

SWISS
FAIRY TALES
WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS

THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK OF SWISS FAIRY TALES

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Title: Swiss Fairy Tales

Author: William Elliot Griffis

Illustrator: George L. Carlson

Release date: January 7, 2023 [eBook #69739]

Most recently updated: October 19, 2024

Language: English

Original publication: United States: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1920

Credits: Jeroen Hellingman and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <https://www.pgdp.net/> for Project Gutenberg (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive/American Libraries.)

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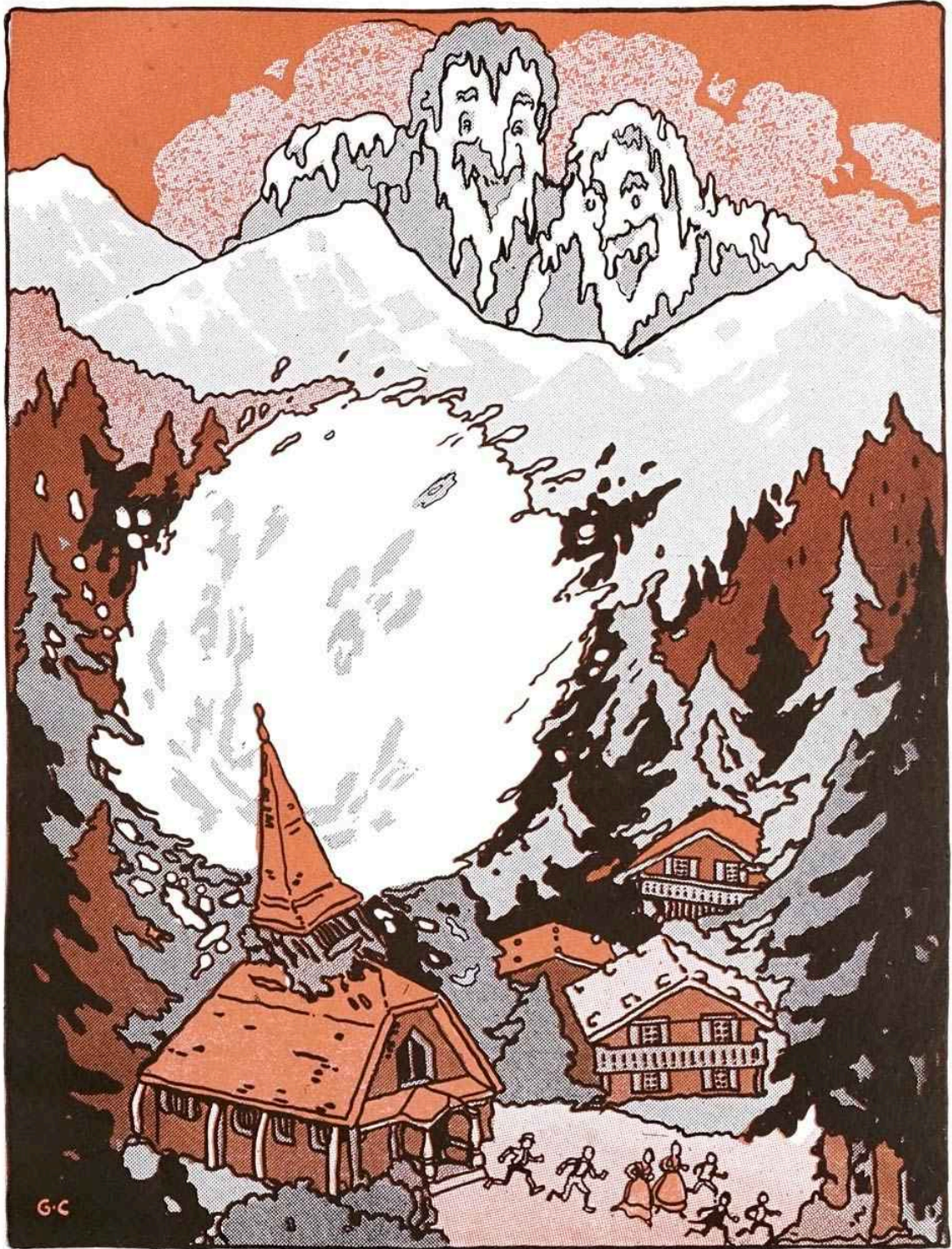
Welsh Fairy Tales 

(In preparation)

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THOMAS Y. CROWELL CO., NEW YORK

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IT SIMPLY KNOCKED
OVER THE OLD TOWER

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By

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS

*Author of "The Firefly's Lovers," "The Unmannerly Tiger,"
"Dutch Fairy Tales," "Belgian Fairy Tales," etc.*

NEW YORK
THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY
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DEDICATED
IN RADIANT MEMORIES
OF MY SWISS MATERNAL ANCESTRY
NEAR VALLEY FORGE
FROM WHOSE LIPS I FIRST HEARD STORIES OF
WASHINGTON, LAFAYETTE, STEUBEN

AND OF SWITZERLAND THE LAND OF THE EDELWEISS [v]

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SWISS FAIRY TALES

I

HOW SWISS FAIRY TALES CAME TO AMERICA

Let us pretend that we are sitting on a stool, a hassock, a rug, or the floor, around the chair of grandmother Hess, to which place all young folks are hereby invited. We shall go with her, in fancy, to the home of the Swiss family Harby, for that was her maiden name, at Barren Hill, in what the Swiss folks called "the Pennsylvanias." For they loved the forests and they knew that the name meant the groves or woods of Penn. They kept always, in their minds, the idea of trees. It was there that some of these fairy and other tales were first told.

It was long ago, during the Revolutionary war, when Washington, and Lafayette, and Steuben, were comrades at Valley Forge. This [2]place was only a few miles away, and the great men rode often past the house and farm of John Harby, who was grandma's father.

When, in 1778, the Hessians and red coats could not capture Lafayette, with his Continental soldiers, they stole the bread out of the oven and drank up the milk from the spring house.

The little girls, Sarah, Hannah and Margaret, often heard from their grandfather and grandmother about Switzerland, whence, following William Penn, they had come. Their kinsfolk still lived in the old land across the sea. When the Revolutionary war was over, their father, John Harby, came to the Quaker City, and kept a hotel. There, when Philadelphia was the national capital, he entertained members of Congress and the refugee French noblemen.

When the story teller heard the once little maids talk about things Swiss, and Hessian, and British, and Pennsylvanian, these three, two of whom the Hessians had once scared into the garret, were dear

old ladies. Sitting up in bed, or in her chair, as straight as her rheumatism and her bent fingers would allow, grandmother told us many a tale of Swiss ancestral and Revolutionary times.

To the end of the years of her life, which lasted from 1770 to 1866, her sister Hannah, our maiden aunt, sang the songs, played on the piano [3]the ditties, and danced the minuets and waltzes, which the French officers and noblemen had taught her when the Quaker city, from 1790 to 1800, was the national capital.

We children, even when big girls and boys, and ready for college, enjoyed the fun, the music, and the stories. It was from these dear old ladies that the story teller learned to love the mountains, and to climb them, in America and Japan, and, for weeks at a time, to tramp among them in glorious Switzerland.

The ancestral Swiss home was in a valley of the Bernese Oberland, under the shadow of a high mountain. In winter, which usually lasted seven months or more, the people, the boys, and the girls, the cows, goats, donkeys, horses, chickens, and all living things were shut in by heavy snows. Quite often in winter, daddy and the boys had to climb out the windows onto the snows that were piled, or drifted, many feet high against the door. Even on May day, spoiling fun outdoors, there might come a storm which left six or eight feet of snow.

Yet when the sun got up early in the morning, and the south wind blew with a quiet force that did more in a day's work than a million steam shovels, the snow melted, and soon the green meadows were spangled with red and blue, yellow and white flowers. [4]

When June came, the big boys got ready, with their fathers and hired men, to leave their village home, and go up to spend the whole summer on the spicy pastures, that is, the Alps, high up on

the mountains, to stay until near October. There the bees would gather honey from the nectar in the blossoms, and cows would feed on the sweet juices of the grass. It was at this season that the milk, cream, butter and cheese, were the very best of the year. Many a growing boy, counting on his fingers the days, looked forward for months to life outdoors, on the highlands, among the birds, the butterflies and the wild animals. As for the cattle, they could sniff the sweet aroma of the flowery fields and grasses at a distance and long before men could.

The day of the great cow parade, when the other four-footed animals, dogs, goats, pigs, horses and donkeys, joining in, was the greatest of the year. Then the leading cow, named Lady, or Queenie, or Cleopatra, often carrying the milking stool on her head, between her horns, led the procession. The girls were all out in their best clothes to deck the hats of the daddies with wreaths and blossoms, and to say and wave good-byes. Pretty nearly every one was decorated with flowers.

Then the music and the yodel songs, and the blowing of the pine wood horns began. These [5]awoke the echoes of the distant mountains. Then the sounds, returning, seemed as sweet as the singing by a choir of the heavenly host. No Swiss boy or girl, even when grown up, living in the cities, or in a foreign land, ever forgot the yodel songs, or the hymns his mother used to sing.

The Swiss chateau, home of the Harbys, before the year 1710, except the first story, which was of stone, was entirely of wood. In winter, the fireplace of brick roared with logs of fir, birch or oak. The great white porcelain stove, eight feet high, banded with shining brass, in which peat, or coal, was the fuel, stood at one end of the main room.

To get into the house, the door, in the front centre, opened into the basement, but there were two stairways on the outside, which took one up into the bedrooms. To let the heavy snow slide off easily, to the ground, the eaves projected from the roof six feet beyond and over the walls. Within the projecting front gable, between the sloping roof and the second story, there was a balcony.

The whole front of the house was nearly hidden by vines and flowers that invited the bees and birds, though there were hives and dovecotes in the yard space, fronting the house. Cut into the corner columns, or through the gable [6]boards, was this Scripture sentence: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Not far away was the barn and yard for the cows and chickens, ducks and geese. Near by, the purling of a running brook, fed from the mountain with water, cold, and clear as crystal, was like the singing of a sweet song. As neat as a new pin was this Spring House. Here upon shelves, only a little higher than the stream, and on the stone surbase that ran across one side of the low room, or floating in the cold water, were shallow pans for the milk. In a corner stood the big jar, to hold the cream, which was daily skimmed from the milk in the pans. The caldron and utensils for cheesemaking were kept in another corner. It was from cheese chiefly that the family lived, especially in winter.

On the walls of the sleeping chambers, parlor, and living room, besides the well-mounted antlers of the wild mountain goat, and the chamois, there were framed pictures of the great men of the Fatherland. Here looked down the face of the holy saint Fridolin, or the reformer Zwinglius, or the heroes, William Tell and Arnold von Winkelried. In some houses, one could see a picture of Calvin, or a view of Geneva, or the seal of the canton in which they lived. In a glass-covered case were dried Alpine flowers, rock roses, violets and

anemones, with their colors [7]kept wonderfully fresh, even in winter. When first plucked, they were put in hot sand—not too hot—and covered for a time.

For breakfast, the Harbys had honey, bread, milk and eggs. On the wall, resting on pegs, was the father's gun, for hunting. It was a real rifle, and few men in the world, except the Swiss and the Jäger, or hunters, then knew of this wonderful weapon.

For dinner, they often had chamois or ibex, and, occasionally, bear meat, for John Harby was a dead shot with the rifle. Beef, with greens, was common, though the chief staple of food was cheese, or cream cooked in many wonderful ways, with cheese-cake, or pie, though buttermilk was in daily demand.

What the young folks liked, best of all, was the weekly treat of "schnitzel." This was made of boiled ham, dumplings of wheat flour, dried apples and spices, and was served on the table with molasses. When nicely cooked, and, as mother knew how to make it, nothing tasted better. It was enjoyed until the waist belts of youngsters began to tighten.

Every morning, the doors of the clock, set in a box or house on the wall, flew open, and the cuckoo chirped its song and then retired inside from view. The wooden bird thus gave notice [8]that it was time to get up and make ready for school.

At night, before the children went to sleep, Mother, and sometimes Daddy, told them fairy or wonder tales, or of the heroes that had made Switzerland free, or the Bible stories, till they knew these by heart, and, when they grew up, told them to their children.

With the young men of the village, it was not always work—in winter with the cows and goats, in the dairy at home; or, in summer the

driving of the flock up to the mountain pastures, with the cheesemaking there. Tired of the monotony of country life, the sturdy lads welcomed the advent of the soldiers, in bright, gay uniforms, with a band of music, and the recruiting officer at their head.

With their flags and banners, these strangers came from the great world outside, to enlist young men for military service, in France or Germany, or for the Scotch Brigade in the Netherlands, or, to serve the King of England, in America. All the village folk turned out and the mothers and maidens were as eager as the fathers, to see how it was done, before their sons, brothers and sweethearts marched away. Not least among these Swiss, who gained fame, was General Henry Bouquet, who, in the British [9]service, and as comrade of Washington, won Pittsburg for the King.

For these were the gala days of monarchs and of the soldier of fortune, that is, of the brave young man, who left his home and country to fight for any one who paid him well. He enlisted, more for love of adventure, than for love of the ruler whose splendid uniform he wore. Yet his loyalty and honor were steadfast. Faithful and brave, he lived in camps and barracks, fought battles, and died in the hospital, or on the field.

When the king's officer raised his banner aloft, in the public square of the Swiss village, the fifer and drummer, or trumpeter, sounded the call. On one side of the broad table, well furnished, and with a foaming pitcher and cups to drink the king's health, sat the notary. Then up came the stalwart young fellows, in their working clothes, to have their names enrolled, to take the oath of allegiance, and to exchange their pitchforks for muskets, bayonets and cartridge boxes. Then they took their places with the others, and soon wore gay

soldier clothes, with shining buttons, and frontlets of brass on their helmets.

Often it was hard, not only for parents and sisters, but for the pet dogs, to leave the dear masters. Many were the tears shed, and lively the gossip among the women at and around the [10]well curb, when the village had again resumed its quiet life.

Greater yet was the glory, when the lad, who had left in peasant homespun, returned, in the royal uniform, to tell of camps, and battles, and sieges; yes, even of palaces and the splendor of the great cities, far away. Buttons were a new fashion, then, and the Swiss soldier came back home, in cocked hat, a coat very much dotted with shining brass, and opened to show the vest and facings, and with leggings reaching from ankle to knee. A high private, in those days, looked as gay as a tropical bird, and as handsome as a prince.

The boys left their hoops, and the girls their dolls, to run and welcome the returning hero. Old and young listened to his war stories, and even the dogs and pigeons seemed to share in the joy. The imagination of the youngsters was fired, and often maidens followed their lovers to distant countries. Who has not read, in the pages of Froissart, or Macaulay, of "Appenzell's stout infantry," or of the valor and devotion of the Swiss Guard, in the Tuilleries at Paris, who "died to defend their master." In their everlasting honor, one sees at Luzerne, sculptured out of the solid rock, the dying lion. This splendid work of art symbolizes the loyalty [11]and valor of the seven hundred and eighty-six victims, of the French mob, in 1793.

