

This publication makes available an annotated online version of Catharine Maria Sedgwick's letters from her travels through Germany from *Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home* (vol. 1, 1841). The document is the result of a COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) project between students from the University of Oldenburg and Salem State University from the summer semester 2024. The participants were Kilian Grote, Xing Han, Alina Hank, Sena Harms, Simge Ince, Wanting Jiao, Anna Kehrwald, Lina Löffbering, Johanna Loos, Vivien Müller, Niklas Wanke, Katharina Wohlers, Yuexi Wu, Zitong Xi, Shuxian Ye as well as the instructors Professor Lucinda Damon-Bach and PD Dr. Michaela Keck. The published documents include an introduction written by the German students, the annotated transcriptions by all students, a brief afterword by Michaela Keck, and a bibliography including research and teaching materials for this particular section of Sedgwick's *Letters from Abroad*.

Introduction (by Kilian Grote, Alina Hank, Sena Harms, Simge Ince, Anna Kehrwald, Lina Löffbering, Johanna Loos, Vivien Müller, Katharina Wohlers):

This COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) project brought together two English literature classes from Salem State University and Carl von Ossietzky University in a cross-Atlantic collaboration. However, it is important to note that a majority of the Salem course participants were exchange students from Nanjing Normal University. The other two universities are situated in Massachusetts (US-American East-coast), Niedersachsen (German North-West coast) and Jiangsu (Chinese East-coast). As such, the COIL project was a scholarly undertaking that comprised the efforts of students from three universities on three continents.

Ultimately, 17 individual perspectives were deployed to facilitate the text's accessibility and to give assistance in fully appreciating Sedgwick's manifold references. Here, the differing cultural backgrounds helped us discern where—and 'for whom'—footnotes were needed. For example, while the students from Oldenburg were familiar with the French expression "tête-à-tête" (*Letters* 164), it became apparent, through conversations with the students from Salem, that the term was not as ubiquitous in US-American conversations and, thus, required a footnote. Conversely, it was the Oldenburg students' lack of familiarity with the term "knapsack" (*Letters* 175)—slang used in regard to an everyday object for the Salem students—that induced the decision to add an explanatory footnote for it.

During this cultural and linguistic exchange regarding English, German and French terms and concepts, the international perspective and the research done by the exchange students from Nanjing were of great importance. Arguably, this collaboration mirrors Catherine Maria Sedgwick's transatlantic encounters and conversations with her contemporary peers of the literature world, which shaped the construction of the masterpiece that is *Letters from Abroad to a Kindred Home*. Notably, it was this focus on interpersonal connection and cultural exchange that drove Sedgwick's writing more than the ritualistic travel philosophies of her time (cf. Stowe 17). Sedgwick was aware of the conventions and the methodology of contemporary travelogues and travel guides; she acknowledged that, generally, she was moving in tune with the ritual performance of the European tour. However, at the same time, she chronicled an experience of travel and tourism that is characterized by the endeavor to catch non-touristic glimpses of the 'real' Germany. During this search for the 'authentic,' she made the deliberate choice to not let the description of famous sights occupy a majority of her text. Instead, the emphasis was placed on intricate observations about the German cuisine, landscape, and architecture as well as Sedgwick's desire to 'get in touch' with the culture, the folklore, and the 'indigenous' population. Accordingly, at times, her text seemingly takes on an ethnographic approach. For example, when she sought out an "infant school" (*Letters* 171)—a "*Klein Kinder Schule*" (*Letters* 172)—where the children's sunny disposition made her wonder "how this quality of social freedom gets into the German nature" (*Letters* 172).

In a way, her musings about the German education systems in comparison with those of her Young Nation were echoed by our transatlantic discussions, in which we compared our experiences as literature students and as participants of this project—discussions, which allowed us to learn about Sedgwick and each other. Regarding Sedgwick's journey through Germany, her travels followed along a route of numerous spas and watering places. But instead of focusing on her family's purposeful selection of these places to improve her brother's health, she turned them into sites of interest and visited places associated with German customs, literary traditions, food culture, etc. Her strong interest in German culture enabled her to veer off from the trodden tourist path and immerse herself into the "real" life of Germany.

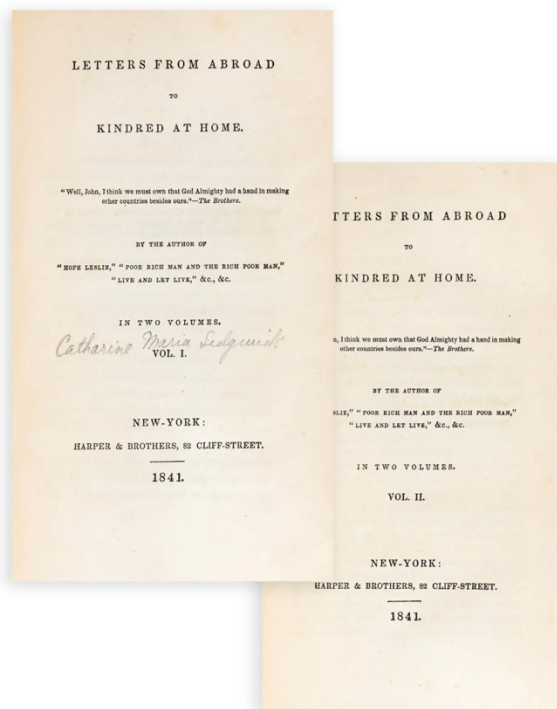
Working on the annotation project, we had the opportunity to get to know Sedgwick through her *Letters* written to her readers whom she also called her "friends." Analyzing the places she visited, the people she met (among them many authors) and traditions she

experienced, we see her as a “Schöngeist,” a “bel esprit,” a person with a beautiful, gifted mind and as a role model in terms of her work. In her *Letters*, she appears as an educated woman with a cultured mind, who aims to learn new aspects of German culture and to share her thoughts and learning with her friends at home. Both by negotiating the New and the Old World as well as by networking with other authors across the Atlantic (Joanna Baillie or Mary Russell Mitford in Great Britain as well as the German August Wilhelm Schlegel), she created a host of transatlantic relationships.

In the collaborative work of annotating Sedgwick’s *Letters*, our project was not only a literary project for us students but also a chance for cultural exchange. It was interesting to observe how we complemented each other, with the German students explaining aspects that perplexed their American peers, and vice versa. As students and readers from different parts of the world, our curiosity was sparked by the cultural roots behind the narrative, prompting engaging dialogues with other native German speakers outside of our project as well. We were all curious about cultural practices that are still common in modern Germany and others that have greatly changed since Sedgwick’s travels, for instance her remarks on the then still unfinished Cologne cathedral which “is not, and probably never will be, finished” (*Letters* 144).

Sedgwick’s *Letters* give insight into the way she herself and as a representative of the United States perceived the way of life, the people and the culture in Germany. She found a plethora of playful comparisons and astute descriptions to characterize German life and culture. As German students these were fascinating aspects to work on, as they describe how the German culture and way of life was observed from an outside perspective and, more specifically, from the perspective of a nineteenth-century American citizen. Sedgwick’s observations generally come across in a light-hearted and good-natured manner. For example, she writes that “[t]he Germans seem to me to go into their houses as the pigeons do, only for shelter and sleep” (*Letters* 210), when evaluating how much time Germans spend outside. Moreover, she describes the food culture in great detail: “the croquets, sausages, tongue, the queenly cauliflower floating in butter, rouleaux of cabbage, macaroni, preparations of beans and sorrel, and other messes that have baffled all our investigation and guessing” (*Letters* 204). German food and eating customs were clearly of great interest to her and we have seldom found another writer who showed such enthusiasm and high regard for German culture.

Furthermore, and depending on the subject matter, Sedgwick's perspective of a nineteenth-century American woman, writer, and traveler opens up everyday visions of German life and culture that still determine our current times while also providing a window into the nation's nineteenth-century history. But Sedgwick also used her *Letters* for cultural comparisons neither shying away from critique nor from expressing her admiration, which likewise functioned as a commentary on her own American nation and culture. For example, after meeting two Russian women in Germany, Sedgwick wrote: "I looked proudly, thankfully back to my country of no princesses! Arrogance and superciliousness exist there, no doubt, but they have no birthright for their exercise" (*Letters* 207), rejecting Old World aristocracy and monarchies. However, at the same time that Sedgwick admired "[t]he quiet and order of the table" (*Letters* 169) in Germany, she unfavorably compared it to the "angry, pathetic and bewildering calls of 'Waiter!' 'Waiter!'" (*Letters* 169) in her home country with its often unruly, unregulated culture and society. In this way, the cultural comparisons in Sedgwick's *Letters* provide insightful commentaries about the as yet unrealized potential of her own nation and culture as well as her own role as an American woman traveler, citizen, and writer.



[Title Page]

LETTERS FROM ABROAD
TO
KINDRED AT HOME

“Well, John, I think we must own that God Almighty had a hand in making other countries besides ours.” -- *The Brothers*.

By the Author of “Hope Leslie,” “Poor Rich Man and the Rich Poor Man,”
“Live and Let Live,” &c., &c.

NEW-YORK:
Harper & Brothers, 82 Cliff-Street.

1841.

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PREFACE.

An apology for a book implies that the public are obliged to read it; an obligation that would reverse the order of nature--transfer the power from the strong to the weak. But, unfortunately for them, there is a portion of the public who are, in a certain sense, obliged to read a book--the kind friends of the author--and among these--I say it gratefully, not boastfully--I have the happiness to number many of my countrymen personally unknown to me. Of *my friends*, then, I ask indulgence for the following pages. They are published rather with deference to the wishes of others than from any false estimate of their worth. Our tour was made under circumstances which forbade any divergence from the high-way of all the travelling world, and, consequently, we passed over a field so thoroughly reaped that not an ear, scarcely a kernel, remains for the gleaner. In addition to this, and to painful anxieties and responsibilities that accompanied us at every step, we were followed by intelligence of deep domestic calamity. On this subject I need not enlarge; the

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disqualifying influence of these circumstances will be comprehended without my opening the sanctuary of private griefs.¹

I was aware that our stayers-at-home had already something too much of churches, statues, and pictures, and yet that they cannot well imagine how much they make up the existence of tourists in the Old World. I have sedulously avoided this rock, and must trust for any little interest my book may possess to the honesty with which I have recorded my impressions, and to the fresh aspect of familiar things to the eye of a denizen of the New World. The fragmentary state in which my letters appear is owing to my fear of wearying readers less interested than my own family by prolonged details or prosing reflections, or disgusting them with the egotism of personal experience.

One word to my English reader, rather of explanation than apology, which I trust the case does not require. I have unscrupulously mentioned the name of such distinguished English people as it was my good fortune to see. I could have screened myself from reproach by giving merely their initials; but, as they are too well known for this device to

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afford them any shelter, it seemed to me but a paltry affectation of delicacy. I might plead the authority of English travellers in the United States; but if wrong, no authority justifies it; and if right, it needs none. I have confined my notices strictly to public characters--to gallery portraits; for so such persons as Mr. Rogers, and even that most refined and delicate of gentlewomen, Miss Joanna Baillie, may be strictly called, after the full exhibitions in Moore's *Life of Byron* and Lockhart's *Life of Scott*.² I have violated no confidence, for none was reposed in me. My opportunities of social intercourse were few and brief; and I should have omitted these slight records of them, but for the wish to transmit to my friends at home my delightful impressions of those to whom we all owe many happy hours. Perhaps my anxiety is superfluous; the King of Ashantee³ was anxious to know what the English people said of him, but I never heard that the English people cared to know what the King of Ashantee said of them!

¹ The "painful anxieties and responsibilities" that travelled with Sedgwick relate to her brother Robert's illness--he suffered a stroke the year before and they were seeking treatments and consulting with doctors along their route. In the 19th-century, travelling to cure an illness was commonly recommended. "Deep domestic calamity" refers to the sudden death of her oldest brother, Theodore, in November 1839, while they were in Italy.

² English poet Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) and Scottish dramatist Joanna Baillie (1762-1851), both famous in the early nineteenth century, are featured in both of the biographies named, *The Life of Byron* (1830) by Thomas Moore (Irish, 1779-1852) and *The Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1837-38) by John Gibson Lockhart (Scottish, 1774-1854).

³ The Ashanti Empire (originally Asante Twi, spelled Ashanti since the early 20th century), was an Akan, or First Nation state from 1701 to 1901, in what is now Ghana. The British invaded the Ashanti Empire four times prior to the First Anglo-Ashanti War, 1824-31, to check their commercial power which significantly impacted the British commercial dominance along the coastal region. While historically inaccurate because the British had been very aware of the Ashanti's rising power since the second half of the 18th century, Sedgwick uses this commonplace of the British ignorance to humorously downplay her own renown among her British audience.

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Aix-la-Chapelle.⁴--This name will at once recall to you Charlemagne,⁵ whose capital and burying-place it was. We have just returned from La Chapelle, which so conveniently distinguishes this from the other Aix in Europe. Otho built the present church on the site of Charlemagne's chapel, preserving its original octagonal form, which Charlemagne, intending it for his own tomb, adopted from the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem. We stood under the centre of the dome on a large marble slab,

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inscribed "Carolo Magno;" and over our heads hung a massive chandelier, the gift of *Frederic Barbarossa*. How these material things conjured back from the dead these mighty chieftains!

The vault must have been a startling sight when Otho opened it and found the emperor, not in the usual supine posture, but seated on his throne in his imperial robes, with the crown on his fleshless brow, his sceptre in his hand, the good sword *joyeuse*⁶ at his side, the Gospels on his knee, the pilgrim's pouch, which, living, he always wore, still at his girdle, and precious jewels sparkling amid decay and ashes. The sacristan showed us his scull--the palace of the soul!--enclosed in a silver case. His lofty soul has, I trust, now a fitter palace. There are shown also several relics found in his tomb which touch a chord of general sympathy: his hunting-horn, a relic of the true cross, and a locket containing the Virgin's hair, which he wore in death, as he had always worn in life.

The church is said to be the oldest in Germany. The choir, built in 1356, is more modern. Its painted windows are so exquisite in their form that they affect you like a living beauty.

There is a fête to-day. The "*grandes reliques*," which are shown once in seven years, are exhibiting, and the town is thronged with the peasantry. They were literally packed on the little *place* before the Cathedral. A priest was in a very high gallery with attendants, displaying the relics. This church is rich in these apocryphal treasures. The priest

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held up one thing after another, the Virgin's chemise, the swaddling-clothes, &c., against a black surface, and at each holy thing down sunk the mass upon their knees. There were exceptions to this devout action; travellers who, like us, were staring, and talking, and making discord with the deep responses, and there were a few persons pushing their way through the crowd, hawking little books in German and French describing the relics; and selling beads that had been blessed

⁴ The French name for the German city of Aachen. In the 9th century, King Charlemagne built a chapel there that inspired the name "Aix-la-Chapelle."

⁵ Charlemagne (748-817) was one of the most significant rulers in Western Central Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire.

⁶ The sword *Joyeuse*, "Joyful" (French; usually with a capital J). Since 1271 this sword had been used in the coronation ceremonies of French kings. Its roots go back to a medieval legend, where Charlemagne, King of the Franks, wielded it as his personal weapon.

by the priest. If not holy, the relics have an historical interest that makes them well worth seeing. They were presented to Charlemagne by a patriarch of Jerusalem, and by a Persian king.⁷

The baths of Aix were enjoyed by the Romans. We went to one in the centre of the town, where a brazen lion spouts out the mineral water, and where there is a very handsome building with a colonnade and refreshment-rooms. We would have gladly lingered here for a few days instead of these very few hours; but, like all our country people, we seem always urged by some demon on--on--on.

Cologne.--Still, my dear C.,⁸ the same story to tell you of yesterday's journey. The peasants have just begun their mowing and harvesting, and the hay and corn are all as thick as the choicest bits in our choice meadows. There were immense plantations

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of potatoes, oats, peas, and beans; no fences, hedges, or barrier of any sort--one vast sea of agricultural wealth.

We are now, as Mr. Murray tells us, "in the largest and wealthiest city on the Rhine,"⁹ and have more than enough to do if we see the half set forth on the eight well-filled pages of his best of all guide-books. We leave here at four P.M.; so you see how slight a view we can have even of the outside of things. Our habit of breakfasting at nine abridges our active time, but it gives me a quiet morning hour for my journal. Do you know--I did not--that Cologne received its name from Agrippina, Nero's mother--surely the most wretched of women? She was born here, and sent hither a Roman colony, calling the place *Colonia Agrippina*. A happy accident I should think it, if I were a Cologne, that blotted out her infamous name from my birthplace.

We passed the day most diligently; and as it is not in human nature not to value that which costs us labour, you must feel very grateful to me if I spare you the description of church after church, reliques, and pictures. Such reliques, too, as the real bones of St. Ursula and her thirteen thousand virgins! the bones, *real* too, of the Magi, the three kings of Cologne (whose vile effigies are blazoned on half the sign-boards on the Continent), and such pictures as Ruben's crucifixion of St. Peter, which

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he deemed his best, because his last, probably. The *real* thing, that would please you better than all the reliques in Belgium, is the establishment of Eau de Cologne, of the actual Jean Maria

⁷ "Formerly 150,000 pilgrims resorted to this fête, and so late as 1832 there were 43,000." **Sedgwick's note**; no attribution for quote; likely Murray, cited below.

⁸ Sedgwick's younger brother Christopher, who remained at home during her Grand Tour to Europe.

⁹ Cologne has 65,000 inhabitants. **Sedgwick's note**. Sedgwick is quoting *A Handbook for Travellers on the Continent*, by John Murray (English, 1808-1892), first published in 1836. The third edition appeared in 1839.

Farina,¹⁰ whose name and fame have penetrated as far as Napoleon's. No wonder that this dirtiest of all towns should have elicited the perfumer's faculties. When some one said, "The Rhine washes Cologne," it was pithily asked, "What washes the Rhine?"

