

## CHAPTER II.

THE RIVER ENZ. — WILDBAD. — ITS EXTERNAL APPEARANCE. —  
HISTORY. — SOCIAL AND LITERARY RESOURCES. — CLIMATE AND  
STATE OF HEALTH.

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FIFTEEN miles south of Wildbad, on a wild mountain height, more than two thousand feet above the sea-level, a small rivulet rises to the light of day from amidst dark moss-grown rocks, like an enchanted princess struggling to get free from the grasp of her giant keepers. Joyously the hardy daughter of the forest bounds away from the place of her long thralldom. They are trying to stop her by a lake they have thrown into her way, but boldly she plunges in and quickly rises again on the opposite banks. Thence she sallies forth to the bright world below, of which the *Mummele* of the lake has told her many a wondrous tale. Down she rushes merrily with the exuberant spirit of youth, and, though at times she plays with the pebbles in her bed, or mischievously drags along some stem that lazily dozes on her border, yet she never stops, but on she goes, winding her way through opposing rocks or leaping precipices with the agility of a young fawn. Sometimes indeed she wants to ask the way from the tall pines at the road-side, but those solemn wise-acres are shaking



their grey mossy beards, and won't tell, unless she leave off her heathenish courses and assume a proper christian name. What are names to her!—still like a good child she listens to counsel, and henceforth goes under the surname of Enz. Then she encounters man, that ugly creature, and he reminds her that she is a German woman and must work; so he puts heavy loads on her back and makes her carry them, and whenever she is weary, he stops her and makes her collect her forces. At first she frowns, but then she does it cheerfully, and as you see her passing by Wildbad, you hear her noisy prattle, and see how playfully she puts her shoulders to the heavy millwheels, turning them round and round incessantly. At Calmbach she is joined by her younger sister, *the small Enz*; farther on the turbulent *Eyach* too, and the strong *Nagold*, unite with her, to play and work. Thus, as she leaves the tall pines and taller rocks of the Black Forest, she gets over her teens, and from Enzberg sedately moves between soft meadows and green vineyards. She knows what she is about and never romps now, for she is well aware that her bridegroom, youthful *Neckar*, is ready to clasp her to his bosom whenever she may be inclined to join him. Well, at last she overcomes her maiden-coyness; at Besigheim their union takes place, and from thence they pursue their career peacefully like a good married couple, spreading blessings on every side, as they move along in the stream of life, until they dissolve in mighty *Rhine*, and with his green waves are borne to the vast sea of Eternity. —

The town of *Wildbad*, as already has been mentioned, is situated in the valley of the Enz, which here runs from South-West to North-East; dividing the place into two unequal portions, connected by three bridges. It is shut in by high precipitous mountains, rising from twelve hundred



to fifteen hundred feet above the level of the valley, which, itself, is 1335 feet above the sea-level. The high street intersects the town in its whole length, until it arrives at the *Königsplatz*, a parallelogram of small dimensions, enclosed on one side by the *Royal Badhotel* and the church, — on the other by the hotels of the *Bear*, the *King of Würtemberg*, and the *cor de chasse* (Post). — At the upper extremity of the street you observe the Catherine asylum, a government establishment, in which every season 56 poor visitors of the spa, are lodged and treated “free, gratis, and for nothing.” A small bridge covered with tin plates leads thence to the stately pile of *Hotel Bellevue*, erected on the left bank of the Enz by Count Dillen, a wealthy Wurtemberg landowner.

The baths of Wildbad were early known and appreciated, if even we do not believe the account of the old chronicler Herold, who pretends that the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus founded them about the year 212 of the Christian era. The earliest written records we possess of Wildbad, go back as far as the year 1367, when Eberhard the Wrangler, Count of Würtemberg, visited Wildbad, and was there surprised by a body of *Schleglers* (or strikers, — a league of Suabian knights), led by the Count of Eberstein. *Uhland*, the celebrated master of the Suabian poetical school, has commemorated this event in a beautiful ballad, beginning as follows:

In balmy days of summer, by gentle breezes fanned,  
When verdant are the forests, and blooming is the land,  
There passed the gates of Stuttgart a knight, beloved and feared,  
Count Eberhard, the Wrangler, surnamed the Rustling Beard.

