

Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. "The Beauty of Soninberg. (A Letter from Wiesbaden.)" *The Evergreen* (May 1840): 234-37.

THE BEAUTY OF SONINBERG. (A LETTER from WIESBADEN.)

By Miss Catharine M. Sedgwick, Author of 'Hope Leslie,' &c.

MY DEAR J—: You have often laughed at me for my 'knack,' as you call it, of picking up stories by the way-side. Certainly my sympathies are not more diffusive than yours, but I am a more patient listener. You have but to listen to get those little personal revelations every one is ready to make, if you but touch the electric chord aright that binds you to your humble fellow-beings.

In going from Brussels to Waterloo a few weeks since, I took a seat on the box beside the coachman—a frank true-hearted looking youth—for the advantage of gaining answers to the questions that are constantly occurring to the traveller in a scene so full of novelty as is every part of the Old World to an American eye. Before he set us down again in Brussels, he had told me a history of personal hopes, projects and disappointments, that with a little skilful spinning would have furnished warp and wool for an octavo volume, with an appendix of ancestral anecdotes that he had better have effaced from the family archives. This will be a pretty good proof to you that I have not foregone my habits in crossing the ocean, but here at Wiesbaden I am cut off from their indulgence by my ignorance of the language. That does not, however, quite isolate me, for by a lavish use of half a dozen words that are common to the English and German, and by gracious tones and a decent kindness in return for the devotedness of the 'Mädchen' who attends us, I am so far in favor that I am sure she would confide to me her 'petite belle histoire' if she has any. 'If!' shame on that hypothetical 'if!' No one could hear the gentle tone of my good friend Cristine's voice, or see how easily the unbidden tear comes to her eye,* (her only eye, for in common with a large portion of her country-people she sees but with one,) without being sure that Cristine, though now in the depths of shady forty, might tell as 'ow'er true tale' of her losses. However, the period for the egotism of love is long past, and Cristine, instead of damming up her feelings to fret and wear inwardly, permits them to flow out in all kindly sympathies.

I just saw her in a position to illustrate this gracious disposition. She was standing on the platform of the well before the Duke of Nassau's new palace. She had filled her tub with water, and with the aid of a friend (these people by a sort of general social compact always interchange this kind office) had placed it on her head. My attention was arrested by seeing Cristine, who is no dawdler—no loiterer—stopping to listen to this friend, and as I came near enough to see her friend's face, I thought I too would have stood with the tub of water on my head, or up to my throat in the fountain, if necessary, to listen to the earnest speech of this peasant girl who had one of the sweetest faces I ever saw—and her whole heart was in it. I think she cannot be more than nineteen, but I will ask Cristine, and perhaps she will tell me some particulars of the girl's history, for

Cristine, like all sympathizers, likes to tell as well as to hear. If I were a painter, I would paint them just as I saw them, the well and all. The girl in the peasant's dress, the dark blue woollen full petticoat fluted from top to bottom as neatly as a French frill, the close boddice, and the snow-white chemise sleeves. Her hair was (as is every creature's of woman-kind' in Germany) long,

[p. 235]

thick, and neatly combed and braided. But that of this gifted girl is longer and thicker than I have often seen, and of a rich full brown, darker than the national hue. She had, in common with other peasant-girls, a black silk cap covering just the back of the head, made of ribbon and with half a dozen streamers, or rather ends, for they only hang over the back of the neck. Cristine's friend's cap had a trifle of embroidery, and was garnished with beads; indeed I remarked in her whole dress an attention to becomingness that indicated a village beauty—a dressing for the world's eye, or, I should rather think, from a certain symptomatic 'careless desolation' in her manner, that *the eye*, for which she employed the limited art of the toilette, was all the world to her. She stood with her hand on Cristine's shoulder. I hardly knew which countenance I liked the best. The peasant-girl was evidently absorbed in some precious interest of her own at stake, while Cristine's honest kindly face expressed that entire unconsciousness of self and sympathy with another, that I fancy must characterize an angel's. I stood rivetted, gazing at them till Cristine caught my eye; and as I, unluckily, reminded her of the waiting mistress and home, and her diverse forgotten household duties, she murmured over and over again "*Ja—ja—ja—wohl*", ("Yes—yes—yes—sure") and hastened homeward; and her friend too left the well.