While the young men had opportunity to see the great world, beyond the mountains, most of the girls stayed at home in the valleys. Yet all the time, they thought of their brothers, lovers and kinsmen. They, too, longed to see a real prince, and to look on a

military pageant, and gaze on the splendor of courts and palaces. At times, it was hard to restrain the maidens from roaming off, down the Rhine, to the rich and gay city of Amsterdam, or to the brilliancy of Paris.

It was not alone in Europe that the absentees from the Swiss villages started. Already, late in the eighteenth century, men of the Grisons and Oberland were hearing of the "Pennsylvanias." The William Penn country was luring the stalwarts away, for reports came across seas, as sweet in sound as yodel songs, or as Alpine echoes, of fertile soil, which was dirt cheap. The kind ruler, of the Forests of Penn, hated war and treated even the wild men, or Indians, kindly. He bought their land and paid them for it, even though his King, Charles, called it his own—which his friend Roger Williams denied.

Sometimes a Swiss mother, left a widow, because her husband had been killed in some prince's battle, resolved not to let her boy die [12]for a king. So she strapped her baby on her back, and skated down the Rhine to Rotterdam, and reached America. One of these, well known, married again, and in Philadelphia reared a fine family of splendid boys and girls. Such a romantic incident happened more than once.

Hardly had the Harbys begun even to talk about Penn's land, when a terrible calamity befell them, which drove them out of their nest-like home, even as the mother-eagle pushes out her fledgelings, while the wonderful opportunity offered them, in Penn's Groves, lured them to even greater ease and comforts. Across the Atlantic, there would be less of toil, than in their mountain home, with its long months of winter and its short weeks of summer.

The story would take too much time to tell, if we tried to note every detail. For a week previous, the snow had fallen continuously. It darkened the air, and covered the earth with many feet of solid

whiteness. One old man was full of forebodings of calamity. On the edge of a cliff, far up on the mountain side, mighty masses of snow piled up, stood like a lofty tower, in terrible menace, likely soon to fall. All were hoping for the Föhn, or south wind, to blow and "eat up" the snow.

Unsuspecting a storm, a hunter had, some days before, gone among the heights, taking his [13]provisions and blanket, hoping to stalk an ibex, or at least a chamois. Caught in the sudden, blinding, whirling snow, and unable to find the path homeward, he built a rude shelter at the edge of the forest. This was opposite an overhanging rock, under this snow tower, which was steadily rising in height. Having enough rations in his wallet to last him four days, he waited till sunshine should come, hoping to see a troop of chamois, making their way down over the narrow ledge of rock, in search of moss for food. Fortunately for him, but calamitously for the village, his rifle shot brought down a fat buck.

Yet immediately upon that shock of the air, following the gunfire and report, fell tons upon tons of snow and ice. The mass, rolling down with lightning speed, increased in size at every yard. It fell on the village, overwhelming houses, barns, stables and gardens. Where yesterday were happy homes were now many human victims. Today, the mouldering stones in the church yard witness to the awful catastrophe. Pathetic is a similar record, made ten years later, in another village. "Dear God! What sorrow! Eighty-eight in a single tomb."

Happily the Harby home, being on the edge of the avalanche's track, though flattened out, like a sheet of mused-up paper, had no human dead within its walls; though in the barn every [14]living animal was smothered by the weight of white.

Digging out a few necessary things, including the trusty rifle, unharmed, they packed them up, because they would be very necessary in the new home, or because they were linked with affectionate memories. They were happy in finding the stocking full of coin, which had been hidden behind a loose stone in the fireplace. Then the family made its way to Basle, on the Rhine. There they took boat, down the river to Rotterdam; where, with hundreds of other Swiss folks, they were sheltered, helped and kindly treated by the Dutch ministers and people.

Getting on board the ship "Arms of Rotterdam," under the tricolor flag, red, white and blue of the Republic, they crossed the Atlantic and in Penn's "Holy Experiment," where thousands of Swiss folk had arrived before them, they reached safely the city of Brotherly Love. It was then little larger than a village. When the people from Wales, England, Holland and Germany first came and were building their houses, they had lived in caves, on the banks of the Delaware river, where now is Front Street; but when Harbys arrived there were hundreds of completed houses, some in brick, or stone, but mostly in wood. Yet even from the beginning, the land was properly surveyed, and laid out in squares, [15]and, with four large parks, and planted with trees, while some of the streets were paved. In truth, for order, and beauty, and liberal ideas, this was the queen city of America. [16]

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THE SWISS HOME NEAR VALLEY FORGE

Only a few days did the Harbys abide on the banks of the Delaware, in the little city of Brotherly Love, where lived a few hundred people, mostly Friends, in drab clothes. Then, from one of William Penn's land agents—the ancestor of American bishops—John Harby bought a farm. It lay on a piece of high ground, at Barren Hill, which was part of a ridge near the Schuylkill river. It was named after the bears that were still numerous in the forests that then clothed the land. It is known as Lafayette Hill and we shall soon see why. The neighborhood afforded good hunting, for any young man, that had brought his chamois rifle with him. One of the active fellows, who was reckoned a sure shot, was Harby's nephew, of whom we shall hear later. He shot many deer and the family had venison often. Not far away was White Marsh. Over in another direction, was Fox Chase, where they had hounds and hunted foxes. [17]

Only a few miles distant, across the Hidden Stream, or Schuylkill, as the Dutch had named the river, was the valley forge, where the farmers in the region around had their tools made and mended.

Not far away, on the hill, was soon built Saint Peter's Lutheran church. In Switzerland, the Harbys had been members of the Reformed church, but all the people of the neighborhood now worshipped together.

The Harbys made their house first of logs of wood, notched at the corners. Trees were plentiful, and the forest was near at hand. Many things were about them to remind them of their old home, though there were no glaciers, or avalanches, or high mountains, with snow

lying on them all the year round, and all was as yet rough, in the new country.

When the barn had been built, the cows, pigs and fowls made things look friendly and sociable. They had no cuckoo clock any more, but it was really homelike to hear the cocks crow at sunrise. This sound was certainly much pleasanter, indeed, than to hear the howling of the wolves at night. Occasionally, early in the morning, the Harbys would see a bear in the barnyard, and they had to keep the chickens locked up in the chicken house, for foxes were plentiful, and always on the watch for a poultry dinner. Wild [18]turkeys—a new sort of bird for them—and wild pigeons were plentiful. Benjamin Franklin, who was then a little boy in Boston, the oldest in a family of seventeen children, when a grown man, wanted to make the wild turkey, which gives food to man, the national emblem, instead of the eagle, that lives on flesh and kills little birds.

Inside the house, there were wide seats at the chimney side, and puss purred in front of the great hearth fire. Outside, the dogs kept watch and ward, and often had a lively tussle with wolves and young bears.

When spring time came, the girls went blossom hunting. One very common flower, which they had known in Switzerland, the Pearly Everlasting, somehow reminded them of the Edelweiss. Daddy, who loved trees, almost to worship, saluted the same species as those which he had seen growing in the Old World—fir, birch, pine, and oak; but the persimmon tree was new to him and he enjoyed the autumn fruit, which the frost seemed to ripen; while the sugar maple was as good as a fairy tale, for the idea of a tree bearing candy was wonderful. In fact, the Harbys hailed the trees as friends, true and tried, with reverence and awe.

A generation came and went, and soon there was a little God's acre around the little church [19] on the hill top. The Hess family, from Zurich, also had made their home near by, at Whitemarsh, and several couples of the young men and maidens of the two households made love and married together.

The fathers and mothers, who had known the old home land beyond the sea, talked often of chamois and ibex, and edelweiss and the rock roses, and the meadow flowers, and the cows and the yodel music. When they spoke of the "Alps," they meant the summer pastures high up, and not mountains. At times, especially in June, they felt homesick for the yodel songs and the Alpine horn echoes. They spoke often of the curious things at Neuchatel, and Berne, and Zurich, and the Lake of the Four Cantons. They sang the hymns of Heimath, or Home, and of the Fatherland, and of the Heavenly Land, and recounted the exploits of the Swiss heroes. The children were taught not to be afraid of the dark, and all knew by heart many hymns, especially that beginning, "Alone, yet not alone with God am I."

On the other hand, the new generation told of other game, deer, bear, wolf, wild turkey and pigeons, and of new fruits like the persimmon. Their model, in civil life, was the good governor, William Penn, and their hero in valor and rescue of captives was Colonel Bouquet, the Swiss soldier [20] in the service of their sovereign, Queen Anne. They loved her, also, because she loved the yodel music. Later came the kings named George. The flag over them was the Union Jack, which they saw float on the staff, when they went to Philadelphia often, and, occasionally, to Lancaster.

Yet all this time, one great desire and romantic longing of the maidens was unfulfilled. The yearning of the girls, as they became sweethearts, wives, and mothers, was handed down, as if it were a

family heirloom, to see a real prince or a nobleman, or a man with a title. They hoped that some officer, in resplendent uniform, such as they had seen in their home village, would come into their neighborhood, for they were tired of Quaker drab. Even though their grandparents were democratic by their Swiss inheritance, and almost by instinct, and though reared in the oldest of republics, and accustomed to town meetings, the little maids, Sarah and Hannah, longed to see a real pageant, a prince; or at least a marquis, and something of the pomp of courts or even of armies. They heard that the Prince of Wales, who became King George II, had indeed visited New York, and skated on the ice of the Collect Pond; but he had come and gone, as a private person, and it was not likely [21] that either he, again, or even King George III would ever visit the colonies.

Before the two little girls could know what it all meant, the Harbys heard, in their home at Barren Hill, of the Continental Congress, held in Carpenters' Hall, in Philadelphia. In this gathering Canada was represented. Then, it was hoped that there would be fourteen stripes in the flag, which the Philadelphia City Troop of cavalry were making. But when their flag was unfurled and the handsome horsemen escorted Colonel George Washington, of Virginia, to Cambridge, many felt very sorry, that there were only thirteen, instead of the longed-for fourteen stripes, and hoped, even yet, that Canada would join.

War broke out. From the new State House, in Philadelphia, then one of the most wonderful buildings in any of the colonies, floated the flag of thirteen stripes, red and white, and independence was proclaimed.

Then, after two years, this same flag had as many stars in its blue field. Yet the armies of the Congress met with many disasters, and,

one day the little girls out in the garden heard the boom of the cannon at Brandywine. It was not very long afterward, that the Continentals marched past the house, to make camp and winter quarters at Valley Forge. [22]

Among the young men riding on horses, as Washington's body guard of young troopers, who were mostly Pennsylvania Swiss, or Germans, was John Harby's nephew, Gustave. At the camp, besides being an orderly at headquarters, it was his special duty to raise, at sunrise, and lower, at sunset, the thirteen-striped flag, which now bore no longer the British Union Jack, but a blue field, in which, in a circle of glory, were thirteen stars; and he and his comrades rejoiced that the colonies had been made independent, and each stripe and star stood for a state, and all in a union. It was his people that, first of all, spoke of Washington as the "Father of his country"; or, as the minister said, "Pater Patriæ."

The winter of 1777–78 had nearly passed and many a skirmish, between the British foraging parties, of Hessians and red coats, and the American Colonel Sheldon's dragoons, had taken place. One fine morning, in the spring, while Gustave was taking breakfast, with his little cousins at the Harbys, all were startled by the firing of guns at Valley Forge. Evidently the Continentals were busy burning powder, but why?

"A battle?" asked the mother as she glanced at her husband.

At the first roll of the echoes, the young [23]trooper, Gustave, put on his bearskin cap, seized his carbine, and rushed out to hear. Putting his ear to the ground, he made up his mind that the reports were too regular for war. Then, entering the house, he declared it must be a salvo—a *feu de jeu*—or joy volley.

"For what, I wonder," asked Mrs. Harby.

"I know," said Daddy. "We have been waiting for news of the alliance with France. Now, our Continentals and the sparkling Bourbonnieres will march together. Whole companies, among these, are our Swiss boys." Then he hummed, joyfully, the old German tune of Yankee Doodle. Perhaps now, a French fleet would come up the Delaware, blockade Philadelphia, and capture Howe's army, as Burgoyne had been captured. At the table, they kept on talking a long time.

Only a few days later, a line of wagons, driven up from a southern port, brought in supplies from France. Five of the wagons contained saddles, bridles, stirrups and a full equipment, made in France, for the whole regiment of Colonel Sheldon's cavalry, which had been at first raised in Connecticut. This was Lafayette's own gift, and had been paid from out of his own purse. The Continental Congress had given him a commission in the American army, with the rank of Major-General. [24]

"Why, that sounds like a prince," murmured little Sarah to herself.

A few days later, and another surprise broke the monotony of life at Barren Hill. Washington wished to know what the British in Philadelphia were going to do. Would they attack him? Or, considering his military position too strong to risk assault, would they retire to New York? Would Washington capture, or be captured?

So May 18, 1778, the commander-in-chief, who trusted the young French nobleman, as fully as he would trust his oldest general, placed twenty-two hundred of his best soldiers and five cannon under his charge. He was to reconnoitre, as the French say. So Lafayette led his force out, and took up to a strong position on Barren Hill.

This movement was quickly known in Philadelphia, and at once three columns of British and Hessians marched to entrap and capture

Lafayette and the Continentals.

All this is national history. Yet it was like a fairy tale to the little Harby maids, Sarah and Hannah, to see the Continental soldiers, now so proud of their drilling, during the long winter, by Baron Steuben. Father Hess, the night before, had sent to the nobleman from over the great sea, an invitation to breakfast. You may [25]be sure that Mrs. Harby got out her best gold-rimmed China cups and saucers, and her caraway-seed cakes, her Zurich cookies, and her best "Dutch cake," and silver teapot, to set before the real, live Marquis. When she told her two small daughters that she would let them wait on the young nobleman, they clapped their hands for joy. At last, they were to see, not, indeed, a prince, but a nobleman who had been at Court, talked with the mighty monarch, and who had a bride and a chateau in France.

The little girls, as they brought Lafayette his food, noticed his deep red hair, his fine forehead, his pleasing mouth and firm chin, but, most of all, his clear hazel eyes. More than once, he smiled his thanks, and this was what they, long afterward, told most about. In fact, the great man's features seemed to bespeak strength, more than beauty; but this was what all the Harbys liked.

Did the British capture Lafayette? Did he show fear, when Gustave Hess, the scout, rode up and told of three columns of red coats marching by different roads? Two were on one side of the Schuylkill river, and one on the other. Surely, with their five thousand men, they would, as they fully expected, trap the Marquis; and, they might even bag his whole force. A ship was actually waiting in the Delaware river to take [26]the young Frenchman a captive to London. Indeed, Lord Howe had invited some handsome Tory ladies to dinner, expecting to outwit Washington and to have the young Frenchman to sit as guest and captive.

