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**Harte and Hardy**

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## HARTE AND HARDY

CREFELD, GERMANY, was heavily bombed on the night of June 21-22, 1943. When the announcement of the bombing was made over the radio, some bibliophiles recalled that Crefeld was the town to which Bret Harte was assigned in 1878, when a foreign consular haven had to be found for him by his friends after his financial collapse. And many Colby Library Associates who recall Mr. K. D. Metcalf's visit to Waterville last March and his entertaining paper on the William D. Howells Correspondence in the Harvard Library, will have no difficulty in remembering the vehement and outspoken letters written by Mark Twain on the subject of Bret Harte's appointment to the post at Crefeld.

The Colby Library has acquired an autograph letter written by Harte from Crefeld. Shortly before Christmas, 1879, he visited Aix and there met an American girl named Nelly Goodrich. Instead of talking about the scenery, they discussed Thomas Hardy, who had just published *The Return of the Native* the year before. Like many other women, Miss Goodrich didn't like Hardy; Bret Harte did. When they parted, he gave the girl a volume by Hardy, about which she later wrote him. Harte replied as follows:

Crefeld, [Germany]  
Decem[ber], 15th / 79

MY DEAR MISS NELLY,

Your gentle *postscript* to our "good bye" in the snows of Aix certainly thawed whatever was frosty out of it. Thank you very much, my kind-hearted compatriot!

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All of which I should have written to you earlier, but one of your adopted countrymen, calling himself a "Zahn-arzt" lately filled me a tooth so vilely and abominably that for ten days he also filled me with acute neuralgia of the face and head, and I, never having been to *any* dentist before, knew nothing of the cause, until Dr. Von Kohlvelter discovered it. Consequently, during that ten days I had no voice left but for general imprecation. The filling taken out, I am better now and quite sane again, but I have lost so much time that I shall *not* go to America this season—or indeed further than Paris or London. Italy is doubtful in this stress of weather. So our "good bye" may be "*auf wiedersehen.*"

Pray make my best compliments to your brother-in-law, and do not let the Herr Consul engage himself to *too* many young German ladies, for the sake of our common country. I do not yet despair of your liking Hardy. I wish I had another volume to send you.

Very sincerely yours,

BRET HARTE

Three weeks later, Harte was in England and at the Rabelais Club, in London, he met Thomas Hardy, whom he described (writing to Mrs. Harte, in America) as "a singularly unpretending-looking man, and indeed resembling anything but an author in manner and speech."



### THE FIGHT THAT FAILED

**I**N these days of frequent reports of successful attempts by American forces to wrest territory from the hands of an enemy—at Guadalcanal, at Tunis, in Sicily and Italy—it may be of interest to read of a similar American attempt years ago, but one with a far-from-successful outcome. We refer to a battle fought at Castine, Maine, August