This stone-well is to me the most interesting of the locales of this pretty town of Wiesbaden; an aqueduct brings to it from the Taunus Hills (a distance of a league and a half) an abundant supply of pure, soft and wholesome water. There is a stone column in the centre, surmounted by a lion grasping the arms of Nassau. The water rises within this column, and pours through ever-flowing pipes into a large reservoir. This is surrounded by a rudely carved curb, and a platform. Standing on this platform and leaning against the curb, you may see the maidens of Wiesbaden at all hours of the day, gossiping while their tubs are filling. Innocent gossip it is I am sure, from their sweet, low-toned voices and perennial good humor. Why is it, dear J--, that a well is linked with our poetic associations? Is it because it recalls home, and the thought of home unseals the fountain of poetry in the soul? Or is it because a well is a common feature in these Oriental stories that first awakened the poetic powers of our imaginations? The scene of the first love-story we probably ever read, the sacred story of Isaac and Rebecca's courtship, is, you know, at a well. Whether the well owes its immaterial beauty to all these sources I cannot say, but I never see one—whether it be like our own most rustic structures, composed of a single curb-pole and old oaken bucket, or like that which we went to see among the Carisbrook lions, or like that beautiful one of stone I saw the other day (still in perfection) among the ruins of Marksburg, or like this of Nassau—without seeing for the moment much more than the eye can see, and hearing more than the ear can hear. I listened for an instant, and then quickened my steps after Cristine.

By the way, I wonder no one has ever thought to drill young ladies into a graceful gait, by making them walk with burdens on their heads. I do not see but the German ladies go *shooling* and shambling along much in the fashion of other ladies, while the peasant-girls with large market-baskets piled with vegetables, or tubs of water containing three or four pails full, walk with a true, light step, and a quiet grace that a fine lady might envy, but could scarcely equal. I overtook Cristine, before she reached our door steps. I communicated my desire to know her friend's story, and she was willing enough gratify it, but I could comprehend but one word—and that word one which every woman would understand as, Falstaff knew the heir apparent, 'by instinct'—"Liebehaber"—"Ah! a *lover* in the case, Cristine. Then I understand why she spoke so eagerly and you listened so patiently. # # #

I have just returned from a walk to the Weeping Oak. Its name indicates its peculiarity. It stands a little off the high road to Schwalbach, in advance of a wood of dwarf pines, and seems a fit type of the monarch of a fallen dynasty. The bark and boughs have the characteristic ruggedness and nodosity of the oak; and there is something touching in the drooping of the magnificent old limbs. It affects you like seeing an old man in sorrow and tears, and if you were ever inclined to believe the fanciful theory that gives to every tree a spirit, I am sure the old oak would persuade you to this faith.

I set off alone, and passing the *Koch-brunnen*, where these boiling waters are forever steaming up from their great cauldron, I turned into the Acacia walk, and out of it as soon as I could; for there is something in this long formal walk between *pretensionary* little trees, that are so trimmed as to look like barber's poles with a bushy wig on top, that is particularly disagreeable to me. At the foot of the Geisberg is a station for asses. Here these miserable animals, whose sad destiny in this world, it seems to me, must have some unforeseen compensation, stand all day awaiting the pleasure of the Wiesbaden visitors. I wish I could sketch them for you, with their grotesque calico housings, and their attendants, men and boys, in their dark blue blouses, lounging round them. Even these ass-drivers, the lowest class of hacks, importunate by profession, here partake the national good manners, and never importune you. If a look expresses a wish for them, they spring to your service, but they do not beset you with offers. So, thinking me probably no wiser than I should be for walking when I might ride, they let me pass, unmolested, up the Geisberg ascent.

The name of Wiesbaden—meadow-baths—describes its position. It is a little interval in the lap of the hills, and the Geisberg is one of the prettiest of the elevations that surround it. In our country, where, if we would have a rural walk, we must scramble over fences, and think ourselves fortunate if we can find a foot-path skirting a ploughed field, we can have no idea of the facilities an old country furnishes for this blessed recreation. Here there are no enclosures, no fences or hedges, and however devious your taste may be, you are sure of finding a path to wander whither you will.

