

it. In the same year that he completed the church, which he named the Need of God, the knight died, and strangers, no sympathising relatives, accompanied him to his grave.

Bingen.

The Mouse-tower.

Hatto, bishop of Fulda, wished to obtain the vacant archbishopric of Mayence, and employed by the Emperor all possible means, to attain the accomplishment of his wish. He knew how to arrange by bribery and other means, that the choice fell upon him, although there were more worthy candidates.

This advancement stamped still more his ambition, pride and inhumanity. Principally he let the poor subjects feel his oppression. High taxes were extorted from them, so that he could execute large buildings and satisfy his love of splendour; tolls were imposed and new burdens invented, as if the country was only therefore destined to satisfy the ruler's whims. Below Bingen, but near Bingenloch, he had built a strong tower, opposite the banks of which stand the ruins of Ehrenfels and castle Rhine-stone, in the middle of the foaming waves, so that all passing ships could be easily stopped

at this narrow passage, to oblige them to pay toll. Soon after the building of this custom-house, it happened, that a general scarcity visited the Rhine country, and particularly the Bishopric. A terrible drought parched the fields; vermin and hail-storms destroyed the little that was germinated, and a general Famine was the more threatened, because Hatto had almost bought-up all that was left of the last harvest, and securely locked in his granaries. The feared misfortune occurred in all its terrors, very soon over the whole country, and spread inexpressible misery among the poorer population. It is true the Bishop allowed his stores to be sold, but at such high prices, that the exorbitant demands could not be satisfied by the greater part of his subjects. The poor were therefore obliged to have recourse to means, which produced maladies, and so increased the general misery. In this necessity the unhappy people stormed the prince with the most supplicating and touching prayers. Even his council and friends urged him to pity the deplorable condition of the poor, and to be for them a succouring sovereign, instead of an oppressor; but all representations and requests remained useless. The tyrant still continued, to sell his corn only for the highest price, for he was wishing, to build a splendid castle of extraordinary size, for which he required large sums of money.

But the increasing distress, and the severity of the archbishop increased the dissatisfaction to

exasperation, and as this at last threatened to pass to acts of violence, Hatto opposed with mockery and cruelty.

One day the hungry crowd of men, women, and children, after vainly soliciting bread before the Bishop's palace, forced themselves violently into the apartment, where the Prince and his guests sat at a luxurious banquet. Hatto received the intruders with mocking condescension, promised them corn, and begged them to go to a large barn where they should receive the mentioned food. Glad to receive this promise the unfortunates retired; but scarcely were they in the barn, as the Barbarian ordered the doors to be fastened, and, oh the inhumanity! set fire to the building, and as the burning sacrifices supplicated lamentably for commiseration and the flames forced their howling cries of pain, Hatto spoke to those surrounding him: „Hear how the corn-mice squeak! I do not do anything else with the rebels, than with other mice, which I catch; I burn them.“

But this terrible act called down the vengeance of Heaven on the infamous author. Out of the ashes of the burned barn crept thousands upon thousands of mice, and as a devastating stream took their way to the palace, filling all apartments, and fell even upon the bishop with bold avidity. However he tried to defend himself, and his servants kill thousands, there was no end of them, and the wretch began to recognise, that a higher

Judge had undertaken to revenge his crime. Left by his suite, who fled from terror, Hatto hastened to a ship, to escape the pursuers; but in vain. By legions they swam after him, as he was ferried over the Rhine; and as he, in despair landed at the Custom-house near Bingen in thinking there to be protected, his innumerable enemies pursued him still, gnawed and perforated the tower with incredible quickness, dug themselves entrances through the thick walls, and at last reached him whom they sought.

Hatto succumbed to the mice, which fell upon him by troops, and hundreds of thousands, and after consuming him they disappeared entirely. — The tower is still called the Mouse-tower. Nobody inhabits, or uses it; its gloomy, half dilapidated walls stand there, as the monumental column of a black, terrible act, haunted, as a warning against such similar crimes to suffering men.

The legend appears in a milder light, if one refers to History concerning Hatto, according to which he appears to have been a clever regent, but imperious Prelate. The emperor Ludwig and the duke Otto then held the regency of the kingdom, and Hatto was the emperor's confident, so that he was called the Heart of the King. A representant of the German clergy and first administrator of 12 rich and powerful abbeys, he was at the same time the principal founder of that tem-

peroral power, which the seat of Mayence obtained for itself. Without doubt, his prond despotical character, by which the people were obliged to suffer much, as well as many inventions of his powerful rivals, assisted in producing that terrible legend of the Mouse-tower.

The holy Rupert.

Under the government of Ludwig the pious, Duke Robolaus dominated in the country of the Saxons. He was not favourable to the Christian religion, besides being of a wild impetuous character, he was also courageous and skilled in arms. Bertha, the daughter of a powerful duke, on the Rhine excited in him a violent passion, and the soft amiable maiden, and pious, devout Christian, was not averse to him, partly because she admired his heroical actions, and also hoped to convert the future husband to Christianity.

Unfortunately this hope was not fulfilled. The rough warrior did not regard Bertha's gracious representations, and at last he forbad them entirely, and was of so sulky a temperament, that the poor suffering wife was obliged to separate from him, and to reside at a distant castle. Here she gave birth to a son, who was named Rupert, and was her only consolation and favourite. Bertha wished to educate him as a pious Christian, because she

regarded the predilection of her husband for warlike life as the cause of their misfortune. She therefore endeavoured, above all things to inculcate in the young heart mild virtues, and an inclination for a quiet domestic life.

