

One sees readily in the site of Merseburg why this particular spot was chosen for the town. On the bank of the Saale in the middle of a wide plain rises a bluff of considerable height, commanding a view of the whole region. This bluff is precipitous on the side next the river, but on the side that slopes away from the river much of the town is built. The streets run, for the most part, lengthwise along the bluff, and are connected here and there by stairways, where the ascent is too steep for driving. From the top of the bluff the approach of an enemy might be seen early enough to warn the peasants laboring in their fields and to gather them behind the walls and moat.

The first great event in the history of Merseburg took place at the end of the truce with the Huns. While Henry was building his towns and training his army, he had regularly paid to his enemies an annual tribute. He now felt strong enough to refuse this payment. The Huns were diligent tax gatherers, and did not long delay their demand for tribute; they entered Germany in great numbers and began their old depredations. Henry met the main body of them on the Keuschberg, it is believed, and gave them such a sound drubbing that they foraged thereafter in other parts of the world.

From this time Merseburg was one of the most important towns of Germany. For a long time there were counts of Merseburg, and by them was built, in the most commanding situation on the bluff, an attractive chateau. This building still stands, but it has been many a long year since emperors of Germany were entertained here. It was long ago set to the humdrum but honest work of an ordinary government office building. In the spacious quadrangle are a number of relics of more or less interest, among them some French cannon. A German town that can boast no trophies of French wars is of little consequence indeed.

In these days of Merseburg's greatness, it was made the seat of a bishopric, and the old cathedral, part of which belongs to a very early time, has more interest for the

tourist than any other object in the town. In the crypt are the heavy leaden coffins containing the bones of the noble counts of Merseburg. One cannot help wishing that the memory of these old heroes might be honored in a more orderly bestowal of their ashes, for these coffins, big and little, are scattered about in indescribable confusion.

In a chapel, certain relics of a good deal of interest are shown. They remind one that here in 1081 was fought a great battle between Henry IV and his revolted subjects led by Rudolph of Suabia. Henry is one of the most pathetic figures in all history. Systematically corrupted in his childhood by great nobles that they might have power over him, he soon alienated his subjects and was put under the ban of the pope. When everything seemed lost Henry underwent a complete transformation. He raised a great army and met his enemies at Merseburg. In the battle that ensued Rudolf was slain, leaving Henry once more master of Germany. History, or tradition, says that Rudolf's hand was cut off in the battle, a judgment upon him for signing the compact against his sovereign. This hand (or some other) mummified, is one of the treasures of the cathedral, a proof of the historical events I have just narrated.—It is said that a certain Irishman, when asked how he knew that St. Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland, answered with the most solemn conviction: "Bedad, an' I've seen the place where they wint out."

Everywhere about the cathedral and the chateau are reminders of a certain Bishop Thilo von Frotha who once occupied the episcopal seat of Merseburg. The story connected with him reminds one very strongly of the story of the statue of justice in *Evangeline*. Bishop Thilo lost a valuable piece of silver and unable to account otherwise for its disappearance, charged a servant with stealing it. The servant could not prove his innocence and was put to death. Sometime later, in the course of certain repairs about the cathedral, the silver was found in the nest of a rook.—One might