But the young general spoiled this game. Mounting his horse, he ordered out, what military men call "false heads of columns." This made the British, who knew not what might be behind these front files, halt, until reinforced. Then they deployed, and, bringing up their cannon, sent a round shot that smashed the axle tree of one of Lafayette's field pieces.

Must, then, the young Frenchman abandon his gun, and face Washington, with one of his cannon lost by capture? Not he! Turning the heads of their horses, the artillery men of the Continentals drove into the Harby farm yard, drew out a wagon, lashed the dismounted cannon to the hind axle, hitched on the team, and, whipping up the steeds, the whole battery dashed toward Matson's ford, and reached safely the camp at Valley Forge. Seven gallant American lads, in the rear guard of the young Continentals, died in the fight to save the guns for their country.

But the rest of that breakfast, and all there was in the spring house, pantry, kitchen and even in the ovens, was eaten by the hot and hungry, [27]and mad, and disappointed Hessians. The two little girls lived to tell what they had seen, and another little sister, born before the war was over, stood with them on Chestnut street in 1824, to see the Marquis de Lafayette again. He was riding in the parade and amid the general joy, when the City Troop, with their old thirteen-striped flag, of 1775, escorted the aged friend of America. And the same cannon that was saved at Barren Hill thundered welcome from its iron throat. [28]

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III

THE WONDERFUL ALPINE HORN

When the little boys and girls, who read these Swiss fairy tales, grow up to be big and travel in Switzerland, they will enjoy the Alpine horn.

Nearly every shepherd lad in the mountains knows how to blow it. It is made of wood, and is about half as long as an ordinary broom. Its butt, or heavy end, rests on the ground. When a man blows a long blast, the sound, at first, when one is too near, does not seem to be very pleasing; for distance lends enchantment to the sound. But wait a moment, and listen! Far off across the valley, the strains are caught up, and sent back from the tops of the high mountains. Then it sounds as if a great choir of angels had come down from Heaven to sing glory to God, and to bring greetings to all good souls. Nowhere in all the world is there such sweet music made by echoes.

Sometimes there is a double set of echoes, like one rainbow inside of another. Then, it makes one think of a choir of little angels, that sing a [29]second time, after the first heavenly chorus has ceased.

How the Swiss people first received the Alpine horn, as a gift from the fairies, is told in the story of a faithful shepherd's boy, named Perrod. He had to work hard all day, in tending the cows that grazed on the high mountain pastures, which the natives call the Alps. But when foreign people speak of "the Alps," they mean the ranges of mountains themselves.

In winter, these level stretches of ground are covered with snow and ice, but by the month of June, it is warm enough for the grass and flowers to grow. Then the cowboys and cheese makers go up with their cattle. At night, Perrod, having milked the cows, skimmed the

cream off the milk, hung the great caldron over the fire, and made the cheese.

By this time, that is, well into the late hours, Perrod was almost tired to death. After calling "good-night" to Luquette, his sweetheart, who lived across the valley, and hearing her greeting in answer, he climbed up the ladder, into the loft, and lay down on his bed. This was only a pile of straw, but he was asleep almost the very moment he touched it, for he was a healthy lad and the mountain air was better than medicine. It was especially good for sound sleep, and he knew he must get up early, at sunrise, to lead [30]the cows and goats out to pasture. Then the all-day concert, of tinkling bells, began.

But this night, instead of slumber, without once waking until day dawn, Perrod had closed his eyes, for only about three hours, when he heard a crackling sound, which waked him up. He thought, at first, the wind was blowing hard enough to rip off some of the bark strips from the roof of the chalet, and was tumbling down some of the heavy stones laid on to keep them in place. But when he saw the reflection, on the walls and ceiling, of a bright fire, he crawled quietly out of bed. Then he peeped down and through the cracks in the board floor, to see what was going on.

Three men were around the fire. One, the biggest fellow of the three, was hanging up the caldron on the hooks. The second piled on more wood, while the others warmed their hands in the bright blaze.

The three men were all different in appearance, the one from the other, and a queer looking lot they were. The tremendously tall man seemed to be a giant, in weight and size. His sleeves were rolled up, showing that his arms were sunburnt, until they were very dark.

When he lifted up the caldron, to hang it up, or take it down, his muscles stood out like whipcords.

But the man sitting on a milking stool, at the [31]right hand side of the fireplace, was entirely different, being smaller, and with a white skin and golden hair. He had a long horn, which rested on the floor beside him.

The man on the left-hand side of the fireplace, appeared to be a woodman, or hunter. At least, he seemed to be used to the forest. Though it was pitch dark night, he knew where the wood lay, piled up under the eaves of the chalet; for, when the fire burned low, he went out doors and returned with an arm load of faggots. Then he piled up the wood, and the fire blazed, and crackled, and roared, until the boy in the loft thought the hut would be burned up, too. Yet, though he trembled at the strange sight, he was brave. He resolved not to be quiet, if the big men tried to steal his cheese, which was to be food for the family during the winter.

Just as he was wondering, whether his sisters and old daddy would have enough to eat, during the long cold winter of eight months, that was soon coming, when snow and ice covered the fields, he saw a curious thing happen. Sweet music began, such as had never met his ears before, since he was in his cradle and his mother sang to him.

It was the man with the golden hair, who seemed to be the real gentleman of the party. [32]He it was, who made the music. He first handed something to the giant, who dropped it into the caldron. Then, with his horn, he disappeared through the door. When outside, he lifted the instrument to his lips and blew a blast.

Perrod was so interested in watching the giant, that he paid little attention to the man outside, or to the sound he had made, for he

saw the hunter take a bottle out of his pocket, and hand it over to the biggest fellow, who stood at the caldron over the fire. This one poured the liquid, which seemed to be blood red, into the big iron pot. Then, with a ladle, as big as a shovel, and long as a gun, he stirred vigorously. Then, three beakers, or cups were set upon the table.

By this time, the golden haired man outside had finished his blast of music, which seemed to float across the valleys down into the defiles, over the pastures, and through the wood. It grew sweeter and sweeter, as it swelled on the gentle night breeze, until all the mountains seemed to have awakened, turned into living angels and lifted up their voices. The sweet strain ended with a prolonged sad note, as if melancholy had fallen on the musicians, and then it ceased.

A strange thing happened. All the cows and goats woke up from their sleep, and one, from all directions, could hear the tinkling of their neck [33]bells, all over the pastures, far and near. The poor creatures thought it was time to get up and be milked, but they were puzzled to find it was yet dark. In fact, they were all, still, quite sleepy and very slow to move.

Something even far more wonderful happened next. Perrod, after first hearing the horn blow, thought the music had ceased: when, suddenly, it all seemed to come back in vastly greater volume. The sounds were multiplied, as if a thousand echoes had blended into one and all heaven had joined in the melody. Perrod was entranced. He even closed his eyes lest he might, by looking down at the strange men, lose some of what seemed to him a choir of angels singing.

When the last strain had ceased, Perrod opened his eyes. The golden haired musician had re-entered the chalet, and resumed his

seat, sitting down again on the milkstool, at the right of the fire; while the hunter rearranged three glass goblets, on the rough wooden table, from which Perrod ate his meals.

All three of the strangers then solemnly watched the caldron, as the liquid boiled, just as the cream does, when cheese is to be made; the big man stirring up with his huge ladle. At a particular moment, the giant lifted the caldron and emptied out the contents into the three glass vessels. To the amazement of Perrod, there [34]issued, from the same vessel, three very different colors.

In the first glass, filled to the brim, the draught was as red as blood, and it foamed at the top. The drops, flying out on the board, left crimson stains.

Giving a tap on the caldron, with the big ladle, the tall man let flow, into the second glass, what seemed to be the same liquid; but this time, it was as green as grass, but hissing hot, and bubbling.

Another loud ladle tap on the caldron, and out flowed a stream as cold as snow water, and as white as the edelweiss flower. The liquid rested in the goblet as quiet as milk, but seemed to be frosty on the top.

Now the giant-like fellow, shaking his huge ladle in his right hand, and putting his left at the side of his mouth, shouted with a voice of thunder:

“Come down, you boy, and make your choice of one of these three. Each has a glorious gift to him who drinks. Come quick, for it will soon be daylight.”

Perrod knew he was discovered, but he was a brave boy. If his legs trembled, his heart was big. Moreover, the golden haired man gave

him a nod, and winked his eye, to encourage the lad.

So Perrod at once climbed down and stood [35]before the table, on which were the three chalices.

“Drink, young friend,” said the giant, “from any one of these, but know that, in the red liquid, is a gift to the Swiss men. Drain this cup, and then you will have strength, like me.” At that, he bent his arm to show his mighty muscles. “You will be able to conquer the strongest man, or fiercest beast. Besides, I shall give you a hundred fat cows, each of which will yield much milk, rich in butter. Drain this cup, and, according to my promise, you will see the kine tomorrow.”

Then the hunter spoke: “Better drink from my goblet. After this green draught, you will have all the gold you want, and heaps of coins; and then you can marry, and still easily support your old father and mother.” So saying, he tossed handfuls of gold pieces on the floor, piling them up, until they reached the lad’s knees. Perrod opened his eyes wide in astonishment, for here was not a promise in words, but the actual thing, that he could see for himself.

He was just about to stretch both his hands and drink the green liquid, when the golden haired man, speaking gently to Perrod, said:

“I cannot promise you either cows or coins, but if you drink the liquid in the white goblet, you will be able to use this horn, make music in the mountains and call your cows, as I have [36]done. Thus your flocks and herds also will share with you my gift.”

Not a minute did Perrod wait to decide. “I care more for music, than for money, or strength,” he said, and, lifting the glass, he put it to his lips and drained the cup dry.

“What was it, and how did it taste?” do you ask? It was what the cows gave him every day—pure fresh milk, but cold as glacier water.

“Good,” cried the man with the golden hair. “Any other choice would have meant death. Here is the horn. Blow it tomorrow, and see what will happen.”

As if lifted up on wings, to his straw bed, but holding on to his horn, Perrod heard the door shut and bang, as the three men went out, two of them scowling. Then the fire cooled to ashes. He fell asleep and dreamed of the time when, in the church, he should lead his bride to the altar, his lovely sweetheart, Luquette, to be married, and the two should have a chateau and home of their own.

Awakening at the first moment, when the rosy light of the rising sun made the face of the mountains blush, even while the valleys below were still in darkness, and long before his sisters, in the village, far away, had awakened, he rushed out to the edge of the pasture. Then, he drew in a man’s breath, filled his lungs, and, putting [37]his lips to the mouthpiece of the horn, blew a long blast. He listened eagerly, for the far off echoes. A pleasant double surprise awaited him.

All over the pastures, in the chalets of the high plateau, and along the mountain slopes, even down to the valleys, there was heard, at once, the tinkling of goat bells, cow bells, and the sound even of what hung in the metal collars of donkeys and horses, until the chorus of bell music was wonderful.

“Very fine, but is that all?” thought Perrod.

But another surprise! From across the great ravine, or chasm, out rushed his beloved Luquette. Hastily throwing a wrap around her

shoulders, she stood in bare feet, threw a kiss to Perrod, and shouted to him her joy.

Now came the crowning wonder. From the high peaks, miles distant, and now rosy red in the dayspring, came back the music, in multiplied echoes, as if all the snow ranges of the Alps were singing. Pure, sweet, prolonged, the boy thought of what he had heard read in the church, that, at creation "the morning stars sang together." So it seemed now to him.

Through many centuries, and to this day, to call the cows together, to make the goats look up, and turn homeward, to seek shelter of the night, for men's evening prayer and chant of thanks-giving, for the signals of defence [38] against enemies, for beginning the festal dance, or, to sound the wedding joy, the Alpine horn is the delight of the Swiss. It is like the carillons of the Belgic folk, the chimes of Normandy, the tower music of Holland, or the bagpipes of the Highlander. In a foreign land, in dreams, in its memories it tells of "home, sweet home." [39]

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THE WHIMSICAL AVALANCHE

It may happen, in Switzerland, that mighty masses of snow and ice, sometimes as big as the capitol at Washington, and as high as Bunker Hill monument, will roll down the mountain sides without giving any notice. These crush whole forests, bury villages, tear rocks to pieces, knock off bits of the mountain sides and kill thousands of people, cows, goats and horses.

Though large enough to engulf an army, or a battleship, they are very small, when first born, up in the very high Alps.

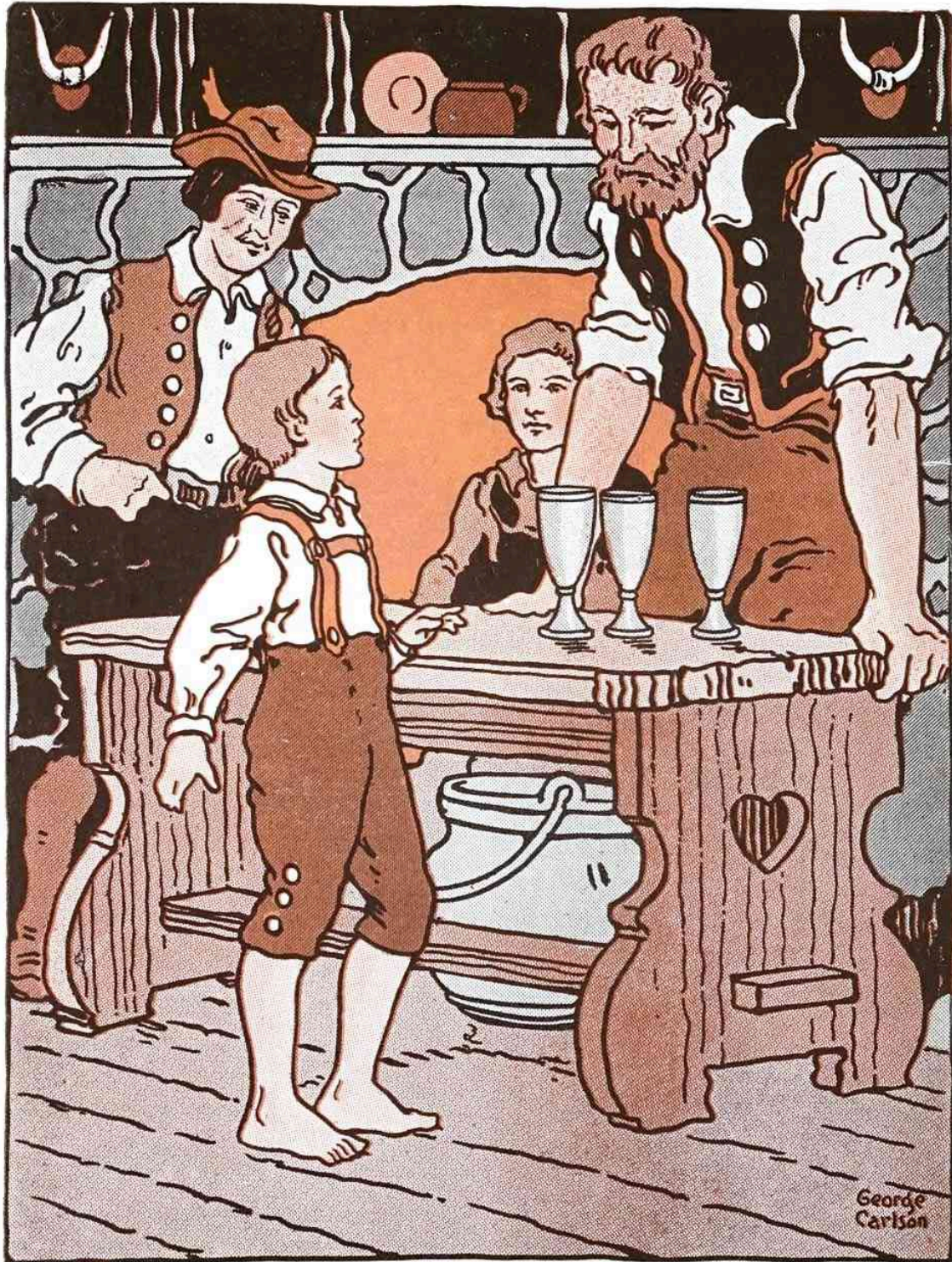
Starting as a snow ball, they grow large, very quickly, every moment, and finally become immense. Then, they roll along over many miles, carrying destruction in their path, until they tumble over precipices, or reach low land that is level. That is the reason why they are so named, for avalanche means "to the valley."

