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## EXTRACTS

Of letters from an American Gentleman travelling in Europe, to the Editor of this Gazette.

CONTINUED.

February, 1803.

WE crossed the Rhine at Manheim, and proceeded to Spire. Spire is situated on the left bank of the Rhine, consequently now in the territory of the French Republic. It was formerly an imperial city and an archbishoprick; but it received several wounds in the wars of Louis XIV. The late war has nearly given it the stroke of extermination. The archbishop's palace and the grand cathedral church adjoining are in a great degree demolished. There are besides 19 other churches destroyed, out of 22 which the town contained, with 13 monasteries, two nunneries, and an immense number of large dwelling houses. Indeed all the best buildings in the place are in a state of ruin. A commission was sent here under the authority of Robespierre, to seize on all the valuables it contained, and to superintend its demolition. Amongst other things destroyed was 5000 soudres of wine, (each soudre being a thousand bottles) which were in the archbishop's and other private cellars. General Custine first took possession of it in 1793, but it was afterwards taken and retaken four or five times. What remains of it is miserably dull and indigent.

Few long journeys are undertaken, I believe, without some unlooked for trouble. The small share that we experienced occurred at Spire. In going from England to the continent to travel, the best mode is to deposit a sum of money in the hands of a broker in London, for which a letter of credit may be obtained to draw at various places on the continent, as the traveller's exigencies may require. We had drawn a sufficiency of Louis d'ors at Frankfort to carry us to Geneva. There is a law of the French Republic which requires that all specie intended to be exported out of the Republic shall be reported at the next bureau, and pay a droite of five sous for every hundred livres. Though we had often been in and out of the republic, we had never been questioned by any of the guard on this subject: and therefore considered it more as a matter of form than otherwise. We were about leaving Spire, and reflecting that we had to pass a guard about three miles above before we could pass the Rhine, we concluded it prudent to go to the bureau and report the money we had agreeably to law. The officer of the bureau was not then to be found. Unwilling to lose time, we agreed to take the chance, determining to be candid as to the sum we possessed in case the sentinel should make the enquiry. When we arrived at the guard two soldiers came forward to question us. Had we any merchandise? No. How much specie have you? So much. Have you a pass for it? No; and then related the circumstances of our application at the bureau, and not being able to find the officer. They said it was contrary to law, and would not admit us to pass. In short they took possession of our money, and ordered us to return with them to Spire.—So much for honesty. Had we descended to tell them an untruth, we might have passed without interruption.

When we reached Spire, the officer of the bureau told us, nothing could be done in the business until the next day, when the civil tribunal would meet and try the case: In the mean time the money must remain in his custody. The law of the Republic gives one half to those who make the seizure, and we saw an evident disposition in the soldiers to turn the business as much against us as possible. We were advised to employ a Lawyer, and did so accordingly.—The next day the tribunal met. It consisted of three magistrates who had been in office while Spire was annexed to the German Empire. In all conquered countries the French government permits the former magistrates in the subordinate offices to remain, to administer the ancient laws as well as those of the republic. This is in part good policy, in order to reconcile the people to the

change; and in part necessary, the old magistrates being better acquainted with German language and the local laws of the place: But then they do not allow them any discretionary power.—They must decide only conformably to the letter of the law, and all their decisions are subject to the controul of a superior officer, who is generally a Frenchman. This close limitation of power to the old magistrates is intended to prevent a partial administration of the laws in favour of their own countrymen.—Our case came on. Our lawyer was a Frenchman, and never did a lawyer act with more zeal or honesty for his clients; but alas, he was unsuccessful; for after a full hearing of the case, and a deliberate examination of the laws of the Republic, the court pronounced judgment of confiscation. Well! here we were, not only with a broad prospect of losing our money, but also of having to go 70 miles before we could procure a fresh supply!

At this moment we received a note from our Lawyer, advising us to appeal to the Director General of the Customs at Mentz. We accordingly proceeded to Mentz with the necessary documents, were received politely by the Director General, who requested us to call next morning for an answer. We waited on him at the appointed time, and instantly received an order to the receiver of the bureau at Spire, to restore our money to us, without delay or deduction, and to charge the expences of the trial to the treasury of the Republic. In ten minutes after our return to Spire, we had the money refunded; and after a delay of four days, occasioned by this untoward occurrence, we left the town on our way to Carlsruh.

