

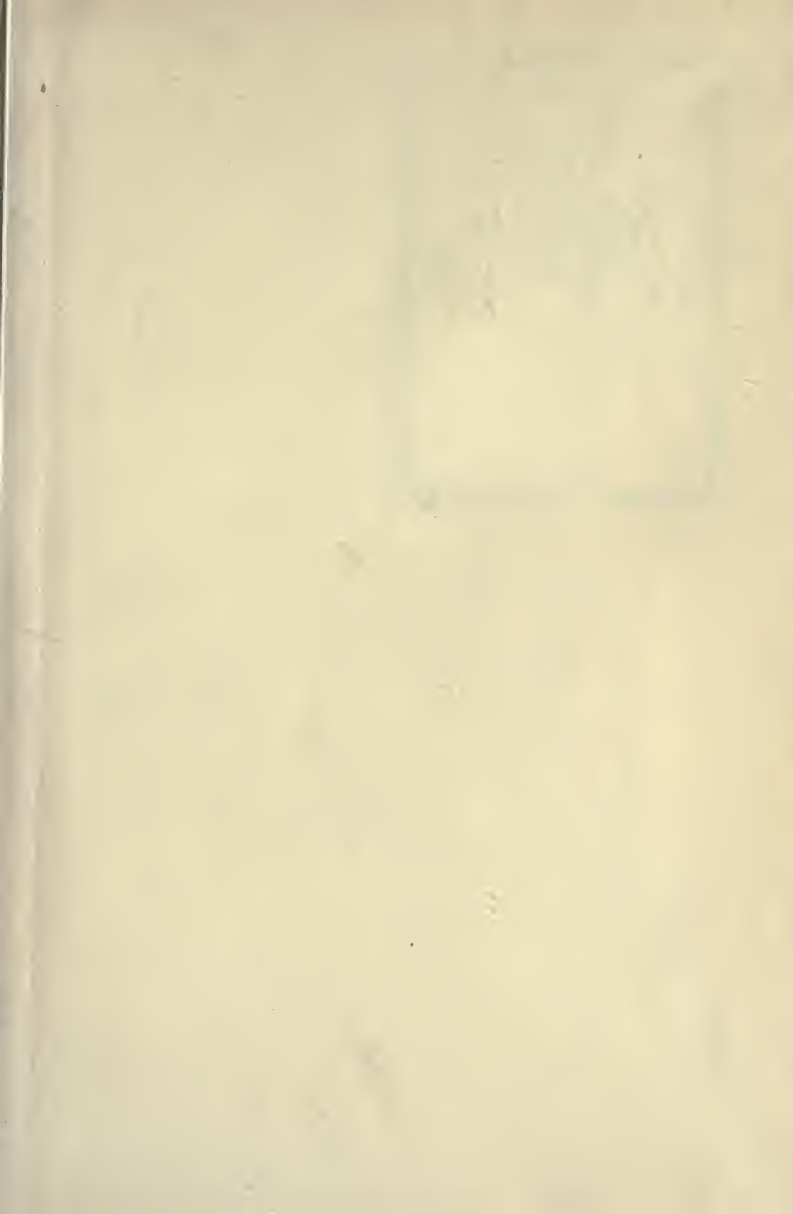


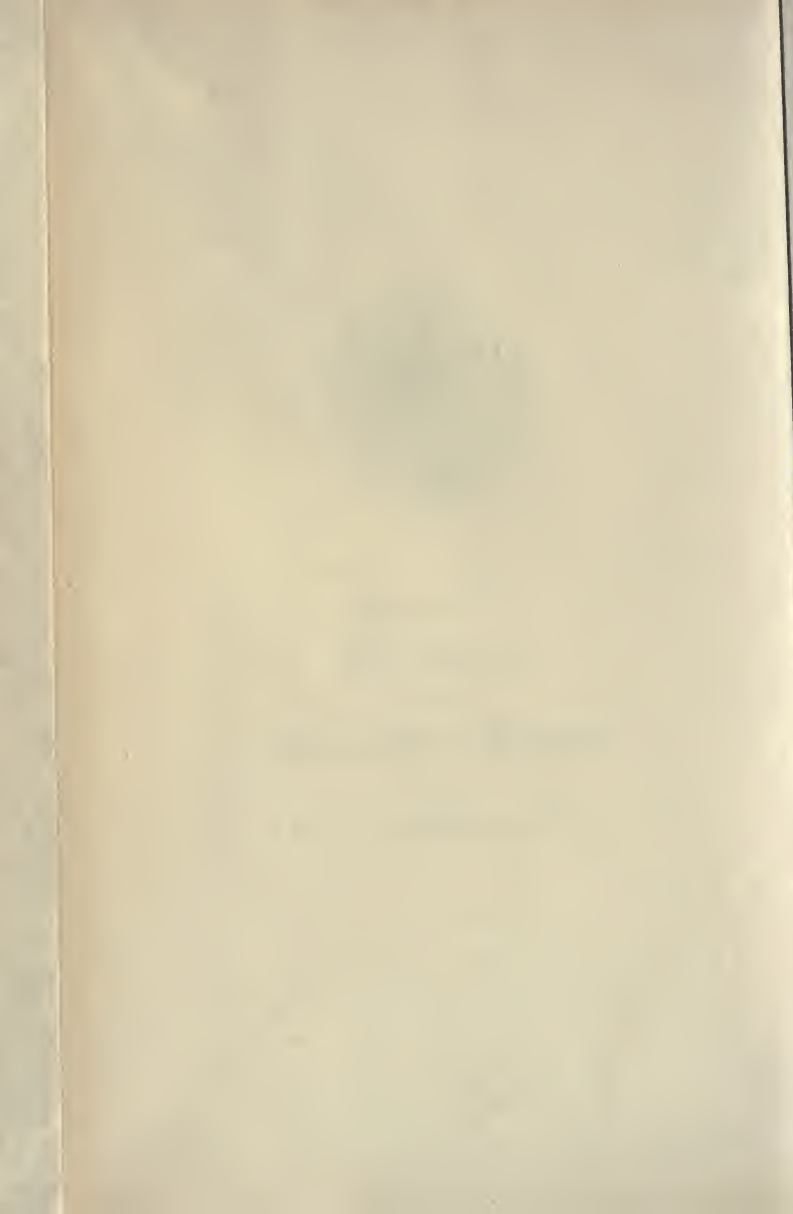
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Legends of the Rhineland

A journey through the land of the monks,
knights and rogues

described by

August Antz

Georg Fischer Verlag, Wittlich

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Translated by Kathlyn Rutherford, London
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Through the Rhine Valley

From Mainz to the Lower Rhine

The Hapsburg king and the baker's wife

WHEN King Rudolph came with his army to protect his lands around the Rhine, he pitched his camp in the depths of winter before the gates of Mainz. One day, very early in the morning, he was walking in his homely-looking cloak through the narrow streets of the cathedral city when, in the district where the bakers lived, the delicious warm smell of fresh bread was wafted to him through an open door. He quickly slipped through the door and was soon inside the bakehouse, where a stout woman was bustling about with a duster and broom, cleaning the kneading trough and the table. When she saw the tall soldier with the long Hapsburg nose who, after a word of greeting, had stood himself boldly in front of the oven, his legs wide apart, she became very angry and screamed, "We're not even safe from the Emperor's beggars in our own homes." The king replied, "If the Emperor's soldiers didn't protect the land many a fat citizen of Mainz and a certain baker's wife too, would be a lot thinner than they are." At this the furious woman snatched up the pail she was using for her cleaning and poured the dirty water in it

over her visitor's head, calling him the worst names she could think of. Rudolph shook himself like a wet dog, and laughingly but hurriedly strode through the door, leaving the woman still screaming abuse at him.

On the afternoon of the same day the doorbell of the baker's shop tinkled and a slim, smartly-dressed youth stepped inside. He set a tankard down on the table, and told the woman to drink to the health of the soldier who had warmed himself so well in the bake-house early that morning. When the stout woman saw the costly tankard she began to feel very frightened, for she thought that the giver of so rich a gift must be a very powerful nobleman. She ran after the youth as fast as her fat legs would carry her, and eventually came to where the army was encamped and to the entrance to the king's tent. Here she ran past the startled sentry, pulled back the curtains and pushed her way through the nobles gathered round Rudolph's table. She at once recognised the soldier whom she had treated so badly, and fell on her knees, weeping and begging for mercy.

The good-humoured Rudolph told her to stand up, to stop making such a fuss, and to tell the assembled nobles what she had done that morning. In no time she was on her feet again, and with a ready tongue described the happenings of the morning, — and so vividly that everyone was soon laughing heartily.

After he had cautioned her severely, Rudolph sent the bad-tempered woman away. She, for her part, never grew tired of telling her friends and customers of her great adventure.

The poor fiddler

ON a bitterly cold winter's day an old white-haired man stepped into a little wayside chapel beside the Rhine. He clasped a fiddle and bow under his arm and was trying to warm his ice-cold hands in the pockets of his threadbare coat. Tears ran down his hollow cheeks, for he had neither a place where he might rest his weary limbs, nor anything to eat or drink. Nobody wanted to hear the old melodies he played on his fiddle, and it was seldom that a kind soul took pity on him and gave him money.

For a long time the old man sat quietly crying and shivering with cold: but he gazed steadfastly at the wonderful richly-decorated statue of the Virgin, which stood on the altar. Suddenly it seemed as though Mary smiled sweetly at him. With a thankful heart he seized his fiddle, and began to play a song in honour of the Queen of Heaven, pouring into his music all the sorrow of his wretched life.

As he stood up, comforted, Mary threw him one of her golden shoes and in utter amazement he picked up the costly gift. He was so grateful and so happy, for he thought that his miseries were now at an end. He carried the shoe to a goldsmith, but the goldsmith would not take it. He did not believe the old man's story about the miracle that had happened: he thought that the shoe must have been stolen, and that the thief deserved to be hung.

As the fiddler was being led to the place of execution, the sad procession passed by the very same chapel. With tears in his eyes the old man begged to be allowed

to stand once more before the statue of the Virgin, and his last request was granted.

Once more he played his fiddle in praise of Our Blessed Lady, and when he had finished she threw her



second golden shoe down to him from the altar. Within the hour the judges had set him free again, for nobody could doubt his innocence any longer.

The wine tasters of Eberbach Monastery

IN the beautiful Rheingau there lies the old Cistercian monastery of Eberbach. This stately building is one of the gems of mediaeval art, and is surrounded by famous vineyards, the best in the whole Rhineland.

When monks still lived in the monastery, there were fat barrels stored in long rows in the high, vaulted cellar, and filled with sparkling Rheingau wine. The brother cellarer, who was said to be a great connoisseur of wines, ruled like a king in his underground kingdom. One year, when the grape harvest had been very good, he was particularly proud of a barrel full of delicious, choice Steinberg wine. This barrel, however, later caused him a lot of anxiety, for although the wine had been stored long enough to be quite matured, he could still taste a trace of something in it which he could neither account for, nor remove, try as he might.

In the hope of coming to some conclusion, he went on tasting the splendid wine, which filled the whole cellar with its bouquet, and often the brother cook took part in the tasting, for he was also reputed to be a good judge of wine. The cellarer maintained obstinately that the wine had a slight flavour of leather. The cook disagreed: he thought it tasted of iron. So the two argued and tasted for a long time without being able to agree, until one day they found the barrel was empty. Then they saw that they had both been right, for when the barrel was rinsed out a small key was found in it, hanging on a leather thong. The two friends now made up their quarrel and buried the little key, for they were determined it should never again get into a barrel of fine Steinberg wine.

The miraculous statue of the Virgin

IN the year 1302 King Albrecht, the son of the Emperor Rudolph of Habsburg, came to the Rhine with

his army and marched on Bingen. On hearing of his approach, the nuns fled from the convent of Rupertsberg where, many years earlier, the prophetess Hildegard had been abbess. The king's soldiers thrust their way into the deserted cells of the convent and into the chapel, and stole anything that seemed worth the taking.

In a niche in the wall of the chancel there stood an old wooden statue of the Blessed Virgin with the heavenly Child. Her crown was set with four splendid jewels and a particularly costly diamond hung on the chain round her neck. One of the soldiers, attracted by the brilliance of the jewels, tore out those that were in the crown. He stretched out his thieving hands towards the diamond too and, as he did so, stuck his dagger into the statue. At once red blood welled up out of the hard wood. Horrified, the miscreant sprang back. He tried to staunch the blood with a scrap of silk torn from the Virgin's dress. But in vain! Then a priest came, carrying the sacrament: he was able to close the wound with the cloth in which he bore the chalice.