Another sight here, my dear C., would in earnest have pleased you; the only one of the kind I have seen on the Continent: troops of little boys and girls with their books and slates. A woman of distinction, who was born here, tells us that the feudal feeling of clanship is in high preservation. "I never come here," she says, "without being assailed by some one of *basse classe*,¹¹ who obliges me to listen to all the details of a family grievance as if it were the affair of my own household." This sentiment of feudal dependance will probably melt away before the aforesaid books and slates. So the good goes with the bad. It is a pity we have not a moral flail; but, as of old, the tares and the wheat are too intricately intermingled for human art to separate them. I promised to spare you the churches of Cologne, but I cannot pass by the Cathedral. It would be as bad as the proverbial leaving out Hamlet from the enacting of his own tragedy. The Cologne Cathedral is not, and probably never will be, finished.¹² It impressed me anew with a conviction of the immortality of the human mind. What an infinite distance between its [COLOGNE. 145]

conceptions and the matter on which it works! A work of art rises in vision to the divinely-inspired artist; what years, what ages are consumed in expressing in the slow stone this conception! and the stone is transformable, perishable. Can the mind be so?

The name of the architect of the Cathedral of Cologne is unknown. No matter; here are his thoughts written in stone.

You cannot see the Gothic architecture of Europe without being often reminded of Victor Hugo's idea that architecture was, till superseded by printing, "the great book" wherein man wrote his thoughts in "marble letters and granite pages;" and, being once possessed with this notion, you cannot look at the beautiful arches and columns, at such stupendous flying buttresses as these of the Cologne Cathedral, and its "forest of purpled pinnacles,"¹³ without feeling as if you were reading a Milton or a Dante. There are innumerable expressions that you cannot comprehend, but as your eye ranges over them, you read the rapturous praises of a David, and prophecy and lamentation, and, even in these sacred edifices, the keen satires and unbridled humour of the profane poets. Victor Hugo says that, at one period, whoever was born a poet became an architect; that all other arts were subservient to architecture, all other artists the servants of the architect, "the great master workman."¹⁴

¹⁰ Johann Maria Farina (German, 1809-1880), called Jean Marie Farina, Cologne entrepreneur and manufacturer of Eau de Cologne, which is a well-known Cologne perfume that was developed at the beginning of the 18th century and dominated the perfumery market until the end of the 19th century.

¹¹ The nobility held most of the wealth and power as opposed to the lower class, or "*basse classe*." The powerful and wealthy families often owned a lot of land and employed many peasants to do the hard work.

¹² Work on Cologne Cathedral was finished in 1880.

¹³ Victor Hugo (French, 1802-1885), author and politician; from *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831).

¹⁴ "L'architecte, le poete, le maitre totalisait en sa personne la sculpture qui lui ciseleait ses façades, la peinture qui lui enluminaient ses vitraux, la musique qui mettait sa cloche en branle et soufflait dans ses orgues."--*Victor Hugo*. **Sedgwick's note.** From *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.

I do not know that the ideas which he has so well
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elaborated originated in his own mind, nor can I tell whether this wondrous art would have suggested the idea to my mind without his previous aid. We see by the bright illumination of another's mind what the feeble light of our own would never reveal; but remember we do as certainly see.

The Apostles' Church here is exquisitely beautiful. Mr. Hope said it reminded him of some of the oldest Greek churches in Asia Minor; and that, when looking at the east end, he almost thought himself at Constantinople; and, though you may think me bitten by Victor Hugo's theory, I will tell you that its romantic and Oriental beauty brought to my mind "The Talisman," in Scott's *Tales of the Crusaders*.

My dear C.,

Bonn.--We embarked, for the first time, yesterday on the Rhine, the "father and king of rivers," as the German poets with fond reverence call it. "The majestic Rhine" it has not yet appeared to us, having but just come opposite to the Siebengebirge, a cluster of mountains where the scenery first takes its romantic character. We were four hours, in a good steamer, getting to Bonn, a distance of about twenty miles. This slow ascent of the river is owing to the force of the current. We were much struck with the social, simple, and kindly manners of our

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German companions in the steamer. Several well-bred persons addressed us and asked as many questions as a Yankee would have asked in the same time. Some of them made us smile, such as whether the language in America was not very like that spoken in England! and if New-York has more than thirty thousand inhabitants! Before we separated the girls were on familiar terms with some pretty young ladies going to boarding-school, and half a dozen people, at least, had ascertained whence we came and whither we were going. M.¹⁵ was quite charmed with this unreserve. "Like to like," you know!

There was a lady on board who riveted our attention. Without being handsome, she had the "*air noble*," that is, perhaps, the best substitute for beauty. Her face was intellectual, and her eyes such as I have never seen except in the head of a certain harpy eagle in the zoological gardens. Lest you should get a false impression from this comparison, I must tell you that these harpy eyes haunted me for days after I saw them reviving, with their human expression and wonderful power, my childish superstition about the transmigration of souls.

"That woman is very ill-bred," said M., "to peer at us so steadily through her eyeglass." "We look at her just as steadily, only without eyeglasses," said L.;¹⁶ and, as none think themselves ill-bred, we came to the silent conclusion that the stranger might not be so. There was something in her air, and in a peculiarity, as well as elegance of

¹⁵ Sedgwick's niece Maria Banyer Sedgwick (daughter of Sedgwick's brother Theodore).

¹⁶ "Lizzie," Elizabeth Ellery Sedgwick (daughter of Sedgwick's brother Robert).

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dress, that indicated she felt well assured of her position.

Bonn.--We brought letters to the celebrated Schlegel,¹⁷ who resides here, and to a certain Madame M.¹⁸ Schlegel sent us a note, saying he was kept in by indisposition, but would be most happy to receive us. Soon after breakfast Madame M. was announced, and proved to be the harpy-eyed lady of the steamer. Her manner struck me as cold, and I felt all the horror of thrusting myself on involuntary hospitality. "She is doing a detestable duty," thought I, "in honouring Mrs. ____'s letter of credit in behalf of strangers from a far country, and of a language that she does not speak." By degrees her manner changed from forced courtesy to voluntary kindness. She marked out occupation for all our time at Bonn, lavished invitations on all our party, and insisted on my going home with her to see what was to be seen at her house, which, she said, in a way to excite no expectation, "was better than staying at the inn." I went, and found that she had a superb establishment in the best quarter of the town. We met a pretty young woman on the stairs, whom she introduced to me as her daughter. She had her long sleeves tucked up over her elbow, and a cotton apron on, and reminded me of a thrifty New-England *lady* preparing to make her "Thanksgiving pies." Mademoiselle M. soon after brought in a small waiter, with rich hot chocolate and cakes. I

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asked Madame M. if the accounts we had received of the domestic education of women in Germany of the condition of her daughter were true. She said yes; they were taught everything that appertained to house-affairs. We know they do not find this domestic education incompatible with high refinement and cultivation.¹⁹ Knowledge of house-affairs is a necessity for our young countrywomen--perhaps some of them would think it less an evil if they could see Mademoiselle M. in her luxurious home expressing, as did Eve, Penelope, and other classic dames, by the dainty work of her own hands, that she was "on hospitable thoughts intent."²⁰

When I entered Bonn through an ineffably dirty street, I little dreamed it could contain a house with the lovely view there is from Madame M.'s window, of gardens and cornfields; and much less did I anticipate sitting with that fearful lady of the steamer over cases of antique gems--some as old as remote epochs of Grecian art--while she expounded them to me; so at the mercy of accident are the judgments of tourists. Madame M.'s house is filled with productions of the arts, pictures, busts, &c., which I was obliged to leave all too soon to go with my party to pay our respects to Schlegel; and I went, half wishing, as L. did on a similar occasion, that there were no celebrated people that one must see.

¹⁷ August Wilhelm Schlegel (German, 1767-1845), writer and professor of literature.

¹⁸ Sibylle Mertens, also called the "Countess of the Rhine" (German, 1797-1857), a collector and patron of the arts and culture and salonnière whose vast female network reached from Bonn to Rome and Britain.

¹⁹At the time only women were taught domestic skills, but later all genders received domestic education.

²⁰ This line refers to Eve in Book V of *Paradise Lost* (1667) by John Milton (British, 1608-1674).

Schlegel is past seventy, with an eye still brilliant, and a fresh colour in his cheek. He attracted our attention to his very beautiful bust of Carrara marble, and repeatedly to the decay of the

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original since the bust was made, with a sensibility which proved that the pleasures and regrets that accompany the possession of beauty are not limited to women. He makes the most of his relics by wearing a particularly becoming black velvet cap, round which his wavy white locks lay as soft as rays of light. He was courteous and agreeable for the half hour we passed with him; but I brought away a new impression but that I have given you, that he is a handsome man for threescore and ten.

At three Madame M. came, according to appointment, to show us the Bonn lions and surroundings. We drove first to the University, which is the old electoral palace. Bonn was comprehended within the electorate of Cologne. The façade of this palace of the lord elector, which has now become a flourishing seat of learning, is nearly a quarter of a mile in extent. The palaces and cottages of Europe indicate its history.

The University, which has now between eight and nine hundred students, was established by the King of Prussia,²¹ and is said to owe its reputation to its distinguished professors; Niebuhr²² was here, and Schlegel is. We were shown a library of one hundred thousand volumes, a museum of natural history, and a very interesting museum of Roman remains found on the banks of the Rhine, altars, vases, weapons, &c. We were conducted through the botanical garden by Monsieur l'Inspecteur, a celebrated botanist, and one of a large family of brothers devoted to the science. "Une aristocracie

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botaniste," said Madame M. He showed us a rich collection of American plants, and I stood amid the mosses and ferns, my old friends of the ice-glen, feeling very much as if I ought to speak to them as they did to me!

We drove, by a road that reminded me of the drives through the Connecticut River meadows, to Godesberg. There was one pretty object, the like of which we shall never see in our Puritan land--a high and beautifully-carved stone cross. It marked the spot where two cavaliers--brothers--fought for their lady-love, and the unhappy survivor erected this cross, hoping the passers-by would stop to say a prayer for the soul of his brother.

There is a cluster of hotels at Godesberg, and some villas belonging to the Cologne noblesse; it is a favourite summer retreat. We went to see the ruins of the Castle of Godesberg.²³ They crown an isolated mount, which looks, in the midst of the surrounding level, as if it were

²¹ King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia (German, 1831-1888), signed the founding charter of the University of Bonn in 1818.

²² Barthold Georg Niebuhr (German, born in Denmark, 1776-1831), historian and statesman who was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1822.

²³ The University of Bonn (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn) was founded in 1818 under Friedrich Wilhelm III, King of Prussia. Its 200-year history has made it one of Germany's most recognized institutions for research and higher education.

artificial; but it is one of those natural elevations which, being castellated and strongly fortified, make up so much of the romantic story of the middle ages, and, with their ruins, so much of the romantic embellishment of the present day. This Castle of Godesberg has its love story, and a true and tragic one. It was here that the Elector of Cologne who married Agnes of Mansfeld²⁴ held out against his Catholic enemies. His marriage made his conversion to Protestantism somewhat questionable; and the separation and misery in which the unhappy pair died was probably

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interpreted into a judgment on these two apostate servants of the Church. It has been one of the purest of summer afternoons, and we had a delicious stroll up to the ruins; a world of beauty there is within the small compass of that mount. Fancy a hill rising from the bosom of meadows as our Laurel Hill does, but twice as high and twice as steep, with a path winding round it, every foot of cultivable earth covered with grape-vines, having shrines chiselled in the rocks, and crucifixes and madonnas for the devout. Half way up is a little Gothic church and a cemetery, where the monuments and graves--yes, *old* graves--were decked with fresh garlands, the lilies and roses that have blown out in this day's sun. Is not this a touching expression of faith and love--faith in God, and enduring love for the departed?

What a picture was the country beneath us, and what a pretty framework for the picture, the stone arches of the old castle! The earth was washed clean by the morning showers. Beneath us was an illimitable reach of level land covered with crops. The harvesting and hay-making just begun, but not a blade yet taken off the piled lap of mother earth. At our feet were the peasants' dwellings, little brown cottages, almost hidden in fruit-trees; beyond, the gay villas of the nobles; and still farther, the lively-looking town of Bonn, with its five-towered Cathedral. Still farther, on one side Cologne, on the other the seven mountains, with the ruins of Drachenfels; fine wide roads--those unquestionable

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marks of an old civilization--traversing the country in every direction, and, as far as your eye could reach, that king of roads, the Rhine.

Madame M. so fully enjoyed the delight she was bestowing, that she proposed to prolong it by an excursion to-morrow, which shall be still richer in romance. She will come at ten with two carriages. We shall take our *déjeuner à la fourchette*²⁵ here, and then drive to Roland's Castle, then pass to the monastery of Nonenworth,²⁶ where, her son officiating as chaplain she proposes to make a nun of Miss K., all to end in a dinner, for (I must tell you the disenchanting fact) the monastery is converted into an inn. This is too pleasant a project to be rejected, and if--and if--and if-- why we are to go.

²⁴ Agnes von Mansfeld (German, 1551-1637), countess and canoness, who met her lover Gebhard, the Prince Elector of Cologne (1547-1601), whom she is said to have converted to Protestantism, when she visited her sister Maria in Cologne in 1579.

²⁵ Literally, lunch with the fork (French). The expression refers to a second breakfast or a luncheon taken between 11am and 1pm.

²⁶ Sedgwick misspells the name of the former Benedictine monastery called Nonnenwerth.

While enjoying to-day and talking of to-morrow, we had returned to the inn. Tea was preparing at the order of our charming hostess. Dispersed about the house and piazza were coteries of German ladies, who had come out for the afternoon, and were knitting and gossiping most serenely.

Our repast was very like a home tea for a hungry party of pleasure, with the agreeable addition to our cold roast fowl and Westphalia ham and strawberries, of wine, melons, and Swiss cheese.

My dear C.,

To-day has played a common trick with yesterday's project--dispersed it in empty air. Compelled to proceed on our journey, we did not lose the

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highest pleasure we had counted on--Madame M.'s society. She stayed with us to the last moment, and then, when saying farewell, a kind impulse seized her; she sent her footman back for her cloak, and came with us as far as Andernech,²⁷ where she has one of her many villas. This was just what L. M.²⁸ would have done on a similar occasion; but how many of these incidental opportunities of giving pleasure, these chance-boons in the not too happy way of life, are foregone and--irretrievable!

At Bonn the romantic beauty of the Rhine begins. I have often heard our Hudson compared to the Rhine; they are both rivers, and both have beautiful scenery; but I see no other resemblance except so far as the Highlands extend, and there only in some of the natural features. Both rivers have a very winding course, and precipitous and rocky shores. But remember, these are shores that bear the vine, and so winding for *forty* miles that you might fancy yourself passing through a series of small lakes. I have seen no spot on the Rhine more beautiful by Nature than the Hudson from West Point; but here is

“A blending of all beauties, streams, and dells,
Fruits, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern farewells,
From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells.”

Read Byron's whole description in his third canto of Childe Harold, of this “abounding and exulting river,”²⁹ and you will get more of the sensation it is fitted to produce than most persons do from actually

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²⁷ The city of Andernach, misspelled by Sedgwick as “Andernech.”

²⁸ Possibly a reference to artist Louisa Davis Minot (American, 1788-1858), one of Sedgwick's dearest friends in Boston, Massachusetts.

²⁹ From *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Cantos III and IV (1816-1818) by Lord George Gordon Byron (British, 1788-1824).

seeing it. Its architecture is one of its characteristic beauties; not only its ruined castles--and you have sometimes at one view three or four of these stern monuments on their craggy eminences--but its pretty brown villages, its remains of Roman towers, its walls and bridges, and its military fortifications and monuments:

“A thousand battles have assailed its banks,”

and have sown them richly with their history. And every castle has its domestic legend of faithful or unfaithful love, of broken hopes or baffled treachery. Story, ballad, and tradition have breathed a soul into every tumbling tower and crumbling wall.

We passed the night at Coblenz. The Romans called it Confluentes, “modernized into Coblenz, from its situation at the confluence of the Mosel and the Rhine. It is the capital of the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, and its population, together with that of Ehrenbreitstein, including the garrison, is about 22,000.” Thank our guide Murray for the above well-condensed paragraph, containing more information than half a dozen pages of my weaving.

The younger members of our party, *including myself*, were enterprising enough to quit our luxurious and most comfortable apartments at the Bellevue at five o’clock, to go to the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein³⁰ (“Honour’s broad stone,” is it not a noble name?).

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We passed the Rhine on a bridge of boats, and followed a veteran Austrian soldier, who was our valet de place, to the fortified summit. It has been from the time of the Romans a celebrated military post. Byron saw and described it after it had been battered and dismantled by the French, and not as it now is, capable of resisting, on the word of Wellington, “all but golden bullets.” It only yielded to famine when the French besieged it. The Prussians have made it stronger than ever, at an expense of five millions of dollars! So the men of toil pay for the engines that keep them mere men of toil.

The works struck me as appallingly strong, but, as I could not comprehend their details, after our guide had told me there were magazines capable of containing a ten years’ supply of food for 8,000 men, that there were cisterns that would hold a three years’ supply of water, and, when that was exhausted, the Rhine itself could be drawn on by a well which is pierced through the solid rock; when I had got all this *available* information, I turned to what much better suited me, the lovely view. Oh, for my magic-mirror to show you how lovely looked, in this morning light, the scene below us; the blue Moselle coming down through its vine-covered hills, towns, ruins, villas, cottages, and the Rhine itself, “the charm of this enchanted ground!” I think I like it the better that it is frozen three months in the year. This seems to make it a blood-relation of our rivers. You cannot imagine how much the peasant girls in their

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³⁰ Fortress Ehrenbreitstein is the second largest preserved fortress in Europe.

pretty costumes embellish these surroundings. They do not wear bonnets, but, in their stead, an endless variety of headgear. Some wear a little muslin cap or one or gay-coloured embroidery, and others a sort of silver case that just encloses the long hair, which is always braided and neatly arranged.

Did you know that the prince of diplomatists and arch-enemy of liberty, Metternich,³¹ was born at Coblenz? We have just been to see a fountain, on which is an inscription commemorative of the French invasion of Russia. It was put there by the French prefect of the department, and a few months after, when the Russians passed through here in pursuit of the scattered army of Napoleon, their commander annexed the following happy sarcasm: “Vu et approuvé par nous commandant Russe,” &c. (Seen and approved by us, the Russian commander.)

Wiesbaden, *Poste Restante*, July 26.