There are many causes of an avalanche and a little thing may start one of these terrors. The irregular melting, by the morning sun, of ice, [40]in light or shade, the fall of an icicle, the tumbling of a stone, or a sliver of rock, or even the firing of a gun, which shakes the overhanging, or piled up snow, will begin one of these revolving globes.

Now in old times, all Swiss folk used to think that an avalanche was alive, and was having a jolly time, enjoying itself, when sliding and rolling, leaping and dashing down the mountain slopes, in its mad race, from the sky to the plain. This was its way of enjoying itself, with a short life and a merry one. It grew faster than anything else known. For, while a glacier might take a thousand years to develop, from snowflakes into miles of solid ice, like a frozen river, it required

only a few minutes for an avalanche to spring from babyhood into full size, with a power exceeding that of a thousand giants.

Being, at its birth, only an inch or two in diameter, this infant son of the King of the Frost Giants, the avalanche soon became the child, which, as it grew up, so terribly fast, took after its daddy. It liked to flatten out trees, and houses, and smash things. It generally so frightened men, dogs, cats and the big animals, that dared to come near the everlasting heights of ice and snow, where the Frost Giants lived, that, in old times, no one in winter went up to the high peaks.



"DRINK, YOUNG FRIEND,"
SAID THE GIANT ~ ~ ~

"DRINK YOUNG FRIEND," SAID THE GIANT

[41]

As a rule, nobody knows, either in summer or winter, just when the avalanches will fall, or whether they will be made of light, powdery, dry snow, or of snow that is heavy, wet, and like what the boys call "soakers." Yet there are some old men in Switzerland, who can foretell avalanches, as our wise men try to do with the weather.

Once upon a time, the Frost Giant's baby, of which we are going to tell, was born, and great things were expected of it, even when it was only as big as a snowflake. But, when it grew up, to be a real avalanche, it behaved very differently from all the others. It disappointed its daddy and its uncles awfully. The Frost Giants like to make all the mischief they can, while this one wanted to help men, instead of hurting them, and made a new record in the history of colossal snowballs.

It was on a summer's day, when the Frost Giants all gathered together on a big mountain top, to celebrate the birthday of their king. On his part, he was to treat them to a sight of an unusually wonderful baby. It was to be in the form of a ball of snow, that, when it become a mighty mass, would wipe out one great forest, two big villages, with all the people and cattle in it, and then roll into the valley. There it would destroy hundreds of acres of farms and [42]vineyards, block up the roads, multiply funerals, and waste so many millions of men's dollars, that years would pass away before prosperity and good times would come again. The Frost King had a map of the route, which the young avalanche was to travel, and he showed it around freely. This was what the Frost Giants loved to do, for they hated flowers and butterflies, and cows and men.

When the white Frost Giants had come together, and all had arrived, in their coats of hard snow and with long beards of icicles, the Frost King invited them to gather at the edge of a precipice, under a jagged peak, that had many times been riven and splintered by lightning. Then he bade them look down over the landscape, while he pointed out the track which he expected his hopeful offspring, the newborn avalanche, was to take, from the time it started, until it had done its work in levelling forests, villages and vineyards. Then, using the big palm of his hand as a diagram, and his five fingers as pointers—just as a fortune teller finds out and assures a girl what kind of a husband she will have—he told them just what he was sure would happen. On reaching the valley, the big ball would spread itself over a square mile or two, while covering up and ruining the grain fields. [43]

After that, it would take the sunshine and warm south wind at least two or three years to melt the mass, while thousands of people would be in mourning for their dead children and kinsfolk. Or, reduced to beggary, they would bewail the loss of all they had in this world. To hear the old Frost King, as his tongue wagged, and the icicles of his beard flopped up and down, as the chief chin-chopper of the party, you would have thought that this baby avalanche, that was to start today was the greatest and most famous ever known.

“Now watch,” said the Frost King.

It was midday in midsummer, and the heat was great, as he took up a mass of wet snow, hardly more than a dipper full, but already made soft by the sun’s rays. He squeezed the mass hard, between the palms of his hands. To the Frost Giants, it seemed scarcely bigger than a pill.

Then, striking an attitude, like a baseball pitcher, or a man playing tenpins, and about to roll the ball along down the alley, the Frost

King held up before them the dark gray, sticky ball. As he fondled and patted it, as his own child, the Frost King called out, "I name thee, my son, 'Soaker Smash-All,' and I expect thee to break all records. Make the widest swathe of ruin, my son, ever known among men. The sun is [44]mine enemy, and, through thee, I shall spoil his work and give him plenty of labor to restore it. Go!"

Saying this, the toss was made and the ball set rolling.

At first, for several seconds, with Soaker Smash-All, it was more like ploughing, than rolling its way through the drifts, for the slope was slight. Then, as the incline grew more steep, the tumbling became more rapid, until about a half mile from the starting point, the baby avalanche had, by its leaps and bounds grown so fast, as to be already as big as a barn. It was bouncing swiftly along, when, instead of going straight ahead, as its daddy, the Frost King, had planned and expected, it rolled against a rounded rock, that curved up and backwards, like the dashboard of a sleigh, or the roof of a pagoda.

At once, it swerved to the right and bounded high up in the air, as though some Frost Giant was playing foot ball, and was trying to hit the goal.

Then all sorts of funny things began to happen.

The Frost Giants were terribly disappointed at seeing their pet mount up in the air like a pigskin ball from the foot of a first class kicker, even before it was half grown. To behave so differently, from what its daddy had felt sure of, [45]and told the Frost Giants it would do, seemed like disobedience. For, was not this avalanche the Frost King's son? Instead of rolling straight down the valley, gathering force for its final plunge, at every yard, it was apparently trying to climb up to the moon.

“That youngster is altogether too smart,” whispered one old giant to another.

Just a second or two, before this baby avalanche seemed to have lost both its head and its path, to go aside and play in the deep valley below, there was a hunter, on one side of the ravine, who had climbed up the high rocks, to get a shot at a herd of chamois that were feeding quietly on the other side.

Besides the buck or daddy chamois there were four mothers, each with a pretty little kid, hardly two months old, beside her. Now it was not the season for hunting, and it was against the law, which allowed the mother chamois a quiet interval, and the kids, time to grow up; for a chamois kid needs to be educated just as a child does.

But this fellow, named Erni, was both cruel and lawless. He had brought his spy glass with him and, pulling it out, swept the distant faces of the great cliffs to find his game. Just as this promising family—a buck, with a harem of four does, and as many kids—hove in sight, his fancy was tickled. Law or no law, he would shoot. [46]He laid down his glass, pointed the rifle and took cool aim, hoping to bring down two of the chamois at a shot. Then he pulled the trigger. With that gun, it was a case of “a fire at one end and a fool at the other.”

Alas, for human hopes! There is many a slip between muzzle and game. In his case a miss was as good as a mile, or even a league. In the cruel hunter’s brain there had been already a flitting vision of venison pot-pie and chamois steak. He even saw, in his day dream, two fine pairs of mounted horns adorning his parlor walls.

But the daddy of the chamois family had, a second before, thrown up his nose and caught a whiff of some human being near. Looking

up in alarm, he saw the huge snow ball in the air above him. Giving the usual sort of whistle, as chamois sentinels do, the whole family started to run, as if racing with the wind, to get under the shelter of an overhanging rock.

Already the bullet had sped, and, despite their speed, one or two chamois might have fallen, but the movement of an avalanche had so thickened and condensed the air, that it was like firing a pellet of lead into molasses, making the ball go slowly. This was what is called "the wind of the avalanche," which sometimes kills men and beasts.

Instead of the heart of a chamois, the rifle [47]bullet struck the monster snowball in the centre, but it hurt the avalanche no more than a flea bite on the end of an elephant's tail.

We cannot here tell what Erni, the enraged hunter, said.

Having lost the whole day in climbing and now, tired, hungry and vexed with disappointment, he trudged back. When he reached home, his wife kept quiet, his children had to keep away from him, and he did not say his prayers that night.

On the contrary, in the forest home of the chamois, there was much rejoicing, for they had heard the ring of the rifle and seen its flash. In fact, avalanches were very popular in chamois society, for even when one was seen coming, soon enough, the bucks and does could easily dodge them. [48]

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V

THE MOUNTAIN GIANTS

Long ages ago, when the round earth was being shaped, and the ice was melting, to give way to the green fields and flowers, huge monsters, bears, wolves and other wild animals were the only living creatures in Switzerland. Then the giants arrived on the world.

When, by and bye, human beings came into the land, they told their children that the mountains were what were left of the earth's crust, after it had shrunk into peaks and ridges, humps and hollows, like an apple, when baked in the oven, making crusts, points and wrinkles. The valleys had been sunk, by the giants walking about on the earth, while it was yet soft. The rivers were formed by the weeping of the giants' wives and daughters, when they were badly treated; for these rough fellows, husbands and brothers, did not know how to be kind to their female kin. The only way the giants were able to make their women obey them, when they were bad tempered, or naughty, or scolded too much, was to use shovels, pokers, clubs, and [49]straps on them. This clumsy and cruel way, of keeping the family in order, was because the giants had not yet learned to love, but were like brutes and knew only about force.

These giants, though so big, were very stupid, as compared with men. Their brains were more like those of babies, and they were not half as smart as boys and girls are to-day. They did not know enough even to plough the ground, and raise wheat, and rye, and oats, and to make porridge, to say nothing of bread and cakes, and pies and doughnuts. They could not melt lead, or work iron, or make tools, but depended on their muscles, because these were huge and tough, so that they bulged out; for the giants had terrific strength, like bulls and elephants. Though their brains were so small, their

limbs were like pillars, much thicker than piano legs, and their arms were like iron. They could only make hammers, or chisels, knives and scrapers of stone, and clubs of wood, for they knew no better, and never went to school or college.

When men finally arrived on the earth, and began to plough the ground, and to raise wheat for bread, and brought cows for milk, the giants, and especially the giantesses, were mightily interested. Their curiosity was great, to see how the things were done and how houses were built, and cradles were made for babies to sleep in. [50]

The giants told their sons and daughters not to meddle with the human folks, but rather to help them; for the giants, dull as their wits were, were afraid of any creature, that, though smaller than they were, had more brains. They wondered how human beings got such big heads, and they often pounded on each other's skulls, to see if they were hollow inside, like a cocoanut.

Now the biggest, of all these big fellows, was their king, named Gargantua, but men learned to call him "Old Gargy." He had only one daughter, Bertha, who was his pet. She was a pretty good giantess, but she always wanted to have her own way, and this often made trouble in the family. Daddy and mamma could not always agree about her. Bertha knew how to get on Old Gargy's soft side, and sweeten his temper.

Too often, her indulgent father either let her have her own way, or gave what she begged of him, or else he winked at, and overlooked, some of her foolish pranks.

One day, when her daddy and mamma were asleep, she sneaked out from the cave, on her tiptoes, and slipped down a glacier. When on solid ground, she ran, like a deer, up into the valley, where she saw a farmer with two horses making furrows in the field.

Amused at this, she stood and watched, while [51]perched on a boulder, looking on with wonder. Then the young giantess burst out laughing.

“How funny, to make stripes, and little gutters, all along the ground,” she said to herself. Then, she walked up to where the man was and lifting him, his plough, and both his horses, in one of her big hands, she held out her apron, open wide, and dropped the whole lot, man, team, and tools into it. These she took home to play with, on the cave floor. Her mother looked on and enjoyed the fun, as her daughter pulled the horses’ tails, and made them kick. She forced the man to dance on her thumb nail, and used the iron end of the plough to clean her finger nails. The man talked and whined and wanted to go home to his wife and babies, but the giantess, Bertha, could not understand, a word he said. So she spoke to her mother thus:

“This must be his way of frowning, like a wolf cub. Or, maybe he is chattering, like a monkey. Or is he crying? Do you suppose?”

At this, the shadow of Old Gargy darkened the cave door. He saw what was being done, and instantly ordered the release of the man and his horses. Then he lifted his club, as a sign of securing obedience.

The jolly giantess, Bertha, having had her fun, took back the man and his team into the valley. The farmer’s wife was so grateful, that [52]she wanted to make her visitor a nice present. So she took from the corner of the room something brown. It was four-foot long and stood there, on the end, with others like it. They looked like clubs, but seemed very light. These were loaves of Swiss rye bread, that were kept standing on their ends, in the spring house, and were called the staff of life. A thick round cheese, a pot of honey and a full pail of milk were also given Bertha for a present. The giantess

ate heartily. She drank a bucket full of the milk, chewed up a cheese, and a yard of bread, and then asked for more to take home; which was willingly given.

When back in the cave, the giant family had a jolly feast; at least, each one had a mouth full. They all smacked their lips, and murmured "Um, um, um," in their delight.

Down in the Valley, the farmer's wife, although the sky was blue, and the sun shining, thought it was thundering, or that an avalanche had fallen down the mountain; but it was only the giant family showing how happy they were, at eating the food of human beings.

"So you see, daughter Bertha," said Old Gargy, her daddy, "what these human creatures can do for us. So, do you let them alone; and, in the future, harm them not, even in play. Then [53]they will give us more bread and cheese and milk."

The good daughter placed one of the big cheeses, still uneaten, upon her thumb nail, as a sign of truth. Then she declared she never would disturb anything, man or beast in the valley.