By an invasion, which Robolaus undertook against a neighbouring race, he was in a bloody battle the sacrifice of his temerarious courage. As Bertha heard of his death, she was much afflicted, for then she thought only of his good qualities. She resolved, to leave her present sojourn, and to remove to her parents who inhabited the ducal palace at Bingen.

Here many nobles of the country solicited the hand of the beautiful young princess; but she declined all, even the most brilliant offers, in wishing to devote her life to the education of her beloved son. He also rewarded her trouble and care in the most beautiful manner. Fortunately he had not inherited from his father the wild pride, but the mother's meekness and piety, and soon developed a spirit of charity, and this increased with his years to the great joy of Bertha and her parents. Rupert tarried willingly among the poor children of the place; he shared with them what he had, gave to the poorly clad, even of what he himself wore, and once as a troop of half naked, hungry boys were assembled around him, for which his gifts were not sufficient, he conducted them to his mother saying: „Take care of them, dear mother,

for they are also your children." Just so showed itself, as Bertha would erect a splendid building, the charitable feeling of the pious boy, in opposing this intention with the words: „First feed the hungry and clothe the naked, those who are in need and are our brethren.“

By such charity Rupert was soon the object of universal love, of which with increasing years he made himself more worthy. All he had and could beg from his mother, he gave away without any regard for himself. Grown to a young man, representations were made to him from all sides, not only on account of his generosity, but his neglect in the practice of knightly arms, it was more suitable to his high position, it was said, to accomplish himself in combatting and exercising his charger, than constant intercourse with beggars, and cripples. But neither representations nor mockery could make any impression on Rupert; he continued indefatigable in charitableness, and found his reward in the blessing of the necessitous.

Once, on a beautiful Spring morning, Rupert slumbered on the banks of the Rhine, where he had lain himself in the shade of a tree, tired from a walk; he saw in a dream a venerable old man in a long robe standing at the stream, surrounded by a troop of friendly playing boys, the old man took them one after the other, and dipped them into the river, whence they reappeared finer and more lovely. At the same time there rose in the

Rhine an island, charming and splendid as a Fairy-land, full of sweet paradisiacal fruits; a many colored plumaged choir enlivened the fields, and an abundance of delicious blossom-perfume filled the air. To this islet the old man led the boys, and clothed them in snow white garments. Full of desire for the wonderful islet, Rupert hastened to the old man, with the request to allow him to share in the charming retreat. But he replied in solemn tones: „Here is not a retreat for you Rupert, your charity and pure pious sense, render you worthy to enjoy the higher delights of Heaven, and to regard the face of the Transfigured.“ And behold at these words arose from the flowery fields of the islet a rainbow in thousand coloured beauty, and as Rupert regarded upwards, he saw a number of angels with golden wings, in their midst the Child-Christ in indescribable brilliancy. At his side knelt respectfully the holy John, and 2 angels soared above, holding a garment which Rupert had lately presented to a poor boy. With the garment they clothed the Redeemer-child, and the latter said: „The clothes you have given to the naked, and fed the hungry; for such works belong the higher reward in the splendour of eternal glory.“ In blissful delight Rupert would stretch out his arms to the lovely Christ-child, as the charming figure disappeared and — he awoke.

From this day Rupert wandered about, like one transfigured. He took the resolution, to make a

pilgrimage to Rome, and from there to visit the Holy repulchre, and then end his days in the capital town of Christianity. All representations of his mother, although she had educated him as a pious Christian, had however as princess destined him for a knight, obtained from him, nothing else than the promise, to return to her from Rome for a short time; and with that he renounced the princely dignity, and instead of the Purple, he took the pilgrim's staff.

On returning after a year, from his wanderings, the fatigues and privations had completely undermined his, without these, weak bodily health. He died, a youth of scarcely twenty years, in the arms of his mother, who soon followed him.

Rupert was later accepted among the number of the saints, and the convent at Eubingen, is said to possess still the garment which he once presented to a poor child, and seen in a dream.

The prophetess Hildegard.

After the death of holy Rupert and his mother, the possessions of the Duke of Bingen fell to several relatives, on which the, not far from Creuznach situated, castle Sponheim was built. At the castle lived the knight of Bökelheim with his wife Mathilde, who presented him only one child, a daughter, baptized by the name of Hildegard. This child

was very early intrusted for her education to an abbess to the convent Dissibodenberg, and so Hildegard passed her youthful days in a convent.

She very soon displayed a predilection for reading pious books and legends; but particularly remarkable were her frequent visions, by means of which, according to her assertion, she could predict future events; and indeed not unlike our modern time is the picture, that at that time, she sketched of the future, in the obscurity of her cell.

The immorality and wickedness, in which the powerful ones, but especially the priesthood of that time were sunk, found in Hildegard a severe, judge, and she relentlessly exposed shameful deeds and vices.

As on the Rhine the holy Bernhard preached the crusade, he visited Hildegard and induced her, to support him by her voice. On leaving he presented her a ring with the motto: „I suffer willingly“, and this ring is still shown in Wiesbaden. Later Hildegard was abbess of the already mentioned convent, and her reputation increased to such a degree, that troops of believing pilgrims arranged themselves about her and solicited her blessing.

Hildegard has left behind her many works written in Latin, which testify of her learning and much knowledge. Although she was bitterly zealous against the priesthood, yet she was later pronounced holy by the Pope.