K.³² and I came here this morning to purvey for the party, and get lodgings for a month or two. The best hotels were full. We were shown disagreeable rooms at *the Poste*, and though the man assured us he could not keep them for us ten minutes, as all the world was rushing to Wiesbaden, we took our chance, and hazed about the streets, finding nothing that we liked. At last I made inquiry in a bookshop, and a good-natured little woman entering into [158 WIESBADEN.]

our wants, ran across the street with us, and in five minutes we had made a bargain with a man whose honest German face is as good security as bond and mortgage. We have a very nice parlour and three comfortable rooms for thirty-five florins³³ a week--about fourteen dollars. We pay a franc³⁴ each for breakfast, for tea the same, and we have delicious bread, good butter, and fresh eggs; for our dinners, we go, according to the custom here, to the table d'hôte of a hotel. We could not get as good accommodations as these in a country town at home for the same money, nor for double the sum at a watering-place.³⁵

³¹ Klemens Wenzel Lothar von Metternich (Austrian, 1773-1859), politician, opponent of Napoleon and Prince of Metternich.

³² Sedgwick's niece and namesake Katharine Maria Sedgwick (daughter of Sedgwick's brother Charles).

³³ The florin has roots in Florence and was originally a gold coin. At the time of Sedgwick's travels through Germany, the country was greatly fragmented into many independent territories and did not have a unified coin system. Generally, currency rates were determined by the “thaler” in the northern areas and by the “gulden” (also called florin) in the southern areas. However, in the preface to his 1896 *History of Currency, 1252 to 1894*, William Arthur Shaw noted a “confusion of nomenclature” as well as the “indeterminate use of the word ‘florin’” (xiii) for all kinds of coins. The area through which Sedgwick and her family traveled, the Duchy of Nassau, belonged to the southern German area and would have minted gulden/florins rather than thaler.

³⁴ According to Shaw, florins were “equivalent to the franc” and “received the same name” (401).

³⁵ A watering-place refers to a location that used natural spring waters for therapeutic and healing purposes.

My dear C.,

*Sunday evening.*³⁶--We have been here now more than a week, and, with true traveller's conceit, I am sitting down to give you an account of the place and its doings. Wiesbaden (*Meadow-baths*) is the capital of the duchy of Nassau, about two miles from the Rhine. It is a very old German town, and was resorted to by the Romans. It may be called the ducal residence, as the duke, in natural deference to his fair young wife's preference, now resides here a good portion of the time, and is building a large palace for the duchess.

Wiesbaden has more visitors than any of the numerous German bathing-places. The number amounts to from twelve to fifteen thousand annually, and this concourse is occasioned by the unrivalled reputation of its mineral-water. At six this morn-

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ing we went to the Kochbrunnen³⁷ (boiling spring). There is a small building erected over it, and a square curb around it, within which you see it boiling vehemently. Its temperature is 150° Fahrenheit. Its taste is often compared to chicken-broth. If chicken-broth, it must have been made after the fashion of Dr. T.'s prescription to his hypochondriac patient, who fancied water-gruel too strong for her digestion: "Eight gallons of water, madam, and the shadow of a starved crow!"

From six to eight the water-drinkers did their duty, drinking faithfully. Some read or lounged in a sunny corridor where a band of musicians were stationed playing gay tunes; but the approved fashion is to saunter while you sip. We were mere lookers-on, and it was ludicrous to see these happy-looking Germans, whom it would seem Heaven had exempted from every evil flesh is heir to, save obesity, come down to the spring with their pretty Bohemian glasses of all colours and shapes, walk back again up the long acacia walks, sipping in good faith, and giving the water credit, no doubt, for doing what, perhaps, might be done without it by their plentiful draughts of the sweet early morning air.

After breakfast I went to the window, and here are my notes of what I saw. "How freshly the windows are set out with flowers. Our opposite neighbour has new-garnished her little shop-window with fresh patterns of calico, and scarfs, fichus, and ribands. Two girls are standing at the next door-step, knitting and gossiping; and at the

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next window sits the selfsame pretty young woman that I saw knitting alone there all last Sunday. It is a happy art that distils contentment out of a passive condition and dull employment. The street is thronging with fair blooming peasant-girls come into town to pass their Sunday holiday. How very neat they look with their white linen caps and gay ribands, and full, dark-blue petticoats, so full that they hang from top to bottom like a fluted ruffle. The bodice is of the same material, and sets off in pretty contrast the plaited, snow-white shift-sleeve. There are the duke's

³⁶ Since the previous entry announced their arrival in Wiesbaden on July 26, a Friday, the date of this letter, over a week later, indicates that the letter was written on Sunday, August 4.

³⁷ Literal translation: boiling well. The "Kochbrunnen" is the name of a thermal spring in Wiesbaden. The water is around 67°C/152,6°F.

soldiers mingling among them; their gallants, I suppose. Their deportment is cheerful and decorous.

“Here is a group of healthy-looking little girls in holiday suit,³⁸ their long, thick hair well combed, braided, and prettily coiled, and a little worked worsted sack hanging over one shoulder. The visitors of Wiesbaden--German, Russian, English--are passing to and fro; some taking their Sunday drive, some on foot. Beneath my window, in a small, triangular garden, is a touching chapter in human life; the whole book, indeed, from the beginning almost to the end. There is a table under the trees in the universal German fashion, and wine and Seltzer-water on it; and there, in his armchair, sits an old blind man, with his children, and grand-children, and the blossoms of yet another generation around him. While I write it, the young people are touching their glasses to his, and a little thing has clambered up behind him and is holding a rose to his nose.”

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If you recollect that we are now in Protestant Germany, you will be astonished at the laxity of the Sabbath. The German reformers never, I believe, undertook to reform the Continental Sabbath.³⁹ They probably understood too well the inflexible nature of national customs, and how much more difficult it is to remodel them than to recast faith. We are accustomed to talk of “the horrors of a Continental Sabbath,” and are naturally shocked with an aspect of things so different from our own. But, when I remember the dozing congregations I have seen, the domestics stretched half the heavy day in bed, the young people sitting by the half-closed blind, stealing longing looks out of the window, while the Bible was lying idle on their laps; and the merry shouts of the children at the going down of the sun, as if an enemy had disappeared, it does not seem to me that we can say to the poor, ignorant, toil-worn peasant of Europe, “I am holier than thou!”

I left my journal to go to church. At all these Continental resorts there is service in English, and here the duke permits it to be held in his own church. The service was performed by a clergyman of the Church of England.

At four o'clock we set off for our afternoon walk. The gay shops in the colonnade were all open, but there were few buyers, where buyers most do congregate, at the stalls of the all-coloured, beau-

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tiful Bohemian glass, and of the stag-horn *jimcracks*⁴⁰ so curiously carved by the peasants; even Monsieur Jugel's bookshop was deserted. The English are, for the most part, the buyers, and they do not buy on Sunday. We went into the Kur-Saal Garden, which at this hour is alive with

³⁸ “Holiday suit,” or “Sunday suit,” suggests a more formal dress worn mostly to church or to public outings rather than clothes worn for work during the week.

³⁹ Continental Sabbath was the day of rest and the day to go to church. In 19th-century German Protestantism, going to church and worshiping god on Sunday was not dogmatically followed anymore.

⁴⁰ Also spelled “gimcracks”: a knick-knack or showy item (often useless).

people, hundreds sitting at their little tables on the gravelled area between the hall and a pretty artificial lake, smoking, sipping coffee, wine, and Seltzer-water, and eating ices. A band of capital musicians were playing. We had some discussion whether we should go into the *Kur-Saal*, and finally, determining to see as much as we womankind can of what characterizes the place, we entered. The *Kur-Saal* (cure-hall) belongs to the duke, and its spacious apartments are devoted to banqueting, dancing, and gambling. The grand saloon is a spacious apartment with rows of marble pillars, and behind them niches with statues, alternating with mirrors. It was an odd scene for us of Puritan blood and breeding to witness. A circular gambling-table in the midst of the apartment was surrounded with people five or six deep, some players but more spectators. The game was, I believe, roulette. It was most curious to see with what a cool, imperturbable manner these Germans laid down their gold, and won or lost, as the case might be, on the instant. There were not only old and practised gamblers, but young men, and people apparently of all conditions, and among them women, *ladies*. These are a small minority, seldom, as I am told, more than half a dozen among a hundred men.

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I watched their faces; they looked intent and eager, but I did not, with their change of fortune, detect any change of colour or expression. We walked through the smaller rooms, and found in all gambling-tables and players in plenty, and that where there were fewest spectators the passions of the players were more unveiled.

This buying and selling, and vicious amusement, is indeed a profaning of the day when God has ordained his earth to be a temple of sacred rest from labour, and sordid care, and competitions. When and where will it be so used as to do the work it might achieve--regenerate the world?

We soon emerged into the garden again, and were glad to see a great many more people outside than in. This garden, or rather, ornamented ground, for the greater part of it is merely in grass and trees, extends up the narrowing valley for two miles to the ruins of the old Castle of Sonnenberg.⁴¹ We passed the little lake with its fringe of bright flowers, its social squads of ducks and its lordly swans, and many a patch of bright flowers and shrubberies, and rustic benches with tête-à-tête⁴² pairs or family groups, and kept along a path by a little brook that seems good-naturedly to run just where it looks prettiest and is most wanted, till we mounted the eminence where the feudal castle guarded the pass between two far-reaching valleys, and where the old keep, chapel, and masses and fragments of wall still standing, extend over a space half as large as our village covers. Fragments of the wall form one side

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of a range of cottages, serving a better purpose than when they were the bulwark of a half-savage warrior.

⁴¹ First officially referenced in 1221, Sonnenberg Castle belonged to the house of Nassau and was damaged and rebuilt multiple times. Until 1816, it was used as a quarry. In 1826, the Kurhaus of Wiesbaden created a viewing platform within the ruins of Sonnenberg Castle as well as a room in the tower. At the time of Sedgwick's visit, it was a popular tourist site for travelers visiting Wiesbaden.

⁴² Tête-à-tête (French; "head-to-head") refers to private conversations held in close proximity.

Sonnenberg is kept in beautiful order by the duke's command and money. There are plantations of furze⁴³ about the old walls, narrow labyrinthine walks enclosed with shrubbery and imbowered with clematis, and seats wherever rests are wanted. I unluckily disturbed a tête-à-tête to-day, which, if there be truth in "love's speechless messages," will make a deep mark in the memory of two happy-looking young people.

There is a compact village nestled close under the ruins of the castle. Here it was that the feudal dependants of the lord lived, and here the rural population is still penned. These villages are picturesque objects in the landscape, but, on a close inspection, they are squalid, dirty, most comfortless places, where the labouring poor are huddled together without that good gift--sweet air, and plenty of it, which seem as much their right as the birds'.

When I see the young ones here playing round a heap of manure that is stacked up before their door, I think how favoured are the children of the poorest poor of our New-England villages--but softly--the hard-pressed German peasant, in his pent-up village, has a look of contentment and cheerfulness that our people have not. If his necessities are greater, his desires are fewer. God is the father of all, and these are his compensations.

We got home to Burgh-strasse just as the last hues
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of twilight were fading from the clouds, and just as K. was taking off her hat she remembered that, after coming down from the castle, she turned aside to gather some flowers, and meanwhile hung her bag, containing sundry articles belonging to herself and *my* purse, on the railing of a bridge. What was to be done? We hoped that in the dusky twilight it might have escaped observation. K. proposed sending for a donkey and going herself in search of it. I consented, being most virtuously inclined (as those to whom it costs nothing are apt to be) to impress on Miss K. a salutary lesson. The donkey came, and off she set, attended by François and followed by a deformed donkey driver with the poking-stick, and everlasting *A-R-R-H*, much to the diversion of the denizens of Burgh-strasse, who were all on their doorsteps looking on. She was hardly out of my sight before I repented sending her off with these foreign people into the now obscure and deserted walk. I thought there was an evil omen in the donkey-boy's hump-back, and, in short, I lost all feeling for "my ducats" in apprehension for "my daughter;" and when she returned in safety without the bag, I cared not for Herr Leisring's assurance "that it would yet be found; that it was rare anything was lost at Wiesbaden."

This morning "my ducats" rose again to their full value in my esteem, and just as I was pondering on all I might have done with them, Leisring's broad,

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charming face appeared at the door with the announcement, "On l'a trouvée, mademoiselle" (It is found!), and he reiterated, with a just burgher pride, "rarely is anything lost at Wiesbaden." The bag, he says, was found by a "writer" and left with the police, and Leisring, the writer, and the

⁴³ A species of shrubs, also known as gorse and as whin, characterized by their bright yellow flowers.

police, all decline compensation or reward. If this abstemiousness had occurred in our country, we might, perhaps, have thought it peculiar to it.

I went last evening with the girls to a ball given every week to such as choose to attend it; I went, notwithstanding Mr. ____'s assurance (with a horror not quite fitting an American) that we should meet "Tom, Dick, and Harry there." One of the girls replied that "Tom, Dick, and Harry were such very well-behaved people here, that there was no objection to meeting them;" and so, fortified by the approbation of our English friends Miss ____ and Miss ____, who are sufficiently fastidious, we went. The company assembled in the grand saloon of the Kur-Saal at the indefinite hour at which our evening lectures are appointed, "early candle-lighting," and it was rather miscellaneous, some in full, some in half dress. The girls had been told it was customary to dance, when asked, without waiting for the formality of an introduction, and they were only too happy to obtain their favourite exercise by a courteous conformity to the customs of the country. They had partners, and very nice ones, in plenty. I

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was struck with the solemn justice of one youth, who, dispensing his favour with an equal hand, engaged the three at the same time, one for a quadrille, one for a gallopade, and one for a waltz. We had no acquaintance in the room, no onerous dignity to maintain; the girls had respectful partners, plenty of dancing, and no fagging, as we were at home and in bed by eleven.

It seems to me that Sir F. Head,⁴⁴ in his humorous account of the German dinner,⁴⁵ has done some injustice to the German cuisine. After you have learned to thread its mazes to the last act of its intricate plot, you may, passing by its various greasy messes, find the substantial solace of roast fowls, hare, and delicious venison, that have been pushed back in the course of precedence by the puddings and sweet sauces. These puddings and sauces are lighter and more wholesome than I have seen elsewhere. Indeed, the drama, after the prologue of the soup, opens with a tempting boiled beef, at which I am sure a "Grosvenor-street cat,"⁴⁶ if not as pampered as my lord's butler, would *not*, in spite of Sir Francis' assertion, turn up his whisker.

We dine at the Quatre Saisons, the hotel nearest to us, and as we are told, the best table d'hôte⁴⁷ in the place. There is a one o'clock, and in deference to the English, a five o'clock dinner. The universal German dinner-hour is one. The price at one is a florin--about forty-two cents; at five, a Prussian

⁴⁴ Sir Francis Bond Head (English, 1793-1875), author and politician.

⁴⁵ From "The Dinner" (54-62), a chapter from the travel guide entitled *Bubbles from the Brunnen of Nassau, by an Old Man* (1834).

⁴⁶ Sir F. Head states: "[T]he barren meat from which the said soup has been extracted is produced. Of course it is dry, tasteless, withered-looking stuff, which a Grosvenor-square cat would not touch with its whisker" (56). Grosvenor Square is a garden square in the wealthy Mayfair district in London.

⁴⁷ Fixed menu with several courses at a fixed price (French).

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dollar--about seventy-five cents. This is without wine. We dine usually at one, but we have been at the five o'clock table, and we see no other difference than the more aristocratic price of that aristocratic hour. Besides the *trifling* advantage of dining at one in reference to health, it leaves the best hours of the day free for out-of-door pleasures. The order and accompaniments of our dinner are agreeable; the tables are set on three sides of a spacious *salon à manger*,⁴⁸ with a smaller table in the centre of the room, where the landlord (who carves artistically) carves the dinner. His eyes are everywhere. Not a guest escapes his observation, not a waiter omits his duty.

When the clock is close upon the stroke of one, people may be seen from every direction bending their steps towards the hotel. You leave your hats and bonnets in an ante-room. The *ober kelner* (head-waiter) receives you at the door, and conducts you to your seats. The table is always covered with clean (not very fine) German table-linen, and of course, supplied with napkins. Pots with choice odorous plants in flower are set at short intervals the whole length of the table; a good band of music is playing in the orchestra. The dinner-service is a coarse white porcelain. As soon as you are seated, little girls come round with baskets of bouquets, which you are offered without solicitation. You may have one, if you will, for a halfpenny, and a sweet smile from the little flower-girl thrown into the bargain. Then come young women with a printed sheet con-

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taining a register of the arrivals within the last three days, for which you pay a penny. I observe the new-comers always buy one, liking, perhaps, for once in their lives, to see their names in print. The *carte à vin* is then presented, and, if you please, you may select an excellent *Rhine* wine for twenty-five cents a bottle, or you may pay the prices we pay at home for Burgundy and Champagne.⁴⁹ These preliminaries over, the dinner begins, and occupies between one and two hours, never less than an hour and a half. The meats are placed on the table, then taken off, carved, and offered to each guest. You see none of those eager looks or hasty movements that betray the anxieties of our people lest a favourite dish should escape. A German eats as long and as leisurely as he pleases at one thing, sure that all will be offered to him in turn and they are the most indefatigable of eaters; not a meat, not a vegetable comes on table which they do not partake. A single plate of the cabbage saturated with grease that I have seen a German lady eat, would, as our little S. said when she squeezed the chicken to death, have "deaded" one of our dyspeptics "*wery* dead;" and this plate of cabbage is one of thirty varieties. The quiet and order of the table are admirable. The servants are never in a hurry, and never blunder. You know what angry, pathetic, and bewildering calls of "Waiter!" "Waiter!" we hear at our tables. I have never heard the call of "Kelner!" from a German.

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I leave the table each day expecting half the people will die of apoplexy before to-morrow, but to-morrow they all come forth with placid faces and fresh appetites! Is this the result of their leisurely eating? or their serene, social, and enjoying tempers? or their lives,

⁴⁸ Dining Hall (French).

⁴⁹ Not the hotel prices, but about one dollar and fifty cents. **Sedgwick's note.**

exempt from the keen competitions and eager pursuits of ours? or their living out of doors? or all of these together? I leave you to solve a problem that puzzles me.

