

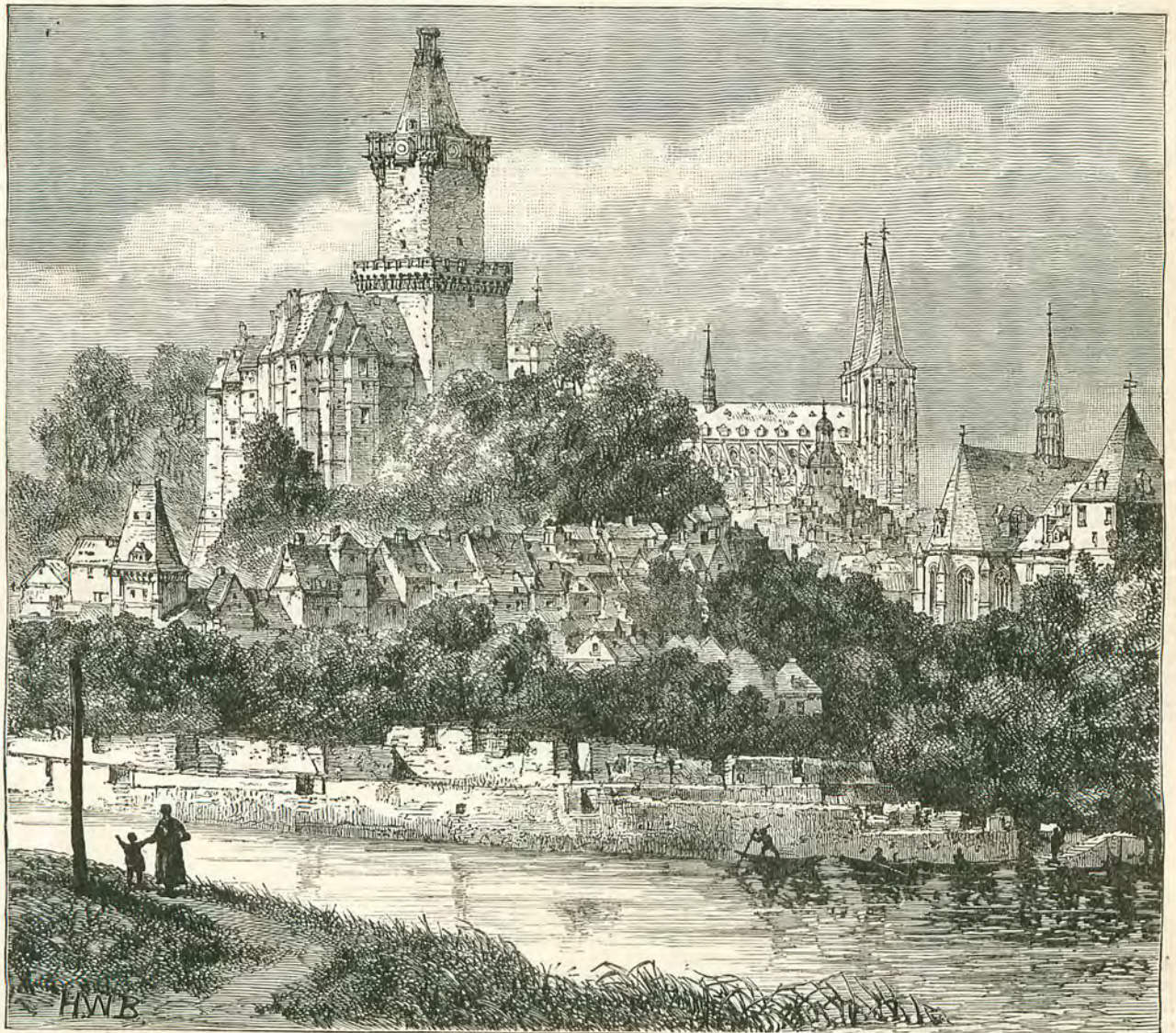


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THE CASTLE OF CLÈVE AND "THE MAGIC SWAN."



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CLÈVE CASTLE.

FROM passing through mile after mile of a flat, monotonous country, which intervenes between the Dutch Coast and the German Frontier, one suddenly comes upon a range of beautiful wood-clad hills, upon the first of which stands the Castle of Clève, or, as we in England call it, "Cleves." A clear and rapid river winds round its base on its way to join the Rhine, which is some six miles distant. The not unpicturesque high street of the little city climbs round and round the hill, ascending by circuitous stages from the bridge at its foot to the old castle on its summit, while a second eminence, nearly as lofty, is crowned by the twin spires and sharply-pointed roof of the great Minster Church. A lovely forest or wood envelops the town, and extends itself in every direction as far as the eye can reach. When we first saw the place the sun was setting in golden splendour behind the great hill, and the scene was one which will not be easily forgotten. The grand silhouette of towers and spires stood out in purple-grey against a brilliant orange sky, the upper boughs of the exquisite trees of the great wood were tipped with golden light, and the whole was reflected in the clear river below, calling to mind those lines of Wieland in "Das Schloss am Mehr," which have been so gracefully translated by Longfellow.