But it ought not to be forgotten, that the appeal to Mentz gave us an opportunity of seeing Oppenheim and Worms, which we should not have done but for the accident.—Oppenheim is situated on the side of a steep hill on the left of the Rhine, and must have been a very strong place. The town itself furnishes but a few objects of admiration; but the rich vale adjoining it, and the Rhine, which is uncommonly wide here, and interspersed with small islands, forms a very grand landscape. Worms is a large neat town. I perceived no other injury it had sustained than the destruction of the Bishop's chateau, and some partial damage to the great church. This place was ceded to the French by the treaty of Campo Formio.

Carlsruh is the place of residence of the prince margrave of Bade. It is a handsome well built town. On entering the town we were required to give in our names, quality and business.—This is customary in all the electorate towns: not so in the imperial. The town is pleasantly situated on a plain about three miles from the Rhine, with a chain of lofty hills stretching round it in the form of an amphitheatre. The streets were wide and laid off at right angles. The houses are regularly built, generally two stories high, coloured white. The main street is 100 feet wide, about a mile in length, and terminates at each end with iron palisades and gates, and an avenue of poplars, which gives it an extremely handsome appearance. Indeed the whole town has the face of neatness, animation and comfort. It plainly evidences the advantages of the peace which this prince made with the French early in the war. Whether he committed a breach of good faith as a part to the German league, in so doing, I will not pretend to say; but the result of the war has demonstrated the wisdom of his policy in making the peace, and his subjects have had abundant cause to thank him for it. In consequence of his thus early becoming friendly to the French republic, he has had considerable advantages secured to him by the arrangement of indemnities.

From Carlsruh we took the road for Raftadt. It is planted all the way with poplars on each side. Raftadt is built on the side of a hill, with a small river running along the side of the town. The principal buildings are a very fine chateau belonging to the prince of Bade; a very handsome church, & two convents. The streets, which are clean and wide, are laid off at right angles, and the houses have a neat appearance; but the town

is small and dull. The convents are handsome, but the interior is not suffered to be polluted with a male foot, and the lattice windows are proof against all scrutiny of the eye.

Being now at the place where the French deputies, Jean de Brie, Roberjot and Bonnier were assassinated, I had a desire to collect on the spot an accurate statement of the facts attending that catastrophe; and the more so as a degree of mystery was created by the publications in England and America, whether the assassination was instigated by the Austrians or French, each party having charged the crime on the other. I received from an intelligent gentleman, who was an inhabitant of the town at the time, a circumstantial detail of the affair. I shall endeavor to narrate it, at the same time divesting it of those incidents which are already generally known.

The deputies from the Austrian, French and several other powers for treating on a general peace, met at Raftadt, in 1798, and continued their sittings for many months, when the conference was broken by the Imperial minister, in April 1799. One of the Austrian deputies, (Lehrbach) had a violent quarrel with Bonnier and two of his colleagues, during the conference, and abruptly left Raftadt. In a short time he was appointed to superintend the operations of the Austrian army near Switzerland. On Sunday, 25th April, 1799, a verbal order was given to the French deputies, by an Austrian captain of Hussars, whose regiment (named the Seckler regiment) lay within three leagues of the town, to leave Raftadt in 24 hours. The deputies having nothing to detain them, determined to comply with the order immediately. They required from the captain a passport, or escort to pass the Rhine about a league distant. The captain informed them it was unnecessary to have either, as they would meet with no obstruction. About an hour before dark, they left the town. De Brie and Roberjot had their wives with them.—Arrived at the gate which opened to the Rhine road, the sentinel refused to let them pass. They told him who they were; but the soldier replied that he had peremptory orders to let no one proceed without a passport. This difficulty detained them until dark, when an order was sent to the sentinel, by the captain who had given them orders to depart, to let the carriages pass. The road to the Rhine has a rivulet close to its left margin, and on the right side a deep ditch. A row of poplars is planted on each side.—Jean De Brie, his wife, and two children were in the first carriage; Bonnier in the second, and Roberjot and his wife in the third.—They had not proceeded more than 300 yards, when they were stopped by several dismounted hussars, who asked who they were? They answered that they were the French ministers, and repeated their names. Jean De Brie, suspecting hostile intentions, jumped out on the opposite side of his carriage, when two strokes were made at him with sabres, one of which wounded him across the arm, the other on the neck. Notwithstanding which, he made his escape into an adjoining wood. Bonnier was dragged out of his carriage, and cut down by sabres close to his carriage door. Roberjot had got out of his carriage, but was instantly cut down. Their wives, children, and domestics were uninjured. De Brie wandered thro' the woods all night, and after day-light was unwilling to show himself, thinking the assassins were in search of him. At length an old shoe-maker passing near the spot, met with the mangled De Brie, who begged his assistance. The good shoe-maker, apprehending that de Brie might still be in danger if known, had the precaution to go into town, collect some of his neighbours, who all went out to de Brie's assistance, and brought him into town under their protection. The women, children, and domestics were sent across the Rhine under an escort.