Now there was another giant, named Hotap, who, in disposition, was very different from his neighbor, and often played bad tricks on the farmers. He loved to start avalanches, by making a wet snowball called a soaker, and then flinging it over the snow and down into the valley, upon the villages. In this way, he ruined many houses, barns, and stables, killing men, goats, sheep, donkeys, chickens and cattle.

Besides this Hotap used to lie in wait for nice little boys, especially those that were rosy, and plump, and to catch them and eat them up. He sometimes came back, to his cave home, with his pocket full of small boys. He thus ruined so many families, and made so many mothers cry, that they sometimes called him Old Schoppe, which

means something like Boy-Eater, or, more exactly, our John Barleycorn.

But Schoppe was a giant that destroyed many more small boys, than any other giant, or ogre, and in a different way. By and bye, Hotap and Schoppe, who at first were rivals, became partners. [54] Instead of living in caves, they went into business and set up shops all over Switzerland. They lured young men into these shops, and set them to drinking poisonous stuff, which the giants made, so that the roads, and streets, and gutters at nights, and early in the morning, were often full of fellows lying asleep on the ground, or like pigs in the mud.

Then, further, the two giants made it the general fashion of putting Schoppe's drink even into things cooked for children.

Hotap found that, as partner to Schoppe, he could catch and destroy more boys in this new business, than in the old way. So he laid aside his club and stopped trying to destroy villages by rolling avalanches on them. He put on fine clothes, and made his shops very attractive, by looking glasses, and pretty pitchers, and tumblers. But, finally, he himself got so fond of the drink which Schoppe made, out of barley, and rye, and other grain that he drank himself to death and was buried in a cemetery. Over his grave a monument was carved, in the shape of a barrel, with a bung, and spout, and tap, as if he were continuing business in the next world.

But Schoppe kept on in the business. He ground up grain, and wasted so much, that he made the price of bread very high, so that poor people often had to go hungry. Out of the good [55] barley and rye, he made the stuff that poisoned the brains of the young men and turned them into flapjacks, so that they lay as stupid as stones in the ground. He filled up the men, until they were hardly better than swill barrels. In this way many boys were ground up into

poverty or stupidity, and the graveyards were filled so fast, by old Schoppe, that people called his saloon the Mill. At last, the big fat fellow, with a red nose, died also.

So at Berne, one sees the monument of Schoppe or Boy-Eater. He stands in bronze over a fountain. He has boys in his pocket, samples of boys in his hands and mouth, some more at his feet, and a good supply at hand, to chew up and swallow.

Everyone goes to see the statue of the Boy Eater. Yet many others still follow his business and eat up the boys. [56]

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THE DWARF AND HIS CONFECTIONERY

Of all the families, tribes and clans of the little brown Folks, that are only a yardstick high, the Swiss dwarfs are the funniest, and at the same time the most friendly. They excel all others in being kind to every living creature and in doing good things for human folks. They look after the chamois, to keep them from being shot at, or killed, by hunters that are cruel. Or, they whisper to the fish, to keep away from naughty boys. They even go after lost cattle and goats, tend the flocks, milk the cows, make cheese, and do lots of good favors for the people whom they like. There are the kind shepherds and housemaids, who give them occasionally a bowlful of milk, or leave out a cup of cream for them to drink. They know where treasures lie in the ground, where the best pastures are to be found for the cows, and the secrets of the grasses and flowers are at their fingers' ends.

In time of storm and wind, when it is too cold, [57]or when avalanches are tumbling down the mountains, they keep away from the land, and are never visible. Going down deep, into the caves, or mines, they shut themselves up, until Jack Frost has departed and the storms and greatest cold are over. They shrink away, especially from the South wind, called the Föhn, which blows for seventeen days at a time, for it is like poison to them, and blinds their eyes.

To the people who treat them badly, or make fun of their feet, or heads, or laugh and jeer at them, because they are so small, the Swiss dwarfs are very mischievous, and even revengeful, and do such folks great harm in the kitchens and stables. They smash the milk pans and cheese kettles, upset the churns, lead the cattle astray, tie the cows' tails together, and put stones and sticks in their food-troughs. Usually they do so much mischief, that the rude or

cruel people have to be good, and treat the dwarfs with more politeness.

As for their looks, and the way they dress, the Swiss dwarfs beat all. They are web-footed, like geese, but they cover themselves, from head to toes, with long green cloaks. They wear gay red caps on their heads, which look like the cowls of monks. Most curious of all, are their beards, which are thick and long, and often white as snow.

[58]

A hundred years or so ago, many stories were told by old folks about the dwarfs. One of these will show how kind, obliging, and useful, or how surly and troublesome, the dwarfs could be—according as they are treated by merry, or by grumpy folks.

For example, Mr. Hilty was a dairy farmer, or shepherd, who was always ready to treat a dwarf with a cocoanut dipper full of cream. Because of this, the dwarfs were willing, whenever he called them, to look after his herds, when he wanted to leave his chalet, in the high pastures, and go down into the valley, to sell his cheeses, or to buy groceries.

But by and bye, Hilty, while he was a good fellow, became too inquisitive. He wanted to know the secrets of the dwarfs and even pestered them with questions. Then, they warned him that they could not tell, and that he must not ask. When he got too troublesome, the chief of the dwarfs thought it was time to give him a lesson. So one day, Hilty was invited, by an old white beard, to come and pay a visit to his cave.

When the shepherd, who had grown rather fat, was very tired, after much climbing up and over the rocks, with much puffing and blowing, arrived at the cave, he had to stop and get his breath. The

chief dwarf came out, and smilingly [59]invited him into the cave, where he sat down on the stool offered him.

Hilty was amazed, as he looked at the beautiful stalactites, hanging from the ceiling, and his eyes opened wide at the ingots of gold and silver, which he saw lying on the floor. Piles of silver ore, not yet smelted, and heaps of rocky crystals, topazes, onyx, and some sapphires and opals lay around. His host, the dwarf, paid no attention to these, but led him further in the cave, where was a sofa, made of thick soft moss, on which he was told to lounge at ease.

Before Hilty, there was spread a table, crowded with every sort of good things to eat, except, that there was no fish or meat in sight. The dwarf explained to his guest that all the cookies, goodies, and eatables were made from things in the vegetable kingdom.

After Hilty had enjoyed a good dinner, the dwarf told his guest that he would reveal to him one of the secrets of his skill, but he must not ask to be told more. He would be shown how to make delicious sweets, and valuable confectionery, from a common weed, which the chamois fed on every day. But this done, he repeated, Hilty must, on no account, ask for any other secret. Nor must he try to learn any receipt about any other delicacy, or even watch, while the cooking was going on. If he did, the [60]dwarf would be angry, and cut off the shepherd from his friendship. He might even punish him, by causing him to lose his way, when returning home.

Hilty gave his promise, making also the sign of the cross on his breast. He swore an oath, that he would not see, hear, touch, taste, or try, even, to feel, any further than was permitted and clearly commanded him.

Trusting his guest fully, the dwarf first took a basketful of what we call "Iceland moss," which grows so plentifully in the high Alpine

pastures. Then he showed how, with water and fire, he could make the delicacy known among us as "Iceland Moss Paste."

At once, after tasting a morsel of the confection, with gusto, Hilty smacked his lips and began to dream of getting rich. He resolved to open a shop and make the new confection in his own village.

But this Hilty was a greedy and covetous fellow and often made a glutton of himself. Seeing that the dwarf had everything ready, to make more confectionery, of other kinds, he made up his mind to learn all the secrets. "This time," he said to himself, "I shall set up, not a village shop, but a big confectionery store in Lucerne, the great city." He never thought more, of [61]keeping the solemn promise, which he had just given to the dwarf.

So, pretending to be very sleepy, he asked the dwarf to let him lie down at length on the moss sofa and take a nap. The kind host at once agreed, and made his guest comfortable. In a few minutes, pretending to be asleep, Hilty, who was a gawk and a bumpkin, in manners, let his nose and open mouth give vent to snores, long and loud.

This, in itself, was bad enough, and the dwarf was disgusted at such manners and much irritated by the noise. But, worse than this was to come. This ill mannered dairyman, who kept peeping between his eyelids, got very much excited, as he saw the dwarf doing the most wonderful things, with common weeds and flowers. Out of these he drew juices, flavors, coloring matter, aromatic liquids, and sugars, either in crystal, or in the form of gum or candy. Out of his pots, pans and kettles, he poured what looked like the most tempting things to eat. They smelled so delightful that Hilty forgot himself and, with his eyes wide open, stared at the dwarf and what he was doing.

By this time, Hilty was building great air castles. He saw himself in a great candy store in Lucerne employing fifty pretty girls, in attractive uniform, to allure the public, wait at the [62]counters on the crowd of customers, who came with plenty of money and all eager to get waited on. They stood in lines, four deep, in front of the show cases, eyeing what they were to choose; while those nearest the girls were eagerly buying bonbons, chocolates, caramels, all-day suckers, mint drops and Iceland moss paste, in boxes tied up in dainty, gay colored ribbons. Each box was wrapped, not in common paper, but in dotted Swiss muslin, or fine cambric. No one seemed to care how much the cost might be.

Back of the counters, were scores of lovely Swiss maidens, in white bodices, with silver chains, ornamented girdles, and brilliant head-dresses. These were tied, so as to show they were not yet married. There were dozens of waiter boys and serving maids, scurrying around with trays, attending to the people at the tables, who called for ices and sweets, or drinks, to be sipped. His chief customers were among the fashionable folks of Lucerne. For, in Hilty's vision, his was the resort of the most stylish people in the city.

Out in the kitchen, another company of cooks, confectioners, dishwashers, and porters, kept hard at work; and, during rush hours, they were nearly ready to faint. At the rear, two clerks were kept busy, every moment, checking off the receipts, of boxes and barrels of white and brown [63]sugar, sorghum, syrup, liquors, and all sorts of flavoring extracts, besides delicacies imported from Constantinople, Calcutta, Teheran, and Nagasaki.

On the shop front, the plate glass bore the name of "Jean Hilty," in large gold letters, and below this, one read "The Home of Hilty's Famous Genuine Swiss Mountain Confectionery and Iceland Moss Paste."

The highest priced confection was a praline, or compound of nuts and chocolate, which was packed up in a most dainty box, lined with perfumed lace paper, and labeled in gold letters "Made according to the sole receipt ever revealed by the King of the Dwarfs."

The display, in the big window, of all the delicious things known to the confectioners, and many of them from foreign countries, advertised to be of "private growth," and "imported in our own fleet of ships" was dazzling.

Most astounding of all, was the tableau over the main entrance. It consisted of a group of carved and gilded figures, in front of a highly tinted background, showing the dwarf at the fire, with the well-spread tables and the dairyman as his guest.

Out on the street, the crowd that stood on the pavement, gazing up to see this pretty picture, in bas-relief, was so great, that the police [64] had to make a lane and keep open a passage way, through the press of old and young folks, so that ordinary people could get through.

So, for a half hour or more, inside that shepherd's brain, a moving picture show went on, as if a five-reel film was being rolled off, and his imagination had spread the screen. The bright colors, in this picture, of the furore for dwarf's candy exceeded any gallery of paintings known in Paris, or any panorama that could be made on canvas.

In fact the dairyman was so sure of the good time coming, that, with his eyes wide open, he actually rubbed his two hands gleefully, right before the dwarf. The next thing he did, was that he so far forgot his promise, as to be heard in his glee. Instead of holding his tongue in silence, he talked out loud to himself saying, "Am I not a lucky fellow? By Saint Matthew, I am in luck, this time, surely."

Hearing the strange noise, the King of the dwarfs turned around to look. In one hand was his skillet, and in the other a ladle and a cloth; and with both he was holding a very hot kettle, full of some liquid. In fact, he was just about to pour out the boiling chocolate over a dish of caramels, made after his own recipe.

But seeing the lazy lubber, wide awake, when he was believed to be fast asleep, the dwarf's [65] whole appearance changed. Instead of smiles, in his usually happy manner, his eyes blazed with wrath, like fire. His face wore one long scowl. He danced with rage, and screamed out,

"So that's the way you keep your word, is it? You ungrateful bumpkin! Take that, and that!"

Then, he flung the pot of hot chocolate at the fellow's head, and followed up his attack, with the ladle and cloth, batting him out of the cave.

What happened just after that, the dairyman never could, or would tell. He was so stunned, that he lay insensible for several hours, as he thought. The scalding, from the hot chocolate, made his face smart fearfully. Tearing off part of his shirt, he bandaged up his head and features as best he could, and then hobbled back home. It was weeks, before his broken head was mended enough, and the ugly scars on his face had healed. At last, he showed himself on the street, where the small boys made his life a burden.

Henceforth the neighbors nicknamed him "The Dwarf's Guest," but he never set up a candy store. [66]

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TWO GOOD NATURED DRAGONS

The whole family of dragons, that are scattered all over the world, have a very bad reputation. It is said that they feed on fat girls, and will not taste anything but nice, tender, juicy maidens. If they try to eat old folks, and grown up people, they get a stomach ache at once. Then, it takes many bottles of medicine, besides keeping them a long time on a baby's diet of milk and bread, while they are getting well, before they are in full health again.

But when they regain their appetite, they roam around through the country, devouring maidens by the dozen. Then all the fathers, that have lovely daughters, must be on their guard. They keep their girls at home, for fear there will be none of them left.

This habit of the dragons to relish, on their bill of fare, only lovely maidens, makes the brave young men want to fight and kill the monsters, because, with so few girls left, they fear that they may not be able to get wives, and, without these, they cannot have homes or be husbands. [67]

But the old dragons were foxy fellows, very cunning and crafty. So they kept out of the way of the knights and heroes, with their swords and spears, and arrows, and bow guns: and even from the fairies, who cast spells over them. It was only once in a while, that a lucky fellow, like Saint George, could stick his spear clear down the monster's throat. It happened, only rarely, that one like Sigurd, the Norseman, or Susanoo, the Japanese, was able to slay one of the big, clumsy, crawling creatures, with their trusty swords.

Happily there came, once in a while, a good natured dragon; that is, the right sort of a fellow, jolly in disposition, and kind to boys. Such

a dragon would even invite a well-behaved man to take dinner with him, and even point out what food on the dragon's table tasted best.

Of course, the man would not always like what was served up before him to eat; for a mortal cannot always enjoy what comes out of the dragon's kitchen, nor can he be sure of what he may be swallowing. Nobody enjoys chewing up his grandmother, or his aunts, or cousins, or sisters, even though he might, once in a great while, feel like doing so.

So when one goes to see a dragon, and does not, himself, get swallowed up, he had better take [68]a sandwich or two with him, and not taste the dragon's delicacies.

No pretty girl, or plump young lady, ought ever to pay a visit to a dragon's cave, because, however kind and polite the monster would wish to be, to his guest, his appetite might be too strong for him. Moreover, the very sight of the lovely maiden might make his mouth water, and then, after roaring out, "um, um," he would be very apt to gulp her down, at one mouthful. This might happen so quickly, that she would not know where she was, or even think what her mother would say, when she missed her, on ironing day. So, even in the case of a well-behaved dragon, or one supposed to have a good character, any person had better be careful about visiting a dragon's cave.