The news of this great miracle spread like wildfire. King Albrecht and his troops were astonished and overawed at what had happened. It was not long before devout pilgrims came from far and near to worship before the miraculous statue.

The blind marksman of Sooneck

IN olden days a powerful robber knight lived in the stately castle of Sooneck. He was the terror of any travellers who had to pass through that district and

carried on feuds with all those of his neighbours who did not join him in his raids. He counted amongst his friends only those who fell in with his evil ways.

One day he and his companions fell upon a band of peaceful merchants. He celebrated his easily-won



victory with a wild carouse. When the brains of the revellers were inflamed by the quantities of wine they had drunk, they began to quarrel as to which one of them was the best shot with a bow and arrow. None of them wanted to stand down: each wanted to be acclaimed the champion.

Then the robber knight shouted above the noise of the quarrelling, "Not a single one of us is as good a marksman as the lord of Fürsteneck!" The others

looked at one another in amazement, for the lord of Castle Fürsteneck had disappeared mysteriously some time before. His voice hoarse with wine, the lord of Sooneck cried, "I know where the sneaking fellow is. He lies a prisoner in my dungeons, with his eyes put out. Yet in spite of that, he shall show you today what a fine shot he is."

A few minutes later the prisoner was brought into the hall, eyeless and with grief-stricken face, but with his head still held high. "Today you are going to show us what a good shot you are", said the lord of Sooneck, mockingly. "If you hit the mark you shall go free." "I will try", said the blind man, and tested the bow which had been given to him. The robber knight threw a goblet in amongst his fellow revellers and shouted, "Aim at the goblet! Shoot!"

Quickly the blind man bent the bow, the bowstring whirred and the robber knight fell dead to the floor, an arrow in his heart. Sobered by the fate that had befallen their leader the guests left the hall. Only one took pity on the blind man and stayed behind to lead him back to his castle and to his wife and family.

The ladder at the Kädrig rock

IT was a stormy day in May. The howling wind drove the rain and the late snow before it as the knight Sibö, Lord of Lorch, came back tired from a long ride. Young Ruthelm, who had learnt the ways of chivalry from Sibö, was just setting out on his first campaign, and Sibö had accompanied him on the first stage of his journey.

The gatekeeper had barely closed the door behind his master when a stranger asked to be let in. Sibö was in a bad temper and ordered that he be turned away. The rough gatekeeper accordingly slammed the wicket in the stranger's face and mockingly told him to spend the night under the drawbridge.

The May sun was shining brightly again the next morning, when Sibö's only daughter, the twelve-year-old Gerlind, ran out of the gate to pick flowers for a spring garland. As the child had not returned by midday, the knight sent his people out to look for her. But they could not find her and came unhappily back. Her father became very anxious: he hastened out himself with his servants, and searched every nook and cranny in the whole district. But all was in vain, for not a trace of the lost girl could they find. At last they met a shepherd boy, who had seen the child early that morning at the foot of a high rock called the "Kädrig". "All of a sudden", the boy told them, "several little grey men came leaping down the rock, seized the little girl by the hands and climbed up to the top with her."

As Sibö stood before the steep cliff and gazed at the smooth rock-face, his heart was seized with anguish, for he saw that no human foot could climb it. At last he thought he could see, high up on the top, a light-coloured dress. He stretched out his arms in longing and called his daughter's name. But all he heard in answer was malicious laughter and a shrill voice calling, "This is in return for your hospitality."

The bravest of his men at once began trying to climb the cliff, but half way up they had to stop, indeed it was difficult even to get them safely down from their

perilous positions. The next morning, when Sibó's servants tried to cut steps in the rocks with axes and chisels, stones began to roll down on their heads and drove them away.

Summer and winter passed. Nobody succeeded in climbing the Kädrieg, and Sibó's hair turned grey with sorrow. In the isolated castle the unhappy father went about with face furrowed and eyes dulled by grief. Not all the rich gifts which he made to churches and monasteries could bring him a single happy hour.

Four long years had passed, and young Ruthelm returned from the wars. In the meantime he had grown into a strong man. When he heard from Sibó what had happened the day after his departure he cried confidently, "I will bring your daughter back again! I will rescue her from the wee grey men." Very doubtfully, but yet with some hope, Sibó replied, "If you set her free you shall ride through the gate of Lorch with her beside you as your bride."

Without delay Ruthelm went to the foot of the Kädrieg. He stared up, trying to find some way of climbing the forbidding-looking rock. Then he saw a little grey man sitting on a ledge, stroking his long beard. The little man laughingly called out, "So the young gentleman wants to climb up and look for his sweetheart! If he can manage it he shall have the girl. He may depend upon it", and in a flash he vanished into the rock like a little mouse into an old stone wall.

As Ruthelm still stared upwards, he saw a bird with outspread wings hovering above the great cliff, and he said to himself, "If only I were a bird, like that falcon who circles so easily around the summit." Scarcely had

he spoken these words when a little dwarf woman stood beside him, looked at him in a kindly way and said, "You will be able to climb the cliff, even without wings, and set the prisoner free. The one who has just promised you the girl is my brother, and he will keep his word. But I will tell you how to find a way up. In Wisper valley there is a tumble-down cave. Above its entrance stand a beech and a fir-tree with their branches intertwined. Ring this little bell there and someone will come to help you."

A few hours later Ruthelm stood at the entrance to the cave and swung the little bell. A wee grey man appeared from inside the cave, holding a candle in his hand. Ruthelm told him who had sent him, and begged for his help. The wee man said, "If you have enough courage, come to the Kädrig early tomorrow morning, before daybreak." Then he put two fingers in his mouth and whistled, and at once there was a rustling in the leaves all around. Ruthelm saw a band of wee men, with axes and saws, but they vanished in a trice, leaving him alone. On his way home, however, he heard a noise in the wood as if a hundred woodcutters were at work.

Before the first streaks of dawn appeared in the sky Ruthelm was at the foot of the Kädrig again, and there saw a huge ladder leaning up against the rock. Without hesitation he began to climb it. After a while he looked down at the ground far below him, and his knees knocked with fright. He set his teeth, however, and pulled himself together, and at last managed to reach the topmost rung of the ladder and to climb onto level ground, where he fell, half unconscious from the great

strain he had undergone. After he had rested a little he looked round him, and seeing a cottage not far away he walked towards it. Imagine his joy when he found, lying on a mossy bed in front of the cottage, a beautiful girl, fast asleep. He knew her at once, although several years had passed since they played together as children. He knelt down beside her and took her hand. She opened her eyes and was frightened at first, but then recognised her former playmate and was overjoyed to see him. Ruthelm told her that he had come to set her free and take her home. They sat together for a long time, blissfully happy, until they noticed at last that a host of wee men were standing around them. The leader said to Ruthelm, "You have won your bride now, but before you can lead her back to Lorch Castle you must climb down the ladder. You will find Gerlind at the bottom. When you come to Lorch tell the old man that he has now paid enough for his lack of hospitality."

As he climbed down a friendly mist rose out of the Rhine and enveloped Ruthelm, so that he did not see the awful depths below him. As soon as he reached the bottom Gerlind came towards him, led by the little dwarf woman. When she said goodbye, the old woman pressed a box full of precious jewels into Ruthelm's hand, as a wedding present.

The lord of Lorch soon recovered his health and happiness once his child had been restored to him. He arranged a wedding feast to which everyone was welcome. In the years that followed, whenever a child was born to Ruthelm and Gerlind the old dwarf woman appeared with costly gifts, and was delighted to be shown the new baby.

The besieged watchtower at Caub

IN the bad days of the Thirty Years' War a fine troop of Spanish soldiers came to Caub on the Rhine.



The little town itself was soon forced to surrender, but the Spaniards did not succeed in overcoming the defenders of one of its watchtowers. Whoever approached the gate of the tower fell dead, for every shot from the defenders found its mark. It was impossible to

raise scaling ladders, for not even the boldest dared to advance against such good marksmen.

The Spaniards stayed in Caub for four long weeks, but always went very carefully round the tower. So far the defenders had only laughed at any demands for surrender, but one morning the Spaniards were surprised to see a white flag flying over the ancient walls. In the negotiations that followed the defenders were represented by an old red-bearded soldier and the Spaniards eventually agreed to allow the besieged forces an honourable surrender.

When the time came for handing over the watch-tower, not only the soldiers, but many of the townspeople too, gathered to see the gallant defenders. First the soldier with the red beard appeared, his wife followed him and after her came a thin nanny-goat. They alone had held the tower. The Spaniards were very angry when they heard the laughter of the townspeople. They would have seized the gallant old soldier if their commander, a nobleman, had not protected him.

The maiden on the Loreley

DOWNSTREAM from Caub on the Rhine, at the foot of the towering Loreley rock, the water-nymphs in olden times had their kingdom. In the rushing waters stood glittering palaces, surrounded by green meadows and stately forests.

As more and more people came to live on the river bank and the river became full of barges and big ships, the water-nymphs sadly withdrew from their home.

Only one of them stayed behind, for she could not bear to part from her beloved river. She often used to sit on the top of the rock, combing her golden hair in the moonlight, and in her enchanting voice she sang wonderful melodies, which bewitched everyone who heard them. Many a boatman who listened to her sweet



singing, could not resist looking up at the maiden, and was so enthralled by her beauty that he did not notice the dangers threatening his boat. Thus is often happened that boat and boatman were seized by the treacherous whirlpool and swallowed up in its depths.

During the Middle Ages, when the proud castles along the Rhine echoed with the clash of arms, with singing and happy laughter, a young knight, — the son

of the Count Palatine, — decided to climb the steep rock and see the beautiful nymph at close quarters. He went down the Rhine in a small boat, accompanied only by his esquire. As he came close to the foot of the rock, he saw the maiden sitting on the top of it, in the last rays of the evening sun. The sound of her voice bewitched him so completely that he forgot everything, and the mighty river dashed his light craft against the sharp rocks, where it sank, taking the knight down with it. The esquire, who managed to save himself, brought the sad news to the Count.

Full of sorrow and anger, the Count Palatine ordered his servants to seize the maiden and to cast her from her high rock into the river. As the men approached her she loosed a necklace of pearls from her throat and threw them into the Rhine, saying:

Father, in your watery glen,
Save me from the powers of men!
Send the white horses from their cave,
That I may ride on wind and wave!

At once two waves rose up out of the river, like great, shining horses. They climbed to the very summit of the rock and carried the nymph down into the flood, where she vanished for ever.

The hostile brothers

IN the castles of Starrenberg and Liebenstein, which stand near each other above Bornhofen on the Rhine, there once lived two brothers who were very rich, and

who had built their fine castles with money inherited from their father. When their mother died they became richer still. But they had a sister who was blind, and they were supposed to share what their mother had left with her. As money was then measured in bushels, they divided it up by taking a measureful in turn. Each time it came to their sister's turn, however, the cunning brothers turned the measure upside down, and just filled the under-side, which had a narrow rim. The blind girl felt the rim, and the money coming to the top of it and thought that she was receiving a measureful. But although she had been so wickedly tricked, God's blessing was upon her money and she was able to give rich gifts to the monasteries at Bornhofen, Kiedrich and Not Gottes.

But there was a curse on the money of her brothers. Their possessions dwindled, their herds died off, their crops were ruined by hailstorms, their castles began to fall down. They even ceased to be friends and became the most bitter enemies: to separate their two castles they built a thick wall, the remains of which can still be seen. When they had finally spent all their fortune, they made up their quarrel and became friends again, but they were still as unlucky as ever. One day they arranged to go hunting together: whoever woke up first was to wake the other by shooting an arrow in at his window. It came about that both woke at the same time, pushed open their shutters and let fly at the very same moment, and that the arrow of each pierced the heart of the other. This was their reward for the injustice they had done to their blind sister.

The ghosts of Ehrenbreitstein Castle

THERE was always an uncanny atmosphere about the Philippsburg at Ehrenbreitstein, the old residence of the Electors of Trier. When the last Elector, Clemens Wenzeslaus, moved into his new castle in Coblenz the thought of the ghosts in the Philippsburg may well have made him regret the change less.

