

ST. - GOAR.

Upon the sumptuous board of the renowned Epicurean Lucullus, it may be well imagined that so great a dainty as Rhine Salmon was not wanting. And if, whereof there is little doubt, Lucca formerly produced as excellent oil and Modena as equally excellent vinegar, as they do now, this fish in the sultry climate of the Roman Campagna must have been esteemed an invaluable luxury. As the journey from Babylon to Constantinople could be performed with post horses, there was no reason why that from Germany to Italy could not be done with equal facility in seven or eight days, thus it was evidently their

own faults if the fashionable Epicures and wealthy Amphitryons of Rome had not an abundant supply of fresh Salmon in their kitchens. All we can say is that if they had they must have enjoyed themselves as much as Eneas did with the butter upon Dido's tartlets.

The race of people who obtain a scanty livelihood by the salmon-fishery, are poor but industrious. Surrounded by the steep and rugged precipices, through which the noble Rhine rushes roaring and foaming, as though it were indignant at the rocky walls that oppose its progress, these hardy men procured themselves a scanty but honest livelihood as far back as the sixth Century, about which period the pious hermit St. Goar first appeared amongst them, to preach the hallowed precepts of Christianity and Salvation.

This good man who was born in Aquitain of noble blood had early obeyed the call to disseminate the word of God to the benighted heathen. After travelling through Gaul and experiencing various hardships and dangers, he reached the lovely shores of the Rhine, where, having found an indigent but industrious and well-disposed people, he determined to fix his abode.

A low cell at a short distance from the small, half hidden huts of the inhabitants, afforded him shelter. He passed his life in their society and in communion with God; frequently sharing in the toils of the fishermen, who, when they had terminated their daily labours, assembled with their wives and children in a

circle round him, whilst he discoursed with them upon the words and miraculous works of our blessed Redeemer. The fame of this holy man quickly spread far and wide. Many strangers from distant parts were attracted to the neighbourhood, so that a little community soon collected upon the left bank of the river, at the foot of the mighty mass of rocks, which at present support the ruined walls of the once powerful fortress of Rheinfels.

The humble and pious life of St. Goar preserved him not, however, from the malevolence of numerous enemies. The Bishop of Treves, who amongst others cherished a secret dislike towards him, persecuted and afflicted him by every means in his power. Siegbert, King of France, hearing at length of the circumstance, summoned the anchorite to his court, where his innocence and pious life were made manifest. Siegbert being justly incensed at the cruelty and oppression of the Bishop, removed him from Treves and offered the vacant diocese to the pious St. Goar.

But the venerable Hermit sought neither the honors or vanities of this world. His only desire was to return to his friends and disciples and once more to retire to the solitude of his cell, upon the banks of the Rhine. To this the King unwillingly assented, and St. Goar again resumed his pious and simple avocations in his favourite spot, where he continued to reside for some time until at length full of years and good works, revered and universally regretted, he yielded up his spirit in July 575.

Where the cell of the saint formerly stood, the pious of the age erected a small church, which was much frequented by pilgrims.

This edifice, enlarged and nobly endowed in later centuries, enjoyed the particular favour of the Frank Monarchs. Its rich cloister, which was erected near the church, attracted to its hospitable walls crowds of pilgrims and wayfarers from distant countries. Many are the jocund tales recounted of its overflowing vats and of its wine and water baptismal ceremonies. The village, which derived its name from the Hermit, rapidly increased in size and consequence and became a wealthy fortified town, which travellers of the present day cannot fail to visit with pleasure. The name of the Saint is also perpetuated by the hamlet of St. Goarshausen, which is situated on the opposite bank and is overlooked by the ruins of a Castle, which is called the Katze (Cat), an abbreviation of the name of its founder, who was a Count of the ancient and noble house of Katzenellenbogen.

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