Now there was a man in Switzerland, a cooper, who made tubs and buckets, and, once in a great while, a hogshead or a bath tub. His shop sign was a well-hooped barrel, set over his doorway. He was especially expert at making and mending milk churns. Some of the girls used to declare that butter came more quickly, and with less hard work, in churns made by him, than in any others.

His name was not Rip Van Winkle, whose father, by the way, was born in Germany, but he had a wife with a bad temper. She had a great [69]reputation for scolding. It was said that her "tongue, which was only three inches long, could kill a man six feet high." In fact, some folks declared that she did not need a sword, but she could fight a dragon with her fiery tongue alone. Let her but open her mouth, and such a volley of abuse would be shot out, at the monster, that, no matter how big, or how hungry he was, he would curl up his tail and run, or else flap his wings, like a frightened chicken, and be off.

Now when this cooper was asked how he felt, about having such a scold for a wife, he used to make apologies, and say, "Well, it was not always so. Once, she was so sweet and lovely, that I wanted to eat her up."

Then, after a minute or two, he would add, "And I have always been sorry, ever since, that I did not do it."

When his wife heard of this, she called him "the son of a dragon, and a woman-eater."

One day, the cooper received an unusually severe punishment, not at the hands, but from the mouth of his wife. This, however, he richly deserved; for, after drinking, with his companions, all night, she had found him lying in the gutter. After she had rolled him over, like a flapjack, to see if the drunken lout was her husband, he got up, looking very sheepish. Then he promised [70]to work hard that day. So she went back home, to get his breakfast ready.

But instead of going to his house or shop, where the wood shavings smelled so sweet, he resolved to take a walk, to get rid of a splitting headache. So he scrambled up the mountain side, expecting, on his

return, to tell his wife, that he had been out in the woods, looking for timber, to make hoops and barrel staves.

He hardly knew where he was going, for he was stupid and half dizzy, from so much drink, from the night before, and pretty soon he slipped and fell. Over and over, he rolled, until, coming to the edge of a precipice, he stumbled and slid far down into a bog. This cooled him off and brought him to his senses.

He tried long to find the way out, but could see no hole or cleft in the rocks. After a while, he saw what looked like a tunnel, or, it might be, a grotto.

Entering in and peering about him, he discerned four great round lights, like moons. At this, his heart began to beat, his blood to swell in his veins, and his hair to rise, nearly knocking his hat off. He saw two streams of fire issue from beneath and between these shining orbs. After a few seconds, he saw clearly two dragons, that were breathing out streams of fire, that [71]nearly scorched off his eyebrows, while the sulphurous smell nearly knocked him over.

At this, the cooper made the sign of the cross, and prayed for protection. Thereupon, both the dragons, that had got their jaws ready to swallow him, shut their mouths. They crawled up gently, with their tails down, and they gave him to understand that they were friendly, by licking his hands and feet. This they kept on doing, until all the mud, into which he had tumbled, and which had stuck to his clothes, was entirely gone. It was almost like taking a steam bath.

As the winter came on, the appetite of the dragons became less ravenous and they ate little. Like bears and marmots, they went into their cave, and kept very quiet, as if asleep. Moreover, even in summer, when these dragons could not get a supply of maidens,

they devoured a sweetish substance, that exuded from a cleft in the rocks, which must have been filled by a colony of bees, for honey trickled plentifully down into the gully. At any rate, the cooper got to like the dragon's winter food so well, that he wondered how he could ever have enjoyed black bread and cheese. In a month, his stomach got quite used to the new diet.

He was not afraid of the dragons, and they seemed to enjoy his company. Perhaps they thought that, when the spring should come, he [72] might tell them, when his wife went abroad out of the house; and then, if starving, they might make a dinner of her.

Meanwhile, the cooper was missed in the village; and, as people wanted their tubs mended, several parties of strong young men climbed the mountains to find him. They sought in every grove and wood, over hill and down dale, in valley, and on the slopes, but his body could not be found. So, he was mourned as dead; for, in spite of his faults, he was considered a good fellow.

But in spring time, when the sun began to climb high in the sky, and the sap rose in the trees, the flowers bloomed, and, the cows went, with the cheesemakers, to the higher pastures, the two dragons grew restless, and their appetites came back in full force. Hoping to catch a nice fat maiden or two, they began to stretch, and roll, and to writhe, and tumble. They flapped, and furled, and unfolded their wings, until they felt ready to soar and swoop, with all their former skill.

By this time, also, the cooper began to get homesick. Even though afraid to meet his wife, he was longing to see his children, after his long absence. He had got very tired of looking only on rocks and the walls of the ravine. Moreover, the dragons did not seem to be as sociable, [73] as at first, and they amused him no longer. Besides, he wanted to see his neighbors again, to tell them of his adventures

and even to pose as a hero. He feared, however, that before he tried to get away, the dragons might still eat him up; for they snorted, and bellowed, and rubbed their stomachs, with their forepaws, as if hungry enough, indeed, to swallow a horse with its harness on.

One warm day, the cooper heard, afar off, the echoes of the Alpine horn. He listened with delight to the yodel music, as the shepherds called their cows and goats. As he was wondering how he could get out of the valley, and whether the dragons would let him go, he saw the larger one of the two monsters unfurl his wings, which were as big as a windmill's sails. He flew straight up in the air, and, when near the blue sky, circled about a few times, like the carrier pigeons, which the cooper had seen at home. Then, careering far away, he disappeared in the dim distance beyond. No doubt, that day, some poor daddy, on coming home at night, missed one of his daughters. The cooper had noticed, that both the dragons had been roaring with hunger, for several days previously, and now he had his fears.

So the cooper watched his chance, determined not to let the other dragon get away, without his stealing a ride on the monster's back. He knew [74]that a man's weight, for a dragon to carry in the air, would hardly be felt, so much as that of a feather.

For a dragon had the power of a catapult, the strength of a rhinoceros, a roar like a lion, teeth like a tiger, fins like a fish, claws like a falcon, wings like an eagle, and scales like an alligator. In short, a dragon was a whole menagerie in itself.

So watching his chance, the cooper, at the very moment that he saw the second dragon unfold his wings, grabbed hold of his tail; and, though it was slippery, he hung on to this, for dear life. Far up in the air, the monster flew, at first very high, and then low, as if he knew where the cooper lived. Then, coming near his village, the monster swooped down near the earth, and dropped his burden gently on

the top of a wagon loaded with hay. He was off before any one could let fly an arrow from the string, or shoot a bolt out of a bow gun, or say "By Saint Matthew."

As the cooper climbed down from the hay wagon, all the ducks, geese and chickens set up a concert of welcome. Donkeys brayed, the cows lowed, and dogs barked, and cats meowed. His wife, instead of scolding him, threw her arms around him, and wept for joy. His children gathered about, and so held his arms and [75]legs, that puss could not get near to rub her sides against his limbs. All his neighbors and friends welcomed him back with delight.

The next day, his shop was filled with leaky tubs, and churns that had lost their hoops, and barrels that needed new staves. In addition, to this old work awaiting him, the orders for new utensils came in so fast, that he expected soon to be a rich man. He was so grateful, for his deliverance and safe return, and for his continuing prosperity, that, instead of hoarding up his money, he presented, to the church, in his village, a beautiful silver communion service, on which two dragons were engraved.

But his happiness was but for a short time, for his stomach had changed, and could no longer digest the ordinary food of mortals, not even buttermilk; and, as for cheese, it nearly killed him. Feeding so long, on honey and dragon's food, had ruined him for liking any other articles of diet.

In vain his wife cooked everything very nicely and offered it in the most tempting form. The maidens of the village, thankful at not being digested by dragons, tried their best to tempt his appetite, with the very finest their dainty hands could make, in the form of broths, salads, meats, cakes, apple dumplings, puddings and tarts. The delicatessen shops sent the choicest tidbits [76]they could roast before their spits, bake in their ovens, or show on their tables, or in

their shop windows. Nothing would avail, and the poor man died of slow starvation; and this, before even autumn had come.

After so sad an event, the popularity of even good dragons waned, so that it is hard, nowadays, to make anyone believe there were such creatures, that are named in encyclopædias. It is now, the firm opinion of most Swiss folks, old and young, that the only good dragon is a dead one, while those neither dead or alive, but only painted, or in fairy tales, are good enough to know about. [77]

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VIII

THE FROST GIANTS AND THE SUNBEAM FAIRIES

Many people think Switzerland the most beautiful country on earth. It is certainly the world's playground. Every year, many hundreds of thousands of persons from various countries, go there to spend either the winter or the summer. They come to enjoy the good sleep that comes from the bracing air, to climb the high peaks, to see the flowers, to hear the echoes of the Alpine horn, to ride over the mountain roads, or to be whisked up, on electric railways, to summits among the clouds. With most of the tourists, the effect of the sharp atmosphere is to whet their appetites, even more than their wits; but perhaps this is what they seek.

The sick and the well alike get vast benefit. They think it great fun to find so much ice and snow, and also so much sunshine, as if winter and summer liked to play together. In February, hardy and strong people enjoy sledding and sliding, besides skis and skittles, and [78]many other merry sports. Children go out on sleds, with almost nothing on them, to enjoy the air baths.

Yet Switzerland was not always a flowery playground, rich in splendid hotels, where the boarders' bills catch the spirit of the place and become mountain climbers. For ages, it was a sort of North Pole, set in the middle of Europe, frozen in, tight and fast, and with mountains of snow and rivers of ice, where no animals could live. In this age, everything was white. Then there were no animals, men, women, children or babies; no flowers, no birds, no fish; no farms, no vineyards, but only dreadful cold, all the year round, and for millions of years.

Then the frost giants ruled a land forever white with snow, that never melted, and their king sat on the top of a solid mountain of ice. These frost giants would not allow anything alive to come near them. They made it the law that, whatever had eyes or nose, feet or hands, or paws or wings, should be instantly frozen to death, and their solid carcasses packed away in a refrigerator, a million years old.

The queen of the fairies, that lived down in the warm meadows, felt sorry that so fine a place should have nothing in it that was alive, or had any color, red, pink, blue, or yellow, violet or green. She believed that the land could be conquered [79] from the frost giants and made a country in which boys and girls could play and pick flowers.

It might, indeed, take several millions of years to melt the ice and cover the ground with flowery meadows. But what was that? Because fairies never care anything about days, months or years. They never grow old and do not use almanacs, because not dwelling in bodies like ours, and never having lived like us mortals, they do not get sick or have any funerals or cemeteries. They are saved all expenses of being buried, for they do not have any graves. There are no doctors, or undertakers, in fairy land, even though the immortelle flowers bloom everywhere. It seems to be that because some are wiser than others that they may be called old, or mothers, aunts or grandmothers.

To carry out her purpose, the fairy queen made a friend of the sun and asked his help. This, Old Sol, as the fairies called him, was very glad to give; because he had rescued other parts of the world from the ice-kings and made many lands bright and beautiful. He thought that the monarch of the frost world and his white giants had reigned long enough, in Switzerland. Besides, Old Sol wanted to show that

he had not yet done his best work. It is true that he had made other lands look lovely, changing them [80]from barren rocks and sand, to fruitful fields, groves and gardens, rich in wheat and corn, fruit trees and berry bushes, besides peaches and apples and pears, roses and lilies.

Old Sol declared that, with the aid of the fairies, he would make Switzerland the most beautiful of all countries, so that many people from foreign lands would come to see it. He would scoop out lakes, channel out rivers, smooth the face of the country, and make it lovely with pastures, rich in cows and goats, and spangled with flowers of many hues. Yes, if the fairies would promise to put enough clothes on their favorites, and wrap them up in downy undergarments, with lots of fur and wool for overcoats, he would help the prettiest flowers to climb up to the high mountains. Then he would promise to furnish heat enough, so that they could keep warm and live there. He would make it so pleasant for them, that they would never get homesick, or want to go back to their mothers in the valley below. In spite of the frost giants, the storms and winds, the tempests, and the icy breath of the giants, these flowers would bloom, and nod, and laugh at and defy all enemies.

What was even more wonderful, Old Sol promised that every flower, as it climbed higher, should have a richer color on its cheeks, so that all the world would wonder. Then, the plants, [81]in the warmer regions lower down, should envy the brilliant faces of their sisters so high up. In fact, it was to be a beauty contest. "Nothing venture nothing have," should be the rule. They might not grow to be so tall. Their feet might be larger, for they would need strong toes, to hold on tight to the ground, when old Boreas, the wind giant, tried his best to blow them away; but to win out, they were sure to do, in the end, and beat Jack Frost and all his army.

When the fairies were called together, and told by their queen that the Sun would be their friend and help them every day, and never tire of his good work, you ought to have seen how happy they were. They all clapped their hands, and every one, big and little, wanted to be brave and go out to fight the frost giants. Each volunteer said, "I am not afraid. The frost giants can't freeze me."

It was wonderful how the pretty fairies were perfectly willing to be changed into humble looking plants, that never could grow very tall, but lie quite flat on the ground, and have deep roots in the crannies. They would have to live without much society, or excitement, and spend their lives in clefts and hollows. What was hardest to bear, was, that most of them would have to live like nuns; for in the case of many of them, [82]their beauty would never be appreciated or even seen.

Some were glad even to become plain meadow grasses. When one plump fairy was told she would become an Alpine Poa, and must carry her babies on her back, she gladly consented saying, "I am willing."

The enthusiasm for the war became an epidemic. Some of the big fairies asked to be changed into trees—oak, maple, spruce, pine, or birch. This was hard, for those who had been regular chatterboxes would now be able only to sigh in the breeze, or whisper in the winds, and they could roar only in a gale or tempest. Some even begged to be allowed to take on the form of the old-fashioned arolla, the most ancient of all the Swiss trees.

It was astonishing to note how ready, these pretty fairies were, to put off their lovely gossamer-like robes, lay aside their wings, and wear such plain clothes, as some of them must, who volunteered to be meadow and rock plants. But then, the idea of fighting the frost giants, and rescuing the land from ice and snow, had filled them all

with enthusiasm. It was like patriotism among mortals. But then, they loved the children and wanted them to have a pretty playground made ready for them, so that, when babies and cradles came into the land, the flowers [83] would be in bloom, for the little folks to pick and string around their necks.

So the queen of the fairies and her wise counsellors enrolled and equipped an army of her fairies, who had agreed to be turned into plants, for the long war against the frost giants. Of all these, Old Sol was to be the general. Heaps of fur and flannel, wool and velvet, and hair and down, were stored up, to make thick underclothes, and stout overcoats to keep warm, and all sorts of wiry stuff, for toes to grip tight and keep hold of the rocks. Then, with plenty of rich paints and dyes, to color their cheeks, the Fairy Queen summoned the volunteers to come forth.