The Elector Johann Hugo von Orsbeck, one of Clemens Wenzeslaus' predecessors, once had a very curious experience in Ehrenbreitstein. In the year 1701, the festival of Epiphany was celebrated as usual in the castle church, and according to the custom of the time was supposed to begin at four in the afternoon. Important official duties prevented the Elector from attending before midnight. He found the church brilliantly lit, with candles burning on the altar. The doors of the sacristy opened noiselessly and three priests came out and walked to the altar, clad in the richest of vestments. The Elector found all this somewhat unusual: what is more, he did not think that he had ever seen any of the priests before.

After a short prayer, the priests sat down and were silent. The Elector made a sign to them to begin the service, but they answered, "We are waiting for a brother priest." This was very strange: the Elector went into the sacristy to see who the man they were waiting for was. He saw there a figure that was his double in height, dress and features. The figure went through a door to which he alone had the key, and when he followed it, he found the door fast shut and could not open it with his own key.

The Elector was now very frightened. He climbed up into the gallery above the chancel, so that he might observe the priests at the altar more closely. He now saw that were three long-dead colleagues of his, who had officiated when he was consecrated Bishop. Amongst the congregation too he recognised the faces of old friends and acquaintances who had died long before, And when the solemn service was ended, his dead parents, surrounded by their children, came hand in hand down the aisle.

Suddenly he realised that everything in the Church had changed. The walls were hung with black, as though for a solemn Requiem Mass. The dies irae sounded mournfully through the nave. The Elector saw himself lying in an open coffin, dressed in his episcopal robes. He was seized with horror; he felt the cold winds of eternity blowing about him. Quite overcome by his experience he dragged himself to his sleeping apartment.

Ten years later Johann Hugo died at Epiphany. He lies buried before the steps of the altar, which he had set up, in honour of the Three Wise Men from the East, in the cathedral of Trier.

The bakers' apprentices of Andernach

ONCE the people of Linz set out to attack their traditional enemies, the people of Andernach. They arrived before the gates of the enemy town in the grey of the morning. They thought that the inhabitants were still in their beds, but they had reckoned without the

hard-working bakers, who had been bustling about in their bakehouses since cockcrow and whose apprentices were already carrying the fresh rolls from house to house.

Two of the apprentices, who had finished their rounds, amused themselves by climbing up the tower over the town gate on the bank of the Rhine. From there they saw the people of Linz creeping warily towards the town. In a moment they were pulling the alarm bell with might and main, and then began throwing the bee-hives, which stood on the parapet; down onto their enemies' heads. The angry bees stung for all they were worth and the people of Linz fled before such dreadful enemies. A little while later they were to be seen sitting in rows along the Rhine, their faces covered with stings, soothing their pain by bathing themselves with the cool water. From the walls of Andernach came shouts of derisive laughter.

The cleverness of the apprentices has never been forgotten, and a statue has been set up to their memory at the very town gate onto which they climbed so long ago.

On the Drachenfels

IN olden times, when the inhabitants of the Rhine bank were still heathens, a fearful dragon dwelt on the Drachenfels (the Dragon's Rocks), amongst the hills on the right bank of the Rhine called the Siebengebirge. Every day a human victim had to be brought to the monster, and it was usually wretched people captured

in battle who were sacrificed in this way. Not far from the dragon's den they were tied fast to a tree under which stood an altar. When dusk fell the monster used to come out and greedily swallow them up.

Once the people of the district brought a Christian girl of great beauty back with them from a raid. As the leaders were unable to agree about who should have her, it was decided to give the unfortunate girl to the dragon as a sacrifice. She was tied fast to the altar stone, dressed in white like a bride. She stood there calmly, resigning herself to God's will, whilst, from a distance, the people stared as though bewitched towards the awful spot.

As the last rays of the setting sun fell on the entrance to the dragon's cave, he appeared, with eyes aflame, and crept towards the altar to devour his victim. Yet even then the brave girl did not despair. She confidently held up her little cross, and when he saw it the monster drew back. Roaring and snorting, he rushed over the edge of the cliff into the Rhine.

The people hurried up in joy and astonishment and let the girl loose. They were so impressed with the power of the God of the Christians, that they allowed the girl to return to her home.

The monk of Heisterbach

IN the monastery of Heisterbach there once lived a young monk who zealously studied the teaching of God in the Bible and in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. He ceaselessly tried to penetrate into those

eternal things which are hidden from the understanding of man. He read the words, "With the Lord a thousand years is as one day", and for a long time he brooded over their meaning. Axious doubts tormented him as he pondered them, walking up and down in the garden of the monastery.

Then he heard the sweet singing of the birds in the nearby wood. He followed where the sounds led him and sat himself down at last upon the moss. His tired eyes slowly closed and he fell asleep.

When he awoke the evening sun was shining through the branches. The sound of the vesper bell came from the nearby monastery. As he hurried off, not wishing to be late for evening prayers with his brother monks, it seemed to him that everything about him looked different. He did not recognise the brother at the postern gate. A stranger knelt in his place in the choir stalls. The abbot asked his name, and when, with some uneasiness, he told him, not one of the brothers had ever heard of him. A monk then brought the monastery records, and it appeared from these that a brother of his name had left the monastery three hundred years before and never returned. He then realised that he was himself this long-lost brother. He sincerely repented of all the doubts he had harboured, and then sank dying to the ground, murmuring, "With the Lord a thousand years is as one day."

Richmodis of Aducht

IN olden days, when the plague was ravaging the streets and alleys of Cologne, Richmodis — the wife of

Mengis of Aducht, who lived at the sign of the parrot in the new market-place, — also fell ill. When, after a few hours, she lay stiff and cold upon her bed, they thought she was dead and buried her in the cemetery of the Church of the Apostles. Her husband, who loved her very much, could not bring himself to take the gold



wedding ring from her finger. The grave-digger noticed this and the following night slipped into the cemetery, placed the lantern he had brought with him at the foot of the grave, shovelled the earth away from the coffin and lifted the coffin-lid, meaning to steal the ring. But the lady who had been taken for dead awoke and began to sigh and to move about. Horrified the grave-digger ran wildly towards the entrance to the cemetery. Richmodis sat up, climbed out of the grave, took the lantern

that the wretched grave-digger had left, and went straight to her house in the market place.

Mengis and his household had already gone to bed. Richmodis rang and after a while a young girl came and asked who was at the door. When she heard the voice of her mistress, she rushed back and hid herself in her room, shaking with fright. Richmodis rang again and again. At last her husband awoke, and called angrily to his servants. The maid who had been to the door came and told him how she had heard the voice of her mistress. To this Mengis said, "If you told me my horses were up in the loft it would be as likely a story." That very minute he heard the clattering of horses' hooves on the stairs. When he went to see what was happening he found his horses standing in the loft. With a beating heart he hastened to the front door and opened it. Outside stood Richmodis. "Why did you make me wait so long", she complained, "I am frozen with cold." Her husband embraced her joyfully, led her into the house and did all he could to make her welcome.

The next day the neighbours were amazed to see horses looking out of a dormer window of the house. Mengis had to put up scaffolding to bring them down safely and in memory of these strange events he had his house decorated with horses' heads.

The grateful dwarf

ONCE upon a time dwarfs used to live in the rocks near Müngsten, on the right bank of the River Wupper.

A young blacksmith going past their cave one midnight heard the sounds of laughter and merrymaking. He saw the wee men hopping about in the moonlight between the trees and rocks. They were throwing their caps in the air and catching them again. Suddenly a gust of wind blew one cap into the Wupper. All the dwarfs ran to the bank, crying, and wringing their hands in dismay, and the wee man who saw his cap floating away from him cried the loudest of all. The blacksmith was touched to see the unfortunate dwarf so upset. He got into the water, fished the cap out, and gave it to its owner, who was beside himself with joy at having it back again.

The blacksmith then walked home, put some pig-iron for the next day's work on the anvil and went to bed. When he came into the smithy the next morning, he found, in place of the pig-iron, the most beautiful steel. This happened night after night, and soon the smith was a rich man.

But he was very curious to know what really happened, and to get to the bottom of it he hid himself one evening behind the bellows. At midnight he heard a slight noise and in came the dwarf whose cap he had rescued, with a silver lamp in his hand and a leather apron round his waist. It was all the smith could do to keep himself from laughing, for the wee man looked so funny. He took a little silver hammer out of his leather apron and set to work. The hammer strokes were so light that you could hardly hear them at all, but the iron gave beneath them as if it were wax, and after a few hours the dwarf had worked it into steel.

The smith did not want to appear mean, so he

ordered a gold embroidered red doublet from the best tailor for his little helper and placed it on the anvil the next evening. The wee man came, found the present and laughed with delight. He quickly took off his old grey doublet and put on the new one, looked himself proudly up and down and cried, "Why should a young gentleman who has a red doublet work!"

From then on the wee man was never seen again.

The oldest coal-mine in the Ruhr

NOT far from Langenberg on the Ruhr a boy was once looking after his father's pigs. It was late in the autumn and the wind blew coldly. The boy thought he would light a fire and warm himself. He gathered dry twigs in the wood close by and looked round for a place where he could make his fire. At the foot of a tree a sow had grubbed up the earth to quite a depth, and that seemed a good place to him. He soon had a bright fire blazing.

When the boy drove his pigs home the fire was still burning, although all the wood had long been used up. The boy could not understand this, and the following morning was still more puzzled to find, when he drove the pigs out again, that the fire had still not gone out. The reason for this was that it was not fed with wood, but with black earth. The boy told his father, who came to have a look and was delighted to find good coal there. At that very place he dug a mine-shaft which is still there today. It is the oldest mine in the Ruhr and is called after the sow who really discovered it.

The Swan Knight

THE father of beautiful Elsa of Brabant fell fatally ill when still in the prime of life. His last days on earth were saddened by fears about his daughter's future, and his thoughts turned to his faithful vassal Friedrich von Telramonde, who was said to have once killed a dragon in Sweden. On his death-bed the Duke recommended his daughter to the protection of this brave knight. Friedrich promised to serve his new mistress faithfully, but his loyalty did not last long. He strove to become all-powerful in Brabant, and aspired to the hand of Elsa, even while she was still mourning for her dead father. Elsa rebuffed the impetuous suitor, who then complained to King Henry that she had promised to marry him and had not kept her word. Elsa maintained, however, that she had never led the knight to believe she would marry him. Since it was only his word against hers the king decided that ordeal by combat could alone reveal the truth.

At this time the bells in the temple of the Holy Grail at Monsalvat rang of themselves. This was a sign to the knights who guarded the Grail that an innocent person was in danger. They chose Lohengrin, the son of Parsifal, the Grail King, to go to this person's aid, and he at once put on his armour and had his horse saddled ready to begin his journey. But on the river that flowed from Monsalvat to the sea a swan appeared, drawing a boat behind it. Lohengrin put his horse's bridle into the hands of his page and climbed quickly into the boat, without making any provision for food and drink on his voyage. The proud bird swam towards

the sea and then across the sea towards the coast of Brabant. On the fifth day it caught a fish, gave one half to Lohengrin and ate the other half itself.

Meanwhile Elsa's vassals were gathering round her in Brabant, but not one of them dared to champion her in a fight against von Telramonde, the dragon-killer. One day the young duchess went with her followers to the banks of the River Scheldt. The swan, pulling the



little boat, came up the river and drew in to the bank. Lohengrin climbed out and, without stopping a moment, the swan swam off towards the sea again, pulling the boat behind him. Something within him told Lohengrin that the lady who stood before him was she to whose aid he had been sent. In reply to his questions she told him the cause of her sorrow, and without hesitation the Swan Knight said, "Noble lady, I will be your champion."

Elsa called her relations and her vassals together to Saarbrücken. From there they travelled to Mainz,

for it was at Mainz that the ordeal by combat was to take place. King Henry, who was then holding court in Frankfort, was also present. Friedrich von Telramonde again swore that Elsa had promised to marry him, but, as the duchess still declared she had never agreed to marry him, the king ordered that the fight should begin.

Lohengrin was the victor, and when Friedrich admitted that he had sworn a false oath, King Henry at once had him beheaded.

The beautiful Elsa chose the man who had saved her as her husband, and gladly promised what he asked — namely, that she would never enquire about his name or where he came from. Lohengrin ruled justly and wisely over Brabant for many years.

