

TRAVELLING ON THE RHINE.

BY VICTOR HUGO.

Translated from the French.

Since my boyhood I have always derived extreme delight from travelling on foot, for in many of my pedestrian trips I have met with adventures which have left a pleasing impression behind.

The other day, about half-past five in the morning, after having given orders for my luggage to be transported to Bingen, I left Lorch, and took a boat to convey me to the other side of the river. If you should ever be here, do the same. The Roman and Gothic ruins of the right bank are much more interesting to the traveller than the slate-roofed houses of the left. At six I was seated, after a somewhat difficult ascent, upon the summit of a heap of extinguished lava, which overlooks Furstenburg Castle, and the valley of Diebach. After viewing this old castle, which in 1321, 1632, and 1689, was the seat of European struggles, I descended. I left the village and was walking joyously along, when I met three painters, with whom I exchanged a friendly "good day." Every time that I see three young men travelling on foot, whose shining eyeballs reflect the fairy-land of the future, I cannot prevent myself from wishing that their chimeras may be realized, and from thinking of the three brothers, Cadenet, Luynes and Brandes, who, two hundred years ago, set out one beautiful morning for the court of Henry IV., having amongst them only one mantle, which each wore in turn. Fifteen years afterwards, under Louis XIII., one of them became Duke of Chaulnes; the second, Constable of France; and the third, Duke of Luxembourg! Dream on, then, young men—persevere!

Travelling by threes seems to be the fashion upon the borders of the Rhine, for I had scarcely reached Neiderheimbach, when I met three more walking together.

They were evidently students of some of those noble universities which tend so much to civilize Germany. They wore classic caps, had long hair, tight frock-coats, sticks in their hands, pipes in their mouths, and, like painters, wallets on their backs. They appeared to be conversing with warmth, and were apparently going to Bacharach. In passing, one of them cried out, on saluting me,—*"Dic nobis domine, in qua parte corporis animam veteres locant philosophi?"*

I returned the salutation, and replied, *"In corde Plato, in sanguine Empedocles, inter duo supercilium Lucretius."*

The three young men smiled, and the eldest shouted—