

From the castle terrace overhanging the valley, I enjoyed a glorious sunset view of the lovely Neckar, winding among the vine-clad slopes of the forest-billowed Odenwald—the ancient haunt of the “Wild huntsman of Rodenstein”—and the more remote “blue Alsatian Mountains.” Of course nobody leaves without seeing in the castle vaults the “great tun,” which will hold eight hundred hogsheads of wine. It lies on its side, is as high as a two-story house, and one goes up a ladder to a platform, twelve by eighteen feet on the top.

It was a students’ fête day, the schloss garden was full of merry-makers, and at night the old castle was illuminated with coloured Bengal lights. Every window, which in daytime look like the eyeless sockets of a skull, and every loop-hole and cranny was ablaze, as if with the old-time revelry of the vanished centuries, or with the awful conflagration by which it was destroyed.

A thunderstorm swept down the valley, and the firing of the old cannon on the castle ramparts blended with volleys of “heaven’s loud artillery.” The famous university, with seven hundred students, dating from 1386, occupies a large plain building. The students wear a jaunty scarlet cap with a broad gold band. I saw on the cheek of one a great scar of a sabre slash, received in a students’ duel, to which these golden youth are much addicted. The Church of the Holy Ghost is unique, I think, in this respect, that it is occupied in common by Catholics and Protestants. In 1705 a wall was built between the choir and nave, and the two Churches have ever since conducted their service under the same roof.

Sure the last end

Of the good man is perfect peace ! How calm his exit !
Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor many worn-out winds expire so soft.

—*Blair.*