Not with a proud retinue he is taking to the field,  
Nor is it his intention the heavy sword to wield;  
To Wildbad goes his errand, and to the healing spring,  
That health to the diseased, and strength to age does bring.



The count pays his devotions at Hirsau's convent shrine,  
And with the holy abbot quaffs cups of sparkling wine.  
Through dark and gloomy forests he then pursues his way  
Till to the rugged valley in which the Enz holds sway.

At Wildbad, on the market, a stately structure lies,  
At which the noble stranger for board and rest applies,  
There he dismounts his charger, for there he goes to rest,  
And daily to the sources repairs, the knightly guest.

He lays aside his doublet, to cool the heated blood,  
Performs a pious prayer, and dives into the flood.  
He always took his station close to the rocky rent  
From which exhaustless nature her choicest treasures spent.

It would exceed our powers of translation, to do justice to the highflowing poetical language of Uhland; we therefore confine our attempts to the fragment, given here, and for the sequel refer scholars and lovers of fine poetry to the German original in the collection of Uhland's poetical works. — The town was burnt down, but Count Eberhard was saved by a faithful shepherd who carried him on his shoulders across the mountains, to Zavelstein. He princely recompensed his deliverer, and in order to prevent future accidents of this kind he enclosed Wildbad with a ring-wall.

Wildbad in olden times was very poor; this may be gathered from the circumstance, that, when Count Eberhard was made a Duke at Worms, in 1495, and all the cities of Wurtemberg sent deputations to congratulate him on his accession to this title, and to offer presents of a value corresponding to their means, the Wildbad deputies only brought twenty one guldens with them; — yet Count Eberhard had granted great liberties to the town, and done everything he could to alleviate their sufferings. At present the corporation possesses 4800 morgens of forest lands, which is a great help to the poor people, as they get their fuel and timber gratis from the woods. Many of them earn their



living entirely from the woods, by working as hewers, raft-men, or turners. There are also some saw-mills at Wildbad; and a paper-mill, where the paper, used for getting-up the present volume, has been manufactured.

Emperor Charles V. in the year 1530 renewed the charter and liberties of Wildbad, granted by Maximilian I., but the deeds of which had been lost in the great conflagration of 1525. The principal heads of this statute were the following, viz. that no one, be he noble or villain, was to injure or damage his neighbour by words or acts, under penalty of decapitation; and, that all who might have committed involuntary homicide, should find an asylum at Wildbad for a year and a day. The Emperor's brother, King Ferdinand, during the time the country was under his administration, resided at Wildbad. The inhabitants owed him much, and, as a sign of their gratitude, when they erected a brunnen, his statue in armour was placed upon it. Since this time the storms of war left the town unscathed, yet the elements were not so merciful as man. Poor little Wildbad has been six times burnt: in 1454, entirely down; to compensate the inhabitants Count Frederick gave them a greater number of privileges. In 1509 the suburbs as far as the church, on the site of which, now stands the school house. In 1525 the whole town shared the same fate. Again in 1645 ninety houses were reduced to ashes; but, owing to the war they were not rebuilt until 1662. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 1742, while most of the inhabitants were in the fields, a dreadful fire broke out; the high mountains intervening, prevented the sound of the bells being heard in the neighbourhood, so before any assistance could be rendered, the town, being built entirely of wood, was reduced to ashes. In the night a heavy rain came on, and the whole population, sick and well, were obliged to fly to the forest for shelter.



After this misfortune a law was passed, to prevent hay and straw being kept in the town, and since this time these materials are stored in small wooden barns, scattered all along the valley of the Enz, which are quite a feature in the country.

In 1824 again, the town suffered greatly from inundation; the Enz, rising to an unprecedented height, overflowed and tore away fourteen bridges and two houses. All the goods and many houses near the river were more or less damaged, and the water stood six feet above the level of the hot springs; the expense of reconstructing the bridges alone, amounted to 4000 florins — a considerable sum in this country where wood is almost to be had for nothing. The last conflagration by which Wildbad was visited, occurred in 1829, when the *King of Württemberg* Hotel was quite consumed, and a similar fate was impending over the whole city, but fortunately a heavy rain came on and prevented further mischief. The hotel has since been rebuilt of quarried stones, and now looks one of the stateliest mansions of the town.

