

Even at this period it presents many attractions al-
though the venerable trees which for centuries had
surrounded the trout ponds are now no more. Thither
the lover of nature escapes from the turmoil of the city,
having traversed the beautiful castle gardens he will
do well to direct his steps along the brow of the hill to
north, the shade of the stately walnut trees that line
the road. Thence, following the course of the stream,
he will visit the village of Schierbach and enjoy
the prospect on the right bank, where on one side
the Helliger.

THE MOUSE TOWER.

cannot raise its proud head, and further on this
white walls of the Harburg, glistening in the rays of
a declining sun, smile upon the spectator and lend a
cheerful variety to the lovely landscape. For the
mouse in "how old" to be mentioned all that
before that it have spent with it in the morning

“Passengers are requested not to speak to the Steers-
man.” Such are the words that I saw written in three
different languages upon either side of the elevated
platform on which stood the Pilot of the good steam
ship, Concordia, wherein I last ascended the noble
Rhine.

Heaven only knows what impulse it is that always
prompts one either to taste of forbidden dishes, espe-
cially if he be going to the Taunus baths in hopes of
mending his digestion, or to thrust oneself into batter-
ies, bastions and casemates, especially if a grim
sentinel declares them to be tabooed to strangers.

In short, heaven knows why we should always desire to fly in the face of law and medicine and to consider every thing ordered for our benefit as an encroachment on our liberty. But such, since the days of our first mother down to the present hour has been, and such until the end of time will be the contradictory tendency of our frail nature. Thus, I could not withstand the desire I felt to transgress the above mentioned warning, and the more so, since the features of the old man at the helm indicated more than ordinary quickness and intelligence. I therefore cautiously made my way through the crowds of fair dames and gallant cavaliers who crowded the deck, displaying their stores of hand books, panoramas, albums and drawing apparatus. Having succeeded in only treading upon one gouty foot, whose proprietor returned my apology with a look so grim that it made me wish to tread upon the other, and having only deranged one new married couple who, strange to say, seemed so glad to have even that interruption to their tête-à-tête that I no ways wished to tread in their steps — I at length reached the afterpart of the vessel and placed myself near the venerable Rhinelander, whose weather worn features and long flowing grey hair gave him a strong resemblance to the river God whose portrait embellishes the title page of this work.

Having saluted him with the usual common place, “Heavenly weather, M^r Pilot!” I ventured to point to and demand the name of a tower which rose grim and solitary from the bosom of the flood near Bingen, as if

it had been spared by the hand of time to record some dark and terrible event. In lieu of giving me a surly reply and pointing to the “noli me tangere” painted beneath his feet, the veteran pilot turned his quid in his mouth and replied: — “If you will wait ten minutes until Hans relieves me at the wheel I will tell you its history.—It is Archbishop Hatto’s death place” and so saying he gave a rapid turn of the wheel in order to bring the steamer’s head in a proper direction to meet the increasing current and I proceeded to thread my course to the fore-castle, where I found the usual group of merry, green-veiled Abigails coquetting with the whiskered couriers who are so indispensable to the travelling comfort of every Englishman.

Many minutes had not elapsed ere I was joined by the pilot who leaned over the bow of the vessel and commenced his yarn in the following terms.

Tradition has given the name of the Mouse Tower to those old stone walls, which the most courageous boatman cannot approach without a feeling of awe or without uttering an inward prayer for his own safety and for the repose of his soul who met with a death so appalling within its battlements. Indeed there are few who steer towards that part of the shore, where pious hands have raised a consecrated effigy of the “Noth Gottes” (God’s need), as an encouragement and boon of peace to mariners, without repeating an Ave, or invoking the blessing of the Almighty on their voyage.

In by gone times, so says the story, there lived an Archbishop of Mayence, named Hatto, whose heart was

obdurate and whose conduct towards the poor and needy was oppressive and inhuman. It chanced, unfortunately, during the sovereignty of this cruel Prelate-Prince, that a terrible famine desolated the Rhine and neighbouring states, spreading death and misery far and wide. Hatto whose immense granaries and stores were filled with grain and provisions, willingly opened them to all those who had the means of purchasing, but to the unhappy poor of his extensive principality they were inexorably closed.

