

The sheikh, he says, who had charge of the river at this particular point, placed himself on a commanding rock, and encouraged his men with shouts, and prayers, and objurgations to haul the boat up the watery acclivity. For this purpose, a stout English rope was made fast to the mainmast; the Nubians clung to it with a vice-like grasp; "Yallough! Wallah!"—a mighty shout—a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together—and away went the boat up the hill of water which forms the first stage of the cataract.

So much having been accomplished, the amphibious attendants, standing waist-deep in the river, took a quiet breathing pause. The sheikh gesticulated, and cried, "Yallough! Wallah!" and again they set to work. More shouting, more efforts, and the second fall or stage was safely passed. Then, over a tranquil reach of the

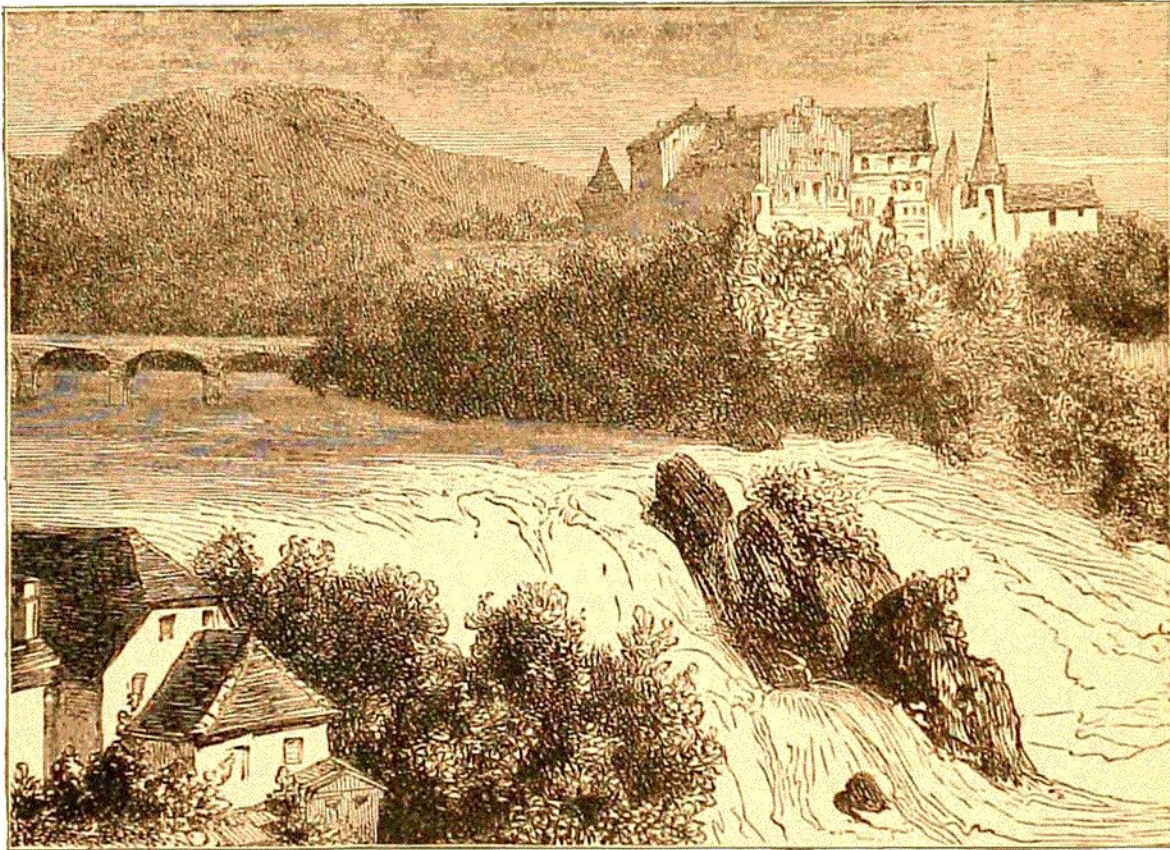


FIG. 186.—FALL OF THE RHINE, AT LAUFFEN, NEAR SHAUFFHAUSEN.

stream, Mr. Warburton moved on to the third and most difficult stage of the rapid, where the Nile hurls the whole volume of its waters between two towering cliffs.

The sheikh, however, proved fully equal to the responsibilities of "the situation." Flinging off the encumbrance of his long robes, he stood forth stripped of everything but his drawers; even his turban was thrown aside, and the long Mussulman tuft of hair that crowned his shaven head floated "like a horse-tail in the wind." His gestures and his ejaculations were violent and incessant. His followers seemed animated with supernatural vigour. They shouted and they strained; they darted hither and thither; they jumped upon the rocks; they leaped into the waters; now they fended off the quivering boat from some perilous crag; now they tugged lustily at the straining rope; the cries of "Yallough! Wallah!" were redoubled, and replied to from the shore by shouts of "Haybesah!" (God help you!)—a minute,