One day it happened that the Swan Knight overcame the Duke of Cleves in a tournament and wounded him in the arm. The wife of the loser, full of envy and ill-will, said, "It is no wonder that the beautiful Elsa's husband defeats all his opponents; nobody even knows where he came from or what he had been doing before he landed in Brabant on the banks of the Scheldt." This malicious speech hurt the duchess deeply. Her husband noticed that she was brooding over something and asked, "Dear lady, why are you so sad?" She told him of the hard words of the Duchess of Cleves. He at once began, in a kindly way, to talk of other things. When she again complained to him he gave her again an evasive answer, but was twice as kind and good to her. On the following day she was so downcast that Lohengrin asked again, "Dear lady, why are you so sad?" "Husband", replied Elsa, "when you landed from your

boat, my followers at once knew you were a prince, and stood around you, as if they were your servants. Tell me then at last where you came from and who your father is." But Lohengrin turned silently away, for he knew that the answer to this question would separate him for ever from his wife and his two children. On the following morning he got up early, woke the children, and said to his wife, "My dear wife, God himself sent me to you. I came to Brabant from the Castle of the Holy Grail. My father is the renowned Parsifal. Tell our children that they can be proud of their descent, but warn them not to be vain. To remind them of their father I leave them my sword and this horn, which is a magic one." First he embraced and kissed his children, and then bade farewell to the duchess, who fell down in a dead faint. He hastened to the Scheldt, where the swan was already waiting for him, climbed into the little boat and had soon floated out of sight of his loyal followers, who had accompanied him to the river. He was never heard of in Brabant again.

The end of the Schellaerts

A PROUD and rich family once lived near Jülich — they were the Counts of Schellaert. One of them was a great devotee of hunting, and even on Sundays and holy days nothing would stop him from going off to hunt. One day — it was the Feast of Corpus Christi — he set off early in the morning with his friends. As he and his unruly mob were riding home from their sport, they passed a procession which had stopped to pray

and sing at a wayside chapel. The grey-haired priest was just going up the steps to the altar and was about to give the blessing. To show his comrades what a fine shot he was, the Count seized his pistol and shot the monstrance from the priest's hand: it fell to the ground with a crash and broke into fragments. A storm of protest broke out amongst the congregation, and for a time the life of the miscreant was in danger. But the priest called in a loud voice, "Leave him alone. The justice of God will overtake him. Not a stone of his castle will remain upon another. This will not be in my lifetime, but many of you will live to see it."

The Schellaerts' wealth dwindled, their castle did indeed fall into ruins and its stones were used by peasants from the neighbouring countryside to build their houses. They carried the stones away until not even the foundations of the castle remained.

The spirit of the mine

THERE was once a time when everyone was allowed to dig for coal and ore without having to get permission. One day a poor woodcutter from Gressenich near Aachen was digging for iron ore. He had found hardly any and was very distressed. Suddenly a voice behind him called out, "God be with you." He turned and saw an unusually tall man in miner's clothes, who asked him how he was getting on. The woodcutter told the man, whom he at once felt he could trust, what difficulties he was in, and how he was scarcely able to feed the hungry mouths of his children. "Go on digging

in the same place", said the stranger, "and you will find some good ore." The woodcutter seized his axe again. After a short time he found a vein of the finest ore; it got wider and wider, and he worked on at it until evening without feeling a bit tired. After he had put some of the ore he had dug up into a sack, he set off for home, and on the way met a gentleman in fine clothes. When he looked at him more closely, the woodcutter could see that it was the strange miner who had given him such good advice. The gentleman spoke to him kindly and asked to see the ore he had dug up. When the woodcutter opened his sack there was pure gold inside.

Through the Eifel District

From the grave of Charlemagne to Trier

The wolf's door in Aachen Cathedral

CHARLEMAGNE loved to put up fine buildings wherever he could, and it was he who built the famous cathedral in the city of Aachen. He sent for the most skillful master-builders and workmen from far and near, so that the building might be as beautiful as possible.

The people of Aachen were planning great festivities to mark the consecration of their cathedral, but long wars emptied the Emperor's coffers, and the citizens too were soon unable to pay any extra taxes. Sad at heart, Charlemagne was forced to send the workmen away one after the other, until at last the whole work was at a standstill.

One day a completely unknown man appeared at a council meeting in the city and offered to obtain all the money needed for continuing the work and completing the building. He made only one condition — that the soul of the first person to enter the cathedral after it was finished should be his: that was all; he did not want to be paid back a penny of the money he was to provide. The councillors, who were quite well aware who the

stranger was, thought the matter over for a long time, but on the following morning they agreed to the arrangement. The devil — for it was none other than he — at once filled all their coffers so full of gold that the building work could soon be finished.

At Epiphany in the year 804 the cathedral was to be consecrated with all due solemnity. Crowds of people streamed into the city to take part in the great celebration. Pope Leo III even travelled over the Alps to consecrate the great new church. But nobody dared to enter it, for everyone knew of the agreement that the councillors had made with the devil.

At last an ingenious citizen had a bright idea. He suggested that a wolf should be caught and chased into the cathedral before anyone else entered it. The suggestion seemed a good one, and was at once carried out. Scarcely had the wolf sprung through the great door into the church when the devil fell upon him and tore his heart out of his body. But when he looked more closely at his booty he saw that the people of Aachen had tricked him. In his rage he slammed the cathedral door so hard that it split in two, and he bruised his right thumb on a door-knob.

The people of Aachen commemorated this strange occurrence by having a figure of a wolf cast in metal. It is still to be seen today near the entrance of the great cathedral.

The smith of Aachen

FOR a very long time there was a fierce feud between the Counts of Jülich and the inhabitants of the free

Imperial city of Aachen. It was a question, as so often in the Middle Ages, of a powerful prince trying to subjugate free citizens.

One day the impetuous Count William of Jülich thought it was high time to subdue the people of Aachen completely. The protector of Aachen, Rudolph of Habsburg, was fighting far away near Prague, so William secretly gathered together all his knights and men, and early one morning, helped by a heavy mist, appeared unexpectedly before the gates of the city. The solitary watchman had scarcely had time to give warning by a loud blast on his horn, when the iron-clad knights pushed through the city gate and began to cut a way with their swords through the narrow streets to the town hall, while the alarm bell rudely shook the citizens out of their sleep.

The men of Aachen had no proper weapons against the armoured horsemen. They therefore climbed onto the roofs of their houses and threw tiles and timber down onto men and horses. In the tumult of the fighting the count, with his two sons, reached the street lying next to the market place. One end of this street had meanwhile been barricaded with rafters and other pieces of timber, so that the knights could not go any further without getting down from their horses. They were barely out of the saddle when the furious citizens blocked the street behind them as well and the count and his sons were caught in a trap. Behind and in front of them were high barricades, and on either side the towering walls of houses with their windows tightly shut. Arrows whizzed from all directions and stones rattled down upon them.

The count quickly sounded the retreat, climbed with much difficulty over the barricade, and rushed through the streets on foot, in his heavy armour, towards the gate of the town. His sons and his men-at-arms followed him — all of them, that is, who had heard his call and were able to extract themselves from the desperate hand-to-hand fighting.

The count had just come safely through — as he thought — when a blacksmith, as strong as a bear and covered in soot, came towards him out of his smithy, swinging his heavy hammer threateningly. Before the count could draw his sword against his attacker, the latter had struck him a terrific blow with his hammer, so that he fell lifeless to the ground. Two further blows laid his sons low, and with shouts of triumph the citizens attacked the leaderless men of Jülich so fiercely that not one got through the city gate alive. At midday the people of Aachen laid 350 bodies in front of the town hall.

The name of the smith has been forgotten, but the story of his brave deed is passed on from one generation to the next in Aachen.

Chlodewech's conversion

CHLODEWECH, the King of the Franks, still clung to the faith of his heathen ancestors. His wife Chlothildis, who had been a Christian since her early youth, was never tired of pressing him to give up the heathen gods and serve the God of the Christians. The king complied with his wife's wishes to some extent, and had

two of his sons baptised. But as they died soon afterwards, he hardened his heart again, for he firmly believed that his beloved children had fallen victims to the anger of the old gods.

Soon after this the Alemans took the field against the Franks. In a fierce battle near Zülpich the fortunes of war fell to the Alemans. In his distress Chlodewech knelt down on the battlefield, lifted his hands and eyes to heaven, and cried, "God of the Christians, my wife tells me that you help those who call upon you. If you give the victory to me, I will believe in you and be baptised." Immediately the Alemans began to waver and then to run from the field. When their king fell in the hand-to-hand fighting they asked for a truce. Chlodewech made peace with them and went home to his queen.

He sent to Rheims for the pious Bishop Remigius. As the latter was baptising the king and sprinkling the holy water on his head, he said, "Bend your proud neck in humility. Worship what you formerly burnt and burn what you formerly worshipped."

Three thousand of his brave warriors were baptised with their king.

The "ride" at Gymnich

THE ceremony at Gymnich called the "ride" is a strange custom, which dates back to the time of the First Crusade. A certain Count Hermann of Gymnich had gone with the crusaders to the Holy Land. After a battle, he and his followers, hard pressed by the

enemy, found themselves on marshy ground. All their attempts to get onto firm land again failed, for the more the horses struggled, the deeper they sank in the mud, and their death and that of their unfortunate riders seemed certain.

The count prayed to God for help in his distress, "If you, in your mercy, will give us your protection", he cried, "then I and all my men will ride in procession through the fields of Gymnich every year on Ascension Day." That very moment several water-hens rustled out of the reeds; the horses took fright, reared up on their hind legs, and managed to find a foothold on firm ground.

Every year, after his safe return from the East, the count with all his vassals and peasants, used to ride on Ascension Day through the fields and meadows of Gymnich, singing and praying. His chaplain, who was also mounted, bore the Blessed Sacrament in his hands.

This devout custom still survives today, in fact only once did the people of Gymnich fail to observe it, and that summer a dreadful hailstorm destroyed their crops. The following year they rode through their fields as usual, with hymns and prayers.

Bonschariant

THE rich Count Sibodo lived in the time of the Emperor Henry I, and was but a lukewarm Christian. One day the devil appeared to him in the shape of a servant, calling himself Bonschariant. The count took him to his castle on the River Ahr, where the new

servant carried out all his orders so skillfully, that eventually his master could not do without him. When the knight went out to a battle, or to a tournament, Bonschariant always had to go with him. Sibodo also took him into the Holy Land, and wherever the servant fought at the side of his master, the latter was always victorious.

When Sibodo came back from the East he was engaged in fierce battles around the Rhine. In one he had managed to beat his enemy, and to force him back across the river. One evening, weary from fighting, he fell asleep under a tree. His enemies crept up and surrounded him, and would have killed him. But Bonschariant rushed up just in time, snatched the sleeping man from their midst, and flew up into the air with him. Sibodo woke up as they were floating through the air, and cried out in alarm, "God have mercy on me." The devil was angry when he heard these words: he snarled and made a dreadful noise. From that day Sibodo regarded his strange servant with mistrust and secret anxiety.

After some years the wife of Sibodo fell very ill. The knight called in the most famous doctors from far and wide, but they could not cure the countess. At last one of the doctors said, "There remains but one way of curing the sick woman, — lion's milk and dragon's blood. But who could obtain them?" "I will", said Bonschariant, and flew off through the air towards the south. Two hours later he came back from the heart of Africa with the strange medicine. The countess recovered and was in better health than ever. But when she heard how she had been cured, she begged her

husband to dismiss his servant — for she was a devout woman, and was sure he must be the devil himself.

It was hard for Sibodo to do without Bonschariant, but to pacify his wife he decided to build a monastery amongst the Eifel hills and to call it Steinfeld. He told his servant that the fine building was to be a hunting lodge. When the work was nearly completed, the count had a cross set up during the night on the very top of it. Early the next day the devil saw the cross as he was dragging a heavy stone along. He began to rage and fume and he cast the stone at it, but the missile was turned aside by an invisible hand and fell far away near Dieffenbach, where it still lies today. From that time on Bonschariant was never seen again.

The wonderful flower on the High Acht

A YOUNG knight of Ulmen, who had recently come back from the East, was walking one day through the woods on the hill known as the High Acht, which lay near his castle, and enjoying the beauty of the Eifel district, where he had always lived. He suddenly noticed a blue flower of exquisite beauty shining at him out of a bush and he hastened to pick it. To his surprise he found that, just where the flower was growing, there was the entrance to a cave. He climbed down into it, wondering what there could be inside. All at once he saw a girl standing before him, silently pointing with her right hand to a rich treasure, which was piled up at the end of the cave. The knight laid the miraculous flower on the floor and filled his pockets with gold and

precious stones. As he was stepping into the open air, a voice called to him, "Do not forget the greatest treasure of all!" But the happy knight thought no more of the blue flower; his head was full of the treasure. In a flash the girl and all the riches vanished, and the knight found himself standing with empty pockets amidst the bushes and rocks. Mocking laughter reached his ears from below the ground. He tried to find the cave again, but he could not. The treasure was lost to him for ever, for the blue flower blooms only once in a hundred years.