I turned from the high road and wound round a plantation attached to an

agricultural school. Orchards were on the slopes below me, and bits of rich green in the valley, while on the opposite hills the many colored crops were spread out much like pattern silks in the shop window. From the town rose up the vapor that is always steaming up from the boiling springs; and as I mounted higher, my eyes caught the spires of Mayence, and the gleaming Rhine, and away went my thoughts with it to the sea, and over the sea, and I had forgotten Wiesbaden and all that belong to it, till I found myself again on the high road, and not alone there. A sturdy young man passed me with the pack on his back which denotes the pedestrian traveler. He seemed wholly occupied with his own emotions, and though after passing me he often turned, stopped and looked back, he was evidently unconscious of my presence. His eyes saw only what his heart was full of, and, as he frequently passed his hand over his eyes as if to clear his vision, I came to the natural conclusion that he was leaving his home—that seeming to me, just now, the saddest circumstance of life. The traveller was attended by a little terrier dog, who seemed to me not quite to have made up his mind whether he would attend his master or not, for every now and then he turned and retraced his steps toward Wiesbaden, with his nose to the ground and his tail down, stopping and looking first toward the traveller and then toward his home, as if he were not sure which was the right way to pursue, having a divided love, or a divided duty, which is as bad. I pitied him. Presently he sprang up on a hillock by the read-side, cocked up his ears, then wagged his tail, vehemently, barked and darted into the wood. The traveller stopped, looked after him and shook his head, as much as to say—Well! you have made up your mind at last, poor fellow!". But presently he appeared again, issuing from a foot-way which, cutting through the pine wood on our left, entered the high road between me and the traveller. The dog was followed by the peasant girl I had seen at the well. An exclamation of surprise burst from the young man. I was too far off to hear what they said, and if I had heard I could not have understood. But their action was in a universal language. I saw she had followed for a last farewell, and that farewell seemed impossible. They walked on together, her hand upon his shoulder and his arm around her waist. The poor little dog seemed frantic with joy. He had now everything he desired in life. He ran first on one side, then on the other, barking, wagging his tail, jumping first on to his master then on to his mistress, till, neither noticing him, he ran along side looking wistfully in their faces as if saying, "Now you are together, what in the world can you be sorry for?" At that moment, I doubt not, they could have envied the dog's nature and thought it a happiness to look neither before nor behind them.

I followed slowly after them till they reached the oak—the weeping oak I mentioned to you. There they stopped, and as they stood leaning against the old trunk, and in the deep shadow of its drooping branches, I thought how much stronger, firmer, more resisting is the true love of two pure hearts than even this old tree that has stood here for centuries. That will perish at last; true love never. It was a broad stretch of imagination to suppose the love of these young people of this

[p. 236]

high nature, but never mind; I honestly give you my thoughts as they came, and if you

had seen these humble lovers, you would not have wondered that they embodied my abstraction of true love.

I saw this was to be the parting place. I was near enough to hear the girl's sobs, and I turned away, ashamed to be an unpermitted though an unseen spectator. I walked very slowly, and for five minutes, (it seemed to me half an hour,) I did not look again. When I did look the lover was gone, and the girl was sitting on the little embankment formed by a trench that has been dug round the oak. Her face was buried in her lap, and one arm was round the little dog, whose paws were on her knees and his head lying disconsolately against her.

I came straight home, unconscious by what way, and the moment I reached my own room, I rang the bell for Cristine, and keeping K---- by me for an interpreter, I told what I had just seen.

“Poor Grettel; poor Grettel!” she ejaculated as I proceeded; “God help her!” and when I finished she wiped away the shower of tears that had poured over her face, and smiling, said, “Never mind, Grettel has done right, and *das ist besser!*” ‘That is better,’ is a favorite phrase of Cristine's, and she always employs it when she wishes to express to me her entire satisfaction.

I will not set down all the particulars of my rather circumlutory conversation with Cristine, since I can very briefly tell the few circumstances explanatory of the love-scene I witnessed. It seems that Grettel lives at Soninberg, a most picturesque old village about two miles from here, close nestled under the ruins of the old castle of that name. She is the only child of her mother, a poor blind old woman, a widow who has no support comfort or solace under Heaven but Grettel.—Grettel is the Beauty of Soninberg, but as Cristine assured me, so discreet is her conduct that the old people say it is just as well her mother should be blind, for Grettel wants no eye to watch her. And she bears her honors so meekly that the prettiest girls of Soninberg are content Grettel should be first.

“But what will Grettel care for that,” said Cristine, “now Johanne is gone!”

This Johanne, it seems, is a worthy youth who has served his apprenticeship with Leising, (our host,) a master builder here. He is a steady youth and a good workman, and having completed his term of service, including the itinerary year which is a part of every German artisan's education*[*] he was just about to set up for himself, when an unexpected course of duty and worldly advantage opened upon him, and upset all his castles in the air, beside the happy humble home which he fancied he had founded upon a rock, when Grettel promised to be its mistress.

