schooner, and bright canopied steam-boat, yacht, periagua, and canoe are seen in countless numbers, decking its waters. There is one more eloquent point of difference that should not be neglected. Drawings and engravings of the Rhine lend their usual advantages, softening, and frequently rendering beautiful, objects of no striking attractions when seen as they exist; while every similar attempt to represent the Hudson, at once strikes the eye as unworthy of its original.

Nature is fruitful of fine effects in every region, and it is a mistake not to enjoy her gifts, as we move through life, on account of some fancied superiority in this, or that, quarter of the world. We left the Rhine, therefore, with regret, for, in its way, a lovelier stream can scarce be found.

At Mayence we crossed to the right bank of the river, and passing by the Duchies of Nassau and Darmstadt, entered that of Baden, at Heidelberg. Here we sat upon the Tun, examined the castle, and strolled in the alleys of the remarkable garden. Thence we proceeded to Manheim, turning our faces, once more, towards the French capital. The illness of one of the party compelled us to remain a few hours in the latter city, which presented little for reflection, unless it were that this, like one or two other towns we had lately seen, served to convince us, that the symmetry and regularity which render large cities magnificent, cause those that are small to appear mean.

It was a bright autumnal day when we returned to the left bank of the Rhine, on the way to Paris. The wishes of the invalid had taken the appearance of strength, and we hoped to penetrate the mountains which bound the Palatinate on its south-western side, and to reach Kaiserslautern, on the great Napoleon road, before the hour of rest. The main object had been accomplished, and, as with all who have effected their purpose, the principal desire was to be at home. A few posts convinced us that repose was still necessary to the invalid. This conviction, unhappily as I then believed, came too late, for we had already crossed the plain of the Palatinate, and were drawing near to the chain of mountains just mentioned.



which are a branch of the Vosges, and are known in the country as the Haart. We had made no calculations for such an event, and former experience had caused us to distrust the inns of this isolated portion of the kingdom of Bavaria. I was just bitterly regretting our precipitation, when the church-tower of Duerckheim peered above the vineyards; for, on getting nearer to the base of the hills, the land became slightly undulating, and the vine abundant. As we approached, the village or borough promised little, but we had the word of the postilion that the post-house was an inn fit for a king; and as to the wine, he could give no higher eulogium than a flourish of the whip, an eloquent expression of pleasure for a German of his class. We debated the question of proceeding, or of stopping, in a good deal of doubt, to the moment when the carriage drew up before the sign of the Ox. A substantial looking burgher came forth to receive us. There was the pledge of good cheer in the ample development of his person, which was not badly typified by the sign, and the hale hearty character of his hospitality removed all suspicion of the hour of reckoning. If he who travels much is a gainer in knowledge of mankind, he is sure to be a loser in the charities that sweeten life. Constant intercourse with men who are in the habit of seeing strange faces, who only dispose of their services to those that are likely never to need them again, and who, of necessity, are removed from most of the responsibilities and affinities of a more permanent intercourse, exhibits the selfishness of our nature in its least attractive form. Policy may suggest a specious blandishment of air, to conceal the ordinary design on the pocket of the stranger; but it is in the nature of things that the design should exist. The passion of gain, like all other passions, increases with indulgence; and thus do we find those who dwell on beaten roads more rapacious than those in whom the desire is latent, for want of use.

Our host of Duerckheim offered a pledge, in his honest countenance, independent air, and frank manner, of his also being above the usual mercenary schemes of another portion of the craft, who, dwelling in places of little resort, endeavor to take their revenge of fortune, by showing that they look

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