"O hast thou seen the castle,
That castle by the sea?
Golden and red above it
The clouds float gorgeously.
And fain it would soar upwards
In the evening's crimson glow;
And fain it would soar downwards,
In the mirrored wave below."

The sombre-looking old ducal castle told out boldly with its many gables against the sky, and the vast brick tower called the "Schwan Thurm," or Swan Tower, reared its frowning machicolations and battlements high above all its surroundings, like some old mail-clad knight standing forward in defence of the weak and oppressed.

When one came to examine the place more minutely, and by the broad daylight, it must be acknowledged that Clève, although an exceedingly pretty place, lost somewhat of its romance, and did not quite carry out those dreams of old-world picturesqueness which its first appearance had suggested.

The town itself, to begin with, is rather too neat and well kept to offer many subjects to the pencil of the artist, though these qualities are undoubtedly advantageous to its inhabitants and visitors; nor is Clève particularly rich in architectural structures, either ecclesiastical or secular. It possesses five churches, three of which are "Katholisch" and two "Evangelisch." The minster is a large, lofty, fourteenth-century church, built of alternate bands of red brick and artificial stone; it has two lofty slate spires at the west end, and a graceful spirelet or flèche in the centre. These, and the commanding position which it occu-

pies, give it the effect of a great cathedral when seen at a distance. Internally it is a graceful but rather plain building. It contains two very fine old monuments; one to a Duke of Clève and his wife, adorned with well-sculptured effigies, and another to a lady of the house of Clève, who is represented upon a brass plate fixed to the slab of her tomb, which is remarkable from having on its side what are called "weepers," that is to say, diminutive representations of persons dressed in funeral garb mourning round the tomb. There are also two well carved and painted altar-pieces, the works of a school of painters and carvers established at Calcar, a place celebrated in the sixteenth century as the great art centre of this portion of Germany. The "Klosterkirche," in the lower part of the town, also possesses some excellent carving. The principal Protestant church is a most singular-looking building, and would be certainly taken for a town hall rather than a church; it is not, however, unpicturesque, and has a very quaint belfry. Several of the hotels in the town have formerly been palaces, and have their rooms adorned with paintings, and possess beautiful gardens. The castle, sometimes called "Schwanenberg," though striking at a distance, is a singular jumble of styles—in fact, a regular piece of architectural patchwork when examined more closely. It is entered by an Italian gateway, adorned with an immense coat-of-arms, erected by Duke John Maurice in the middle of the seventeenth century. The little courtyard to which this gives ingress has some curious-looking doorways, which look like twelfth-century work, and its walls are covered with inscribed tablets, several of which date from the times when the Romans were masters of this district. The vast Swan Tower, a great brick structure 180 feet high, was rebuilt, as we see it at present, in the year 1439; and from its height and commanding situation is visible for many miles round.

A strange legend is attached to this tower. It is said that in very early times a knight in full armour appeared to a Duchess of Clève, in a vessel drawn by a large white swan. The knight took up his abode in the castle, and was married to the lady; they lived together in great happiness for ten years, but at the end of that time the swan again appeared and carried off the knight. We need scarcely say that Wagner has immortalised this story in his beautiful opera of *Lohengrin*. A monument in the market-place records the event, and a fountain, in which the water emerges through the bills of swans, and the old tower has been known as the Swan's Tower for many centuries.

Another princess of the house of Clève found a temporary husband in the person of that great English Bluebeard, Henry VIII. Anne of Cleves' matrimonial venture did not, however, end in the disappearance of her husband, but in an iniquitous divorce, founded upon no other charge whatever except that

Holbein's portrait had rather flattered her, and that the lady was not sufficiently good-looking to satisfy Henry's fastidious taste.

As things went in those days, however, Anne of Cleves was perhaps not the most unhappy queen of her time, as she appears after the separation to have lived a life of peace and retirement many years after the death of her tyrannical husband, and was honoured by a public funeral, and a handsome monument was erected to her memory in Westminster Abbey. She was the only one of Henry VIII.'s wives who received this distinction, and one of the very few queens of England.

Few towns in Germany have such pretty surroundings as Clève. The great wood comes quite up to the town, in fact, surrounds it on three sides; and as it is full of hills and dales, charming views can be obtained from it of the great valley of the Rhine, and the rich and fertile plain which extends on the one hand to Brabant and on the other to the ancient city of Cologne.