A German, of whatever condition, bows to his neighbours when he sits down and when he rises from table, and addresses some passing civility to them. We are sometimes amused at the questions that are asked us, such as, "Whether English is spoken in America?" A gentleman asked me "Whether we came from New-York or New-Orleans?" as if they were our only cities; and another said, in good faith, "Of course there is no society except in New-York!" Oh, *genii locorum* of our little inland villages, forgive them!

We are too often reminded how far our country is from this. Yesterday a Russian gentleman said to K., "Qui est le souverain de votre pays, mademoiselle?" "Monsieur Van Buren est le President des Etats Unis." "Ah, oui. Mais j'ai entendu le nom de Jackson. Il est du bas peuple n'est ce pas?"

"Comment s'appellent les chefs des petits arrondissements?"⁵⁰ It might be salutary to such of our

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people as are over anxious about what figure they make in foreign eyes to know they make none.

I have been attracted to the window every morning since I have been here by the troops of children passing to the public school, their hands full of books and slates; the girls dressed in cheaper materials, but much like those of our village-schools, except that their rich German hair is uncovered, and they all, the poorest among them, wear good stockings--so much for the universality of German knitting. Education is compulsory here as in Prussia; the parent who cannot produce a good reason for the absence of the child pays a fine. I went into the girls' school nearest to us this morning. They looked as intelligent, as early developed, and as bright as our own children.

They went successfully through their exercises in reading, geography, and arithmetic. At an interval in these lessons, the master, who was a grave personage some sixty years old, took from a case a violin and gave them a music lesson, which, if one might judge from the apparent refreshment of their young spirits, was an aliment well suited to them. What is to be the result of this education system in Germany? Will people, thus taught, be contented to work for potatoes and black bread?

We have been in search of an infant school which we were told was near the *Poste*.
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We passed the *Poste* and lost our clew, so I resorted to my usual resource, a bookseller, who directed me up a steep, narrow street, and told me to ask for the "*Klein Kinder Schule*." I

⁵⁰ "Who is the sovereign of your country, miss?" "Mr. Van Buren is the President of the United States." "Ah, yes. But I have heard the name of Jackson. He sprang from the lower class, did he not?" "Pray what is the title of the chiefs of the lesser departments?" **Sedgwick's note.**

went on, confident in my “open seshime,” but nothing could be more ludicrous than my stupefaction when the good people to whom I uttered my given words, not doubting that one who could speak so glibly could also understand, poured out a volume of German upon me; up--up we went, half the people in the street, with humane interest, looking after us, till we came to the window of an apartment that opened on to a court where the little urchins were seated. The appearance of visitors was a signal for the cessation of their studies. There was a general rising and rush to their plays; but first the little things, from two years old to six, came, unbidden, to us with smiling faces, to shake our hands. It puzzles me as much to know how this quality of social freedom gets into the German nature, as how the African’s skin became black! If a stranger were to go, in like manner, among our school children, and they were forced forward by a rule, they would advance with downcast eyes and murky looks, as if the very demon of bashfulness stiffened their limbs. The infant-school is supported by charitable contributions, and conducted much like our infant-schools. The children stay all day, and the parent pays a kreutzer for the dinner of each--less than a penny. We followed them to their plays, and as I looked at them trundling their little

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barrows and building pyramids of gravel, and the while devouring black bread, I longed to transport them to those unopened storehouses of abundance which the Father of all has reserved in our untrodden “West” for the starved labourers of Europe.

But they were a merry little company, and, if no other, they have here a harvest of contentment and smiles.

Our letters came to-day! The delay was owing to the change in our plans. While we were every day going to the poste for them they were lying quietly at Wildbad. This interruption of communication with those who are bound up in the bundle of life with us, is one of the severest trials of a traveller. It was past eleven when we had finished reading them, and then I went to bed with mine under my pillow. I could as easily have gone to sleep if the hearts of those who wrote them had been throbbing there! “Blessings on him who invented sleep!” says Sancho. “Blessings on him,” say I, “who invented that art that makes sleep sweet and awaking happy!”

Our good landlord, Leisring, is, in all exigencies, our “point d’appui.”⁵¹ He has the broad, truth-telling German face, and a bonhomie quite his own. He is, in an humbler position, a Sir Roger de Coverly;⁵² and his family and numerous dependants seem

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to have as kind a master as was the good knight. He is a master-carpenter, and is just now

⁵¹ Point of contact (French).

⁵² Sir Roger de Coverly is a fictional character created by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in *The Spectator*. Described as representing a typical country gentleman.

employed in finishing off the new palace which the Duke of Nassau⁵³ is building for his duchess, and has twelve subordinates in his service--nine journeymen and three apprentices. To the nine journeymen, he tells me, he has paid, in the last four months, one thousand florins, about eleven dollars a month each, besides feeding them. The apprentices he supports, and gives them a trifle in money. They eat in a back building attached to ours. I asked leave to-day, while they were at dinner, to look in upon them. They had clean linen on their table, and everything appeared comfortable. They are allowed three rolls of brown bread for breakfast, and coffee, beer, or schnapps (a mixture with some sort of spirit), whichever they prefer. They have soup, meat, and vegetables for dinner, and soup, bread, butter, and cheese for supper. A florin and a half (sixty cents) pays for the meat for their dinner.⁵⁴ The best butter is twenty-four kreutzers (eighteen cents) a pound; the rolls a kreutzer each. Vegetables are excessively cheap.

There is a law in Germany compelling an apprentice, when the term of his apprenticeship is completed, to travel a year, to work in different towns, and enrich himself with the improvements in his art. In each town there is an inn for these

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travelling mechanics. After reporting himself to the police, he goes there and then finds employment. You meet these young men on the road with their knapsacks,⁵⁵ and they often take off their caps and present them at your carriage-window, modestly asking a halfpence. At first we were quite indignant at seeing such decent-looking people begging. But our hasty misjudgments have been corrected by the information that these poor youths go forth penniless; that it is not considered a degradation for them to solicit in this way; and that they are, in fact, sustained by the wayside aid of their countrymen.

We have made another experiment of German society. The girls went with E. to a soirée at the Kur-Saal. This was a *soirée musicale*, that is, a ball beginning with a concert; a higher entertainment, and more choice in its company than the one I have described to you. The only condition for admission was the payment of a little less than a dollar for the ticket of each person. They all came home charmed with the young duchess, with her very sweet, blond beauty, simple dress, and unassuming and affable manners. They were the more pleased as they contrasted her with another sprig, or, rather, sturdy branch of a royal house: a certain Russian princess, who, though assuredly of a very coarse material, fancies herself of a choicer clay than the people about her. This woman, whom

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we meet everywhere, in the garden, at the table d'hôte, and at the Kochbrunnen, is quite the

⁵³ Duke of Nassau refers to Adolphe Grand Duke of Luxembourg, who was the duke from 1839 to 1869. "The new palace" refers to the Wiesbaden City Palace (Stadtschloss), which was built from 1837-1841.

⁵⁴ The game is all taken in the duke's preserves, and is, of course, his property. Old venison is four kreutzers a pound; young from twelve to sixteen; a hare without the skin twenty-four kreutzers (eighteen cents). **Sedgwick's note.**

⁵⁵ Common American term referring to a small backpack.

noisiest and most vulgar person we encounter. Such a person would naturally be fastidious in her associates; and her prime favourite, if we may judge from their constant juxtaposition, is a coloured man with woolly hair, some say from New-Orleans, others that he is a West Indian. I do not speak of this in any disrespect to him, but as a proof that colour is no disqualification in European society.

Last night, while the fair young duchess was dancing at a brilliant soirée at her palace at Bieberich, a courier arrived with the news of the duke's death of apoplexy while drinking the waters of his bubbles of Kissingen. Rather a startling change from that sound of revelry to the knell of widowhood--from being the "cynosure of all eyes" to be the dowager stepdame of the reigning duke!

Our host tells us the duke was "un bon enfant" (a good fellow), and much beloved, and will be much regretted. No one can doubt that a sober, well-intentioned man of forty-five, who is to be succeeded by a boy of twenty, is a great loss to his people. Where power has, as here, no constitutional restrictions, the people are at the mercy of the personal character of the sovereign.

The good people of Wiesbaden seem to take the
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death of their political father very coolly. I see no demonstrations of mourning except that the bells are rung an hour daily, and that the music has ceased at our dinners and in the garden, and that the public amusements are stopped: a proceeding not likely to endear the duke's memory to the inn-keepers and their host of dependants, who are all in despair lest their guests should take their departure. The influx of the money-spending English is a great source of profit to the duchy of Nassau, so that nothing can be more impolitic than this prohibition, which extends to Schwalbach, Schlangenbad, &c.

We have now been here more than a month, and I may venture to speak to you of what has been a constant subject of admiration to us all, the manners of the Germans. The English race, root and branch, are, what with their natural shyness, their conventional reserves, and their radical uncourteousness, cold and repelling. The politeness of the French is conventional. It seems in part the result of their sense of personal grace, and in part of a selfish calculation of making the most of what costs nothing; and partly, no doubt, it is the spontaneous effect of a vivacious nature. There is a deep-seated humanity in the courtesy of the Germans. They always seem to be feeling a gentle pressure from the cord that interlaces them with their species. They

do not wait, as Schiller⁵⁶ says, till you “freely invite” to “friendly stretch you a hand,” but the hand is in-

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stinctively stretched out and the kind deed ready to follow it.

This suavity is not limited to any rank or condition. It extends all the way down from the prince to the poorest peasant. Some of our party driving out in a hackney-coach yesterday, met some German ladies in a coach with four horses, postillions, footmen in livery, and other marks of rank and wealth. What would Americans have done in a similar position? Probably looked away and seemed unconscious. And English ladies would have done the same, or, as I have seen them in Hyde Park, have leaned back in their carriages, and stared with an air of mingled indifference and insolence through their eyeglasses, as if their inferiors in condition could bear to be stared at. The German ladies bowed most courteously to the humble strangers in the hackney-coach.

Yesterday, at the table d’hôte, I observed a perpendicular old gentleman, who looked as if he had been born before any profane dreams of levelling down the steeps of aristocracy had entered the mind of man, and whose servant, in rich livery, as stiff as himself, was in waiting behind him, bow to the persons opposite to him as he took his seat, and to those on his right hand and his left.

Soon after we came here, a gentleman with whom we passed a few hours in a Rhine steamer met us

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at the table d’hôte. “Had I not,” he said, “the pleasure of coming from Bonn to Cologne with you? I see one of your party is absent. She is, I hope, well,” &c. To appreciate as they deserve these wayside courtesies, you should see the relentless English we come in contact with, who, like ghosts, *never* “speak till they are spoken to.”

A few days since, as we were issuing from our lodgings, a very gentlemanly German stopped us, begging our pardons, and saying, “English, I believe?” and then added, that as we appeared to be strangers in quest of lodgings, as he had just been, he would take the liberty to give us the addresses of two or three that had been recommended to him. This was truly a Samaritan--a *German* kindness. The hotel-keepers, that important class to travellers, often blend with the accurate performance of the duties of “mine host” the kindness of a friend. Their civility, freedom, and gentlemanliness remind me of my friend Cozzens⁵⁷ and others, the best specimens of their fraternity at home. The landlord often sits at the table with his guests, and, with his own country people, converses on terms of apparent equality.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (German, 1759-1805), polymath--translator, writer, poet, dramatist, philosopher, and historian.

⁵⁷ Likely William B. Cozzens (American, 1787-1864), manager of the American Hotel in New York City in the 1830s.

⁵⁸ This opinion may appear to have been formed on a very slight acquaintance with the country. It was afterward amply confirmed in Germany and Switzerland, where the manners are essentially the same. **Sedgwick’s note.**

The same self-respect blends with the civility of the shopkeeper. He is very happy to serve and suit you, but, if he cannot, he is ready to direct you elsewhere. Shopmen have repeatedly, unasked, sent

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a person to guide us through the intricate Continental streets to another shop.

The domestics are prompt, faithful, and cheerful in their services. There is freedom, but no presumption in their manners, and nothing of that unhappy uncertainty as to their exact position, so uncomfortable in our people. In all these subordinate classes you see nothing of the cringing servility that marks them in England, and to which they are exposed by their direct dependance on their employers.

Our English friend, Miss _____, who has been repeatedly in Germany, and is a good observer, acquiesces in the truth of my observations, and says this general freedom of deportment comes from people of all ranks freely mingling together. If so, this surely is a healthy influence, a natural and beneficent effect from an obedience to that Divine precept, "honour all men." Wo to those who set the brethren of one family off into *castes*, and build up walls between them so that they cannot freely grasp hands and exchange smiles!

I have just been to the *poste*⁵⁹ to see our English friends off. Their departure is a sad epoch to us, for they have been our solace and delight. A curious scene is the "poste" in a Continental town. Here (and ordinarily, I believe) it has a quadrangular court, enclosed on three sides by a hotel and its offices, including that for letters, and having on the fourth side a passage through a stone arch to the

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street. Here the public coaches arrive, and hence take their departure; and here the travellers and their luggage are taken up and discharged. I will describe the scene to you precisely as I just saw it. Besides the diligence for Schwalbach,⁶⁰ in which our friends were going, and towards which the luggage of various passengers was converging, while that which exceeded the authorized weight was passing through the postoffice window out of the hands of the weighmaster,⁶¹ there were private carriages arriving and departing. Some of these were elegant, and the horses curveting and prancing right royally, so that I fancied they must be carrying German princes, or *Englishmen*, who are princes all over Europe.

My friend's postillion, with his yellow and black Nassau livery, his official band round his arm, his leather boots cut to a peak in front and extending some inches above his knee, his

⁵⁹ Post office (French).

⁶⁰ Diligence: A large horse-drawn carriage for public transportation, often with compartments; passengers paid a fare. <https://www.meisterdrucke.ie/fine-art-prints/Unknown-artist/1000158/Public-transport:-passengers-entering-the-Parisienn-Diligence.-Engraving-of-the-19th-century-Private-Collection.html> Sedgwick erroneously spells Bad Schwalbach "Sewalback." It is another spa (Kurbad) that she and her family visited on their tour through Hessia.

⁶¹ The allowed weight of baggage in Germany as well as in France is small, thirty pounds, I think. And for the excess of this you pay at so high a rate, that the transportation of one's luggage often costs more than that of one's self. **Sedgwick's note.**

immense yellow tassel bobbing over his shoulder, was blowing his note of preparation from the trumpet he carries at his side. Fat Germans stood at the windows of the different stories of the hotel, smoking and talking to women as fat as they. There were other Germans, mustachioed and imperturbable, coolly awaiting the moment of departure, meandering about among the carriages and barrows, with their pipes

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dangling from one side of their mouths, and their incessant “Ja,” “Ja wohl” (yes--yes, indeed), dropping from the other. Our friend’s female fellow-passengers, in caps without bonnets, had ensconced themselves in a little nook, where they were knitting as if they were neither part nor parcel of this stirring world.

But what a contrast to this quietude, the English traveller! You may know him by the quantity and variety of his luggage, by every ingenious contrivance for comfort (alas! comfort implies fixture), impregnable English trunks, travelling-bags, dressing-cases, cased provisions for all the possible wants that civilization generates, and all in travelling armour. There is no flexibility about an Englishman, no adaptation to circumstances and exigencies. He must stand forth, wherever he goes, the impersonation of his island-home. I said his luggage betrayed him; I am sure his face and demeanour do. His muscles are in a state of tension, his nerves seem to be on the outside of his coat, his eyebrows are in motion, he looks, as my friend says she felt when she first came to such a place as this, “as if all the people about her were *rats*;” his voice is quick and harsh, and his words none of the sweetest, so that you do not wonder the Continental people have fastened on him the descriptive soubriquet⁶² of “Monsieur God-d--n.”

An interesting little episode to me in this bustling scene was Miss W., the very essence of refinement and *English gentleness*, running hither and

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yon, settling with porters, garçons, and maitres de poste,⁶³ while her Yorkshire maid was watching, with dismay, the rough handling of her lady’s precious parcels, and Miss St. L. looking as if she did not care if they were all lost, if she could but save her friend from these rough duties, to which she is compelled by being the only one of the party who speaks German.

My dear C.,

We have been waiting for fine weather, that being an indispensable element in a party of pleasure, for an excursion down the Rhine, and this morning we set off, the girls and myself, without any attendant of mankind; an elegant superfluity, as we are beginning to think.

While François was getting our *billets*, we, eager to secure the best places in the diligence, jostled past the Germans, who stood quietly awaiting the conductor’s summons; and when, ten minutes after, our fellow-passengers were getting in, offering to one another precedence, the conductor came to us and said, “Ah, ladies, you are placed; I had allotted better

⁶² Nickname (French).

⁶³ Postman (French).

seats for you.” Was not this an appropriate punishment for our selfish and truly national hurrying? I could give you many instances of similar offences committed by ourselves and other travellers among these “live-and-let-live” people. There is a steam navigation company on the Rhine, who have three boats ascending and descending daily; this en-

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ables you to pay your passage to a certain place, and avail yourself of each boat or all, as suits your convenience. You are at liberty, at any point you please, to quit the steamer, ramble for two or three hours on the shore, and then proceed on your expedition. We are descending the river rapidly; the current runs at the rate of six miles an hour.

The big Russian princess, who is a sort of “man of the sea” to us, is flourishing up and down the deck with two of her suite, one on each side, as if to guard her from contact with the plebeian world. Every look and motion says “I do *not* love the people.” The royal brood may wince, but they must submit to the democratic tendencies of the age. These steamers and rail-cars are undermining their elevations. I have not, as you know, my dear C., any vulgar hostility to those who are the heirs of the usurpations of elder times--“the accident of an accident”--but when I see a person, radically vulgar like this woman, queening it among those who are her superiors in everything but this accidental greatness, my Puritan blood and republican breeding get the better of my humanity.