The distress of his vassals becoming daily more urgent, they assembled in crowds before his gates and implored him to have pity on their suffering. But in vain did they lift up their withered arms and starving children and supplicate him, in God's name, to grant them a few sacks of flower in order to save them and theirs from a lingering death. In vain did they invoke the benediction of the Almighty on his head. His heart was steeled and he bade his retainers drive them thence like dogs. At this the poor wretches murmured and uttered deep though impotent curses upon their Princely tyrant.

Now, although Hatto's heart was closed to pity it was singularly alive to anger. Waxing exceeding wrath, therefore, he sent forth his pampered men at arms and commanded them to seize and bind the seditious hounds, as he called the famished creatures. This barbarous command having been obeyed he ordered the miserable wretches to be confined in a large barn and then, horrible to relate, he bade his myr-

midons set fire to the building. This hideous mandate was promptly executed for no one dared disobey the tyrant Prelate. So that ere long the flames burst forth, roaring and hissing and soon scorched and burned to death the unhappy prisoners.

The winds quickly bore the wretched victims death cries to the Palace where it reached the ears of their hellish destroyer and his infamous boon companions, who sat around him at his festive board. Whereupon he exclaimed in fiendish mockery. "Hearken to the corn mice! Hark how they squeak there! This will teach them to creep into my granaries."

At length the sounds of woe were hushed and all was still — save the avenging wrath of God, which gleamed forth in forked lightning and awful bursts of thunder at the sight of the calcined bones of his creatures. But Hatto laughed and defied this sign of God's anger and in his drunken mirth roared out: "Heark to the corn mice's requiem." Suddenly, however, the mid day sun withdrew its light and darkness, like that of night, overspread the tyrant's hall. But this had no effect on Hatto, for he laughed the more and bidding them bring lights and fill the goblets to the brim with sparkling Rudesheimer, he called out: "Here's a toast — Let us drink to the merry corn mice."

The servants upon this brought torches, but they burned not, nor could a thousand tapers dispel the gloomy darkness that hung around the tyrant's chair. Suddenly, however, the thunders ceased, the light-

nings no longer flashed — and for a while there was a dead and awful calm.—Then, rattling, grating sounds like that of rushing waters or ten thousand saws was heard on every side and in an instant more the mighty hall teemed with life and movement. The vengeance of heaven was about to show itself in a manner little expected by the despot, for, from all corners — from all crevices — from the windows, doors, walls and cellars a host of ravenous mice came leaping, squeaking in interminable legions — so that the whole Palace from the roof to the lowest vault was filled with these strange guests. Fearlessly did the little brutes clamber upon the side boards and spring upon the tables — devouring or carrying off the viands before the eyes of the terrified guests. Every instant the number increased so that the very floor was hidden by them. Many were destroyed but their places were instantly supplied by others, so that at last not a single crumb in the buttery, nor a single grain of corn in the granaries was spared, even to the very morcel which Hatto clenched in his hand.

Fear and amazement now fell upon the tyrant and his impious companions, so that Hatto's servants and retainers, seeing that the hand of God was on him, determined to abandon him and to fly from the service of a man, whom they regarded as proscribed by heaven. The terrified but still incredulous Archbishop vainly urged them to remain and ordered all the cats of the city to be collected and turned into his Palace. Then he boarded a vessel well stored with

provisions and descended from Mayence to yonder tower in hopes of escaping the vengeance of God. But his hopes were vain.— His unwearied tormentors, following his steps in countless thousands, rushed along the banks without injuring the land or vineyards.

No sooner did they perceive his vessel anchor near that tower, into which Hatto quickly entered and shut himself up, than the little animals plunged into the bubbling waters and swimming through the whirlpools clambered over the battlements. And, as they approached, Hatto heard or thought he heard the voice of a thousand demons laughing at his terrors and then arose shouts and scornful outcries of “Hearken! heark to the corn mice.” At this his heart quailed and he felt that the Avenger’s hand was on him.

Marvelous to say the host of half starved cats had likewise followed, but in lieu of falling upon the mice and satisfying the cravings of their hunger, they sat upon the river’s shore purring and mewing as if in token of approbation—so that the mice fell to work and, having overcome every obstacle and gnawed through doors and walls, cast themselves upon the deserted wretch and fixing upon his hands, his face and body tore him to a thousand shreds.— Having devoured his flesh they left the blanched bones upon the turret, as an awful example of God’s avenging wrath, and then disappeared no one knows whither.

“Such,” said the Pilot, “is the legend of the Mouse Tower which I’ve told to a thousand travellers before and I’m now ready to drink your honor’s health as I did theirs.”