The knight's leap

A YOUNG knight, called Günther of Saffenburg, asked Hildegunde, the daughter of the Count of Are, to marry him, and she gladly agreed, for she had loved him for a long time. But the girl's father, who had an old score to settle with the lords of Saffenburg, dismissed his daughter's suitor contemptuously and forbade him to enter Are Castle again.

Günther did not let himself be put out by the refusal of the revengeful man. Every night he risked his life to climb up the castle rock, so that he might at least see his bride. But the count soon got to hear about this, and one night, as the devoted lover was climbing up the steep track, under cover of the night, he was suddenly startled by the clash of arms. Before he could think what to do, he found himself surrounded by a group of armed men, whilst the lord of the castle, swinging his sword and thirsting for revenge, came rushing at him. It seemed that the unarmed youth was

lost: resistance was useless, for his enemies were too many for him. Yet he would rather have died than be taken prisoner, so he boldly sprang into the fearful abyss below the castle, and, by a miracle, escaped with his life.

So impressed was the Count of Are, that on the very next day he agreed to the wedding. The place from which the young man had jumped so bravely is still called the "Knight's Leap".

The three maidens of Landskron

IN the castle of Landskron on the River Ahr, there once lived a powerful count, who had three lovely daughters, none of whom lacked suitors. A neighbouring knight asked for the hand of the youngest, but he was given no encouragement and therefore resolved to have his revenge.

Accordingly, he and his followers made a surprise attack upon the castle one day when the count was out hunting. Yet although the rejected suitor stormed into every room, he could not find the girl for whom he sought. In his wild rage he had the castle plundered and set on fire.

Meanwhile the three sisters had succeeded in escaping through a secret door in the castle wall and had sought shelter in a nearby cave in the rocks. But, by the light of the flames from the burning castle, the furious man found his way there too. The sisters who, in their fear, had hidden themselves in the farthest corner of the cave, soon heard threatening shouts and

the clash of arms at the entrance. They knew that only God could help them in their great peril, and, putting their arms round each other, they knelt down and begged Him earnestly for protection. At once the wall of rock behind them parted like a curtain, revealing a dark grotto, in which the sisters hid themselves. After a while the rattle of swords and the curses died away in the distance.

Meanwhile the count had returned from the hunt. From far off he had seen the smoking ruins of his castle and he pursued the wretch who had harmed him, and killed him in single combat. Then he looked for his daughters, but search how he might, he could not find them. He looked in the woods on either side of the Ahr, he searched the debris of the ruined castle, he even climbed down into the deep dungeons, but nowhere could he find a trace of his lost children.

At last, the third night after that dreadful day, an angel showed him his daughters' hiding place in a dream. Long before the dawn broke he had made his way, full of hope, to the cave, and soon clasped his children happily in his arms. On the spot where, by a miracle, his daughters had been saved, he had a chapel built of gleaming white stone. Today it still looks down from the top of the castle rock into the Ahr valley below.

The fisherman's son at Lake Laach

ON the banks of Lake Laach there once lived a fisherman with his son. The boy was always fascinated by anything strange and mysterious. On still evenings,

when the lake shone with a ghostly light under the moon, he loved to hear his grandmother tell stories of sunken castles and hidden treasures in the lake, and determined that one midnight he would row out to see these wonders which lay under the water.

One night, when the stars were shining brightly, he stole unnoticed from his bed and crept down to the shore of the lake. With a practised hand he loosed a boat from its moorings, swung himself in, and rowed fearlessly towards the middle of the lake. All around there was a deep silence; he heard only the splashing of the waves against the bows and, from the shore, the call of the screech-owl.

Suddenly he heard sweet music, which grew louder and louder. There was a sound of harps and flutes, the clink of goblets and the warlike clash of arms. Astonished and delighted, the boy leant over the edge of the boat. Far below him he saw a wonderful castle with strong walls and high battlements. Fleeting shadows, as of dancing couples, moved past the brightly-lighted windows. Nymphs rose out of the water and enticed the boy with charming smiles. Somehow, he did not know how, he slipped from the little boat, down into the fathomless depths.

The following morning the fisherman found a boat floating on the water, keel uppermost. But the boy was never seen again.

Saint Mauritius

MANY years ago the people of Büchel built a fine parish church. They carried the holy vessels and vest-

ments, the old flags and pictures of saints out of the tumble-down little chapel where they had worshipped God and into the new church.

But one statue was overlooked — an ancient wooden one of Saint Mauritius on horseback. For a long time it lay disregarded in a dark corner, until one day it was



discovered by children at play. They brought it to the house of a rich peasant, who placed it in his loft. But Saint Mauritius was not at all pleased to be up there, amongst heaps of corn and all sorts of dusty rubbish.

Now one day the peasant came to the loft to feast his eyes on his stocks of golden-yellow oats and brown rye. He noticed that the heap of oats seemed much smaller than it had been, although he had not taken a

single pound of it. He thought it might be mice, so he got a cat and had all the holes in the thatched roof mended. But this was of no avail, for the oats only disappeared all the faster. At last the master of the house decided that it must be a thief. In the hope of catching him red-handed, he and his two sturdy sons lay in hiding one evening. But who can describe the peasant's astonishment when, on the stroke of midnight, the wooden saint began to move. The horse leapt agilely down from the rafters, trotted quickly to the heap of oats, the saint on his back, and ate as much golden corn as if he had gone hungry for a week. Then he returned to his place and stood stiff and wooden under the rafters, just as before.

The next day the peasant brought the statue of the saint to the priest, who put it in a place of honour on the altar.

The loaf of stone

IN the hungry days of the Thirty Years' War bread was very expensive and difficult to come by in the Eifel hills. Need drove not only beggars, but also well-to-do peasants to the monastery doors, where merciful hands gave to those who were hungry enough to keep body and soul together.

One day a peasant sent his son to the old monastery of Mariental on the Endertbach. The good monks gave the boy a loaf of bread nearly as big as a cartwheel. On his way home the lucky boy reached the bridge in the Marter valley and there met a woman with a small child. Both were starving and dead-tired. They had not

enough strength left to climb the steep path to the nearby monastery. The poor woman beseeched the boy to give her a piece of bread for herself and her child, but he hardened his heart and would not let her have so much as a crumb. He even lied boldly, saying that he only had a stone in his sack, and ran quickly across the fields to his home. As soon as he walked in the door his parents and brothers and sisters pressed eagerly round him to see what he had brought.

After he had said grace, the father of the family was about to cut the bread when his knife slipped off it. Instead of a loaf he held in his hands a hard stone. The frightened boy then confessed how badly he had behaved to the poor woman and his father at once sent him back to find her. But he came too late: mother and child were dead. The unhappy boy sought forgiveness for his great sin in the chapel of the monastery.

The loaf of stone was kept for a long time in Mariental monastery, but later disappeared beneath the debris of the ruined church.

True love

A KNIGHT called Philip of Ulmen went to the Holy Land with the Crusade of the Emperor Barbarossa. He was taken prisoner by the Saracens and sold as a slave to a rich Turk.

His brothers-in-arms had long returned to their native land, but nobody had brought any news of the unfortunate Philip back to Ulmen. In his proud castle at the edge of the small lake in the Eifel hills, his lady grieved for her long-lost husband. When two years

had passed away since the return of the crusaders, she at last set out for the East, to find him. On the journey she had to endure many hardships and submit to many humiliations, but her heart remained firm. She played on her harp in the streets of the towns and villages through which she passed and sang in her sweet voice old songs of longing and true love. Many people took pity on her, and gave her alms.

When she reached the country of the Turks, she sang one day in front of a house in the country, which lay within a walled garden. Suddenly she caught her breath in sheer joy, for she heard, from the garden, the voice of her husband, calling her by name. Then she sang and played so movingly that the heart of the rich Turk, to whom the house belonged, was touched. He had her brought before him and told her to ask for anything she wanted. "Set my husband free and let him come back home with me", said the brave woman. And the Musselman kept his word.

After a long journey, the knight and his lady returned happily to their castle by the lake of Ulmen.

The Pulvermaar shepherd

IT was an old custom for the people who lived near a lake called the Pulvermaar to gather together every year in the early days of spring, and to process round the lake with prayer and song, asking God's blessing on their crops. One year the people were too careless and too lazy to keep up the custom. Then water in the deep hollow of the lake began to move; it seethed as

though heated by subterranean fires; it rose higher and higher and threatened to burst the banks. An eerie rumbling and roaring came from the depths of the water and all around the earth trembled.

A shepherd, who was looking after his sheep nearby, saw with terror what was happening. He realised at



once that this was a judgment sent by God, because the people of the villages had neglected the custom of their forefathers. To make good their omission, he put his hat on his shepherd's crook, and walked, singing and praying, round the lake, followed by his sheep. At once the angry waves became calmer and gradually subsided, and when the shepherd had gone right round the lake, the surface of the water was as peaceful and as calm as usual on a still spring day.

The exiled nightingales

THE monastery of Himmerod had become very rich, for so many people had endowed it with money and other treasures. But with these earthly gifts a worldly spirit had also entered its doors. In the cool monastery cellar big barrels were lined up, full of delicious wine, brought from the large estates which the monastery owned on the Mosel. In the kitchen many a savoury roast was prepared, and the degenerate monks led a life of pleasure.

Saint Bernard came to hear of this: at once he took up his staff and went through the Eifel woods, towards Himmerod. With stern, but kindly words, he spoke to the monks, reproached them for not keeping the rules of their order and admonished them to lead a better life.

Late in the evening, the saint retired to a cell and stretched his tired limbs on the hard bed. It was a lovely May night. Through the open window the soft rustling of the leaves could be heard, and the sweet smell of flowers floated in. In the garden a nightingale began to sing, and soon other nightingales took up his song. Lost in wonder Bernard forgot the worries which had brought him there. He listened, as though enchanted, to the enticing melodies and did not hear the warning voice of the vesper bell. Nor did he wake out of his sweet daydream until he heard the singing of the monks in the chapel.

Then he knew why those who lived in the monastery so often forgot heavenly things in earthly pleasure. He went to the window and adjured the nightingales never

again to bewitch the hearts of the monks with their sweet singing. With loud laments the birds rose into the air and flew far, far away, to Honnef on the other side of the Rhine. There the nightingales of Himmerod found a new home in a pine forest.



The drowned castle

WHERE the Weinfeld Lake now lies there once stood a splendid castle, surrounded by green and fertile lands. In this castle lived a rich count, who was famous far and wide for his kind-heartedness. But his wife had a heart of stone. She would rather have trampled bread underfoot, than have given it to a hungry man. This

was a great grief to the count, but he bore his sorrow in silence, and sought consolation in his love for his only child.

One day the count had ridden off to hunt with his men. Suddenly the sky above the castle grew dark: vivid lightening shot from the black clouds and the thunder rolled uncannily. With a deafening roar the earth cracked open, great columns of water spurted up



and swallowed the castle and everything in it. The countess died a hard death in the surging waters.

A messenger brought the dreadful news to the count as he was on his way home. From afar off he called to the unsuspecting knight, "Count, your castle has vanished. There is only a deep lake where it once stood." The count, not believing him, replied, "That is no more possible than for my good horse Falchert to paw the ground and make a spring gush out." He had scarcely spoken when the horse did indeed begin to

paw the ground, and beneath his hooves there bubbled up a fresh spring. The count turned pale as death. He pressed his spurs into his horse's sides and galloped to the place of the disaster. When he arrived there he saw nothing but a wide and dismal stretch of water. Pale and trembling, the sorely-tried man stared at the dark waste which held everything dear to him. Then he saw a cradle floating towards the bank, and in it was his beloved child, saved as if by a miracle. Full of gratitude to God, he pressed the child to his breast and rode away comforted.

The emperor who became a monk

IT was a September evening in the year 850 when two horsemen, wrapped in long cloaks, slowly approached the monastery of Prüm. Before the gate they stopped and demanded admission.