In one of the most sequestered valleys of this great wood stands a vast bronze tomb, adorned with trophies and insignia, amongst which the eight-pointed cross of the Knights of Malta is conspicuous. This tomb covers the grave of John Maurice, Duke of Clève and Prince of Nassau-Siegen. There are many places of interest in the neighbourhood of Clève; two are well worthy of a visit. The first is Calcar, some seven miles distant, a place which was celebrated in the sixteenth century for its school of art and the renowned master, John of Calcar, one of the greatest painters of his day.

The Catholic parish church (Katholisch Kirche) possesses several of his pictures, and some magnificent carved oak triptychs, works of the Calcar school of wood-carving. One of these contains as many as two hundred figures, executed with extreme delicacy. Xanton, some seven or eight miles further on, contains a still finer church, covered externally with sculpture, whereas its interior is a perfect museum of Mediæval art, carved altar-pieces, screens, stained-glass, pictures, tapestry, chandeliers, and a wealth of Mediæval embroidery and needlework, such as is probably not to be found in any other church north of the Alps.

Like Clève, Xanton is celebrated as one of the scenes of the Nibelungenlied; here was the castle of the Nibelungs and the birthplace of Siegfried, the dragon slayer. It was one of the most important Roman stations in Germany, and its great church was first erected by the English Empress St. Helena.

In conclusion, we may recommend any of our girls who want an economical, health-giving, and enjoyable Continental holiday to visit Clève. The hotels are numerous, handsome, extremely comfortable, and reasonable, and there are many excellent pensionnats. The mineral baths are also said to be efficacious in many cases.

H. W. BREWER.

ALDYTH'S INHERITANCE.

By EGLANTON THORNE, Author of "My Brother's Friend," etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

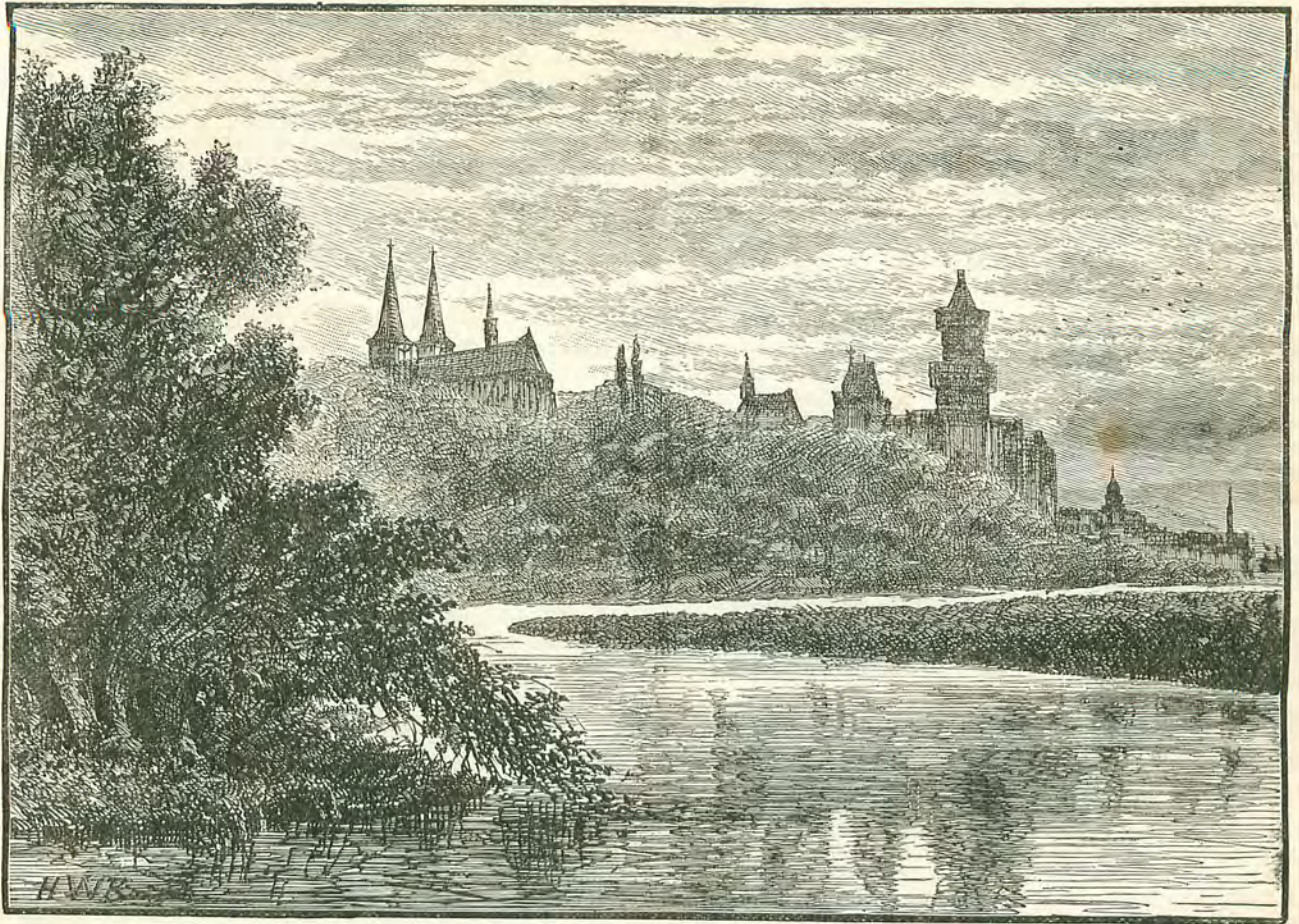
A LONG-DEFERRED HOPE IS REALISED.

