

Hammerstein, the Asylum of the Emperor Henry IV.

Between Coblenz and Bonn, on the right bank of the Rhine, is seen a black rock of gigantic size picturesquely crested by the ruins of the castle of Hammerstein. In the 11th century this castle belonged to a count Otto from whom, it is believed, are descended the race of the counts of Nüringen and Hammerstein.

The unfortunate Henry IV., after his escape from the captivity in which his son held him, first in the castle of Klopp, and afterwards at Ingelheim, sojourned for a short time within this castle, whence he repaired to Cologne, a city which had throughout remained faithful to him. After several fruitless attempts to regain the sovereignty, of which he had been so cruelly deprived, he at length ended his life at Liege, in 1106.

We learn from the ballad that Wolf of Hammer-

stein, an old companion in arms of the emperor Henry, towards the close of his life, complained of his hard lot in having only two daughters, instead of a son by whom his name might be transmitted to posterity. Whilst he was thus repining, his old master the emperor suddenly stands before him imploring from him an asylum and protection against his own son, by whom he had been dethroned and driven from his dominions. Struck with this mournful sight the old count perceives that domestic happiness is not always ensured by the possession of a male descendant, and returns thanks to heaven for having made him the father of two beloved daughters whose virtues constitute the delight of his old age. Such is the subject of the lithographic design which accompanies the ballad.

Roland, the faithful Paladine.

The castle of Rolandseck, the ruins of which are seen mournfully towering over the lofty rocks on the left bank of the Rhine, was built, as is believed, by Roland the bold, nephew of the emperor Charlemagne, in order to live near the lady of his love, who had

been induced, by a false report which had reached her of his death, to take the veil in the monastery of Nonnenwerth, situated on an adjacent island of the Rhine. According to tradition it was within this castle that the heroic Roland died.

In the design which accompanies the pathetic ballad, the Paladine is represented at the close of his life overwhelmed with grief for the loss of his mistress. Nothing can rekindle the expiring spark within. In vain his faithful squire strives to awaken his love for the sports of the field by drawing his attention to a heron rising in the air; in vain they lead forth his spirited charger, the neighings of which might revive in him the remembrance of his glorious exploits: — the expiring gaze of the warrior is immovably fixed on the monastery which contains the object of his love.

The lute, the last notes of which had been sounded for her, drops from his powerless hand; — nothing can bind him any longer to a world in which all is to him a dreary void.

The conception of the poetess is admirably embodied in the lithographic design.

The castle of Rolandseck belonged in the 12th century to the chapter of Mentz, and was in ruins as early as the reign of the emperor Frederic III., who died in 1493.

Sigefrey, the Vanquisher of the Dragon.

In the popular traditions of the north we likewise meet with Sigefrey, the hero of the poem of the Niebelungen and vanquisher of Fasner, who had been transformed into a serpent.

According to the tradition which prevails along the Rhine, the cavern in which the dragon, slain by the intrepid Sigefrey, lived, is still to be seen on the south-eastern side of the mountain on which the ruins of the castle of Drachenfels stand. The castle itself was once the residence of a race of Burggraves of the same name, which became extinct in 1580.

The design represents the intrepid knight as just victorious over the formidable dragon, and meeting the

beautiful Gunhilde as she comes from the cave in which the monster had so long detained her a captive. The poem is so fertile in picturesque images, that it would have furnished materials for a whole series of designs. We were however obliged to content ourselves with the one we have offered, illustrative of the principal scene, which, from the fidelity and beauty of its details, can hardly fail to excite a lively interest.

The view from the summit of the Drachenfels, at an elevation of 1055 feet above the level of the sea, is certainly the most enchanting and magnificent which the region of the Rhine, or, perhaps, the whole of Germany, can afford.