"Who can it be disturbing the peace of this house so late", said the brother gatekeeper to himself, starting up in fright; and he went to see. He asked the strangers their names and what they wanted, but they would not tell him. "Lead me at once to the abbot, for to him alone will I reveal who I am and what has brought me here", said the older of the two men in a low voice, and the younger, seeing that the monk hesitated, gripped his sword threateningly. The terrified monk led the impatient visitors through the wide hall to where the abbot lived. The older man entered, while his companion returned with his guide.

The abbot was very surprised to see his visitor, and

when the latter took off his cloak, started back in astonishment and fear, crying, "The emperor!" His visitor nodded and said, "Do not turn me away, but let me find here the peace which I have so far sought in vain. My soul is laden with heavy sins. All those who have suffered under my rule accuse me. I have there-



fore laid down the burden of my crown, so that I may do penance for my evil deeds and ease my conscience. In all humility I beg you to accept me into the peace of your monastery."

The abbot comforted the despairing man and did what he asked. He who had accompanied the emperor sadly took his leave, and soon the great monarch was wearing the simple habit of Saint Benedict.

Thus, sick in body and soul, did the Carolingian King Lothar, who had forced his father, Louis the Pious, to abdicate, and had carried on a war with his brothers, find the peace of mind which had so long evaded him in a life full of chaos and battle. He gave great gifts of money to the monastery, and costly plate and holy relics. Only six days after entering the monastery he died, having made his peace with God. His body lies in the chapel at Prüm, near the high altar. The inscription which the great teacher Rhabanus Maurus is said to have placed on his tomb runs:

“In this tomb lie the bones of the famous emperor, Lothar, that mighty and devout prince, who once ruled over Franks, Italians and Romans. He relinquished all riches and all power and departed this life as a poor man. He had reached the age of 60 before he became a monk and here died a good death.”

The arrow

TOWARDS the end of the ninth century a certain rich knight called Nithard, and his noble wife Erkanfrieda, lived near Laon in France. Nithard served God with prayers and good deeds and was a kind and just master to those who served him. Everything that he undertook was successful, and his happiness would have been complete if God had given him an heir.

As his life drew to an end, he decided to give all his wealth to some monastery, so that it might be used for good and charitable purposes. As he did not know to which monastery to bequeath it, he sought the advice

of his father-confessor, who said to him, "Take an arrow out of your quiver and shoot it into the air. The winds will carry it over mountain and valley. Give your wealth to the monastery near which it falls to earth."

This suggestion pleased the knight, and he arranged a great feast in his castle, lasting seven days. On the



last day he intended to shoot off his arrow. He gathered his guests around him, and with them climbed down the castle hill into the valley, to a rock, concerning which many legends are told. There he fastened to an arrow a document, in which he announced the gift he intended to make. Before he shot the arrow into the air his chaplain said to the waiting crowd, "Nithard is performing a noble work. Let us kneel down and ask

God that it may be successful." All knelt and prayed devoutly. Then Nithard climbed the rock and shot the arrow high into the clouds. At that very moment the heavens opened, sweet singing was heard, and a shining angel descended, caught up the arrow and carried it away through the air.

At the same hour, in the far-off monastery of Prüm, Abbot Ansbald was standing at the altar, celebrating Mass. Suddenly the sound of sweet music filled the church. An angel floated down in a cloud of light and, in full view of the astonished congregation, handed to the abbot Nithard's arrow, with the deed of gift attached. After the angel had bowed before the altar, he vanished again.

For a long time the wonderful arrow was preserved in the monastery at Prüm as a priceless treasure.

Eulenspiegel* at Castle Dasburg

THE Count of Dasburg was riding to the hunt one day, when Eulenspiegel met him. "Where have you come from?" asked the knight. "From the market at Neuerburg", replied Eulenspiegel. "Was it a large market?" asked the Count. "I didn't measure it", was the reply. "I didn't mean that", said the Count, "I wanted to know whether there were a lot of people there." "I didn't count them", responded Eulenspiegel.

* Till Eulenspiegel is a well-known character in German legend and story, chiefly famous for the tricks he delighted in playing on all and sundry.

These smart answers annoyed the knight considerably. But he restrained his anger and said, "You are from Dahlen, aren't you, my fine fellow?" The rogue said he was. "I have already heard a lot about you", continued the Count. "Why don't you come to my castle? I am sure you would like it there."

Eulenspiegel was well aware that the knight meant to get his own back on him, but all the same he accepted



the invitation. He relied on his cunning, which he knew would help him out of any dilemma, as it had so often done before. On the following day he went to Dasburg Castle. "I am glad you have come", said the Count, and exchanged a meaning look — which, however, did not escape Eulenspiegel — with his servant Franz.

The servant then invited the guest to taste some of the wine in the cellar. When they were down there, Franz stopped in front of a fat barrel and filled a huge

tankard, which he handed to the rascal, saying, "Your health." Whilst Eulenspiegel was taking a long drink, he noticed that his companion was busying himself with something behind the barrel. A few minutes later Franz appeared with an oxhide whip and rushed at Eulenspiegel. But Eulenspiegel sprang quickly to one side, pulled the tap out of the barrel and threw it as far as he could. The wine gushed out onto the floor in a broad stream, and filled the cellar with its delicious bouquet. To stem the flood, the surprised servant stuck his thumb into the hole where the tap had been. But Eulenspiegel picked up the oxhide whip, which was lying on the floor, and beat the defenceless man with it, shouting all the time, "Your health." Not until his arm was tired did he stop belabouring the servant, who was howling with pain. Then he leisurely emptied the tankard, took two hams, which were hanging behind a partition, hid them under his doublet, and ran through the cellar door into the open air.

But outside the rascal began to limp and to howl piteously. The lord of the castle was delighted to see this, and called out, "Have you got what you deserve?" "Oh yes", said Eulenspiegel, thinking of the hams, "I shan't forget it for a good fortnight." And he made off as fast as he could.

The knight rubbed his hands with delight. Then he heard cries for help coming from the cellar. He rushed down and learned from his servant what had happened. Furious at being fooled so easily, they chased after the cunning rogue, but he was far ahead of them, and they never caught him.

The little green elf

A FISHERMAN stood with his net at sundown above the mill at Fließesem on the River Kyll. Time and time again he cast the net into the clear water, but did not manage to catch a single fish. He felt very miserable, for he had two sick children at home, who were longing for some fish to eat.

As he stood waiting patiently on the bank, two young swans came swimming slowly upstream, weak and exhausted. He was just about to throw out the net after them, when a little green elf stepped out of the wood, and shook his finger at him threateningly. The fisherman however took no notice of the warning: he cast the net and caught the swans. But when he took the net out of the water, instead of the swans there were two shining trout in it. The fisherman was not a little surprised at this. He hurried home to bring the sick children the food they longed for. As he approached his cottage, he saw two swans fly up from the roof and vanish in the misty distance. But the children lay in their beds — dead.

Then he knew that the sick swans had been his own children, and he cried over and over again, "If only I had heeded the warning of the little green elf."

The fiddler of Echternach

MORE than a thousand years ago, Saint Willibrord, who was a great benefactor of the Germans, lived in Echternach. Whenever he preached, the people flocked

to hear him. Now an extraordinarily tall man, called Veit, was always to be seen in the front row of the congregation. Veit was a travelling musician, and used to play at feasts and celebrations. The moving words of the great preacher touched the heart of the fiddler so deeply, that one day he set off with his wife to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Many years passed by, and Veit did not return, nor was anything heard of him. His relatives decided that he was dead and divided his possessions between them. At last, on Easter day, ten years after he had set out on his pilgrimage, Veit reappeared quite unexpectedly, alone and penniless. Robbers in the East had killed his wife. His only possession was an old fiddle. He went to his relatives and asked them to give him back his goods. But they were dishonest, and loth to give up what they had taken, so they decided to get rid of Veit. Accordingly, they denounced him as the murderer of his wife.

They had no means of proving so serious a charge, and so a trial by combat was the only way of deciding the matter. Veit had to fight against a relation of his, who was skilled in arms. He was defeated, and the judge, as the law and tradition demanded, condemned the vanquished man to death.

As he stood beneath the gallows, with the noose already round his neck, he asked if he might play his fiddle once more before he died. His request was granted, and at first he coaxed such mournful notes from the strings, that tears ran down the cheeks of those who listened to him. But suddenly he changed his tune and played music so wild and throbbing that all those who

had rushed to see the execution had to dance — boys and girls, men and women, yes, even the solemn judge and the sinister hangman. The dancers spun round faster and faster, but Veit climbed calmly down the ladder and disappeared in the wood, playing as he went.

The townspeople could not stop dancing until late in the evening, for Veit had put a spell on them. And Veit's wicked relations could not even stop then. When they had danced themselves up to the knees in the earth, Saint Willibrord was sent for, and he undid the spell.

Through the Mosel District

From Trier to Coblenz

Rictius Varus

ON the orders of the Emperor Maximian, the Roman prefect, Rictius Varus, had cruelly persecuted the Christians in Trier. Because of his cruelty he could not find rest after his death, but was obliged to go about the city in many different shapes. Now he appeared as a black dog, now as a calf that glowed as though on fire: in the shape of a wild colt he raced through the streets on dark nights, his hooves clattering on the stones, and on the days on which his deeds of cruelty were commemorated, he was seen at dawn, standing in front of Saint Paulin's church, in the shape of a white horse.

Once the suffragan bishop of Trier was returning from a late walk, and was frightened by the ghost of Rictius, who had laid himself across the path, like a black shadow. "That shall be your last trick in Trier", said the holy bishop to himself, and the next day he sent for a capuchin monk and asked him to banish the evil thing. The pious monk carried the ghost down to the Mosel under his white cloak, and had himself ferried across. The huge ferry-boat nearly sank under the heavy weight, and the ferryman said in surprise, "I

should like to know what you have under your cloak." The monk lifted it a little, and the inquisitive man started back, crying, "God have mercy on me." He had seen the ghost, glowing like iron that has just come from the smith's forge.

Soon afterwards the ferry-boat moored at the opposite bank. The monk carried the ghost into the Meulen Forest and there showed him the boundaries within which he was to be confined.

The cathedral stone

WHEN the people of Trier were building their cathedral, they got into great difficulties, and did not know where to get enough money to finish the great work. Then, one day, the devil came to the master builder in disguise and said to him, "I am ready to help you finish the building, but you must first tell me what it is for." The wily builder realised at once who his visitor was, and replied, "I want to build a fine inn for the townspeople." His answer delighted the devil, and he helped as much as he could with the arduous work. Day and night he dragged huge blocks of stone great distances, and the building progressed much more quickly than had been expected.

One morning the devil was flying through the air, carrying an enormous stone, when he heard below him the solemn pealing of bells. The bishop had just consecrated the cathedral and was walking through the assembled crowds to celebrate Mass. The devil flew into a rage: he threw the lump of stone he was carrying

towards the new building. But his missile fell to earth a little short of the cathedral, and there it still lies today.

Eberhard's barrel

THE pious hermit Eberhard wanted to build a chapel in honour of the Virgin Mary, and chose for his site a



spot called Klausen, which has since become a famous place of pilgrimage. Building proceeded quickly, for the country people came from far and near to help. It was in the middle of summer and Eberhard had got a good cask of wine from the Mosel, so that he could give the workmen a cool drink now and then. But one day, when the sun was particularly hot, the wine gave

out. Eberhard had sent for a second cask in plenty of time, but it had not arrived. The workmen began to grumble and threatened to go away. Eberhard thought the Virgin herself might find a way out of the difficulty, and he prayed to her, "Dear Mother of God, I have done all I can. It is your turn now. Help me out of this difficulty." And his prayer was answered, for the cask which, a short while before, had been empty, was found to be full of the best wine.

The news of this great miracle spread quickly through the surrounding countryside. Even today it is the custom there, in very hot weather, to wish for a cask like Eberhard's.

The faithful bride

A BRAVE young knight, who came from Veldenz Castle, was once asked to go into a distant land with the army of the Emperor. When he left, he put a gold ring on the finger of his wife-to-be.

The war had been over a long time, but the knight of Veldenz had not come back. The unhappy girl wept over his fate, and mourned for him, and was inconsolable. But deep in her heart she still cherished the hope that her lover would return.

After some time her mother said to her, "You have mourned long enough. Give me that ring, for you will never be happy while it is there to remind you of the dead man." She talked so long and persuasively to her daughter that at last the girl drew the keepsake from her finger and gave it to her mother.