Johanne, it seems has an uncle who went many years ago to America, and who is now a wealthy man in New-York.—He has written to Johanne that if he will come to America with his three young and orphan brothers, he will pay their passage, and take charge of their education and establishment there. For himself, Johanne said, he would

not have given the offer a second thought—but the little boys! he stood in the place of a father to them, and he had no right to refuse.

“Oh! why,” he asked, “should their uncle, who had forgotten them so many years, just now remember them?”—The ‘why’ is easily told. He had lost his only son, and was too far advanced in life to hope to repair the loss.

The next thing to be done, after Johanne had made up his own mind, Cristine said, was to persuade Grettel to go with him. “Johanne knew this would not be right, but men wereso used to having every thing their own way, that to pleasure themselves they were ready to pull down the walls God had set up.”

“Surely, surely,” Grettel said, “God would never forgive her if she forsook her old blind mother; and if in His mercy He should forgive her, she would never forgive herself!”

Johanne urged that her mother was very old—that she could live but a little while—and he must live a life-time without Grettel; that the neighbors could be kind to the old woman; that she would have a florin a month from the poor's box, beside many a casual gift when she was known to be quite alone; that his first earnings should be sent to her succor. He even went so far as to get the consent of a kind-hearted dame that the old woman should be removed to her house. Some of the neighbors, too, feeling it to be a very hard case for the lovers, joined their entreaties to Johanne's, and promised Grettel they would do all in their power for her mother. But as Cristine again and again assured me, the good child never faltered, and “das ist besser,” said the honest creature.

“Never, never will I bring tears from her blind eyes,” said Grettel. “God gave me to her, and till he separates us, I will not leave her.”

No arguments, no entreaties made her waver. The generous girl would not even permit her mother to know the sacrifice she was making, and when the old woman remarked that Grettel's step was heavy and her voice sickly, and begged her to take some odious nostrum, Grettel swallowed it and said nothing. “And then, when Johanne saw how good she was, he loved her better than ever, and before he went away, he said she had done right, and he did not deserve her. And for my part,” concluded Cristine, “if any man on earth gets Grettel, I think it will be more than he deserves.” By the way, our friend Cristine has contracted rather an humble opinion of the deserts of mankind; and, as often happens with ancient maidens, her charities for them contract as her sympathies with her own sex expand.

It is, as Cristine says, “a hard case.” Grettel has but obeyed the strong law of nature in setting her affections on one who, according to that law, should supersede father, mother and home, and when I think on the ease, social dignity and competence that reward the children of toil in our happy land, and see what a life of privation and hardship she must endure in this mouldering village of Soninberg, the sacrifice appears to me much greater than she knows it to be. However, she is, after all, rather to be envied

than pitied. Strait and narrow is the way of self-denial, and she has entered therein—and obscure and unknown as she is, she will be one of ‘the few’ who, having resolutely chosen her duty for her law, will be rewarded with more than all the glory of this world; or even than all its love, which is a good deal more seducing.

Our detention at Wiesbaden, dear J—, gives us an opportunity of seeing the strange chances of human life exemplified in the story of our poor friend of Soninberg. It is ten days since the parting at the Old Oak. When Cristine came into our room this morning, she looked haggard and sorrowful, and instead of her usual cheerful “Gutten Morgen,” she muttered something about “God's time and our time never coming together;” and before this first of Cristine's murmurings at Providence was interpreted to me, the cause of it was fully explained by her telling us that Grettel's mother was dead.

“If her poor dark life had ended but ten days ago,” Cristine said, “all would have been well enough, but now Johanne was on the sea, and who could reach him there? But it is I only, ladies, that am wicked enough to think of all this: Grettel grieving only that her mother has gone from her and thinks but of that. Grettel let the old woman believe that Johanne had gone to Frankfort to work at his trade, and was a comfort to her to think that he was just waiting to earn money enough to come back and marry Grettel. Oh! It made my heart beat as though it would come out of me when the old woman, in her last strength, rose up from her pillow and said, “Grettel, give my love and my blessing to Johanne; he is a good boy, and you will be a happy wife, and God send you as good a child for your old age as you have been to me—light to my heart when all other light was gone—God be thanked I have had you to the last—to the *last*.”—She sank back and did not speak again, and poor Grettel fell on her knees and said, “God be praised that I am here!” And so I try to say to,” added Cristine in conclusion, “but indeed had it pleased God so, it would seem to work better round that the old body should have died ten days ago. But it's too late now, and so it does not signify; and poor Grettel must go on as I have done, working for others and caring for others—it's a lonesome life, ladies.”\

Christine sighed deeply. It was a moment when the harness of life was galling, and though I felt how truly the poet's words applied to her,

“With cheerful heart, and purpose pure,
So—our onward way is sure,”

I shall take a happier moment to enforce their consoling moral.

