

and to render it easier to his descendants, had the Palatine still more strengthened, and decided that in one of its chambers Agnes should keep her first child-bed, and that it should serve for the same purpose to all future Palatine countesses. This chamber is still shown to all visitors in memory of that event.

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## Oberwesel.

### The seven Virgins.

**N**ear Oberwesel, on a height, since long in ruins was the castle Schönberg, once the seat of a family of the same name. Here resided a knight with seven daughters. Because destiny had not presented him with a son, and anticipating the extinction of his race, he grieved extremely and thereby fell into a severe illness, which prematurely tore him from his children. Unfortunately their education was very defective, their father, early a widow, scarcely troubled himself about them, and a distant relative, who ought to have replaced their mother, had developed in them more vanity and coquetry than domestic virtues. After the death of this relative, the already grown-up daughters were left to themselves, and as they all shone in youthful beauty, to their castle belonged rich estates, they did not want suitors, who an-

nounced themselves to try their fortune. But it seemed, as if the hearts of the Orphans were incapable of feeling the tender passion. Every guest was received most hospitably, and he could remain, as long as he pleased at the castle, however when he thought of making his wooing effective, instead of promises, he found only mockery and sneers. Therefore many left the castle and its inhabitants in justifiable contempt, however the beauty and riches of the maidens always attracted new suitors, so that there was always present no inconsiderable number, and a gay and joyous life was led there.

Several years the castle maidens had continued this certainly egotistical, but dangerous and contemptible life, and many knights from far and near, effected by love, sojourned still with the seducing syrens, flattering themselves with hopes, and troubling themselves to supplant their rivals.

By a grand banquet two knights fell into a jealous dispute concerning their mistresses, which threatened to end in a bloody duel. Both were too popular not to excite general attention to this disturbance, and endeavors to reconcile them. By this occasion several expressed themselves loudly, that one should urge a final decision on the castle-maidens, so that no further discord could happen, and each could know to what he had to trust. This proposal pleased so much the more, because every one believed, to be the favored of her whose love he had troubled himself to win. Urgently therefore

the seven charmers were requested, to declare themselves decidedly, and make a choice for marriage.

Against this demand was no refuge, and the maidens saw themselves obliged, the next day to note those whom Destiny determined their wooers.

At the destined hour the suitors appeared in the roomy State-saloon, where they were assigned, and full of expectation they riveted their eyes on the door, through which the Graces, announcing Fortune and Misfortune, were to enter. A servant appeared, to announce to the waiting knights, that the Virgins expected them in an arbor, on the Rhine. Quickly all the marriage candidates hastened there, but how astonished were they, to see their fair ones in a boat, already distant from the bank, on the raised stern of the boat the eldest Prude stood. From where she made the following speech to the Candidates: „It has never been our intention, to love one of you, or indeed to take as husband. We only love our liberty too much, to like to sacrifice it for any man to be his Slave. With the Confession that we have treated you as fools, we connect the announcement that we leave our castle for a long time, to go to an Aunt in the Netherlands, where we intend to continue the same game with the knights of that Country, that we have played with you. Therefore good-bye, sweet gentlemen, good-bye and do not fret too much.“

This speech was accompanied by loud laughter