The assassination it is certain was perpetrated by about 20 hussars of the Seckler regiment, who received their orders from the above mentioned captain; and this captain received his orders from

the colonel. Public opinion here goes to clear the imperial court from the foul imputation, but is strongly inclined to fix it on the Austrian deputy, who seceded from the conference in consequence of his quarrel with Bonnier, whom he collared in his passion; and especially as this deputy, before the congress broke up, was in the exercise of great authority with the Austrian army near Switzerland. The colonel of the regiment seems to be exonerated.—The imperial government ordered a court of inquiry, and nominated a general to preside; but before the scrutiny came on, this same general was engaged in an action with the French and taken prisoner. At this particular juncture also, the French government underwent a change, three of the five directors abdicating their seats; and presently after, the government fell under the management of Bonaparte. In this rapid change of men in the government of France, and the busy scene of war in Germany, the circumstance was lost sight of by both parties, and has never since been revived. Besides, the spirit of party in France had charged the crime on the deposed directory, and the supposition was very current in every part of Europe as well as in America. The German government finding this the case, very wisely availed themselves of the circumstance, and never pushed an enquiry.

We went to look at the graves in the church at Raftadt, and then walked to the scene of the murder. The trees on the side of the road are marked on the bark with the initials of each one where he fell. It will be recollected that this Jean de Brie was the man who proposed to the National Assembly of France a project for the assassination of all the crowned heads of Europe. He is now prefect of Belancon, and said to be quite an altered, moderate man. His gratitude to the old shoe-maker of Raftadt, does credit to his principles. He has relieved him occasionally ever since, & within the last few weeks sent for him to live under his protection at Belancon.

On leaving Raftadt we went to Bishopsheim. The day after we arrived, being Sunday, we had an opportunity of seeing the villagers in their best dresses going to church. All the young women are remarkably tall and stout. The hair, of which the women of this country have an abundance, and take great pride in displaying, hangs down the back in three strong divisions, each being plaited, and reaching below the small of the back. From the extreme end of each division of the hair, a black ribbon hangs down as low as the heel of the shoe. On the tops of their heads they wear a small black silk cap or cawl, some of them embroidered with gold thread. Their stockings are red with white clocks, and their clothes worn very short.

Soon after leaving Bishopsheim, we had the spire of Strasburg in view. On arriving at Kehl we found an entire new village, consisting of very neat and comfortable houses.—Not a stone of Old Kehl was left standing one upon another. Its ruins are lying in every direction. It is truly astonishing to observe the exertion and industry that has been used to raise the new town in so short a time; & still more so to reflect that the inhabitants should, after what they have experienced, think of settling down again in to exposed a situation in case of another war between the Empire and France. Kehl, lays close on the right bank of the Rhine. The skeleton of the permanent bridge which was built on piles still remains. In this part of the Rhine there is a considerable island. There is now a pontoon bridge across, connecting the island with each bank of the river. Here it was that General Moreau passed with one division of his army when he invaded Germany.—After passing the bridge it is about two miles to Strasburg. In this distance we were stopped by three guards, demanding our passports, and questioning us as to our having merchandise. The vigilance of the French to prevent the introduction of English and German goods is extremely great. There is a continued line of guards from the North Sea to Basle along the Rhine, being a distance of 600 miles. Strasburg is situated on the river Ill, about a mile