As each name was called, and a fairy stepped out, the queen waved her wand. First, she pointed it upward, to where the stars were playing hide and seek among the snowy peaks. Then, touching each kneeling fairy, she tapped with her star-tipped wand, upon the neck of each.

Presto! What change! Eyes, nose, ears, lovely yellow, or raven black, or shining auburn hair, limbs, hands and feet and wings disappeared, in a golden mist.

When one looked again, there was, where each fairy had kneeled down, a flower. Never was the like seen before, in all the wonderful floral [84] world, either as to the kind, or blossom, or the shape of the stalk, leaves or petals of the plants. Some hardly looked like flowers at all, while others were recognized at once, as cousins or sisters of old friends; but so dressed up, as if for an arctic journey, as scarcely to be recognized. One had a family of little folks on its back—"As

hairy and furry as an Esquimaux baby," whispered one fairy to the other.

Here was one creature, dazzlingly splendid in colors, while, alongside of her, was a little lady robed entirely in white, as if she were to be the bride of Jack Frost, and marry him in a country where the tint of ermine and ptarmigan bird was the only one in fashion.

The lowliness, of some of these new born flowers, was perhaps the most astonishing thing about them. Even when in bloom they were not over an inch in height, while their neighbors, down in the valley, were all nearly as tall as yard sticks. One group became only plain meadow grass, while their relatives seemed dressed for Fifth Avenue, or the main street of Zurich or Berne.

Although, when the fairies were turned into trees, and were, at first, hardly higher than a needle, and not one of them had a body as thick as a thimble, they at once began whispering, for [85]it was hard to give up the old habit of talking every minute.

Of one pretty creature, shaped like a blue bell, with scalloped edges, it was noticed that she shut up her mouth, and did not say a word. At this, one wise old fairy looked up at the sky, and said, "It is certainly going to rain." Thereupon, since flowers were so cheap, this one, they called "the poor man's weather glass." Another, that had a curiously shaped blossom, they named Lady's Slipper. To still another, very reddish, tufty, and strong, they gave the title of Prince's Feather; while an unusually pert and active one, that had a very expressive face, they christened Johnny-jump-up. This fairy had whimpered a little, at the idea of being named after a boy; but, when told she would have clothes of many colors, she was instantly happy, and welcomed her change into a flower with a face that would never need rouge, or lily white powder.

While these, thus far mentioned, were mostly valley or pasture flowers, and not expected to live very far up the mountain slopes, several others volunteered to lead what some called "the forlorn hope," but they were too full of "pep" for that and took the name of the advance guard. These were especially equipped for fighting the cold. These were the edelweiss, the Alpine rose, and the octopetalla. They were made so frost-proof, [86]by fur and thick clothes, that they could laugh in the very faces of the frost giants, and dare them to do their worst in trying their best to freeze them out.

Of the one, that seemed done up entirely in white flannel, and that kept its blooms in a bunch, like a rosette, everybody knows, for it was the edelweiss—proud of her name, the noble white.

Millions of fairies gathered together on the hill slopes, to see the procession start, and did not mind waiting a thousand years or so. They hung on bushes, sat on top of rocks and boulders and on the tree-branches, or stood or hovered, wherever they could get either a peep, or a good view of the fairy flower army, that was to march up to the heights and wrestle with the giants.

Some wondered how the battle would go, and if the war would ever end. Could they possibly march up the mountain sides, and hold their own, amid the blasts of winter and amid the eternal snow and ice, and win the land now covered up? Not a sign of field, or pasture, or road, or any space clear of snow, was then visible. There was nothing but ice, many miles thick and looming so far up in the air, as to seem, at night, to touch the stars. The jagged rocks, splintered by the lightning, and the mountain sides, clothed [87]with glaciers, like armor, and which were billions of tons in weight, seemed very forbidding.

"Just give us a few millions of years, and we'll surely win," cried the fairy queen, who was proud of her beautiful army, and who, with

them all, knew or cared nothing for what we call time.

Fairies never cry, but some felt as if they might weep, to see so many pretty flowers killed, as they feared they would be. Even the idea of the chills and shivers, they would have to suffer, made some of the timid ones feel creepy.

Even suppose they could survive ice and frost, and the cold breath of the strong winds, that might uproot them, how could they resist the avalanches, that might overwhelm and crush them? If whole forests of giant trees were often leveled, like egg shells, and flattened like flounders, by these rolling terrors, or torn up by landslides, or ground to gravel, by falling rocks, or carried away by landslides, how could tiny and tender flowers hope to escape?

But the fairy queen knew the power of her friend, the Sun, and the tenacity and perseverance of her flower children. So, laughing at such forebodings, she bade the lovely flowers and little trees begin their march. Their orders to advance were steadily "forward and upward." They were to hold the ground gained, inch by inch. They must even try, again and again, to [88]split the rocks, and be willing to suffer cold, wet, wind, and not be out of sorts, or show bad temper, when it rained too much, or the clouds hid the sun. They must take advantage of every nook, crevice, crack and cranny.

"Don't be alarmed," said one wise fairy to her neighbor. "I'll warrant you they will pretty soon complain that it is too hot, and sometimes even ask the sun to veil his face with clouds. When the evil imps, that ride on the Föhn, or south wind, visit them, one or more will be eager to marry a frost giant, to keep cool."

But the other fairy said, "that is only gossip," and she did not believe they would "ever be sorry and want to change back."

When, after their first victories, the cows and goats should come, and the birds make their nests, and men and women arrive, and the boys and girls play, these fairies, thus changed into flowers, were not to object to have their stalks eaten up by the cattle, or their seeds to be swallowed by the birds, or their blossoms to be plucked by the children. Even when they should come to their best bloom, and seem too pretty to be touched, they were to welcome the cows and goats.

To all these directions, the new plants, trees, and flowers, nodded their heads, and the war began. The older fairies went back to the vineyards, [89]groves, forests, dales and meadows, in the lower lands of sunshine, of mild climate, and of fair weather, and the battle was on.

Several millions of years slipped away, and some of the fairies in the warm countries had almost forgot their cousins in the high Alps. Then it happened that some thousands of them made up a party to go and visit what they had once left long ago, as a polar region, of thick ice where no land was visible.

What a change, and how lovely! When they reached Switzerland, and looked over the landscape, they could not, at first, believe their own eyes. True, it was mid-summer when they arrived; but, as far as the eye could reach, they beheld valleys and meadows spangled with flowers, from which floated the sound, or echoes, of tinkling bells, where contented cows and goats were browsing. On the sweet perfumed air, were wafted the aromatic odors of the delicious herbage, freshly cropped by the cattle. Pretty houses, on the flat spaces, or perched on the hill slopes, told of happy homes. Children were playing games, or picking flowers. Church spires pointed toward Heaven. In one village, a great long parade of sleek cows, their well groomed coats shining in the sun, and one with a milking

stool between her horns, was moving up, where the grass was most luscious. Donkeys [90]and horses, laden with cheese and garden produce, were moving in lengthened lines to the markets. Here and there, castles, chalets, bridges, church spires, and thickly clustered houses, told of villages, towns and cities; for man was now in possession, and all the world rejoiced. It was like an heiress receiving her fortune, for human beings thus to enter into the enjoyment of the lovely landscape and beautiful country, which the fairies had helped so grandly to create. [91]

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THE FAIRY IN THE CUCKOO CLOCK

As a rule, and certainly with most fairies, mortals are considered to be very stupid. In fairyland, the reputation of human beings, as dull witted and slow, is a fixed tradition.

Before doing a new thing, men and women have to think it out. They talk a good deal about "cause and effect"; whereas, with fairies, there are no causes, but things, and events just happen. If they do not, the fairies make them.

Some situations, like the sun and moon, the earth and sky, the summer and winter, cannot be changed. Yet fairies can bring to pass lots of wonders that surprise men. They can play tricks that puzzle them beyond measure.

A hundred years ago, before the days of tourists, alpenstocks, hotels, electric railroads, and other foolish novelties, the guides, and all village folk, believed in the fairies. They felt as sure of giants and dwarfs, elves, and dragons, as folk of today, that never saw a dodo, or a pterodactyl, or an auroch, or a five-toed horse, believe these were once plentiful on the earth. [92]

In fact, there was once a time, when men had no clocks or wrist-watches, and girls did not carry at their waist the pretty gold or nickel time-keepers of today. Nor did the big bells in the towers boom out the hours, nor were the huge clock-faces or dials seen, by day or by night. In the castles of Switzerland, where rich men or nobles lived, they knew nothing about marking the hours and minutes by anything, with a round face, having figures on it. One way to announce the hours was to have a candle, with two little brass balls, on opposite sides of the wax, and tied together with a

string. When the flame burned, say, an inch, or other measured space, the balls dropped down into a brass basin. This made a loud, ringing noise, which sounded out the hours. Or, a little hammer struck a bell, and that is the reason why a clock, as its name was at first, was called a klok, or bell. On ships, the bells sounded every hour, and half hour, and this is still the method, to which sailors are accustomed; "eight bells" marking the end of one of the three periods of four hours each, into which the day is divided.

The fairies could always tell the time, as well as men, by the sun, but they were more interested in the moon and stars, for night was their joy time. The common people had no word for a minute, or a second, or anything less than an [93]hour. They knew when the sun rose and set, and they guessed the time of day from the place of the sun in the sky—at the east, as it rose in the morning, and during the afternoon, as it sank in the west.

After the Alpen glow, or rosy light, that flushed the mountains like a maiden's blush, the fairies came out to dance in the meadows. They always went away and disappeared at sunrise, for the dancing fairies would be turned into stone, if the sun's rays struck them. It was even worse for them, than for mortals, who, even amid the ice and snow, when climbing high mountains, might be sunstruck and die. One family of the flowers they named Four o'Clocks.

But by and bye, men learned that they could set two sticks in a line north and south, and the shadow line from one stick would touch the other. They called this time twelve o'clock, or noon. The old men also took notice that, in the long days of summer, the sun lengthened and, in cold winter, shortened its shadows. They were thus able to count the days before the flowers would bloom in the springtime. Then the yodel music would sound and the cows be driven to pasture up in the high mountains.

From this noon shadow of the sun, men got the idea of the sundial. Placing a round disc, or plate, made of brass, or copper, on a stone or [94]post, and setting on one side of it a metal pin, they noticed the sun's shadow going round it in a circle. On the spaces, they marked the hours. Soon, it became the general fashion to have sundials in the gardens.

Yet all the time the fairies laughed at mortals and declared that if they could live on the earth, during the sunshiny hours, they would be able to tell the time of day from the flowers and the sun's place in the sky. So, just for the fun of it, whenever they noticed a new sundial, of brass, or stone, set up in a garden, they invariably held a ball, and danced around it all night.

Once in a while, they went into a church when no one was there, and walked and sported around the hour glass in the pulpit.

Of the arrant stupidity of some mortals, the fairies became finally and perfectly sure, when one night, they gathered together for a merry dance around a new sundial. This had been placed, only that day, in a garden owned by an old fellow, who was reputed, by his neighbors, to be a very wise man. The fairies were interrupted in their plan of playing ring-around-a-rosy, when their sentinel, set to watch, had seen a strange sight and called out a loud alarm.

Now this funny old fellow had a name which, if translated, into English, would be Soft Pudding. He was a kind-hearted chap, that loved [95]the birds, and his pets, and children, but he was a most absent-minded codger. He never knew where his hat was, when he went outdoors, so his wife tied it, by a string, on to his button hole, as she did the little children's mittens with a bit of tape, over their shoulders. Yet he was a delightful daddy, and all the little folks loved him.

Mr. Soft Pudding gladly paid the bill for his new toy, the sundial. He was so overjoyed at the idea of telling time by a shadow, that he talked about it for hours. Indeed, he was so absorbed in it, that he forgot all about the sun, and the necessity of its shining, or that daylight was at all requisite for his enjoyment, in looking at the sundial.

So, on one cool autumn night, old Soft Pudding put on his cloak, lighted his lantern, and walked out into the garden to see what time it might be! Fool that he was, he found that as he changed the position of the lantern, its rays every time cast a new shadow. Instead of its showing one time, it looked as if there were several times, marked by the pin; and, as if everything had gone wrong. Then, for the first time, the idea entered his head that sundials were for use, during the daytime only.

“Who would have thought it?” he cried, as he tramped back into his house, hoping his wife would not know the object of his errand and [96] laugh at him. But he did not tell her, and she thought he had gone out to look after the cows.

But the fairies were irritated and in bad temper, because they had been driven away, by this intruder on their pleasures. They laughed at his stupidity, but their vexation was plain to be seen.

“He might as well have had a wooden head, or one made of a squash. This only shows what fools these mortals be,” said one fairy to another.

“Oh, don’t be angry, or sneer at him,” said an old fairy, who was a famous inventor. “Stupid though he is, he and his wife have always been kind to us fairies. Leave him to me. I’ll put another idea in his head. For the sake of his people, I’ll teach him to turn the dial upside down, turn its face outward, and put hands and fingers on its

face, with wheels inside and weights below. Then, he can always have what he expected, this evening, to do; and tell the time, at night, as well as by day.

“And I’ll make the new contrivance sing. No longer shall a timekeeper be called a bell, to strike or sound the hours. I’ll put a bird inside, to fly out and call out the hours.”

So the next night, the Queen of the Fairies took counsel of the owl, the wisest of all the birds, and also as fair-minded as a judge, who is just to all and the favorite of none. The owl decided that the cuckoo would serve best, and could be [97]most depended upon always to come out, flap its wings, and chirp out the proper numbers of the hours.

The Fairy Queen was surprised. “How can you, sir Judge, nominate a bird of bad character? The cuckoo is a pirate. Does it not lay its eggs in the nests of other birds? How often, besides stealing their homes, it throws out the eggs of the rightful owners, and, because of this robbery, the birdies die.”

“True, I have considered this,” said the owl, “but the cuckoo is a summer bird, that eats up the hairy caterpillars, which other birds will not touch. In this manner, it helps the trees to grow and the fruit to ripen, so that men have a clean country for the fairies to play in. Besides, in the courting season, you know it is the male bird’s love note, that sounds so sweetly, in April, May and June, and this song, ‘cuckoo, cuckoo,’ we all love to hear.”

The Queen of the Fairies pondered this answer. She was impressed with the owl’s wisdom, and, besides, she wanted all the fairies to love each other. So she concluded to invite the male cuckoo bird to be her model, for the new clock, that was to make Switzerland

wealthy and famous. Surely, such clocks would be wanted, all over the world.

The land being rich in walnut trees, there was [98]no trouble in getting plenty of wood, dark and handsome, to be carved. So, appearing to old Soft Pudding, in a dream, the fairy queen said to him.