[p. 237]

I have elsewhere, my dear J----, described to you the various rural “Gast-hauser,” (guest-houses,) eating-gardens, and multiplied walks, provided about this place for the recreation of the Wiesbaden visitors. If you would lose yourself in a romantic solitude,

you have but to go up the lovely valley of the New-Thal, to the forest of the New-Berg, where, in the green arched walks you will meet no one, not even such as should be found

‘In their assigned and native dwelling-place.’

Or you may mount to the old Roman water-tower, and see all these hills with their wavy outlines sloping down to Wiesbaden, and hung with vines and grain of every color, and in the distance the Rhine (its very name giving charm to the scene) for many a mile. Or if you have a town taste, and like the ‘sweet security of streets,’ you may promenade up and down the long walks in William street, where from the broad shadows of the double row of sycamores you may look out on the sunny pavement, the hotels, museum, &c., opposite to you, and the traveling post-equipages that are entering and leaving Wiesbaden, and to which it must take a long time to accustom an American eye, so that the horses without blinders, looking round as if they were on the point of speaking to you, the frightful distance between the wheel-horses and leaders, and the mystery of the safe guiding of the immense machine that comes lumbering on after him by the one postillion, shall cease to be a matter of curiosity.

Or if you like to hide yourself while you hear the din of the world all around you, you can go to the dark walks behind the colonnade. Or if you prefer ‘happy human faces,’ where there seems nothing but the spirit God has given them to make them happy, stray up the Acacia walk. There on the wooden seats you will see groups of the Bourgeois—men, women and children—looking as if they had not an anxiety or care on earth. But probably you, like myself and most of the world here, would prefer, day after day, and evening after evening, to all other resorts, the garden of the Cur-Saal. This garden, or rather pleasure-ground, occupies the whole interval between the hills from the centre of Wiesbaden to the village of Soninberg. The valley gradually narrows for two miles, and finally closes at the rocks on which the old castle of Soninberg was erected. The garden is a part of the Duke's private domain, and is kept in ducal order. You enter on each side of the Cur-saal, a public building about 300 feet long, where there are splendid apartments devoted to gambling all day and all night, excepting two or three times a week, when the roulette tables give place to music and dancing. Passing through a wood of catalpas, (unless you prefer going through the Cur-saal, and seeing the gentlemen and *ladies* standing round the table, losing and winning gold with apparent unconcern) you find a plot of ground behind the Cur-saal, occupied by tables and chairs, and coteries of Germans and English, regaling on Rhenish wines, coffee, cake and ices. I turned my back on all this, as usual, last evening, and took the way to Soninberg, skirting along the piece of artificial water—a clear large mirror to reflect the fine-dressed gentlemen and ladies and the far better dressed flowers that are flourishing round its brim. These gentlemen and ladies, by the by, seem to me to be travestied by a stately pair of white swans and a family of ducks that live on this water; the swans pompously sailing back and forth without an object in life, apparently, but to show off their beautiful forms and dress; and the ducks whirling and turning, and gabbling, and feeding—always feeding. But I am ashamed of an ill-natured thought here, where every living thing contributes to the cheerfulness of the scene.

Flowers, and choice ones too, are in profusion; for besides the rich fringe of geraniums, roses, pinks, myrtles and other precious plants around the edge of the water, you are constantly passing plots of heart's ease, astres, hydrangeas, strips of roses, and *plantations* of splendid dahlias. The walks are as intricate and multiplied as the space admits. As the valley narrows they diminish in number, and finally end in one which follows the windings of a little brook, too wide for you or me to leap, dear J----, but which H----, or any other active boy would think it no feat to jump over. It is this little brook, murmuring with a voice as soft and low as a German woman's, that gives the peculiar charm to this walk to Soninberg. The scenery is tame enough; indeed you see nothing but the garden, and the hills that slope to it. But the water is natural; it has a familiar home look and sound; and the tree (willows, locusts and poplars) and the clematis that hangs over them, and the clusters of bright red berries, all seem to have grown there at their own will and pleasure. For more than two miles, you follow the windings of the stream, and then as you approach the ruins of Soninberg, the valley has come to an end, and you mount the side of the hill.