A FORTNIGHT later, on a raw, gloomy afternoon, Aldyth and her aunt stepped from a train on to the platform of Liverpool Street Station. A telegram received late on the previous evening had acquainted them with the fact that the

Stanton family had arrived in London, and Aldyth was now on her way to meet her mother.

Aldyth's face was white and eager, and Miss Lorraine, too, looked excited. Aldyth had been disposed to maintain silence all the way, and the journey had never seemed to her so tedious; but

excitement had had the contrary effect on her aunt. Unchecked by her niece's reluctant rejoinders, she had talked the whole time, chiefly on matters of little or no importance. But when they were in a cab, driving to the West-end hotel where the Stantons were to be found, Miss Lorraine, too, became silent, and



CLÈVE FROM THE RIVER.

her eyes were often turned upon her niece with a rather anxious expression.

It was no new thing to Aldyth to be in London. She and her aunt not seldom came up for a day's shopping in town, or gave themselves a few days' enjoyment of sight-seeing. They found such delight in the pleasures of town as only country people can, to whose ordinary experience it offers so sharp a contrast.

But to-day Aldyth had no eyes for the shop windows, nor for the beautiful equipages they met as they drove westwards. She saw nothing that they passed. There was a strange combination of thoughts—if thoughts they could be called—in her heart. Every now and then tears would rise to her eyes as she told herself how happy she was going to be. Life must be different for her from henceforth. All she had known or read or dreamed of a mother's love was to be realised at last. She started as from a dream and flushed crimson when her aunt suddenly laid her hand on her arm. "We are almost there, Aldyth. See, this is Charing Cross."

And, still with a dreamy sense of unreality, Aldyth recognised the wide space before her, the fountains, the lions, the statues; the omnibuses taking up passengers; the carriages dashing to and fro, with all the bustle and stir of London life.

"Oh, Aldyth! Oh, my dear child!"

said Miss Lorraine, taking the girl's hand in hers, and speaking in agitated tones.

Aldyth looked at her wonderingly; but whatever Miss Lorraine was about to say—if indeed she knew—was never said.

Their cab was making its way through a crowd of vehicles. There was a bump and a jar which startled Miss Lorraine, always somewhat nervous when driving in London. Happily there was no cause for alarm; all was right in a moment; but ere Miss Lorraine had recovered from her fright they were at the door of the hotel, and an obsequious servant stood ready to help them alight.

Aldyth made an effort to subdue her excitement as they followed a waiter up the broad, shallow staircase; but in spite of her will her heart beat uneasily, and she felt quite faint as the man threw open a door and announced them. She need not have experienced any nervousness, however. The room they entered was a large one, with three windows overlooking the Embankment, and at first sight it appeared to be empty; but a young lady rose hastily from the depths of a great easy-chair by the fire, and came forward with out-stretched hand.

"Aldyth! do we meet at last?" she said, and kissed her affectionately. "How strange it is to think that you are my sister, and we have never seen each other till now! And this is your aunt, I

suppose? How do you do, Miss Lorraine. I cannot claim you as an aunt, although Aldyth is my sister. Pray come near the fire, you must be dreadfully cold. I never knew anything like the cold of London."

Aldyth sat down, but her eyes were fixed upon the door which communicated with the next room. Was her mother there? Why did she not come to her?

"You are Gladys, I suppose?" said Miss Lorraine, pitying Aldyth's suspense. "Mrs. Stanton is quite well, I hope?"

"Oh, perfectly well, thank you," said Gladys. "She will never forgive herself for not being here to welcome Aldyth; but papa wanted her to go out with him. I think they were going to inquire about a house, and of course we did not know exactly when you would arrive. But mamma will be very vexed."

Aldyth said nothing. She could not have spoken without betraying how disappointed she was. All the way to London she had had a vision of her mother awaiting her, eager for her coming, longing to clasp her in her arms. This reality was so different from her anticipations that she experienced a painful revulsion of feeling.

"Do come nearer the fire," said Gladys Stanton, seeing her turn pale and shiver. "And you will like some tea—tea is always refreshing after a journey." She rose and rang the bell