



tached to the grey moss-clad rocks and allow the imagination to climb with the dark-leaved ivy which mantles around the old towers and crumbling walls. By-gone days there seem to rise again from the grave, and the soul may uninterruptedly indulge in its longing after those desired but unattainable objects, which lend additional charms to the golden dreams of youth.

Who is there that has felt the poetry of youth, and dwelled in exstasy upon the images and recollections of past times, who can avoid gazing with melancholy contemplation upon the ruins of Frankenberg, whose half-decayed towers covering the woody declivity with their prostrate fragments. The modern postern of this venerable castle, a part of which is inhabited, is approached by a bridge, stretching across the sedge-covered lake, and is surrounded by luxuriant meadows, bounded by cool and verdant woodlands. In order to form an adequate idea of the richness and charms of this spot, it should be seen upon a fine spring-morning, when the dew glitters like diamonds upon the new-born grass; when the rising lark fills the air with its cheerful melody and the fresh verdure of the trees admits a partial view of the ancient towers of the neighbouring city, as they stretch forth their pinnacles through the early haze. It may then be imagined, how the puissant and illustrious Emperor, to whom the whole world, with all its glorious attractions, majesty and splendor, lay open, should have selected this sequestered spot, in preference to all the palaces of his boundless Empire.

Of the many anecdotes, which have been treasured up in old chronicles, songs and popular traditions, concerning the greatest Emperor, that Germany ever possessed, none are better known or more affecting than those of the love which held him a willing slave in the chains of his beautiful consort Fastrada. Although, by sometimes availing herself of the influence she possessed over Charlemagne, to effect her own purposes, she had given rise to divers commotions in the Empire, and created much discontent and animosity, the Emperor clung to her with unabated affection. At length, while the court was residing at Francfort, on the banks of the Main, which rolls its peaceful and majestic waters through the surrounding fertile plains, she fell grievously ill. The Emperor's grief knew no bounds and it amounted even to despair on the death of this beloved object, which occurred shortly after. He would not quit the chamber in which she had breathed her last : he appeared to be bound there by some unaccountable spell. As the corpse lay before him, he fancied that she only slept, and the moment when her spirit was emancipated from her frail body seemed to him to have been but a hideous dream. In short, he knelt beside her bed, attempted to awaken her, and called her by the most endearing names.

The Emperor's councillors and courtiers knew not what course to pursue : he would not so much as hear of the interment of Fastrada's mortal remains. He imperiously dismissed those who even mentioned it to

him, and answered that she would soon awake from her slumber. All feared for the reason and even for the life of their sovereign, if he should continue in this frame of mind. While matters remained in this perplexing state of uncertainty, the pious Turpin, Archbishop of Rheims and first councillor of the Emperor, had a vision which explained the whole mystery. The Prelate stated that he perceived a mysterious ring interwoven with the hair of the Empress, and that it was this ring, that kept Charles still fettered to his deceased consort. Turpin's resolution was soon formed: on the following morning he entered the apartment and, unobserved by the Emperor, secretly took possession of the ring.

No sooner had he done this, than Charles stood up and threw himself weeping into the prelate's arms. It seemed as if his eyes were just opened and as if he now for the first time became conscious of the fatal truth: he shuddered and knew not what had taken place within him. He willingly permitted himself to be led by the Archbishop out of the chamber, mounted upon horseback and rode through the city, where he was hailed by the anxious citizens with the most heartfelt demonstrations of joy, and soon arrived at his favourite Ingelheim, where he applied himself with renewed ardour to the affairs of state. Every thing which had occurred since the death of Fastrada, was to him as a dream. Her remains, however, wrapped in purple and gold, were carried in solemn procession from Frankfort to Mayence, and were interred in the

abbey of St. Alban, where Charles commanded a magnificent tomb to be erected in commemoration of her merits and his love.

From this time forward the Emperor always insisted upon the pious prelate remaining near his person : he did nothing without his advice and in short could not support his absence for a moment. Although the Archbishop took advantage of this attachment for the benefit of the church and state, for he was a well meaning and wise man ; his pious spirit took offense at what seemed to him an unholy charm, wherefore he determined to rid himself of it as soon as possible. His mind was full of this thought when he once accompanied the Emperor upon a visit to Aix-la-Chapelle, where he was wont occasionally to take up his residence. Wandering in the valley where those salutary hot springs take their rise, which had induced Charles to build himself a palace there, Turpin came to a small placid lake, enclosed on all sides by woods and carpets of green turf : into this he threw the fatal jewel.

From this time the Emperor, in whom his palaces of the Upper-Rhine only awakened sad recollections of his lost happiness, thought he could no more leave the green valley. It was only, when compelled by the affairs of the Empire, which did not at that period allow the monarch to rest quietly at any fixed spot, but called him from one place to another, that he separated himself from his favourite retreat, to which he returned as soon as he was at liberty. He not only embellished the city itself with a palace and churches;

but he also caused the castle of Falkenberg to be built near the neighbouring lake, after having cleared away a part of the wood. Here he often sat for hours together in undisturbed solitude, gazing on the sheet of water beneath his feet, and meditating even in his old age upon the happiness of past days.