We are passing the chateau of Johannisberg--a castle of Prince Metternich, an immense white edifice which, as we see it, looks much like a Saratoga hotel.⁶⁴ It is on a gently-sloping hill, covered with vines which confessedly produce the best Rhine wine. “The extent of the vineyard is,” Murray says, “fifty-five acres. Its produce in good years amounts to about forty butts, and has been valued at

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80,000 florins.” This vineyard was formerly attached to the Abbey of St. John; and a genial time, no doubt, the merry monks had of it. Would they not have regarded the modern tabooing of wine as the *ne plus ultra* of heresy? But, poor fellows! their abbey and their wine were long ago secularized, and have fallen into the hands of military and political spoilers. Napoleon made an imperial gift of these vineyards to Marshal Kellerman, and in 1816 they again changed hands, being presented to Metternich by the Emperor of Austria. I have drunk wine bearing the name of Johannisberg in New-York, but I have been told by a person who had tasted it at Metternich's table, that it is only to be found unadulterated there. Murray informs us that they permit the grape to pass the point of seeming perfection before they gather it, believing that the wine gains in body by this, and that so precious are the grapes that those which have fallen are picked up by a fork made for the purpose.

We met a countryman to-day who has been travelling through France and Italy with his

⁶⁴ The United States Hotel, the Grand Union Hotel, and the Grand Central Hotel in 19th-century Saratoga Springs, N.Y., were large hotels painted white, possibly designed to resemble the chateau of Johannisberg.

sister, “without any language,” he says, “but that spoken on the rock of Plymouth,” which, true to his English blood, he pronounces, with infinite satisfaction, to be the best, and all-sufficient. He is a fair specimen of that class of Anglo-American travellers who find quite enough particulars, in which every country is inferior to their own, to fill up the field of their [186 BRAUBACH.]

observation. He has just crossed the deck to say to me, “I have let them know what a *tall* place America is; I have told them that an American steamer will carry 2000 people and 1000 bales of cotton, and go down the river *and up* twice as fast as a Rhine steamer.” He has *not* told them that a Rhine steamer is far superior in its arrangement and refinement to ours. These little patriotic vanities are pleasant solaces when one is three thousand miles from home—but truth is better.

Braubach.--We arrived here at half past three, having passed about fifty miles of the most enchanting scenery on the Rhine. Imagine, my dear C., a little strip of level land, not very many yards wide, between the river and precipitous rocks; a village with its weather-stained houses in this pent-up space; an old chateau with its walls and towers, and at the summit of the rocks, and hanging over them, for the rocks actually project from the perpendicular, the stern old Castle of Marksburg, and you have our present position. Murray says this castle is the only one of the strongholds of the middle ages that has been preserved unaltered, the beau ideal of an old castle and this is why we have come to see it. I am sitting at the window of the chateau, now the *Gasthaus zur Phillipsburg*. Under my window is a garden with grapes, interspersed with fruit-trees and flowers, and enclosed by a white paling, and finishing at each end with the old towers of the castle-

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wall. Along the narrow road between the garden and the river there are peasant-girls going homeward with baskets of fresh-mown grass on their heads, followed by peasants in their dark blouses, with their sickles swung over their shoulders. Little boats are gliding to and fro, guided, and, as their ringing voices tell you, enjoyed by children. But here is mine host to tell us the *esels*⁶⁵ are ready the four asses we have ordered to take us to Marksburg.

Of all “riding privileges,” that on a donkey is the least. You are set on to something half cushion, half saddle, that neither has itself nor imparts rest. Though there is a semicircular rampart erected, to guard you from the accident of “high vaulting ambition,” it seems inevitable that you must fall on one side or the other. There is a shingle⁶⁶ strapped to the saddle for the right foot, and a stirrup for the left; fortunate are you if you can extricate your feet from both. A merry procession we had of it, however, up the winding road to Marksburg. The Braubach donkeys

⁶⁵ Donkeys (German). The German noun “Esel” is used for both singular and plural. Sedgwick’s additional “s” playfully adapts the English plural to the German language.

⁶⁶ In the context of riding, shingle is an old English term that refers to a belt or girdle.

have not had much custom of late, I fancy, for we ran a race, fairly distancing our donkey-drivers, who seemed much amused with our way of proceeding. The fellow who was spokesman demanded, as I thought, an exorbitant price, and I appealed to one of his comrades, who decided that half he asked was quite enough. I mention this with pleasure, because it is the only thing of the sort we have had to complain of since

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we came into Germany. The fellow was a stranger and an alien from this worthy household, I am sure he had a most *un*-German expression.

The castle has been, till recently, a state-prison, and is now occupied by invalid soldiers. We were led through dark passages and up a winding stone staircase to the apartment where prisoners were put to the rack; and we were shown another gloomy den, where there were two uprights and a transverse beam, and beneath them a trap-door; if not satisfied with so much of the story as these objects intimate, you may descend and search for the bones which you will certainly find there! In another apartment are some mediocre paintings on the wall, done with only a gleam of light by a poor fellow who had thus happily beguiled weary years of imprisonment. On the whole, the castle was not so interesting, not nearly so striking as I expected. Nothing is left to indicate the rude luxury of its lordly masters; its aspect is merely that of an ill-contrived prison.

When we got back to the inn an old man, who seemed an *habitué*,⁶⁷ asked us, in very good French (which Germans of the inferior orders never speak), to walk into the garden. Such a pretty garden, with its towers, its fragment of the old castle-wall, its bowers and wreaths of grapes, and such grapes; oh, you would go mad if you could see them, remembering your seasons of hope and despair over

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your few frostbitten vines. The old man picked some plumbs [plums] and served them to us with sylvan grace on a grape-leaf. We fell into conversation. He told me the story of his life; it was common enough, but there was a gentleness and sensibility in his voice and expression very uncommon. He came from Alsace, and was travelling in this vicinity with his wife and only surviving child, a girl, "trying to forget home;" for he had lost at short intervals his three sons, when his daughter was asked in marriage by a young man of Braubach. The parents gave their consent, and, wisely resolving to have but one home among them, he bought this old chateau, and converted it into the *Hotel zur Phillipsburg*; and here he and his wife have reposed under the spreading shadow of their posterity. "I am not rich," he said, "but I have enough. I thought myself happy; my life was gliding in the midst of my family and my vines; but man, with whom nothing lasts, should not call himself happy. Seven months ago my wife died"--the old man's eyes filled--"it was a sudden and a hard blow; we must bow before the stroke of the good God! My daughter has four children. I am their instructor. In my youth I was at college, and, afterward

⁶⁷ Regular visitor (French).

being engaged in commerce, I travelled: so I can teach them French, Dutch, and Italian. Certainly I am not a severe master; but they love me, and love can do more than fear. The youngest is sometimes too much for me. He is a superb boy, madame! When I say, ‘Julius, come to your lessons!’ he answers, ‘Oh, it is too fine

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weather to study; see how the sun shines, grandfather, and the boys are all at play,’ and away he goes.” You may think me as garrulous as the old man to repeat all this to you, since I cannot send with it this lovely scene in twilight, harmonizing so well with the twilight of his closing life.

I inquired into the condition of the poor in this neighbourhood. He says their poverty is extreme. They live on potatoes and *some* black bread; on Sunday they have, for a family, half a pound of meat. A woman with three or four children to support has a florin a month allowed her. Begging is prohibited, but they must subsist on charity. Every hotel has a poors’ box, of which the magistrate keeps the key, and comes each month to take out and distribute the travellers’ alms.⁶⁸ He says that, whenever a poor woman of the village lies in, she is supplied for fifteen days from their plentiful table. God bless their basket and their store!

We left Braubach this morning. The old grandfather and that *youngest* grandchild, “a superb boy,” truly, came to the shore with us, and we exchanged cordial good wishes at parting.

As we pushed off in our little boat and looked up to the precipitous shore, it seemed, even while we gazed on them, incredible that the vines should be reached for cultivation there, where they hung like a

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rich drapery. The peasants, women as well as men, scale the precipices to dress their vines, and every particle of manure is carried up on their shoulders.

In the steepest places the vines are put in baskets as the only way of retaining the soil about them. For the most part the vineyards are a series of terraces or steps (we have counted from twenty to thirty) covering the face of the hill. Each terrace is supported by a wall from five to ten feet high. Murray tells us the Rhineland vinedresser is not rich, but generally the possessor of the vineyard he cultivates. What a beautiful gift of Providence is the vine to the patient, contented tiller of ground that would produce nothing but this! and this “makes glad the heart of man.”

The steamer carried us past village after village most beautiful as seen in passing; but again, my dear C., I warn you not to let this, the greenest word in memory, call before you wide streets, shaded courtyards, ample space, and all rural luxuries. A village here is a mass of wretched dwellings stuck against mouldering walls, where human existence, in point of comfort, is nearly on a level with the brutes; in fact, the same roof often shelters all the *live-stock*, from the master to his ass. The streets are scarcely wide enough for a carriage to pass, and the lanes

⁶⁸ I have repeatedly observed these boxes affixed to the wall, and have been told that a German rarely passes them without a donation. **Sedgwick’s note.**

are but a flea's leap across—a measurement that naturally occurs here. But mark the compensating blessing! The denizens of these dreary places, steeped to the very lips in poverty, are a smiling, kindly people.

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We landed at St. Goar's, in the midst of the most enchanting scenery of the Rhine, and in showery weather giving us the most favourable possible light. Nature, like "ladies and fine Holland," owes much of its effect to the right disposition of light and shadow. The mountains enclose this little village. The Mouse and the Cat, the beautiful ruins of two castles, are at either extremity of the view. The "Cat" is well stationed to watch its prey, but, contrary to all precedent, the "Mouse" is said always to have been the strongest when they were held by their lords, rivals and enemies. The immense Castle of Rheinfels, half way up the steep behind St. Goar, looks, as L. says, like a great bulldog that might have kept all its subordinates civil. Rheinfels, as early as the fourteenth century, was the strongest hold on the Rhine. It was built by a Count Deither,⁶⁹ who, secure in his power, levied tribute (the exclusive privilege of governments at present, and they, as Murray happily says, call it *laying duties*) with such unsparing cupidity that the free cities of Germany confederated against him, and not only dismantled his castle, but the other "robbers' nests" on the Rhine.

The girls carried my carpet-bag up to the inn, which being rather weighty with my journal, one of them expressed the pious wish it "might not be so heavy in the reading as the carrying." On our way we went into a most grotesque little Catholic church, where an image of the good hermit who

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gave his name to the village is preserved. He looks like an honest German, and, though his head had been crowned with a fresh garland of roses last Sunday, and plenty of cherubs were hovering round him, I fancied he would have liked better a pipe in his mouth and a table before him, and the cherubs converted into garçons, to serve him with Rhine wine and Seltzer-water.

We took a boy from the steps of "The Lily" to cross the river with us and guide us up the Schweitzer Thal (the Swiss Valley). We followed the pathway of a little brook resembling some of our mountain-haunts. *Die Katz*⁷⁰ hung over our heads half way up a steep, which Johanne (our guide) told us was higher than the Lurlieburg. It may be, but there is nothing on the Rhine so grand as this pile of rocks, which look with scorn on the perishable castles built with man's hands. It is in the whirlpool in their deep shadow that Undine, the loveliest of water-nymphs, holds her court. No wonder it requires, as says the faith of the peasants of St. Goar, the miraculous power of their canonized hermit to deliver the ensnared from her enchantments.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Count Diether VIII of Katzenelnbogen (Prussian German, 1342-1402; Sedgwick misspells his name) ruled over the Middle Rhine region during the 14th century.

⁷⁰ Die Katz (Burg Katz) is one of the castles of the family "Katzenelnbogen" that still remains today, hanging from a cliff overlooking the city.

⁷¹ The mythical creatures called Undines originated in the writings of Paracelsus, born Theophrastus von Hohenheim (Swiss, 1453-1564), a physician, alchemist, lay theologian, and philosopher of the German Renaissance. According to various sources, an Undine could win an eternal soul if she married a human, but if he betrayed her she could curse his ability to breathe naturally, condemning him to eternal wakefulness in order to stay alive.

We walked a mile up the valley, and loitered at little nooks, so walled in by the hills that we looked up to the sky as from the bottom of a well. To us it appeared clear and blue as a sapphire, but we were sprinkled with rain so sparkling that L. said the sun was melting and coming down in drops! I amused myself with finding out as much of my little guide's history as could be unlocked with the talis-

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manic words "father," "mother," "brother," helped out with dumb show; and I found out that he had one sister that was shorter than he, and one brother much taller, who was a soldier, and so would Johanne be. Against this resolution I expostulated vehemently (as a friend of William Ladd and a member of the Peace Society should do⁷²), but Johanne laughed at me; and I doubt not, as soon as he has inches and years enough, he will buckle on his sword.

When we got back to St. Goar the shower came on in earnest, and we took refuge at a jolly miller's, a fit impersonation of that classic character. In an interval of his work he was sitting over his bottle and cracking his jokes. We invited him to go to America. "No," he said, holding up his Rhenish⁷³ and chuckling over it, "I should not get this there; and, besides, all the millers that go there die!" He is right to cherish a life so joyous.

The steamer came up at a snail's pace. We had the pleasure of finding on board one of our fellow-passengers in the Saint James. He had been purifying in the bubbles of Schlangenbad, which produce such miraculous effects on the skin that Sir Francis Head avers he heard a Frenchman say, "Monsieur, dans ces bains on devient absolument amoureux de soi-meme!" ("One falls in love with one's self in these baths"). Our friend was a witness to its recreative virtue.

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My dear C.,

I will not even name to you the beautiful pictures past which we floated. Everything is here ready for the painter's hand. Oberwesel, with its Roman tower, its turreted walls and Gothic edifices; the old Castle of Schonberg, Anglice *Beautiful Hill*, where there are seven petrified maidens who were converted into these rocks for their stony-heartedness--fit retribution. Villages, vineyards, and ruins appeared and disappeared, as the mist, playing its fantastic tricks, veiled and unveiled them. As we drew near to Bingen the sun shone out, throwing his most beautifying horizontal beams on Rheinstein⁷⁴ and other famed points of the landscape, while masses of black clouds, driven on by the gusty wind, threw their deep shadows now here, now there, as if (we flies on the wheel fancied) to enchant the senses of travellers for the picturesque.

After much discussion with a friendly Englishman (an old stager in these parts) as to the comparative advantage of landing at Bingen or Rudesheim, we followed his advice and went on shore at the former place, where we found a cheerful welcome in the face of mine host of the

⁷² William Ladd (May 10, 1778- April 9, 1841), American anti-war activist, founder and first president of the American Peace Society. This society still exists, based in Washington, D.C.

⁷³ Sedgwick refers to but misspells a "Rheinisch" beer brewed in the area.

⁷⁴ The Castle of Rheinstein is situated directly on the bank of the River Rhine and was restored during the Romantic period by Prince Frederick of Prussia (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burg_Rheinstein).

Weisse Rosse, but no room in his house. This man is quite my beau ideal of a German innkeeper, and, but that it would take too much space, I should like to tell you the pains he took to get us rooms in another inn, and how, after he did get them, we reconsidered our decision and determined to pass the night at Rudesheim, and

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how, when we came to him with our tongues faltering with some mere pretext for being off, he just good-humouredly brushed aside the flimsy veil, saying, "Never mind, you choose to go, and that is enough;" and proceeded to select boatmen for us, and to make them promise to take us down to Rheinstein and back again to Rudesheim at the lowest and a very moderate rate. Would not the world go on swimmingly if all strangers errant were dealt by as mine host of the Weisse Rosse dealt by us?

How would you like, dear C., to see us, your nearest and dearest relations, boating on the Rhine with men whose German even K. found it hard to comprehend? There would be no reason for anxiety; they took us in good faith in half an hour to Rheinstein, or, rather, the current took us. The Castle of Rheinstein has been restored by Prince Frederic of Prussia and refurnished, and is now supposed to represent the castles as they were when there was wassail in the hall and love in the bower. The castle itself is the most beautiful on the Rhine. It is planted on a projecting rock, half way to the summit of a steep,⁷⁵ and set off by a dark, rich woodland. It is built of stone taken from the bed of rock that forms its foundation, and you can scarce tell where nature finishes and art begins. In truth, the art is so perfect that you forget it. Nature seems to have put forth her creative power, and to have spoken the word that called from its mother rock this its indescribably beautiful and graceful offspring.

We wound up a path of easy ascent, passed over
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a drawbridge and under a portcullis, when the warder appeared. He was a sober-suited youth, with a rueful countenance; love-lorn,⁷⁶ the girls said, pointing to his hump-back and a braid of hair round his neck. He bowed without relaxing a muscle, and led us through a walled court where there were green grass and potted plants, and, perched, over our heads in niches of the rock, eagles who, it would, appear, but for the bars of iron before them, had selected these eyries of their own free-will. Our warder proceeded through a passage with a pretty mosaic pavement to the knight's hall, which is hung with weapons of the middle ages, disposed in regular figures. The ceiling is painted with knight's devices, and complete suits of armour, helmets, and richly-embossed shields hang against the wall.

We were repeatedly assured that the furniture was, in truth, of the middle ages, and had been collected by the prince at infinite pains; and looking at it in good faith as we proceeded, everything pleased us. There is a centre-table with an effigy in stone of Charlemagne, a most fantastical old clock, carved Gothic chairs, oak tables; in the dining-room an infinite variety of silver drinking-cups, utensils of silver, and of ivory richly carved, and very small diamond-

⁷⁵ Old English: the declivity or slope of a mountain.

⁷⁶ A person suffering from unrequited love.

shaped mirrors, *all* cracked; by-the-way, an incidental proof of their antiquity. The princess' rooms, en suite, are very prettily got up; her sleeping-room has an oaken bedstead of the fourteenth century, with a high, carved foot-board like a rampart, and curtains of mixed silk and woollen. In the

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writing-room are beautiful cabinets of ivory inlaid, and wood in marquetrie--that is, flowers represented by inlaying different coloured woods.

In the working-room was a little wheel, which made me reflect with envy on the handiwork of our grandames, so much more vivacious than our stitching. You will probably, without a more prolonged description, my dear C., come to my conclusion that Rheinstein bears much the same resemblance to a castle of the middle ages that a cottage ornée does to a veritable rustic home. I imagined the rough old knights coming from their halls of savage power and rude luxury to laugh at all this *jimcrackery*.

The prince and princess make a holyday visit here every summer, and keep up this fanciful retrocession by wearing the costume of past ages. The warder maintained his unrelenting gravity to the last. "Man pleased him not, nor woman either,"⁷⁷ or I am sure my laughing companions would have won a smile.