The mother threw the ring into a deep well. But it did not stay hidden long, for a servant-girl found it in a pail of water, which had been drawn up from the well. Again the mother took the ring, and this time buried it in the garden. But when the daughter was walking there one day, lost in thought, she saw it hanging on a bean-stalk, and shining brighter than the drops of dew. Happily she slipped it on her finger and declared that she would never be parted from it again. Her mother was very angry when she heard what had happened. "Give me the ring at once", she cried, "I am going to burn it, so that it does not disturb your peace of mind again." Just as she tried to snatch the ring from her daughter's finger, the door opened, and the long-lost knight came in, alive and well, and clasped his faithful bride happily to his breast.

The Berncastel doctor

ARCHBISHOP Boemund lay seriously ill in his beautiful castle of Landshut. The doctors had done all they could for him, but it seemed that he must die.

He therefore promised a rich reward to anyone who could cure him. A simple peasant of Berncastel heard about this. He had some very fine wine in his cellar, and he took a cask of the very best, and carried it laboriously up to the archbishop's castle. At first the guards would not let him pass, but when he told them so earnestly that he could really make the Archbishop better again, they allowed him in. He put the cask down beside the sick-bed, and screwed the spigot into

it, filled a goblet with the sparkling wine and gave it to the invalid, saying, "Anyone who drinks this wine is bound to get better. This is the right doctor for you."

First the sick man sipped the wine, then he took a large mouthful, and then a long drink. When the goblet was empty, he said, "Give me some more of this fine medicine. I can feel it doing me good already." He drank some more of the delicious wine and in a short time was able to get up from his bed, completely cured.

Today this wine is still called "Berncastel Doctor".

Countess Loretta

NOT far from Traben-Trarbach on the River Mosel is the little village of Starkenburg. It stands at the top of steep slopes, covered with vineyards, and has a fine view over the surrounding countryside. Only a single narrow road leads up to it. And a few ruined walls mark the spot where once stood the castle, which gave its name to the village.

In the days of the Elector Balduin the energetic and beautiful Countess Loretta of Sponheim lived at Starkenburg Castle. She had been widowed early in life, her husband having failed to return from a journey to the Holy Land. She was always engaged in bitter feuds about her children's inheritance, not only with envious neighbours, but even more with the imperious Elector himself, until at last well-meaning friends and relations succeeded in arranging a truce. But soon Loretta found such a good opportunity of getting her great opponent into her power, that she made no bones about breaking the solemn agreement.

The countess learnt from her spies that the Elector was going to sail down the Mosel to Coblenz in a small boat, with only a few followers. At a spot which was ideal for an ambush — for the willows grew thickly together on the bank — she had a strong chain stretched across the river, just under the water, which served as a barricade. The Elector, having no idea what was



going on, fell into the trap. The chain was suddenly pulled taut and brought his light craft to a standstill. His followers were overpowered by the superior numbers of Loretta's men, who had been hidden amongst the willows, and he was captured and led to Sponheim Castle. There the countess received him with all the honour due to his rank, but held him as a prisoner. Even when she learnt that the Pope had excommunicated her, Loretta would not set the Elector free.

For a long time negotiations for his release dragged on. At last Balduin promised to pay the countess a

large ransom and also to hand over to her the castle at Birkenfeld, built on Sponheim lands, and even to make an alliance with her. After he had been set free the Elector kept his promise. He even became the friend of this countess who was as brave as she was clever, and who had fought so manfully for the rights of her children.

The founding of Arras Castle

DURING the first half of the tenth century after Christ, when Routbertus was Archbishop of Trier, the Hungarians were repeatedly attacking German territory. Year after year they overran and ravaged the country as far as the Rhine. In the year 938 a horde of these savage fighters even came across the river, and pushed on through the Eifel to Kaisersesch and Lutzerath.

At that time many charcoal-burners lived in the woods on both sides of the Alfbach. Their leader was a brave and strong man, called Arras. He had twelve sturdy sons, who did not lag behind their father in courage. When they heard the dreadful news that the Hungarians were approaching, the father sent for all the charcoal-burners in the district. A crowd of men, burning to fight, were soon gathered round him, They knew all the hidden tracks and hiding-places in the hills, and were ready to lay down their lives to protect their homes.

Arras armed his brave band as well as he could, with weapons of all types, and then distributed the men very carefully behind rocks and bushes on the heights on the

right bank of the Alf. It was not long before the barbarians came riding that way, leaving burning villages in their wake. As they appeared, arrows rained down on them from the men lying in ambush, and many a brown horseman fell from his horse. Fear and confusion seized the raiders, for they had not expected opposition. As they did not know the footpaths in that wild hilly region, they did not dare to advance any further.

Meanwhile the soldiers of Hermann, the Count Palatine, had arrived, and they now closed in on the Hungarians. A desperate battle developed in the valley, which ended in the complete annihilation of the raiding force.

On the following day the Count Palatine went, with Archbishop Routbertus to the cottage of the old charcoalburner.

He thanked the brave man for the heroic attack he had made, and dubbed him and his sons knights. The Archbishop, however, had a strong castle built to protect the valley, at the place where the battle had been fought. He called it Arras and gave it and the lands round it to the charcoal-burner. There the lords of Arras lived for many generations and always showed themselves worthy of their brave ancestor.

The chapel on the Petersberg

LONG ago there stood, in Neef on the Mosel, a little church surrounded by a churchyard. Here the inhabitants of the village had been laid to rest for as long as anybody could remember. When the church fell into

disrepair, the people of Neef pulled it down, intending to build a larger and more beautiful one in its place. Old and young vied with each other in helping with the work, and soon plenty of wood and stones lay ready on the building site. But one morning when the stone-masons went to begin work, they found the site was bare: wood and stones had vanished. They set about looking for them, and found them at the top of the Petersberg — a hill nearby — carefully arranged in piles. At first they thought that it was just some boys playing a trick, yet, whoever had moved the materials had done it quite noiselessly, for not a dog had barked during the night.

The industrious people of Neef worked away, carrying everything back to its original place, but all in vain. In the morning the wood and stone was back on top of the Petersberg. The next night the men of the village kept watch to see who was playing this cruel trick on them. Until midnight everything was quiet and the site lay peacefully in the moonlight. Then shining figures descended from a cloud and carried the wood and stones through the air back to the top of the hill. The people of Neef realised that God wished the church to be built high up above their vineyards. They did as He wished, and today the little church still stands in its peaceful cemetery at the spot which was chosen by a miracle.

The swan church

A DEVOUT knight from Pymont Castle, in the Maifeld district, went to the Holy Land with Barbarossa's

army, and was captured by the Saracens. For many long years he languished in a dismal tower, loaded with heavy chains, longing to be free, and home-sick for the distant Eifel hills. All his hopes rested with God, for he knew that no human hand could save him.



One spring evening in the eighth year of his imprisonment, the knight said his prayers as usual and fell into a deep sleep. He dreamt that a great shining-white swan flew into his cell and freed him of his chains. The proud bird made him climb on his back, and carried him swiftly away many hundreds of miles through the air, over land and sea. At last the swan came gently to earth, put down the knight and vanished in the clouds.

The knight awoke, strangely light of heart, and as

he groped around with his eyes shut, he felt, instead of the stone floor of his prison, the soft earth of his native land. He opened his eyes in amazement, and saw the well-known Eifel hills, shining in the early morning sunshine.

He was so thankful for his deliverance that he had a church built on the spot where the swan had set him down. This church — now very old — still stands on the top of a hill, not far from Garden in the Brohlbach valley. At the top of the steeple, where the weathercock usually stands, there is a swan.

The armour with the hole in it

AMONGST the armour and weapons, which are preserved in Eltz Castle, there is a breast-plate, the left side of which has a bullet-hole in it. In less peaceful days young Gisela of Eltz wore this piece of armour, and died the death of a hero in it.

According to the custom at that time, the Countess Giesela had been betrothed, when quite a small child, to the lord of Braunsberg, but when she grew up she came to dislike him, and refused to marry him. But the lord of Braunsberg would not leave the rich and beautiful girl alone. One day when he tried to embrace her during a feast, she pushed him away, to the great amusement of the other guests. Deeply offended, the knight decided to win his bride by force of arms, and that very day he declared war on the people of Eltz.

One dark autumn night he fell upon the Castle, and all in it rushed to its defence. In the battle which

quickly followed, a young nobleman distinguished himself above everyone else by his bravery. The lord of Braunsberg aimed at him with his pistol at close range, and the shot pierced the steel armour.

When the men of Eltz had finally defeated their attacker, they carried the fallen man into the courtyard and, lifting his vizor, they were horrified to see the dead, but still lovely face of young Gisela, who, unknown to them, had fought at their side.

The "Miseräbelchen"

WHEN Jesus Christ was still on earth, he came one day, with his disciples, to the Mosel River. It was a very, very hot day. He and his followers were terribly thirsty. They had already put a good stretch of dusty road behind them, and were dead-tired. At last, when the sun was shining almost straight down upon them from the cloudless sky, they sat down under the shade of a nut tree to rest, and Christ sent Peter into the nearest village to fetch something to quench their thirst.

Although he was very tired Peter hurried along, for he was just as thirsty as his master. He had scarcely reached a certain pretty Mosel village, when the fragrant scent of wine floated towards him out of a cellar door. He went down the steps into the cellar, and found a pleasant-faced man there, busying himself with a wine-cask. The man gladly handed a fat, wooden tankard full of cool wine to the thirsty disciple. Peter emptied it at one draught. Then he had it filled again with the delicious liquid, and started out on his return journey, quite refreshed.

As he strode quickly and happily along, the wine slopped over the brim of the tankard, which was very full. "It is a pity to waste even a drop", said Peter to himself, and he drank a little, to save any more from being wasted. But he drank so much, that the wine looked rather low in the tankard. To remedy this, he took his knife out of his pocket, and cut a little off the rim of the tankard all round. It was not long before the



wine again began to spill onto the dusty road, and Peter did just what he had done before. This happened several times, so that when he reached the nut tree there was very little left of either wine or tankard.

When Jesus looked at him questioningly, he hastily said, "All the cups are as small as this in these parts", and handed the queer-looking vessel to his Master. But Jesus said to him, "Keep your poor little cup" — (and the word He used for "poor little cup", for he spoke German in Germany, was "Miseräbelchen"). — Then

He turned to the other disciples and added, "Now you are going to have a proper drink, but Peter can just watch, for he has already had his share."

Since that time the people who live by the lower reaches of the Mosel have always called a tiny glass a "Miseräbelchen."

From the Saar to the Rhinegrave Stone and the Hunsrück

The devil's chimney

NEAR Saarhölzbach there once lived a smith, who was so strong that he could easily lift his anvil above his head. He was a rough sort of a man, swore from morning till night and believed neither in God nor the devil.

One day he was standing in his smithy, making horseshoes. When he had finished the first, and laid it on one side, it sprang apart in the middle. Angrily he began to work at another, but this also sprang in two. With a dreadful oath he seized a third piece of iron in the tongs and said, "If this breaks too, may the devil fly away with me!" He hammered away at it furiously and the sparks flew all round him. But the third horseshoe broke apart with a clang too, and at that very moment the devil came down the chimney and said to the amazed smith, "I heard the wish you made and have come to grant it. Follow me!"

The smith was very frightened: he tried to think how he might escape from the devil, and said at last, "I will keep my word, but first you must show me how powerful you are." The devil was quite prepared to do this, and after they had arranged to meet at midnight on

the hill opposite Saarhölzbach, he vanished through the chimney just as he had come.

When night came the smith tucked his heavy hammer under his arm, crossed the Saar in a small boat, climbed up the hill, and sat himself down in a hollow tree to wait for the devil. Suddenly the hillside opened and the Prince of Darkness, shrouded in a cloud of smoke, came out of the opening. He sniffed the air, and then made straight for the hollow tree. The smith told him to prove how powerful he was by gathering together in a heap all the stones which marked the boundaries of the district round Trier: this was to be done between midnight and one o'clock, and between one and two he was to carry them back again, and place each stone in its proper place. The devil agreed: he whistled and at once a crowd of his cloven-hoofed companions came rushing up. When the clock struck twelve in nearby Mettlach, they set to work with their master. The stones arrived thick and fast, and before an hour had passed half the work was done, and the pile of stones stood as high as a house. Just one stone lay a little to one side: one of the devils had let it drop as if it were too hot for him. When the smith looked more closely at it he saw that it was marked with a cross. Without anyone seeing him, he hammered it into dust and strewed the dust in the stream close by.