Since the fire of 1742 the appearance of the place has considerably improved. Particularly the fashionable quarter, which commences with the *Königsplatz*, looks more like a square in a capital than like the market place of a country town of 2000 inhabitants. If it were not for the hills whose aspect everywhere obtrudes upon your view, the illusion would be complete. From the secluded situation of Wildbad people often imagine, that visitors must be exposed to many privations — a consideration which prevents a great many from resorting to this spa. This, however, like many other popular opinions, is a great fallacy. Dr. Heim in 1840 enumerates already 350 lodgings, partly in hotels, and partly in private houses; and this number has been greatly



increased by the new wing added to the *Bear-hotel*, the *Royal Badhotel*, and the *Hotel Bellevue*, all of which have been erected since. These three hotels, besides, would be considered first-rate, even in a large town, and, as Dr. Granville in his work on the spas of Germany, says: It is indeed surprising to see such establishments in this wild and secluded valley and to find oneself in apartments on the principal story,—*aux lambris dorés*—when, out of every window, nothing meets the eyes but a dense forest, romantic glens, and terrific rocks, with the murmuring Enz darting past the sleeping-chambers in the rear of the building. Here, of course, as in every other place, they follow the maxim, “first come, first served,” and we should therefore recommend to those who may feel disposed to try a season at Wildbad, to engage an apartment beforehand at one of the before-mentioned hotels,—at the *cor de chasse* (Post), or at the *König von Württemberg*; unless they should prefer private lodgings. But as these latter cannot well be secured, with any degree of satisfaction with regard to their choice, before they are seen, the best way is to proceed first to one of the hotels, where an apartment or suite of rooms may be retained by writing a month before the season begins. I counsel my readers thus, because I am convinced, that by following such a course, it is possible to be as well and as comfortably accommodated at Wildbad, as in the most frequented and fashionable Spas. — The prices of every thing are much the same as at Baden-Baden, perhaps even more moderate. The Dinner at the *table d'hôte* of the principal hotels is very creditable to mine host both for its goodness and cheapness. The evening meal or supper, which begins at eight o'clock and proceeds till eleven, is not on the plan of a *table d'hôte*, as the dinner, but *à la carte*.



In the measure as the fame of Wildbad spread in modern times, the number of the visitors also regularly increased with every consecutive season. And here is the proper place unreservedly to condemn the manner in which the bathing-lists of Baden-Baden and many other celebrated spas are annually swelled to that enormous figure with which the eyes of the uninitiated in such matters are startled. In those places every travelling bagman, every journeyman tailor or shoemaker who chance to have a night's rest there, is numbered in the list, and parties, only one member of which, perhaps may use the baths, are regularly counted by the sum total of individuals composing them—family, servants, and all. — In Wildbad however, quite a contrary course is pursued. Only those persons who really have taken a series of baths, are mentioned in the *Badliste*, with the exception even of such, as in passing through the place, have taken a bath by the way. It would be easy enough by following the system commented upon above, to double or treble the numbers in each season's bathing-lists, but the authorities, preferring to give a true picture of the bathing season, to a mere stranger's-list, have done wisely, and will do well never to leave their upright course for the purpose of surrounding the Baths with a factitious semblance of brilliancy that never will stand the test of cool and passionless investigation.

An abstract of the Wildbad bathing-list for a series of years, will best be adapted to elucidate the progressive increase alluded to. — The number of invalids was

in 1830	470;	the number of baths taken	12,000,
„ 1831	515;	„ „ „ „ „	13,797,
„ 1832	601;	„ „ „ „ „	15,004,
„ 1833	677;	„ „ „ „ „	16,162,
„ 1834	693;	„ „ „ „ „	17,012,