We found going up the river quite a different affair from coming down. Our oarsmen raised a ragged sail. The wind was flawy, and we were scared; so they, at our cowardly entreaties, took it down, and then, rowing the boat to the shore, one of the men got out, and fastening one end of a rope to our mast and the other round his body, he began toilsomely towing us up the stream. Our hearts were too soft for this, so we disembarked too, and walked two miles to "The Angel" at Rudesheim; an angel indeed to us after this long day of--pleasure.

[NIEDERWALD. 199]

Friday. Rudesheim.--This morning we set off on an excursion to the Niederwald, the "Echo," "The Temple," "The Enchanted Cave," and the "Rossel." Now, let your fancy surround you with the atmosphere of our cool, bright September days, and present the images of your friends, mounted on asses, winding up steep paths among these rich Rudesheim vineyards, which produce some of the finest wines on the Rhine. See our four *esel-meisters*⁷⁸ slowly gossiping on after us, and our path crossed, ever and anon, with peasant women emerging from the vineyards with baskets on their heads, piled with grape-cuttings, and weeds to feed the asses, pigs, or--children! See us passing through the beech and oaken wood of the Niederwald, and coming out upon the "Temple" to look down on the ruins of the Castle of Brömser, amid a world of beauty, and think upon its old Jephtha-lord⁷⁹ who, when a captive among the Saracens, vowed, if he returned, to devote his only daughter Gisela to the church--of poor Gisela, who had devoted herself to a human divinity, and, finding her crusading father inexorable, threw herself from the tower of the castle into the river. With the clear eye of peasant faith, you may see now, of a dark

⁷⁷ Sedgwick here loosely cites Hamlet's famous speech "What a Piece of Work is Man."

⁷⁸ Donkey masters (German): probably people who take care of the donkeys.

⁷⁹ In Judges 11-12 Jephthah pledges to sacrifice his daughter if he succeeded in the next battle.

and gusty night, the pale form of this modern Sappho,⁸⁰ and you may hear her wailings somewhere about Hatto's Tower.

Next see us emerging from our woodland path, and taken possession of by a *very* stout woodland

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nymph, who has the showing of the Bezauherter Hole (Enchanted Cave); but, no; you shall not see that with our eyes, but read Sir Francis Head's description of it, which proves that, if he has any right to designate himself as "the old man," time has not done its sad work in abating the fervours of his imagination. He has made a prodigious bubble of this cave. His "subterranean passage" was, to our disenchanted vision, but a walled way on upper earth; and where he looked through fissures of the rock, we had but the prose of windows, whose shutters were slammed open by our Dulcinean wood-nymph. But never mind! long may he live to verify the fantastical figure in the vignette to the Frankfort edition of his charming work, to walk over the world blowing bubbles so filled with the breath of genius and benevolence that they diffuse sweet odours wherever they float.

See us now standing at the Rossel, looking with the feeling of parting lovers at the queenly Rheinstein sitting on her throne of Nature's masonry—at a long reach of the river up and down—at the lovely Nahe; not merely at its graceful entrance into the Rhine, but far, far away as it comes serenely gliding along its deep-sunken channel from its mountain-home—at Drusus' bridge, with its misty light of another age and people—at the massy ruin of Ehrenfels under our feet—at the Mouse Tower of old Bishop Hatto on its pretty island—at vineyards without number—at hills sloping to hills, at the green ravines between them, and the roads that traverse

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them—at villages, towers, and churches and, finally, at our little hamlet of Rudesheim, which, with its 3500 people, is so compact that it appeared as if I might span it with my arms. And remember that into all this rich landscape, history, story, ballad, and tradition have breathed the breath of life. Do you wonder that we turned away with the feeling that we should never again see anything so beautiful? thank Heaven, to a scene like this "there can be no farewell!"

We were delighted on getting down to "the Angel" to see the "Victoria" puffing up the Rhine for, to confess the truth, now that the feast of our eyes and imaginations was over, we began to feel the cravings of our grosser natures. There is no surer sharpener of the appetite than a long mountain-ride in a cool morning. The Niederwald, the Hohle, the Rossel, all were forgotten in the vision of the pleasantest of all repasts – a dinner on the deck of a Rhine steamer. It was just on the stroke of one when we reached the Victoria. The table was laid, and the company was gathering with a certain look of pleased expectation, and a low murmur of sound much resembling that I have heard from your barnyard family when you were shelling out corn to them. The animal nature is strongest at least once in the twenty-four hours! The Russian

⁸⁰ Sappho (Greek, c. 610-570 BC), ancient poet known for her love poems.

princess was the first person we encountered. "Monsieur Tonson come again."⁸¹ "We'll not have a seat near her," I whispered to the girls, as, with some difficulty, we doubled the end of the table which her

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enormous royal person occupied. "No; farthest from her is best," said K.; so we proceeded to the other extremity of the table, where we were met by the head-waiter. "Places for four, if you please," said I. He bowed civilly, was "very sorry, but there was no room." "Surely you can make room!" "Impossible, madame!" A moment's reflection convinced me that a German would not risk the comfort of one guest by crowding in another, so I said, "Well, give us a table to ourselves." "I cannot; it is impossible!" "What!" exclaimed the girls, "does he say we cannot have places? Do order a lunch, then; I am starved," "and so am I," "and I." My next demand showed how narrowed were our prospects. "Then," said I, "I'll ask for nothing more if you will give me some bread and butter and a bottle of wine!" "Afterward, afterward, madame," he replied, his German patience showing some symptoms of diminution; "afterward lunch, dinner, or what you please; but now it is impossible." Like the starving Ugolino when he heard the key of the Tower of Famine turned on him,

"Io guardái

Nel viso a' mie' figliuoli senza far motto."⁸²

But soon touched by their misery and urged by my own, I once more intercepted the inexorable youth, and mustering all my eloquence, I told him he had no courtesy for ladies, no "sentiment;" that he would have to answer for the deaths of those three blooming young women, &c, &c. he smiled, and I thought relented, but the smile was followed

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with a definitive shake of the head, and away he went to perform well duties divided between half a dozen half-bred waiters in our country. Nothing remained for us but to submit. In a Hudson River steamer (we remembered regretfully our national despatch) the "afterward" would have been time enough; at most, an affair of half an hour's waiting, but the perspective of a German's meandering through his "meridian" was endless. Besides, we were to land at Bieberich in two or three hours, so, "ladies most deject," we sat ourselves down in the only vacant place we could find, close to the head of the table. The people, for the most part, had taken their seats; here and there a chair awaited some loiterer, but one dropped in after another, and my last faint hope that, after all, the waiter would distribute us among them, faded away. There was some delay, and even those seated with the sweet security of dinner began to lose something of their

⁸¹ This was a well-known reference to a comic poem by John Taylor from 1795. The line "here's Monsieur Tonson come again" becomes a running gag of a prankster, whose inquiries for a Mr. Thompson in the middle of the night drive a Frenchman to despair, especially when the prankster returns after a period of six years.

⁸² "I looked into the face of my children without saying a word" (Italian). From *Divina Commedia* by Dante Alighieri (Italian, 1265-1321). Ugolino is incarcerated with his children and in this passage he at the very least contemplates eating them after they starve to death.

characteristic serenity. There was a low growl from two English gentlemen near us, and the Germans beside us began mumbling their rolls. “Ah,” thought I, “if ye who have been, as is your wont, feeding every half hour since you were out of bed, sitting lazily at your little tables here, could feel ‘the thorny point of our distress,’ you surely would give us that bread!”

The soup came, and as each took his plate, from the top to the bottom of the table, the shadows vanished from their faces as I have seen them pass from a field of corn as a cloud was passing off the sun. “I should have been quite content,” said M., meekly,
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“with a plate of soup on our laps.” “Yes,” said L. in a faltering voice, “I should be quite satisfied with soup and a bit of bread.” But away went the soup, no one heeding us but a fat German whose back was towards us, and who, comprehending our dilemma, felt nothing but the ludicrousness of it. He turned when he had swallowed his soup, and smiled significantly.

Next came the fat, tender bouilli with its three satellites, potatoes *à la maître d’hotel*, cucumbers, and a fat compound called “gravy.” “I always relish the bouilli,” said K., faintly. Bouilli, potatoes, and cucumbers were eaten in turn; a German has no sins of omission to answer for at table.

Then appeared the entremets, the croquets, sausages, tongue, the queenly cauliflower floating in butter, rouleaux of cabbage, macaroni, preparations of beans and sorrel, and other messes that have baffled all our investigation and guessing.

Now, fully to comprehend the prolongation of our misery, you must remember the German custom of eating each article of food presented, each separately, and lounging through a change of twenty plates as if eating dinner comprehended the whole duty and pleasure of life. “If they would only give us a bit of tongue!” said K., “or a croquet,” said M., “or just one sausage,” said L. But tongue, croquet, and sausage vanished within the all-devouring jaws, and again the emptied dishes were swept off, and on came salmon, tench, pike, and trout (served cold, and with bits of ice), and the
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delicious puddings. Now came my trial. The puddings, so light, so wholesome, with their sweet innocent fruit-sauces, are always my *poste-restante*⁸³ at a German dinner. But “what was I to Hecuba, or Hecuba to me?”⁸⁴ the pudding, in its turn, was all eaten, and our fat friend, wiping his mouth after the last morsel, turned round and laughed, yes, actually laughed; and we, being at that point of nervousness when you must either cry or laugh, laughed too—rather hysterically.

Are you tired? I have described but the prefatory manoeuvring of the light troops. Now came the procession of joints, mutton, veal, and venison, interspersed with salads, stewed fruit, calves’-foot jelly, and blancmanges. “Surely they might spare us one form of jelly,” said M., “Or

⁸³ *Poste-restante* (French), “remainder, or left behind mail”: an arrangement in which a post office holds a person’s “general delivery” mail until they collect it, used especially when somebody is traveling. Here Sedgwick likely means the part of the meal she looks forward to “collecting” after she has “travelled” through the other courses.

⁸⁴ Likely in reference to the passage: “What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?” (II.ii.494–5), from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. In this scene, Hamlet comments on an actor’s ability to cry in a speech about the tragedy of Hecuba, a queen from Greek mythology.

a blancmange,” said K. but no; meat, jelly, and all were eaten, and again our stout friend looked round, with less animation this time, for he was beginning to resemble a pampered old house-dog who is too full to bark. The dessert appeared: apricots, cherries, mulberries, pears, and a variety of confectionary. The conductor appeared, too, with the *billets*. “Surely,” I said, “that is not Bieberich!” “Pardon, madame, we are within a quarter of an hour of Bieberich.” “It is a gone case!” I sighed out to the girls; and, in truth, we arrived before the Duke of Nassau’s⁸⁵ heavy palace just as the company, with the most provoking flush of entire satisfaction, were turning away from the table. We had learned to appreciate

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the virtue of those Lazaruses who, witnessing the feasting of the Dives⁸⁶, go hungry *every* day. I have given you an exact inventory of the dinner, “setting down naught in malice” or in misery; and when you are told that it costs but one florin (forty-two cents), that it is served with nice table-linen, large napkins, and silver forks, you must conclude that provisions are cheap, and that the traveller--if he can “catch the turbot”--is a happy man in Germany.⁸⁷

When we got into the diligence at Bieberich there were two neat peasant-women beside us. We saw the Russian princess, whose carriage had disappointed her, waddling about, attended by her suit, in quest of a passage to Wiesbaden. One of the gentlemen said to her, “The sun is hot; it will be tiresome waiting,” and counselled her highness to take a seat in the diligence. “It is quite shocking,” she said, “to go in this way.” “But there is no other, madame.” So she yielded to necessity, and put her royal foot on the step, when, looking up, she shrunk back, exclaiming, “Comment? il y a des paysannes” (“How is this? there are peasants here!”) I am sure we should not have been more dismayed if we had been shoved in with the asses that carried us in the morning. We drove off; and when I compared this woman, with her vacant, gross

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face, her supercilious demeanour, and her Brussels-lace mantilla, to our peasant companions, with their clean, substantial, well-preserved dresses, their healthful, contented, and serene faces, and their kindly manners, all telling a story of industry, economy, and contentment, I looked proudly, thankfully back to my country of no princesses! Arrogance and superciliousness exist there, no doubt, but they have no birthright for their exercise.

I think it is Madame de Staël who, in speaking of travelling as a “triste plaisir,” dwells much upon that sad part of it, “hurrying to arrive where none expect you.” This was not now our case. We were going “home to Wiesbaden,” and there sparkling eyes, welcoming voices, and loving hearts awaited us. And, don’t be shocked at the unsentimentality of my mentioning the circumstance, we arrived in time for the five o’clock dinner at the *Quatre Saisons*, after having

⁸⁵ Probably George Wilhelm August Heinrich Belgicus (German, 1792-1839), Duke of Nassau from 1816 till 1839.

⁸⁶ In Luke 16:19-31, a poor man named Lazarus desires to be fed as he witnesses the feasts of rich men.

⁸⁷ The Englishman goes from here to London in two days, and there must pay at a hotel, for the single item in his dinner of a lobster sauce to his salmon, seventy-five cents! No wonder he “puts up” with Germany. **Sedgwick’s note.** “Turbot” refers to a kind of fish.

passed three days that will be forever bright in memory's calendar, and having paid for all our varied pleasures but about seven dollars each. Had we not them "at a bargain?"

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My dear C.,

August 30.--The spell is broken and we have left Wiesbaden. We arrived here last evening, after a drive of four hours through a tame country,
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varied here and there by a brown village, a church, or little chapel, and the old watch-towers near the town, marking the limits of its territory which does not exceed ten English square miles. I had supposed this was a free city, and I was surprised to meet at the gate we entered, soldiers in the Austrian uniform. We should think it an odd sort of freedom that was protected by the forces of a foreign prince.⁸⁸ The annual fair is just beginning, and the town is crowded, though these fairs are no longer what they were before the general diffusion of commerce and manufactures; the introduction of railroads will soon put an end to them.

We drove to six hotels before we could find a place to lay our heads in: this is certainly a *very* "triste plaisir" that we travellers have now and then.

Having secured a roof to shelter us, we sallied forth for a walk. We went up the principal street, the Zeil, where the buildings are magnificent, looked in at the shop windows, examined the bronze images at the fountain, and then, as if by instinct, turning at the right places and proceeding just as far as was necessary, we reached the Main, which is not much wider than the Housatonic in our meadows.⁸⁹ Returning, we went into the public gardens, which occupy the place of the old ramparts. This green and flowery belt girdling the town is a pretty illus-

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tration of turning the sword into the pruning-hook. The redeemed ground is laid out with economy of space and much taste. We passed through copses, groves, and parterres, and came out upon a growth of firs encircling a bronze bust of a benefactor who had contributed to this adornment. As I looked at the children and various other happy groups we passed, I wished there were some arithmetic that could calculate the amount of happiness produced by a man who originated a public garden, and set it off against the results of the lives of those great conquerors whose effigies and trophies cumber the earth!

Our first impression of Frankfort is very agreeable. It has not the picturesque aspect of the other Continental towns, but it is clean, with broad streets and modern houses, and appears lively and prosperous, as if one might live and breathe and get a living in it. M., true to her

⁸⁸ I was afterward informed that there was an alarming effervescence among the students in 1833, which induced the Frankforters to call in the aid of Austria and Prussia, who have kindly since watched over the "tranquillity" of the city--a kind of vigilance in which they excel. **Sedgwick's note.**

⁸⁹ Here Sedgwick is comparing the Main River in Frankfort to the Housatonic River in her native Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

general preference of cleanliness and comfort to the picturesque, declares it is the only place she has seen since she left England she could be tempted to live in, while L., as true to her peculiar tastes, prefers the oldest, wretchedest German village, provided there is a ruined castle brooding over it, and plenty of fragments of towers, peasants in costume, &c.

“Necessity is the mother of Invention.” I believe she is the mother of half our faculties, and so will you, dear C, when I tell you, you who
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would not trust me to buy a go-cart, that I have selected and bought to-day our travelling carriage. Mr. K. tells me I have good reason to be satisfied with my bargain, though I did not take François’ advice, who said to me, as we were entering the coach warehouse, “No matter if you are very well pleased, always shake your head and say ‘il ne vaut rien’ (“it is good for nothing”): this is a fair specimen of courier diplomacy.

We took tea this evening with Madame _____. She has a gem of a country-house half a mile from town, resembling the cottage of a Boston gentleman. The grounds are laid out and cultivated with the elaborateness of an English suburban villa. Madame _____ received us at the gate, and conducted us to seats beside a green painted table surrounded with flower-beds and under the shadow of fine old chestnuts. She told us her husband was induced by these chestnuts to buy the lot for a play-ground for his grandchildren. Then, in case of a shower, they must have a shelter, and he built a tea-room, and the shelter expanded to its present comfort and elegance; a pleasant illustration of the growth of a project. Madame _____ gave us our choice of taking our tea in the garden, the balcony, or the drawing-room. The Germans seem to me to go into their houses as the pigeons do, only for shelter and sleep. Their gardens are, in fact, their drawing-rooms.

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After tea Madame _____ took us [for] a drive.⁹⁰ We crossed the Main on a stone bridge to Sachsenhausen, a suburb of the town, and drove to an eminence, where we had a good view of the town, the river, and very extensive vegetable gardens. We then drove quite round the town, outside the public gardens. The environs are gay with summer-houses and gardens, now brilliant with dahlias and asters. Very cheerful and uniform they looked, as if each one had a fair portion; not one a feast and another a fast, the too general condition of life in the Old World. On our return we passed the new library, with the inscription, “Studiis, libertati, reddita civitas” (“The city returned to studies and freedom”) and we were beginning to feel as if we were surrounded by a home atmosphere, when we plunged into the Jews’ quarter, so dark, narrow, and intricate that it reminded me of Fagan’s haunts.⁹¹ The old town is very curious. The old houses have

⁹⁰ The preposition appears to be missing.

⁹¹ Fagin, a Jewish character in the novel *Oliver Twist* (1838), by Charles Dickens (English, 1812-1870).

grated windows and massive doors, and are many stories high, each story projecting over that below it. The fronts of those which are of stone are curiously carved or painted in compartments. All this, indeed, looked “the ancient, imperial, free city!”