On the stroke of one the crowd of devils began to carry the stones back again, and before the time stipulated their master was able to declare that the task was finished. The smith, however, pointed out that one stone was missing. When the devils found out what had happened, they pressed angrily towards the smith. He

gripped his hammer and hit them hard on the head as they came up to him, so that the mountain rang with the sound of the blows. Yet gradually his strength gave out and he would certainly have been lost, if at the crucial moment the clock in the church tower at Mettlach had not struck two. The devil's time was up, and he and his companions stormed through the opening in the hillside, down into the depths of the earth.

When the smith had recovered, he went slowly home. The following morning he threw his hammer and anvil into the the Saar and set out on a journey to the Holy Land. But the rock under which the inhabitants of hell had gone in and out is still called the devil's chimney.

Saint Oranna

SAINT Oranna was the daughter of a king of Scotland. Like her brother, Wendelin, she left her home and her native land, without telling her parents, and travelled across the sea, to serve God in quiet and seclusion. She arrived, with her companion Cyrilla, in the wooded hills by the River Saar. One day, as she rested on the steep heights of Berus, she saw in the valley a band of horsemen, who had been sent by her father to find her and bring her back to Scotland. Fearful lest they should be discovered, the two girls hurried off again.

At that time a peasant was at work in a field nearby. As he strode along the last brown furrow, sowing his corn, the men who were pursuing Oranna arrived at the top of the hill. They asked him if he had seen any people running away, and he answered, "As I was be-

ginning to sow, two girls of good birth rode by in a great hurry." As he spoke, he looked round and saw that the barley he had just sown had already grown as high as his knee. The horsemen saw the field of green corn too, and said to each other, "It is no use, we are too late." And they gave up their search and returned to Scotland.

Oranna and Cyrilla remained in Berus Wood, living as devout hermits. When they died they were buried in nearby Essweiler, and a chapel was built above their grave. During the Peasants' Wars the village was razed to the ground, and although the little church escaped destruction, the bones of the two holy women were brought into the parish church of Berus for safety. There they still occupy a place of honour today. Many pilgrims from the country around the Saar and from neighbouring Lothringia come to Berus for the Festival of Saint Oranna, which is held on the third Sunday in September.

The "Great Boot"

LONG, long ago, when the inhabitants of the beautiful Saar valley were still heathens, a Christian knight called Heim, had a castle on a hill near Ensheim called the "Great Boot", about which many legends are told. His good and beautiful daughter helped the poor and gave rich gifts to the brothers of Saint Arnual's monastery, who brought Christian teachings to the people of the district. With the permission of her parents the girl entered the nunnery of Saint Arnulph. She died not long afterwards and lies buried in the convent church.

Many hundreds of years have passed by since then, but the girl still appears on the castle hill as a kindly fairy, who gives flowers and fruit to good children.

One beautiful summer day a poor girl was looking for strawberries for her sick mother round the old ruined walls of the castle. She was very intent on her work, and when she at last looked up she found herself in the middle of a pretty garden. A beautiful girl in a lovely dress appeared from behind a rose-bush, beckoned to the astonished child, and led her to a bed where the most delicious strawberries were growing, saying, with a friendly smile, "Fill your basket and take the strawberries to your Mother. She will be better once she has eaten them."

The girl picked the fruit eagerly, and it was not long before her basket was quite full. Then the fairy brought some beautiful roses and laid them in the child's apron.

Suddenly the fairy and the beautiful garden vanished, and everything was as it had been before. Ruined walls stood amongst low bushes, and agile lizards slithered over the stones.

With a thankful heart the child ran home. Her mother ate the delicious fruit and decorated her poor room with the sweet-scented roses. When she awoke the next morning she found she was quite well again. The roses had turned into pure gold.

Saint Wendelin

SAINT Wendelin was the son and heir of a king of Scotland. But since he longed rather for a heavenly

than an earthly crown, he renounced the world and secretly left father and mother, that he might dedicate his life to God in poverty and solitude.

After many wanderings he arrived near Trier, and twelve miles away from the city itself he discovered a wild tract of country, where lived a hermit. There he built himself a hut and worshipped God by day and night, with fasting and prayer.

One day Wendelin made a pilgrimage to Trier. He looked in amazement at the holy relics which the pious country people flocked to the old cathedral city to see. As he possessed nothing he had to beg for alms to support himself while he was there. Now a certain nobleman, to whom he applied, said sharply to him, "How can a strong man like you beg? Come to my estate and look after my sheep, then you will not need to be a burden to others."

Saint Wendelin was sure it was the will of God that he should heed these words, and so he entered the service of the knight. He looked after the animals very well, and God blessed his work. His sheep never fell ill, not a single lamb was killed by wolves and the flock increased as never before. So it came about that he won the favour of his master.

Wendelin often thought, as he guarded his flock, of the hut in the woods which he had left behind, and which had been a second home to him. It lay on the side of a hill which had always made him think of the Mount of Olives. One day, as he was following his flock, deep in thought, he suddenly found himself at the foot of that very hill, quite close to where his hut lay. This was very puzzling, for his master's castle lay many

miles away from it. After he had mended the hut, and covered it with fresh branches and leaves, he drove his flock home, and in spite of the long distance they had to go they reached the castle well before sunset. From that time on Wendelin visited his old home every day, and, while the sheep grazed peacefully, he knelt in his cell and prayed.

Now one day Wendelin's master chanced to pass by the hermit's cell. One of his servants said to him, "My lord, is not the shepherd kneeling there our Wendel?" "Yes", replied the knight, "unless I am mistaken it is he." They rode up to Wendel, and the knight was angry and began to scold him. "Wendel", he said, "I am most displeased to find you here. When are you going to come home?" The devout man replied gently, "My lord, let there be no anger in your heart. God will make everything right again."

The knight went away with his companions, but, although they rode hard, Wendelin and his sheep were in the castle courtyard before them. When he saw this the knight was full of fear, and thought, "I am not worthy that this man should be my servant, for he is blessed in the eyes of God." And he said to his servant, "Dear Wendel, forgive me for having spoken harshly to you. Tell me what I may do to please you." The holy man answered, "If you want to please me, then serve God in future and lead a good life." The knight took these words to heart and became a better man. But he did not wish Wendelin to be his serf any longer, and he released him. The holy man returned to his beloved hillside. Yet he could no longer live hidden from the world as he had done before. The people believed he

could work miracles, and he was always being asked to cure diseases both of man and of beast.

Once a dreadful epidemic broke out amongst the cattle in the country around Trier. Wendelin went into the stables and pastures and blessed the cattle, and from that hour the epidemic died out.



The monastery of Tholey lay not far from Wendelin's hut, and when the old abbot died the monks began to quarrel amongst themselves about the choice of a successor. In the midst of their disagreements they then heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Choose the holy shepherd Wendelin." The brothers obeyed the heavenly command. They went to Wendelin and asked him to

become their abbot. But Wendelin was a man of great humility: he did not want to rule over others and only gave in when the monks told him of the voice they had heard.

Wendelin performed the duties of his high office with great diligence for many years. When he felt that his end was at hand he sent two monks to Trier to the holy Bishop Severin, with the request that he should bring the blessed sacrament and the holy oils. The bishop set out without delay for Tholey. As he was administering the sacrament the bishop saw a wonderful sight. Two shining angels descended from heaven and held a snow-white communion cloth over the saint, as he lay on his poor bed in the narrow cell. After Wendelin had received the sacrament he told the bishop of his royal descent and died peacefully and happily.

The monks buried him before the altar in the monastery church. When they gathered for Mass the next day, they found that the grave was open, and that the coffin lay beside it. They then realised that God wished the saint to have a different resting place, and they placed his coffin on a cart, to which they harnessed two oxen, who had never before been yoked. Without a driver to direct them the oxen pulled the cart straight to the hill where Saint Wendelin had so often prayed, dragged it to the top, and then stood still. The monks made a grave there and laid the saint in it. Over the grave they built a church. Pilgrims came from far and near to seek help in times of need and sickness, and the town of Saint Wendel grew up around the church.

The church on the rock

ON a steep rock above the little town of Oberstein on the River Nahe there once stood the proud castle of a count. Two brothers, Emich and Wyrich, once lived there. They were devoted to one another, but at a tournament where they had fought side by side and won great renown, they met a young girl of noble birth, who came from Lichtenberg Castle, and they both fell in love with her. From that day they grew more and more jealous of each other, and, from being the best of friends, they became the most bitter of enemies. One day when, by chance, they were both in the same room in the castle, the hatred between them flared up, and Wyrich seized his brother, and hurled him out of the window. Emich fell to the foot of the castle rock, and was killed.

The dreadful thing he had done weighed upon the murderer's conscience, and he was tormented by the thought that he had shed his brother's blood. He wandered in despair from one place to another. Even a journey to the Holy Land brought him no peace.. One day he met a hermit, whom he told of his misery. The wise old man said to him, "Take note of your next dream, and do whatever God, in his wisdom and goodness, may suggest to you then."

Soon afterwards the knight dreamt he saw himself cutting a deep ledge in a rock with a hammer and chisel and building a church there. When he awoke, he remembered the advice of the hermit, and started work at once. Tirelessly he hammered away at the steep cliffside above the rushing River Nahe. Often his hands would

become too tired for him to work any more, but after a short prayer he always seized hammer and chisel again with fresh courage. One hot summer day, as he was working, he longed for a drink of fresh water, and suddenly a clear spring began to bubble out from a cleft in the rock. "Lord, You are good and all-powerful", said the knight, as he saw the wonderful sight, "You can also grant me forgiveness for my great sin." He set to work again harder than ever, and before a year had passed the church was finished.

On the day the church was to be consecrated, the priest, who was to celebrate the first Mass there, walked to the altar, and found the knight lying dead at the foot of the altar steps. His pale face wore an expression of great peace.

Boar Castle

NOT far from the two spas of Kreuznach and Münster on the River Stein, and in the angle formed by the junction of the Rivers Nahe and Alsenz, stands Boar Castle. In the year 1500 Franz von Sickingen lived there. He was the leader of the League of Knights of Swabia and the Rhineland, and a powerful supporter of the Reformation. Many adherents of the new teaching found hospitality in his castle, and protection from their persecutors. One of his guests was Ulrich von Hutten, who spurred the inhabitants of the castle on to fight against the leaders of the Church.

During the many battles which followed, Boar Castle was once beseiged. For many weeks the enemy attacked its strong walls without success. At last only one hope

was left to the besiegers — that they might be able to starve out Sickingen and his men. They were sure the supplies of food in the castle could not be very big. Yet time dragged on and the castle was not surrendered. Day after day the despairing enemy watched the defenders bring a huge pig into the courtyard and make



ready to kill it: these proceedings were always accompanied by loud squeals from the pig. If the besiegers had only known that this farce was carried out each time with the same pig — a fine, bristly boar — they would not have given up the siege so quickly. But the trick was successful and they withdrew, albeit reluctantly.

The castle has been rebuilt with the help of stone from the ruins, and a stone figure of the boar can still be seen by the entrance.

The Rhinegrave stone

ON the Rhinegrave stone, a steep rock beside the River Nahe, there once stood a mighty castle, which had not been built by human hands, but was the work of the devil.

A certain Count of Kauzenburg in Kreuznach made a pact with the devil. (He had spent the previous night carousing, and did not quite realise what he was doing.) It was agreed that the devil should build a castle in one night on the Rhinegrave stone and give it to the Count of Kauzenburg. In return the devil was to receive the soul of the first person to look out of a window of the castle.

The count felt sure that the devil would not be able to fulfil his part of the bargain, and so he was very surprised and very frightened the following morning, when he saw the building towering up from the high rock; in fact he did not want to enter his new castle at all. His wife, however, told him not to worry. She rode calmly up the rocky path, followed by the chaplain, while the count, with his knights, reluctantly brought up the rear. When the devil, who was sitting on the roof in the shape of a huge bird of prey, saw the priest, he laughed wickedly to himself, for he thought that the priest would certainly enter first, and would be a fine catch for him.

But the clever devil was quite mistaken this time, for the countess was cleverer than he. She had a donkey brought into the castle hall, dressed him in the chaplain's cassock and black hood, and made him look out of the window. In wild delight the devil fell upon his



victim and carried it away in his claws. But high up in the air the frightened donkey began to bray. Then the devil knew that he had been tricked. With a dreadful oath he let the donkey fall, and the poor animal was killed as it fell onto the rocks.

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Antz, August

Legends of the Rhineland

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