in 1835	713;	the number of baths taken	17,227,
„ 1836	902;	„ „ „ „ „	21,936,
„ 1837	1003;	„ „ „ „ „	24,665;
„ 1838	1235;	„ „ „ „ „	30,434,
„ 1839	1424;	„ „ „ „ „	32,441,
„ 1840	1504;	„ „ „ „ „	32,146,
„ 1841	1814;	„ „ „ „ „	37,377,
„ 1842	1832;	„ „ „ „ „	39,278,
„ 1843	1601;	„ „ „ „ „	36,748,
„ 1844	1622;	„ „ „ „ „	37,599,
„ 1845	1948;	„ „ „ „ „	43,467,
„ 1846	1945;	„ „ „ „ „	43,500,

showing an average number of 24 baths for each individual. The number of English parties arose to 112 during the season of 1840, 74 in 1841, 79 in 1842, 31 in 1843, 42 in 1844, 45 in 1845, and 58 in 1846.—The shower-baths, established since 1840, have also been employed on a rising scale; the number taken of them in six consecutive years, was: 1840:2193, 1841:3447, 1842:3054, 1843:3130, 1844:4370, 1845:5103.

The lists of mortality in 1845 record but five deaths of invalids, and of these five individuals two arrived at Wildbad in a dying state; one of them totally paralysed, the other in the last stage of consumption.

Wildbad cannot boast of so many pastimes as Baden-Baden or other fashionable watering-places; still, considering that it is a Spa for curing the Sick, and not a place of recreation for the Gay and Healthy, the balance will be found in its favour. Gambling, it is true, is forbidden fruit here, yet this is rather a benefit than a defect, as the excitement necessarily attending it would counteract the calming effects of the water. Notwithstanding this, a very fair share of amusements will be found provided



for visitors who are not over-fastidious. An excellent band performs in the Königsplatz daily, from 6 to 7 A. M., and from 7 to 8 P. M.; besides, the weather permitting, music is to be met with every afternoon at some place of resort in the neighbourhood. The walks for many miles round the town, in every direction, are charming; the vistas you catch at the different openings are striking, and you stop with pleasure, to gaze upon so singular a scene, and to listen to the murmuring of the little river below; while the calm and stillness of all around soothes and enchants. These walks are all strewed with gravel and possess the advantage, that even after the heaviest rains you may venture out without risking to get wet feet. Particularly the shady promenade, being so very near, and affording so many delightful changes of scenery, from the wild and romantic mazes of sombre woods, and dark granite rocks, to the quiet of smiling meadows and fertile fields, is much resorted to. The river has excellent trout, and there are many spots on its banks, where the angler may enjoy his pleasant sport. Horses, wheel-chairs, and donkeys are hired out at comparatively very low charges. In front of the Royal Bad-hotel there is a colonnade where the brunnendrinkers digest their libations, it also has coffee- and billard-rooms, and a saloon in which balls and concerts sometimes are arranged. Nor is there want of intellectual enjoyment; — food for the mind being supplied by the stationery shop, reading-rooms and circulating-library of Mr. *Sonnewald*. At this establishment a vast assortment of books is kept for sale — the reading-rooms are well supplied with German, French and English papers, and the circulating-library contains all the recent publications, issuing from the English, German and French presses.

During the season an English clergyman performs the Service of the Protestant Church, every Sunday morning.



He is remunerated by government, and his salary is increased by subscriptions collected among the English residents. — In the same chapel the Supreme Being is worshipped also according to the rites of the German Protestant, and the Roman Catholic Church.

The mention of a curiosity, peculiar to Wildbad, ought not to be omitted here. — A blind minstrel, a sort of improvisatore, in a woodcutter's or shepherd's dress, annually descends from the highlands of the Black Forest, to lash in doggrel rhymes the vices of the strangers luxuriating at Wildbad. It is particularly amusing to observe him while he makes his verse, rocking his body backward and forward with a sort of sawing motion, like an Irish-woman, singing the *Ulican*.