We finished the day in Madame _____’s box at the theatre, literally the day, for it was yet twilight when we got home. The theatre is by law closed at nine o’clock precisely. This very rational hour obviates a serious objection to the amusement.⁹²

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We were fortunate in seeing one of the great dramatic performers of Germany, Emile Devrient. The play was one of the Princess Amelia’s; a tale of domestic sorrow, as I ascertained by my interpreters. There was no scenic effect, no dramatic contrivance to aid it. The scene was not once shifted during the play. Devrient seemed to me, as far as I could judge merely from his action, expression, and voice, to deserve the applauses showered on him. The playing was all natural, and the voices of the women marvellously sweet. Have I never yet remarked to you the sweet, low tone of the German woman’s voice? 1 From the cultivated actress to your chambermaid, it is a musical pleasure to hear them speak. Is it an atmospheric effect, or the breath of a placid temper? The latter, I thought, when, a moment since, my inkstand was upset, and the girl summoned to repair the mischief held up her hands, smiled, and uttered, in a lute-like tone, a prolonged g–u–t (good!)

We dined to-day at Mr. Köck’s. He is an eminent banker here, and, from his extensive English connexions, is in some sort compelled to be a general receiver of the Continental tourists. We do not bank with him, and therefore have not this

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claim, such as it is, upon his hospitality; but, for all that, it has been most liberally extended to us. A family whose hospitality is not exhausted in such a thoroughfare as Frankfort, must have an inexhaustible fountain of humanity. Hospitality in an isolated country residence is the mere gratification of the appetite of a social being; here it is virtue. Our dinner-table was arranged in a manner quite novel to me. In the centre of the table there was a china vase with a magnificent pyramid of flowers, and the whole table was covered with fruits, flowers, wine, and confectionary.

“Fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough or smooth rind, or bearded husk or shell.”

⁹² The theatre at Frankfort was near our hotel, and it used to amuse me to see the people going to it with much the air of quietness and sobriety that you will see an assembly collecting for a lyceum lecture in a New-England village. Ladies go without any male attendant, and in their ordinary dress. The price of a box ticket is fifty-cents. The orchestra is said to be one of the best in Germany. Does not all this indicate a high degree of civilization?

Sedgwick’s note.

If you think the confectionary was not quite à la Paradise, remember Milton makes Eve to “temper dulcet creams” “from sweet kernels pressed.”⁹³ Considering her unfortunate love of delicacies, her skill, and the climate, nothing is more probable that in the “fit vessels” which Milton mentions she converted her “dulcet creams” into ice. However that may be, Madame K.’s table looked like a sylvan feast. We had the most delicious atmosphere of fruits and flowers, instead of being stupefied with the fumes of meat. There was no bustle of changing dishes, no thrusting in of servant’s arms. The meat was carved and brought from an adjoining room. We had one of the very largest pineapples I ever saw, raised in Yorkshire!⁹⁴

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Kronthal.--Our decision is made, and, instead of being on our way to Italy, here we are, close under the Taunus Hills, trying the virtue of a gas-bath recently discovered. E. says you cannot turn up a stone with your foot in Germany without finding mineral water under it. The bathing-places are innumerable. The water here is very like, in its taste, to the Hamilton spring at Saratoga.⁹⁵ The gas is conveyed in India-rubber pipes into a bathing-tub, in which you sit down dressed, and are shut in except your head. The perceptible effect is a genial warmth and a slight moisture. We hear marvellous stories of its cures. It makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak; and, in short, does what all other baths do if you believe their believing champions. One rare advantage that we have here is a physician of excellent sense, and of a most kind and winning disposition; another is, that we see the manners of the people of the country without the slightest approach to foreign fashions or intermixture of foreign society. It is a two hours’ drive to Frankfort over a perfectly level plain. The Frankfort gentry come out every day with their children and servants, and seem to find quite pleasure enough in sitting down at a table before the door and working worsted, knitting, smoking, drinking wine and Seltzer-water, sipping coffee and eating Mademoiselle Zimmermann’s cakes, which are none of the most delicious. Her *very* frugal table must be rather a contrast to those of their luxurious homes, but I never see a wry [KRONTHAL. 215]

face or hear a discontented word from them. Of a fine day the area before the door is covered with coteries of people who have no amusement in common, none but such as I have mentioned these suffice. They interchange smiles and bows as often as they cross one another's path, and thus flow down the stream of life without ever ruffling a feather.

The Germans never stray beyond the gravelled walks around the house. Such quietude would kill us, so we appease our love and habit of movement with a daily donkey ride among the Taunus Hills or a walk through the lovely woodland paths. The famous castles of Kronberg (Crown-hill), Konistein (King’s-stone)⁹⁶, and Falkenstein are within a reasonable walk. Konistein has been an immense fortress, and its story is interwoven with the annals of the

⁹³ *Paradise Lost* (1667), an epic poem by John Milton (English, 1608-1674). In the poem Eve, designed as Adam’s companion, is subtly portrayed as inferior, excelling only in beauty.

⁹⁴ This mode of serving a dinner was, as I have said, quite novel to me but I am told that within the last few months it has become common in New-York. So easily do we adopt foreign fashions! **Sedgwick’s note.**

⁹⁵ A reference to a resort in Saratoga Springs, New York.

⁹⁶ Sedgwick misspells Königstein: a city, and castle, near Darmstadt.

country. We visited the ruins yesterday. The girls wandered away and left me with an English woman, who, while I was admiring these irregular, romantic hills, and the sea-like plain that extends eastward from their base without any visible bound, was telling me a marvellous tale, and an “o-er-true one,” as she believed. Some other time I will give you the particulars I have now only space for the catastrophe. Two *American* lovers, whether married or not no one knew, came to Konistein, mounted the loftiest part of the ruin, and, clasped in one another’s arms, as the peasant-boy who saw them averred, threw themselves down. “It was from that old tower,” said my companion; “you see how tottering it looks; they say the view is better there,
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but it is considered so unsafe that it is forbidden to mount it.” I started up, not doubting that my girls, with the instinct that young people seem to have to get into places of peril, had gone there. I fancied them tumbling down after their sensible compatriots. I screamed to them, and was answered distinctly--by a well-mannered echo! However, I soon found, by a little ragged boy, that they were loitering unharmed about the old tower, and I got them down before they had time to add to the American illustrations of Konistein.

To-day we have been to Falkenstein.⁹⁷ It is one of the highest summits of the Taunus, near those loftiest pinnacles, the Fellberg and Auld König.⁹⁸ There is a pretty story of a knight having won a daughter of Falkenstein by making a carriage road in a single night up to the castle-wall. The most sensible miracle I ever heard being required of a lover. The elf who lent him spades and pickaxes and worked with him, demanded in payment the fee simple of some wild woodland hereabout.⁹⁹ I like this story better than that in Schiller’s ballad of the “Lord of Falkenstein.”¹⁰⁰ One does not like to mar such a scene as this with the spectre of a treacherous and cruel lover, or to remember, amid this rural peace and beauty, that there are sweet deceived young mothers, whose spirits brood over the graves of the children they in madness murdered. And who that has seen Retzsch’s¹⁰¹ exquisite sketch of the peasant-girl of Falkenstein can forget it? We were there just before sunset. The little stone-built vil-
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lage lay in the deep shadow of the woodland steep which is crowned by the castle. It was a fête-day, and the villagers in their pretty costumes looked so happy and yet so poor, that they almost made me believe in the old adage, "no coin, no care." While the girls sat down to sketch, I escaped from a volunteer companion whose voice was as tiresome as a March wind, and, getting into an imbowered path, passed the prettiest little Gothic church I have seen since we were in the

⁹⁷ Falkenstein Castle is within the district of Königstein.

⁹⁸ Großer Feldberg: highest mountain in the Taunus region (summit 879,5 m.). Altkönig: third highest mountain in the Taunus region (summit 798 m).

⁹⁹ A version of this story is collected in *Deutsches Sagenbuch [German Legends]* (1853), collected by Ludwig Bechstein (German, 1801-1860); an English translation called “The Gnomes’ Road” appears in *Legends of the Rhine* (1895), translated by Hélène Adeline Guerber (American, 1859-1929).

¹⁰⁰ Sedgwick may be misremembering the author. Goethe, not Schiller, adapted a ballad called “Es reit der Herr von Falkenstein” (1539). There are multiple ballads with this title, including one by Matthew Gregory Lewis (English, 1775-1818) in his collection, *Romantic Tales*, Vol. 1 (1808).

¹⁰¹ Moritz Retzsch (German, 1779-1857), painter and etcher, illustrated the works of Schiller and Goethe.

Isle of Wight.¹⁰² Here, in the green earth, as the legend rudely scrawled above them tells you, “ruhen in Gott” (“rest in God”) the generations that have passed from the village. Faith, hope, and memory linger about these graves. There are roses and heart s-ease rooted in the ground, and wooden crosses, images of saints, and freshly-platted garlands of flowers over the graves. What more could the richest mausoleum express? I mounted through a fragrant copse-wood to the castle—part rock and part masonry. The tower is standing, and waving from its top is some rich shrubbery, like a plume in a warrior’s cap. Falkenstein village, close under the castle, looked like a brood of chickens huddled under its mother’s wing. Kronberg and its towers were in shadow; but the vast plain beyond was bathed in light, and the Main and the Rhine were sparkling in the distance. All around me was a scene of savage Nature in her stern strength, all beyond of her motherly plentiful production. I counted eighteen villages; a familiar [218 KRONTHAL.]

eye would probably have seen twice as many more. They are not easily distinguished from the earth, which with their colour blends harmoniously.

"Life is too short," we said, as we forced ourselves away just as the last ray of the sun was kissing the aforesaid green plume of the castle. We did not get home till it was quite dark, but we were as safe and unmolested as if we had been on our own hill-sides.

You will, I know, dear C., think there is “something too much” of these old castles and Taunus scenery; but consider how they fill up our present existence. But I will be forbearing, and abridge a long, pleasant's day work we have had in going to Eppstein¹⁰³ [Eppstein], a village in a *crack* of the Taunus, one of the narrowest, most secluded, wildest abodes that ever man sought refuge in; for surely it must have been as a hiding-place it was first inhabited.

Some knight must have fled with a few faithful followers, and wedged them in here among the rocks and mountains. The lords have passed away, and the vassals are now peasants. We were invited into the habitation of one of them by a cheerful dame, whose “*jungste*”¹⁰⁴ [jüngste] (a blooming lassie) she introduced to *my youngest*. I am not willing to lose an opportunity of seeing the inside of a cottage; hers was all that is habitable of the old castle, and is the neatest and most comfortable peasant's dwelling I have seen. The lord's kitchen was con-

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 verted into the peasant’s salon, where there was a good stove, antique chairs, a bureau, pictures, and a crucifix. In the kitchen I saw a very well filled dresser. The good woman was eager to hear of America; some of her neighbours had gone there. “They had but money enough to carry them to the ship, and had since sent help to their friends.” Strange, it seemed, that there should be a relation between this sequestered valley and our New World, and that our abundance should be

¹⁰² The Sedgwicks began their tour in Portsmouth, England, where they disembarked after their six-week sail from New York; their first excursion was to the nearby Isle of Wight (*Letters from Abroad*, vol. 1, pp. 21-24).

¹⁰³ Eppstein: a town in Hesse at the edge of the Taunus region, ruins of Eppstein castle are a prominent landmark.

¹⁰⁴ Youngest (German).

setting back upon these poor people. “Ours is a fine country for the young,” said I. “Yes,” said an old woman from the corner, “but an old tree don’t bear transplanting!”

I should like you to have seen us taking our repast at the mill *gasthaus*,¹⁰⁵ seated on the pebbly plat in *settles* made of birchen sticks, served by a cheerful hostess, who sat knitting in the intervals of supplying our wants, and supplying them with ne-plus-ultra¹⁰⁶ bread and butter, tender boiled beef, honey, Seltzer-water, and wine: four hungry women for sixty cents. The mill-wheel kept its pleasant din the while, and another dine there was that amused us from a handsome youth, who occupied a table near us, and who was telling the hostess, with frequent glances at us, of a visit he had paid to London. As he spoke in French, I presume it was more for our edification than that of our hostess. After a very picturesque account of the shocking disparity between the amount of food and the amount of the bill at an English inn, he concluded, “Ah le triste sejour Lon-

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dres! On prie le bono Dieu tout le Dimanche--ça n’amuse pas!”¹⁰⁷

I can believe that England would be to a German traveller with stinted means one continued fast and penance.

We saw to-day fifty peasants gathered under a chestnut-tree, and an auction going on; but, as we saw no wares, we were at a loss what to make of it, till we were told the duke’s chestnuts were selling. Chestnuts are an article of food here. This neighbourhood abounds in thriving nurseries, which are a main source of revenue to the peasants. There is one on the hill-side opposite my window. It covers thirty acres, and is divided into small proprietries and owned by the peasants of Kronberg, to whom it brings an annual revenue of 10,000 florins (\$4000): a shower of gold on these children of toil and hardship.

A labourer in haying and harvesting, the busiest season of the year, is paid one florin 12 kreutzers a day (fifty cents), and finds himself, and works earlier and later than our people. If he works for several days consecutively for one employer, he is allowed a trifle more as drink-geld.¹⁰⁸ A female domestic in a family where only one servant is kept is fed and paid twenty florins a year (eight dollars!!); and for this pitiful sum she gives effective, patient,

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and *cheerful* labour. An accomplished cook can earn twenty-four dollars!

The perfect blending of self-respect with deference, of freedom with courtesy, in the manners of the subordinate classes in Germany, puzzles me. They are, as you perceive by the rate of wages, quite as dependant on their employers as in England, but I have never seen an instance of cringing servility or insolence. The servants are indefatigable in their attendance,

¹⁰⁵ Inn, tavern (German).

¹⁰⁶ A peak of perfection (French).

¹⁰⁷ “Oh what a dismal place London is! They pray all day long on Sunday--not very amusing that!” **Sedgwick’s note.**

¹⁰⁸ Tip or gratuity (German).

grateful for a small gratuity, and always meet your social overtures frankly and cheerfully. A seamstress sewed for us for two or three weeks, a quiet, modest and respectful girl; when she parted from us she kissed us all, including R., not our hands but fairly on the cheek; a demonstration to which, as she was young and very pretty, neither he nor you would object.

I bought some trunks at Frankfort of a man who, when we had closed our traffic asked me to go up stairs and look at his rooms and the picture of his wife; and when he saw my pleasure I is very clean, well-furnished home, he said it was all their own earning; that they had to much, but they had contented minds, and “that made a little go a great way.” When he brought home the trunks he brought his two little boys to see us. I could tell you fifty similar anecdotes, which all go to prove that the bond of brotherhood is sound and strong among them.

The family ties seem to be very strictly maintained. Children are kept much longer in subordination to their parents and dependance on them,

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than we have any notion of. The period of minority may be almost said to extend through the parents' life. A very clever German woman lamented to me the effect of an English education upon the habits of her son. And, by-the-way, she considered his reluctance to submit to the restraints of his father's house, and his notion of complete independence and escape from the thralldom of his minority, to have been perfected by a year's travel in America. After telling me that he had refused to occupy a suite of apartments in his father's house because he could not submit to be asked “where were you yesterday?” “where do you go to-morrow?” she concluded with, “But I have nothing to complain of; he is a very good young man, but he is no longer a German. We should have foreseen this when we sent him to England; we cannot expect if we plant cabbages they will come up potatoes.”

The strict union of families seems to me to be promoted by the general cultivation of music. I say *seems* to me, my dear C.; for, conscious of my very limited opportunities of observation, I give you my impressions with unaffected diffidence. Almost every member of a family is in some sort a musical performer, and thus is domesticated the most social and exciting of the arts. You would be astonished at the musical cultivation in families where there is no other accomplishment.

There is one of the rights of women secured to them here which I have been assured has an important effect on general prosperity and individual hap-

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piness. The German wife has an inextinguishable right to half the joint property of herself and her husband.¹⁰⁹ He cannot deprive her of it by will, nor can it be applied to debts of his contracting. “This it is,” said a gentleman to me, “that makes our wives so intelligent in the management of their concerns, so industrious and economical.” I don't know how this may be,

¹⁰⁹ The French *Code Civil* of 1810, which “introduced liberal principles into private law,” was in effect in Germany, mainly along the left bank of the Rhine, during Sedgwick's visit. “According to French law,” Ute Gerhard states in his chapter, “Legal Particularism and the Complexity of Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century Germany” (2000), “the wife was able to own property, but she had no legal capacity to manage it” (143-44). See https://perspectivia.net/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/pnet_derivate_00005000/gerhard_particularism.pdf.

but it seems to me to be but common justice that a wife should be an equal partner in a concern of which she bears so heavy a part of the burden. Would not the introduction of such a law have a beneficent effect on the labouring classes in the United States? How many women would be stimulated to ingenuity and productive labour if the results of their industry were secured to them? How many women are first wronged and then disheartened by having an inheritance consumed by a husband's vices or dispersed by his wild speculations? How many, well qualified for respectable branches of business, are deterred from attempting them by the impossibility of securing to themselves and their children the proceeds? How many poor women among the lowest class of labourers have you and I both known, whose daily earnings have been *lawfully* taken from them by their brutal husbands? This is a pretty serious evil, as in that class at least (you will allow me to say) the destructive vices are pretty much monopolized by your sex.

It is one of our distinctions, thank God, in the New World, that we do not quietly rest in any er-

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ror; so I have faith that in good time this matter will be set right.

It is impossible to witness the system of general instruction in Germany without asking if the rulers are not making an experiment dangerous to the maintenance of their absolutism. Debarred as the lower orders are from all political action, it may be some time before they use the "sharp-edged tools" put into their hands; but, when they once begin to read, to reflect, and compare, they will hardly go on quietly wearing a master's uniform, doing his work, and eating black bread and potatoes, as if this were their full and fair share.

When you look at the highly-educated classes, at the diffusion of knowledge among them, and consider the activity, boldness, and freedom of the German mind, you are confounded at the apparent serenity and quietude. But is it not the serenity of the mighty ocean, that wants but the moving of the wind to rise in resistless waves? the quietude of the powder magazine, inert only till the spark touches it?

We are not in a way to hear political topics agitated. They make no part of general conversation. But I have met with some touching expressions of feelings that I imagine are much diffused under this placid surface of society. One of our German friends spoke to me with deep emotion of her aunt, who is just embarking for the United States. "She is leaving us all," she said; "her children and grandchildren, brothers, nephews, nieces, all the friends of a lifetime, and such a happy home! to

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go and live with one son in the backwoods of America."

