

**FARINA, A LEGEND
OF COLOGNE**

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Farina, a legend of Cologne by George Meredith

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GEORGE MEREDITH

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OF COLOGNE**

FARINA

A Legend of Cologne. By George Meredith



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1865.

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SANTA BARBARA

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F A R I N A:

THE WHITE ROSE CLUB.

IN those lusty ages when the Kaisers lifted high the golden goblet of Aachen, and drank, elbow upwards, the green-eyed wine of old romance, there lived, a bow-shot from the bones of the Eleven Thousand Virgins and the Three Holy Kings, a prosperous Rhinlander, by name Gottlieb Groschen, or, as it was sometimes ennobled, Gottlieb von Groschen; than whom no wealthier merchant bartered for the glory of his ancient mother-city, nor more honoured burgess swallowed

impartially red juice and white under the shadow of his own fig-tree.

Vine-hills, among the hottest sun-bibbers of the Rheingau, glistened in the roll of Gottlieb's possessions; corn-acres below Cologne; basalt-quarries about Linz; mineral-springs in Nassau, a legacy of the Romans to the genius and enterprise of the first of German traders. He could have bought up every hawking crag, owner and all, from Hatto's Tower to Rheineck. Lore-ley, combing her yellow locks against the night-cloud, beheld old Gottlieb's rafts endlessly stealing on the moon-light through the iron pass she peoples above St. Goar. A wailful host were the wives of his raftsmen widowed there by her watery music!

This worthy citizen of Cologne held vasty manuscript letters of the Kaiser addressed to him:

“Dear well-born son and subject of mine, Gottlieb!” and he was easy with the proudest princes of the Holy German Realm. For Gottlieb was a

money-lender and an honest man in one body. He laid out for the plenteous harvests of usury, not pressing the seasons with too much rigour. "I sow my seed in winter," said he, "and hope to reap good profit in autumn; but if the crop be scanty, better let it lie and fatten the soil.

"Old earth's the wisest creditor," he would add; "she never squeezes the sun, but just takes what he can give her year by year, and so makes sure of good annual interest."

Therefore when people asked Gottlieb how he had risen to such a pinnacle of fortune, the old merchant screwed his eye into its wisest corner, and answered slyly, "Because I've always been a student of the heavenly bodies;" a communication which failed not to make the orbs and systems objects of ardent popular worship in Cologne, where the science was long since considered alchymic, and still may be.

Seldom could the Kaiser go to war on Welsch-