Soninberg was one of the fortified castles of the Middle Ages. It must have occupied an important position, commanding the only pass from the upper to the lower valley.—The remains are still extensive. Arches and fragments of wall are standing at many hundred yards' distance from the Keep, and other masses of masonry in good preservation on the height. You can hardly imagine anything more picturesque in its way than this old village of Soninberg, with its little angular rookeries of rough beams and plaster all huddled together under the protecting shadow of the castle, like a brood of frightened chickens under the wing of their mother. Some of these little dwellings are niched in an angle of the old wall; others in part built of its fragments. Here a street runs under a narrow stone arch of the old fortification; there it passes the simplest of all rustic bridges over the very little stream that gladdens the garden, and here it ends against the mouldering chapel of the castle.

These abodes of extremest poverty have at this moment a beauty and luxury that our gentlemen with their hot house graperies might envy. Between the lower and upper windows there is a grape vine in a regular festoon, and pendent from it just now (for it is a most fortunate season for the vine growers) bunches of grapes so full and beautiful that they could never seem 'sour grapes,' even to those who could not get them! A rich drapery, is it not, for these poor cottages? and some counterbalance for the luxuries of space and pure air which the poorest of our country poor enjoy. But I have forgotten in the village, that I am drawing near to the ruins, and am admonished by the rose color on the evening clouds that there is no time to loiter.

I passed through the great arched way where I suppose the port-cullis was, and ascending a steep acclivity by the side of a wall overgrown with wild plants, I went round the tower and through the labyrinthine walk, which has been formed by the Duke's order I suppose, of hawthorn and clematis, and which is a very simple and excusable bit of pretty *petitesse* amid these grand old ruins. I smiled at seeing here and there a table arranged with a circular seat. I do not believe the Germans could be tempted to go where

there was not a table on which to set a bottle of their precious Rhenish, and half a dozen social glasses. After rambling around till I was tired, I seated myself at a projecting point, a good look-off; but instead of looking off I looked up, and directly above, seated on the ground and leaning her head against a broken wall, I saw my pretty peasant girl, Grettel. She had come here to think her own thoughts, I suppose, drawn by the mysterious sympathies of Nature that even the most uncultivated feel at some moments of their lives. And here, soothed by their maternal influence, she had fallen asleep. Her knitting-work, the 'idlesse' of every German woman, had dropped from her hand and lay on her lap. The delicate white flowers of a clematis that fringed the broken wall, shaded her cheek, and to complete the picture (for with the rose-colored clouds above mentioned it was a picture that might have tempted Cole's Heaven-loving pencil) the little terrier-dog was sleeping at her feet. Suddenly he awoke, raised his head, and cocked up his ears. His manner quickened my senses, and I fancied I heard a quick footstep behind a wall which intervened between me and the path. Grettel was still sleeping. A smile played on her lips. I thought she had forgotten her sorrows and was dreaming of Johanne, and I would have muzzled the little dog if I could, when he sprang up, barked and bounded off. Grettel awoke, and to a reality better than any bliss of dreams, for at the next instant I saw her in Johanne's arms.

We leave Wilsbaden to-morrow, but not till the last act in this drama of my peasant girl is played out. I have just seen Cristine in her gala dress, and with a truly fête-day face, prepared to go to Grettel's wedding, and to-morrow the happy pair set off for their home in the New World.

It seems that the good school-master of Soninberg, who, if he did not think with Heloise that letters were invented for the love-stricken maiden, was eager to make them subserve her use—at the moment of the death of Grettel's mother, wrote to Johanne at Hamburg. It had so happened that Johanne, 'by the good will of Providence,' as Cristine says, had failed in getting there at the time he intended, and was awaiting the sailing of an American ship. The letter reached him, and in Cristine's favorite phrase, 'das ist besser;' that is to say, all has ended as well as if Cristine's kind and loving heart had arranged the catastrophe.

[Sedgwick's notes]

* One is painfully struck on first going to the Continent with the prevalence of diseases of the eye among the lower classes. In an infant Charity School I visited at Wiesbaden, I think out of a hundred at least ten had diseased eyes. The women live out of doors, their babies in their laps or on the ground beside them. Bonnets are not worn by females of the lower orders of any age; there is therefore no protection for the eyes.

* [*] There is a law throughout Germany, requiring the artisan, when he has finished his apprenticeship to travel a year from city to city (visiting, if he pleases, Paris and London,) in order to improve himself in his art. When he arrives in a German town, he goes to the

herberg, a tavern kept for artisans, and there, after reporting himself to the police, finds employment. This is an admirable provision tending to facilitate the diffusion of the arts, and the enlargement of the artist's knowledge out of his art.