Although the highlands of the Black Forest are at so short a distance (the Katzenkopf, 3612 F., the highest point of Würtemberg, being at about 8—9 hours walk beyond Wildbad), still the climate of this valley is milder than might be expected. The mean temperature at Stuttgart, which is considered the mildest place of the country, in summer, is  $14^{\circ} 76'$  of Reaumur, and it rises to  $25^{\circ} 95'$  in the hottest days. In winter it is  $+ 0^{\circ} 65'$ , and down to  $-11^{\circ} 18'$  on the coldest days; — at Wildbad during the months of July and August which are generally the time of the greatest heat, the mean temperature, according to Dr. Fricker's observations is  $14^{\circ}$  R., showing a difference of but three fourths of a degree in favour of Stuttgart. Winter, it is true, here sets in earlier, and leaves later, still there have been winters when the snow did not remain above a fortnight. Besides, in the depth of the valley, and particularly in the neighbourhood of the hot springs, the snow never remains. — This mildness of the climate makes Wildbad peculiarly adapted for winter-cures, and the advantages it offers in



this respect, have been recognised by the most renowned physicians of Germany.

The quantity of rain and snow falling at Wildbad is considerable. In the hottest summers even the innumerable springs, rising in the vicinity, have never been known to fail. The quantity of rain falling annually in the Black Forest amounts to 48 inches.

If we compare the meteorological statistics of Wildbad to those of other bathing places, the scales will turn in favour of the former. The number of fine days during the season, (which comprises the months of June, July and August), amounts to 39, cloudy days there are 35, and rains or thunderstorms rule the remaining 16 days. It is a remarkable fact, that Wildbad has never been struck by lightning, the surrounding hills admirably serving the purpose of lightning-conductors. The inhabitants use to say, „However the thunder rolls, it hurts not Wildbad.“ — The finest period of the year is that of the autumnal months, when scarcely a cloud will be visible.

These dates will be sufficient to show that the valley of Wildbad is not the inhospitable soil for which prejudiced persons have been pleased to descry it. Many of those who came to Wildbad with notions of this kind, have been agreeably surprised by the fertile aspect of this lovely valley, and the extreme mildness of its climate, which indeed is well adapted to remove any unfavourable opinions, and to confirm all the good ones, one may previously have entertained on its account.

With respect to the state of health of the inhabitants, Dr. Heim says in his work on Wildbad: „It is neither better nor worse than in the neighbouring places or in other healthy situations of the country. The population is not very robust, but this arises generally from the rude



work they have to perform, and the bad food, of whose pernicious consequences the faces of the poor bear the fatal stamp. This observation applies even more to the female sex than to the males, for while the latter are occupied in the forest, the former alone remain charged with the field-labour. After nightfall one sees long files of women, often far advanced in pregnancy, returning from the fields, bearing heavy burthens on their heads.

The diseases prevalent here, mostly are caused by excess of work, colds, caught from exposure to bad weather, or working in the Enz, and by drinking from cold sources. In lighter diseases the natives have no recourse to the physician, but cure themselves by the use of their mineral waters. Rhachitic persons and cripples are very rare, and only two or three cases of cretinism will be found here. The abundance of goitres reported of this place is quite a fable.

As the water used here for household purposes, is of the greatest purity and clearness, (Acetate of Lead does not disturb it, and Goulard water is perfectly limpid here) no endemic maladies are to be found. Complaints of the chest also are great exceptions in this country, this is principally owing to the balsamic exhalations of the resinous trees of the forest, and to the great quantity of Oxygen disengaged by them. It is a well known fact, and indeed, affirmed by the authority of Saussure, that the trees of the pine-genus absorb more carbonic acid gas from the atmosphere than any other, and that therefore the air in their vicinity must be highly saturated with Oxygen. In consequence those who enter this valley, almost instantaneously feel an indescribable sensation of ease and well-being steal over them; the lungs dilate, and the chest expands as if some heavy load had been taken from it. Decarbonisation



of the blood proceeds more rapidly and copiously, the muscles acquire new strength and tension, the nerves become more sensitive, and even the digesting system works with redoubled activity. Whatever may be your complaint, you feel confident of the cure, your sleep becomes tranquil, your appetite increases. Those who do not intend to use the waters, feel an increase of strength in body and mind; and even the suffering find forces to endure fatigues, which would have been impossible to them some weeks ago. — Thus the morbid enemy, attacked from within and without, soon is put to flight, never to return.

“Curae vacuus hunc adeas locum,  
Ut morborum vacuus abire queas.”

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