"Is that son so much a favourite?" I asked.

"Oh, no; but he and his brother have suffered for their political opinions. They were imprisoned eight years; one of them died. *He* was a favourite; and so good, so beloved by everybody. My aunt says she cannot breathe the air of Germany. She must have the free air of America!"

There is a captain in the Austrian army at Kronthal for his health, a man about fifty with a most melancholy expression of countenance. Ever since he knew we were Americans he has manifested an interest in us. He has asked many questions about the country, and let fall on various occasions, in an under tone, his respect for our free institutions. His extreme despondency affected me and I took an opportunity to endeavour to inspire him with hope in the efficacy of the waters. I repeated to him every instance I had heard of benefit in cases similar to his; at each he shook his head mournfully, and then explained why the “amen stuck in the throat.”¹¹⁰ “It is not my disease,” he said; “that may be cured; but it is my incurable position; what am I but a mere tool in the hands of the men of power employed to watch every generous movement, and support the wrong against the right?” It wants but that this feeling should be a little more general, and the oppressor’s rod will be broken.

I leave his country with an interest, respect, and attachment that I did not expect to feel for any

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country after leaving England. I rather think the heart grows by travelling! I feel richer for the delightful recollections I carry with me of the urbanity of the Germans. Never can I forget the “Guten tag,” “Guten abend,” and “Gute nacht” (“good-day,” “good-evening,” and “good-night”), murmured by the soft voices of the peasants from under their drooping loads as we passed them in our walks. Addison says that the general salutations of his type of all benignity, Sir Roger de Coverly, came from the “overflowings of humanity”--so surely did these. On the whole, the Germans seem to me the most rational people I have seen. We never “are” but always “to be blessed.” They enjoy the present, and, with truest economy of human life, make the most of the materials of contentment that God has given them. Is not this better than vague, illimitable desires and ever-changing pursuits?¹¹¹

Basle, Switzerland, Sept 23.

We have been seven days on the way from Frankfort to this place, a distance of 225 miles. We have posted, a most comfortable mode of travelling in Germany. The postillions are civil, the horses strong and well broken, and changed every six

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miles. There is no *fast* driving--that would be perfectly *un*-German--but, far more to my liking it is cautious, safe, and uniform. Driving rapidly through a new and beautiful country, seems to me in the same good taste as walking with a quick step through a gallery of pictures. Our posting expenses have been at the rate of twelve dollars for thirty-six miles; this, for seven persons, is lower than our ordinary stage-coach fare at home. And how superior the accommodation. You

¹¹⁰ From *Macbeth*, II.ii.41 by William Shakespeare (English 1564-1616).

¹¹¹ I cannot be understood to say, or suspected of intimating, that Germany impressed me as happier than our country of general activity, progress, and equalized prosperity. No, every American must feel, wherever he goes from home, that his is the happiest country for the general interests of humanity--*the favoured land*; but let us remember there are some compensations to other countries--and thank God for it--and imbibe, if we can, their spirit of contentment and enjoyment. **Sedgwick's note.**

can travel just as far, and stop when, and as long as you please. We have often wished we could turn W.'s corner and drive up to your door, and hear the shouts of the children at what would seem to them a very grotesque appearance. The leaders, attached with rope traces, are so far from the wheel-horses that our equipage must be about thirty feet in length. The postilion sits on the near wheel-horse and guides the leaders with rope reins. He and his horses are all stout, heavy moulded, and reliable. He wears a short blue coat, turned up behind with red tips. His trumpet is suspended by a cord, from which two huge tassels of bright-coloured worsteds hang bobbing down his back. His breeches are of yellow buckskin, and his boots are cut up to a point in front some inches above the knee, and the whole pleasure of his profession seems to be to keep up an eternal cracking of his whip, which I found, to my surprise, after two or three days' annoyance, we minded no more than his horses did.¹¹²

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The roads are excellent: quite as good, it seems to me, as the English roads, that is to say, *perfect*. We travelled one hundred and eighty miles without passing an elevation of more than fifteen or twenty feet, at the utmost. It is like a road through a meadow, raised some ten or twelve feet above the adjacent ground. This is probably from the accumulation of stones and dirt brought on from year to year to repair it. This level road is called (for some distance) *Bergstrasse* (mountain-road),¹¹³ because it runs parallel to a range of hills which bound your view on the east of the Rhine. R. insisted that they had been swung back like a gate for the traveller to pass; and so it appears. They start forth at once from the low ground, without any preparatory slope or an intervening hill, and there they stand as if they had just stepped out of your way. They are covered to their summits with corn and vines, and castle-crowned, of course. It would be as strange to see a man in Berkshire standing out of door without his hat, as a hill here without its o'ertopping castle. On our right stretches a vast sandy plain, with the Rhine gliding through it, and bounded, at some sixty miles distance, by the Vosges--French mountains.¹¹⁴ You might fancy a painter had laid out the road, so pretty are the views of the villages, so for-

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tunately does the spire of a cathedral come in here and a village church there. The road is often on the outskirts of orchards, and bordered by an avenue of fruit-trees that extend from town to town. At almost every post we observed a new costume¹¹⁵. It seemed like the shifting scenes of the theatre. Here we pass peasants and peasant-boys driving their carts, with three-cornered hats

¹¹² Posting here, and generally on the Continent, is monopolized by the government. With our preconceived notions of individual rights, we were startled, on arriving at a post-station where there was a deficiency of horses, to hear the postmaster order an impressment of peasants' horses. What would our friends, *Colonel W.* or *Major D.*, the gentlemen-yeomen of S., say to such a procedure? We should have a revolution. **Sedgwick's note.**

¹¹³ The Bergstraße ("Mountain Road") is an 80 km long (50 miles) ancient trade route in the south-west of Germany. The name comes from the road's route along the foot of the mountains, the Rhine lowlands once being too damp to build a road there.

¹¹⁴ The Vosges are a range of medium mountains in Eastern France, near its border with Germany.

¹¹⁵ Germany consisted in the late 18th century of 35 independent units: Kingdoms, Princedoms, Counties, Electorates, Dioceses, and quite a number of free cities. Every small political unit developed a strong identity which found its expression in individual fiscal systems, local dialects and individual dress styles. Regional dress was an important sign of local and social affiliation.

such as our old ministers wore. Six miles farther, there were fifty peasant-girls seated on the ground, picking hops from the vine, with immense tortoise-shell combs in their hair. A few miles farther on we saw them scattered over a hayfield, with hats wide enough for umbrellas; and the next change was a little high-crowned hat with a narrow brim. Here were girls driving a cart drawn by cows, with enormous black bows on the top of their heads, and, a few miles farther, old women *shovelling out manure*, with red velvet caps bordered with black lace. The prettiest costumes we saw, and they would have done honour to a Parisian *improvisatori des modes*¹¹⁶ (there are such people, I believe), were on a fête day at Freyberg.¹¹⁷ Besides all the varieties I have mentioned, we had, in their holyday freshness, scull-caps of black and coloured velvet, prettily embroidered with silver and gold, and long braids of hair hanging behind and tied with ribands that touched the ground--their bodices were of velvet with slashed sleeves. Some wore simply a bosom-piece worked with beads, and others had bright-coloured
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handkerchiefs tied round their throats, and their skirts bound with bright-coloured ribands. Contrast this in your imagination with the working-dresses of our working-people. Why it is the difference between tropical birds and a flock of tame *she*-pigeons!

As we made Southing we noticed some productions that we have not seen before. Tobacco-fields have abounded. In approaching Freyberg we saw pretty fair patches of Indian corn; and to-day, trailing down the terraces, our own honest, broad-faced pumpkin has greeted us. The grapes are obviously nearer the vintage. I bought a magnificent bunch yesterday, and, holding it up as I came in so as to display its broad shoulders, said, "I gave but seven kreutz' for this!" "Ah, ça commence!" exclaimed François, his eyes gleaming with his Italian reminiscences.

There are vineyards of wide-spread fame on this route. We drank a delicious red wine at "The Fortune"¹¹⁸ at Offenburg, kept by Pfählers, called Affenthaler.¹¹⁹ Our landlord told us he made 50,000 bottles a year, and had had orders from New-York. I wish he may have more, and everything else that may minister to his prosperity; and so I am sure all must wish who have enjoyed, as we did, the comforts and luxuries of "The Fortune."

The first bad bread we have eaten in Europe--a villainous composition with caraway seeds--was at Brucksal [Bruchsal].¹²⁰ One would think *good* bread would be one of the first products of any society one advance
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¹¹⁶ With the term "improvisatori," Sedgwick may refer to the oral extemporization of poetry by male performers in Western Europe of the early 19th century while also linking it to their dress. The poetic improvisers typically performed in theaters and invented a poem or a drama within a few minutes of preparation.

¹¹⁷ Freiberg (Neckar): city in Baden-Wurttemberg.

¹¹⁸ Probably the inn "Fortuna" in Offenburg, Germany.

¹¹⁹ Name from medieval times. Cistercian monks of the Baden-Baden-Lichtental monastery started cultivating Pinot Noir. Located nearby was a pilgrimage chapel; over time the "Ave Maria" of the prayers turned into "Affenthal" (Valley of the Monkeys), which gave the wine its name.

¹²⁰ Bruchsal: city in Baden-Wurttemberg.

beyond the savage state; but we know that our country is not yet old enough to have perfected the art of making it. Perhaps the reason of the difference is, that with us, except in the large towns, it depends on individual skill, knowledge, *virtue*, and is exposed to various family mischances, whereas in Europe it is uniformly made in bakeries. Heaven speed the time when we shall have no more sour bread, hot bread, heavy bread, bread made with "milk risings," and with no risings at all! "distressful bread" truly!

We have passed through some very interesting towns on this route, and done traveller's duty in seeing their lions. Darmstadt, not at all interesting, by-the-way, though the residence of the Duke of Hesse Darmstadt.¹²¹ It is filled with gigantic houses, from which the giant proprietors seem to have run away; a more empty-looking town you never beheld. Heidelberg¹²² [Heidelberg], with its magnificent old castle, its picturesque sites, and the scenery on the Neckar around it, is worth coming all this way to see.

At Carlsruhe [Karlsruhe] there is the palace of the Grand-duke of Baden, and old, extensive, and beautifully-adorned pleasure-grounds, to which the public have free access.¹²³

Baden-Baden¹²⁴ is, as you know, the most famous watering-place in Germany. As its waters have no longer much reputation, it must owe its chief attraction to the beauty of the scenery. In its natural features it resembles the northern towns in our own Berkshire; but, with all my home prepossessions, I

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must confess that it is more beautiful even than Williamstown; more beautiful, I mean, in its natural aspect. As to what man has built, from the cottage to the cathedral, the difference between the Old and the New World is--unmeasurable. In the material, form, and colour of our buildings, we have done, for the most part, all we could do to deform the fair face of our nature. All that we can say for them is, that they are either of so perishable a material, or so slightly put together, that they cannot last long; and when they are to be replaced, we may hope that the inventive genius of our people, guided by the rules of art, will devise an architecture for us suited to our condition, and embodying the element of beauty. I say "suited to our condition," for it is very plain that, where property is so diffused as to make individual possession and comfort all but universal, and where society is broken into small multitudinous sects, we have no occasion for the stately palaces, the ducal residences, the cathedrals and splendid churches of Europe; nor shall we have the beautiful, *comfortless* cottage niched in an old tower, or made of the fragments of a castle-wall, so enchanting to the eye in the picture-scenes here. After all, dear C., when I get home, and have nothing to see but our scrawny farm-houses, excrescences, wens as they are on the fair earth, it will be rather a comfort to think they are occupied by those that *own* them; that

¹²¹ Darmstadt: city in the Rhein-Main area. Duke of Hesse Darmstadt: Louis II (1777–1848), Grand Duke of Hesse and by Rhine from 1830 to 1848.

¹²² Heidelberg: University-city in Baden-Wurttemberg.

¹²³ Karlsruhe: city in Baden-Wurttemberg. Palace of the Grand Duke of Baden: served as the residence and seat of government of the margraves, the electoral princes and grand dukes of Baden. Grand Duke of Baden: Leopold (1830-1852).

¹²⁴ Baden-Baden: city in Baden-Wurttemberg, famous for its hot springs since the Celts and the Romans (see <https://www.gettyimages.de/search/2/image-film?phrase=trinkhalle+baden+baden>).

under those unsightly, *unthatched*, shingled roofs are independent, clean, and abundant homes, and a *progressive* people. Still, with patriotism,

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common sense, and, I may add, but a common gratitude to Providence for our home-condition, *on the whole*, I cannot but sigh as I look back upon the delight we had yesterday in seeing surely the most exquisitely beautiful of all cathedrals, the Cathedral of Freyburg,¹²⁵ and in joining in the vesper service¹²⁶ there in the twilight of the preceding evening; yes, joining, for surely dull must be the spirit that does not allow free course to its devotional instincts in such a place and at such an hour, while people of all conditions are kneeling together. You do not ask or think by what name their religion is called. You feel that the wants of their natures are the wants of your own, and your worship is spontaneous, which it is not *always* in our pharasaical pews, amid a finely-dressed congregation, and while listening to a sermon written for the *élite* of the *élite*. Dear C., let us see things as they are; depend on it, the old faith, with all its corruptions and absurdities is, in a few of its *usages*, nearer to the Christian source than the new.

We went to the Cathedral again and again, walked round it, and to different points of view, and mounted up a vine-covered hill, and sat down under a crucifix, whence for an hour we gazed on it, and finally looked our last after leaving Freyburg, when the last rays of the sun were upon it, and it was set off by a background of the Black Forest.¹²⁷ Our sensations were like those you get from reading an exquisite old poem.

To come to the prose of the matter, the Cathedral
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was begun some eight hundred years ago, and is the only large Gothic church in Germany which is completed. The tower is finished with a spire; and though of so ponderous a material as stone, so light in its effect as to give you the idea (it did give it to L.) of an arrow shooting from the bow. I can go on and give you dimensions, colour, and form, but, after all, there is nothing for you but to come and see.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Cathedral of Freiburg (Freiburg Minster “Unserer Lieben Frau”) was constructed approx. 1200-1650.

¹²⁶ Vespers (from the Latin for ‘evening’) is the official Evening Prayer of Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran churches.

¹²⁷ Large forested mountain range in Baden-Wurttemberg, with a length of 160 km (100 miles) & width of 40-60 km (25-37 miles). The name was probably given by Roman troops, who, some 2000 years ago, found the forest dark, impenetrable and eerie.

¹²⁸ My readers will thank me, I am sure, for condensing into a few pages my journal of our route from Frankfort to Basle. It was full of variety and beauty in the external world, but there was little incident and no character; and it requires a skilful artist to make his landscape attractive without figures. We became ourselves tired of the repetition of descriptions of villages and castles, and, finally, we amused ourselves with making the following summary of epithets. For castles: “beautiful, brooding, baronial, crowning, elevated, lofty, high, grand, magnificent, superb, sublime, lordly, mounted, mouldering, murky, perched, springing up, suspended, overlooking, watching, protecting, guardian, smiling, frowning, threatening, lowering, hovering, hung, towering, decayed, dilapidated, crumbling, ruinous, picturesque, lovely, light airy, massy, heavy.”

Villages: “pitched, perched, planted, imbosomed, lapped, cradled, nested, sheltered, hidden, concealed, cribbed, ensconced, peeping, terraced.” We had the modesty to call them *synonymes*. **Sedgwick’s note.**

Afterword (by Michaela Keck)

This joint editing project of Sedgwick's travels through Germany from her *Letters from Abroad to Kindred at Home* (1841) both resulted from and fostered the international online collaboration among my German students in several remarkable ways. The project demanded that they organize their group work independently, responsibly, and with commitment—all tasks that the students mastered admirably. Moreover, the fact that the project itself supported such self-reliant collaborative work among the participants became evident when, after the COIL component had ended, the German class continued to show a noticeable group spirit and keenness to discuss our other reading materials, which resulted in most productive and lively in-class debates and a learning attitude that is otherwise difficult to bring about (specifically in the German educational system with its comparatively cheap tuition fees and where teachers have been witnessing increasing numbers of drop-outs in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic).

To create a scholarly edition of Sedgwick's *Letters* intensified the students' engagement with diversity. Not only did their group work enhance their understanding of cultural diversity as learners and aspiring scholars through regular online interaction, Sedgwick's narrative involved the students in negotiations of 'self' and 'Other' with regard to such issues as culture, nationality, race, gender, class, and education. Here, the choice of an American woman writer's travelogue through Germany no doubt heightened the immediacy of the intercultural experience among the American and German students in particular.

Importantly, the students' scholarly work brought to life Sedgwick's very own intercultural experiences in unexpected ways despite the vastly different sociohistorical contexts in which this nineteenth-century American upper class woman writer traveled: Sedgwick had grown up in the Early Republic and toured through a Germany that, due to increasing socioeconomic hardships, would soon experience considerable yet brief revolutionary turmoil in the late 1840s. The students excavated Sedgwick's negotiations of an American 'self' versus a German 'Other' in the writer's continuous transatlantic comparisons and contrasts regarding transportation, foods, dress, social customs, education and gender and, not least, her networking with the artistic and intellectual elite of the Old World. We were even able to discern shifts in the tone of her narrator persona, which ranges from a gossipy excitement about the adventures of

being abroad to a sincere concern, at times even dismay, regarding such heartfelt issues as women's social roles and (lack of) education.

Although Sedgwick's *Letters* constitute an outdated medium for conveying visits of famous foreign sites and celebrities, Sedgwick's travelogue, the students noted, demonstrates a preoccupation with 'self' and 'Other' that they themselves could readily relate to, albeit via digital media and platforms—whether in her reports about the foreign food she ate; in the social interactions she experienced; in her playful translations of the German language; or in the less exhilarating confrontations with poverty, squalor, and remainders of premodern forms of government. Also, Sedgwick's enjoyment of the outdoors both at home and abroad became evident. The students, thus, recovered an American woman author whose varying narrating personas, intercultural perspectives and negotiations continue to be fascinating as well as relevant in American Studies and beyond.

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