“Although we fairies all had a good laugh at you, when we saw you coming out of your house at night, with a lantern, to tell the time at the sundial, thus breaking up our party, yet because you have always been so kind to the birds, and loved our fairy folks, and the children, I will show you how to make a new kind of clock. It will not only mark the hours on its face, without the aid of the sun, but will send out a cuckoo, every hour, to flap its wings in delight. Then this wooden bird will call out ‘cuckoo, cuckoo,’ as if a real one in feathers were making love to its mate. Do you not, yourself, think that the affection of the lover bird, thus shown, will increase mutual affection in your own house and brighten every Swiss home, and many more homes, beyond the sea?”

“I am sure it will. Thank you heartily,” said Soft Pudding.

Then the Fairy Queen held out before his gaze a lovely cuckoo clock, made of black walnut, with hands and face-figures cut out of the wood of the white birch tree.

When he woke up in the morning, out of his sleep, old Soft Pudding stretched out his hands [99]to receive the gift, but it was daylight, and, of course, the fairy was gone. It was the common light of the sun, but he was very happy, even though he had only dreamed. He proceeded at once to turn his dream into reality, by constructing the clock.

Within a week, he had made the works. Then, he set them inside a black walnut case, with ivory figures on the dial. After several attempts, he succeeded with the wooden cuckoo, that would come out, flap its wings, and chirp the number of the hours, and go inside the shut doors, while the clock face also marked the proper point.

Then, he brought his whole family, one morning, near the moment when the minute hand was approaching the proper dot on the disc.

What was their surprise, when, without any one touching the little black house, which was set on the wall, the doors flew open, and out strutted a cuckoo, flapping its wings. It chirped out, ten times, and then bowed, went into its box again, and the little doors shut.

The children all clapped their hands and the mother embraced her husband in joy. By and bye, for ivory, which was very costly, Mr. Soft Pudding used white birch for the clock hands.

Then he set up a factory, and this gave work to many villagers, men and women, boys and girls. He soon made a fortune, and now, no one [100] called him Soft Pudding, but every one saluted him with a title of respect.

When he died, he left his wealth to his family. To this day, his cuckoos flap their wings, and salute the hours, in every land. Because the wooden clock and bird were black, the time-telling cuckoo, which was sometimes hitched to a barometer, or set in a toy, to foretell the weather, was called the "rain-crow." But, with this beginning, made by the cuckoo clock, Switzerland became a land of clocks, watches, and musical boxes. [101]

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THE CASTLE OF THE HAWK

The hawk is one of the children of Asia, the Mother Continent, in which almost all the fairy tales were first told. From the beginning, this sharp-eyed bird of prey has had the reputation of being very cruel, and of eating up the little birds. It has a curved beak, terribly sharp talons, and very large and strong wings. The young fowls in the barnyard are afraid, even of the hawk's shadow, and they quickly run to cover. For the hawk, sometimes called a falcon, can fly up very high and then swoop down on the small, or tame birds, kill them at once and carry them off. Little chickens, to be safe, had better run at once under the wings of their mother. Sometimes, the old hen faces the falcon so bravely, that she can save her brood and fight hard, until a man comes with a gun and drives off this pirate of the air. In Switzerland, they call the big hawk the Mountain Condor, or the Robber Bird. It seizes many a lamb, kid, or puppy, and its nest is, most of the time, built in the midst of bones. [102]

In the Far East, before rifles were invented, falcons were kept, fed, trained, and taught to hunt such birds as the crane, pigeons, ducks, geese and barnyard fowls, and the many little feathered fellows, that live in the woods and swamps. Men would go in among the rushes and the bushes, and drive out, from the covert, both the smaller and larger birds. Out in the fields, or on the hills, the falconer would be in waiting to let his trained birds fly at them, with beak and talons.

One man carried around his waist a wide hoop, kept a foot or so out from his body, and held by a strap from his shoulders. On this hoop, were a half dozen or so trained falcons, with their eyes covered by little caps or hoods held down over their heads. As soon as a bird

was seen, the hunter would take off the hood and let one of the trained falcons free.

Flying straight up, high in the air, and swiftly descending, swooping down and striking the bird in the neck, with its sharp beak, the falcons brought down the game to their masters, until the hunting bags were full. Women, as well as men, loved this sport, and it was a gay sight, when a cavalcade of ladies and gentlemen, as they issued from the castle, and all on horseback, went out for a hunt, while the gamekeepers with the falcons and bush-beaters, with the dogs, followed. [103]The men on foot carried a spear, in case they should meet a bear, or wild boar. On their return, the hunting party would have a feast in the castle.

Now it was the belief, in Asia, that a good person, after his death, was born again in another world, and became a still holier being or even an angel. But a bad person, after his death, if he had been a tale-bearer or deceitful, or told lies, would be changed into a snake. If he had been stupid, he might become a sheep or donkey, or a mule. Or, if he or she had been too proud, each was reborn as a peacock; if cruel, into a tiger or a hawk.

There were many girls in Japan, named Taka, which means a hawk, because of their bad temper, or their cruelty to puppies or kittens. Sometimes, however, the name was a compliment, because they were quick and smart, like falcons.

Now, according to these ideas, there was a very hard-hearted man, named Chicksha, who beat his children. When angry, he threw dishes at his wife and cursed his servants. One day, when in a fit of bad temper, he fell dead. No one was sorry, and some were even glad.

After this event, whenever people saw a falcon, with terrible shining eyes, and beak as sharp as two razors, and with claws and talons, like a steel meat hook, they said, "It must be Chicksha, [104]come to life again." Then they all ran out of their houses to see a thing so wonderful.

After they had become used to the sight, they noticed, one day, that the terrible creature had unfolded its wings, spread them out wide, and flown westward. After awhile, this falcon had soared so high and so far, that, in the distance, it became nothing more than a speck on the blue horizon. Then it disappeared behind the mountains. At this, everybody clapped their hands with delight. In fact, some of the more pious went to the village shrine and gave thanks to Great Buddha, for ridding the neighborhood of such a pest.

On wings, which seemed to be tireless, this bird of evil flew on and on, farther and farther away, until in a strange land, it perched, tired and hungry, on a very high rock, beneath which was a lordly castle.

In this stronghold lived a count and countess, in whose castle-yard was a skillful gamekeeper, whose ring of falcons was the most noted in all the land. Flying down among the falcons, the soul of Chicksha, now a hunting bird, at once felt at home among these winged creatures, that fed on the blood of their fellows.



THEN THE FAIRY QUEEN HELD
OUT A LOVELY CUCKOO CLOCK

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When taken out on hawking expeditions, few, even of the strongest falcons, equaled, and none excelled, Chicksha, in striking down, what the [105]good Saint Francis called, "our little brothers of the air." So Chicksha became the favorite of his owner, the Count.

But one day, tired of being hooded and kept inactive in the cages, in the castle yard, or, when taken out on the hoop and often, when hooded, kept from having the chance to kill and cause suffering, Chicksha, the falcon, leaped up from its keeper, when its cap dropped off, and flew away. Proud of its freedom, the bird never stopped, until it perched upon a mountain named the Wülpelsberg, in Switzerland.

On this lofty pinnacle, far above the river torrent, in the Aare valley, there stands today a lonely ruin, which is all that is left of what was once a spacious and magnificent castle.

Meanwhile, the Count, who was loath to lose his best bird, went off to hunt for his lost favorite. Hoping, at every climb, to find his prize, he went up higher and higher into the forest. Emerging from the woods, he caught sight of the hawk resting on the jagged rock. Approaching stealthily, he put out his hand, captured the bird and quickly slipped the hood on its head.

On turning his eyes, to survey the scene, the count had before him a splendid view of the grandest scenery upon which he had ever looked. It was the valley of the Aare, with its wonderful glacier and ice-cold river, and its romantic wild [106]and rocky gorge, where now are villages and hotels, while its healing sulphur baths are among the most famous in Switzerland.

The nobleman at once felt that here was the spot on which to build his castle. Returning home, he summoned an architect, made his plans, and set about the enterprise. When he had finished it, he named the lordly structure, Hapsburg; which means the Castle of the Hawk. Here, one of the most renowned princely families of rulers, including kings and emperors, that wore crowns on their heads, was founded. They took for their emblem a double-headed bird of prey, as if they would seize double the amount of land, and oppress twice the number of people, commonly ruled over by monarchs. It is astonishing how rulers, in the past, have chosen birds and beasts of prey as symbols of their government—all so different from the Good Shepherd.

In course of the centuries, this house of Hawk Castle gained a greater amount of power and spread their sceptre over more countries than any other. Yet this was done, more by marrying their daughters, princesses, to kings and princes, than by victories in war. So this dynasty of rulers became famous for its matchmaking, in which the mothers and aunts had much to say.

Now, when the time came, that the young prince of the Hawk Castle House must seek a [107]bride, he went into the country now called Belgium, and sought in marriage the hand of a lovely princess, named Eleanor. Then, the usual medieval custom was followed, in regard to royal ladies who left their own land to marry the prince of another country, and to live among strangers.

In this case, also, the Prince having been summoned to Rome, on business that could not be put off, had first to be married by proxy; that is, one of his officers must make the journey to Belgium and take his place at the ceremony.

For, while she, the promised bride, was perhaps the most beautiful of the princely daughters in all Europe, as she certainly was the

richest heiress, he, the betrothed groom, was one of the poorest of titled rulers. There were beggar princes, then, as well as wealthy ones, and the needy bridegroom wanted to use some of the money of her dowry at once, for he was hard pressed to pay his debts. So he sent one of his high officers into Belgium.

The ceremony was one of great magnificence, like a pageant. It was held in the largest hall of the palace, which was brightly lighted by hundreds of candles and the walls were hung with tapestry in brilliant colors. A train of bridesmaids brought in the princess, arrayed in her fairest robes, and decked with jewels.

Then the prince's officer, who, in his splendid [108]garments, was in uniform, with decorations for the occasion, like his master, and looked like him, came in the hall. He had on his head a crown, and at his side a sword, spurs on his boots, and jewels on his breast. He took his place on the right, for the bride must always be near the husband's heart. In each corner of the room, was a sentinel in armor, and with his sword drawn. Then a notary appeared. He was in his scarlet robes of office, with the legal documents in his hand to secure the signatures. The witnesses were ranged around the hall and the nuptial service was read. The wedding was made legal by the loyal officer making answer for his august master, and the notary writing a record, attested by witnesses.

The next day, attended by her ladies in waiting, her maids, cooks and serving women, the princess travelled in state to the frontier at the Rhine. In a great house, standing on the boundary line, half in Belgium and half in France, the preparations were made, by which the princely daughter ceased forever to be a Belgian maiden. After this ceremony of disrobing, she was ever afterwards to be an Austrian wife, for this was the time, when the Hapsburgs ruled over

Switzerland in which epoch also the story is told of Gessler and William Tell.

In one room, she left behind her all the wardrobe [109] and whatever was Belgian. She then stepped into the next room, which was all Austrian in its furniture and treasures. It was full of dainty clothes, fluffy and gauzy for summer wear, the time of flowers; but there was also more, in plenty, of garments that were fur-lined, for winter warmth. With garments for wear next to the skin, that were white as an edelweiss, and thicker wraps for her body, that were crimson and purple, like the Alpine rose, she was met by the Swiss chaperone and the maidens awaiting her, who completed her costume. Then she stood forth as a bride, ready for the other ceremony of wedding, which took place in the cathedral, where, with bell and book, in the holy bonds of matrimony, they were to be joined by the bishop. There, the prince met his lovely princess and the two were married, and they and their children lived happily ever afterwards. [110]

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THE YODEL CARILLON OF THE COWS

They say that the soul of Belgium is the carillon. In many a tower, far up in the air hang a hundred bells or more, of all sizes. These are struck by hammers, which are worked by the carillonier, who presses the keyboard, as if playing the piano. Very famous are these chime-masters, and sweet is the music, which sounds in the air. When away from home, in a foreign land, the Belgian gets homesick, amid strangers, and is often down-hearted, because of the silences of the strange country. Should he hear the sweet chimes of a city church, a vision of the home land, with its quaint houses and high towers, its carrier pigeons, and river-dykes, and flower markets, and happy children, playing in the streets, rises before him. Then he thinks of the years of his childhood, in his old home.

In Switzerland, it is not the tower bells, or even the church-spires, sounding out the tollings for a funeral, or the merry peals of wedding bells, [111]or the strokes calling to worship, that so deeply stir the mountain man's heart, as do the yodel music and the carillon of the cows.

On summer days, let one stand in the high pastures above the valleys, or on a mountain slope, and he will hear the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, of bells, bells, bells. They sound and echo from near and far. They float on the air, from unseen nooks in the distance.

Even the cattle enjoy the music of the bells. Just as soon as the shepherds sound the Alpine horn, or start the call, for the herds to come home, every goat moves forward and cows leave their grazing on the grass, or they rise from chewing the cud. Then one may see the long lines of the milk-givers marching towards the chalets. There

the men, at night, and in the morning, milk the cows. When the animals are housed for the night, they start the fires. They put in the rennet, that curdles the cream and turns the white and golden liquid into cheeses, so solid that one can roll them down the hills.

Everyone in America knows about the delicious white Schweitzer cheese. When cut open, it is seen to be full of holes, as if well ventilated, or, in many places, bored with an augur.

So well do the cows like to wear the leather collar, or neck strap, and hear the tinkle of the bells, that sometimes they die of homesickness, [112]when these are taken away, or they lose their sounding collar; or, when among their sisters, thus decorated, they have none.

In old days, when it was the fashion for young men to be soldiers of fortune and enlist in the armies of France, or Germany, or Italy, or Holland, a Swiss man could forget, even his country, unless he had a sweetheart at home.

But when any one would start the yodel song, it made him and his comrades so homesick, that they wanted to leave at once, for their native land. So many soldiers were found to desert, on this account, that the generals forbade any one ever to sing the yodel songs, or play the yodel music, such as Queen Anne introduced into England. The "Ranz des Vaches," or Song of the Cows, is more truly Switzerland's national music, than is even the carillon of Belgium for the Belgians, or even that of the Swiss song, "Stand Fast, O Fatherland."

In this country, where the music box was invented, the yodel is centuries old. It is almost like telling a fairy tale, to narrate the story of the cow parade in June, as it assembles and moves up to the high pastures, called "the Alps," which are spangled with flowers of

gorgeous colors. From June to October, these highland meadows are rich in the sweet aromatic herbs, which the cows so enjoy, especially the plant called the [113]Alpine Poa. Almost as wonderful, is the cow parade, on its return downwards, in October.

During the long winter, every boy in the villages looks forward to the time, counting the last few days on his fingers, when he can go, with his father and hired men, and along with the dogs and donkeys, to spend the summer in outdoor life in the highlands. Then, he can be like a virtuous Indian, or a moral pirate, or an antique shepherd; and, indeed, the frisky goats, though all named and numbered, will give him plenty to do. He waits patiently, during the long house life of the cold time, when, walled in by the winter snow, he thinks of the long, bright summer days that are coming. Then, he can live nearer the sky, and until the sun begins again to set earlier and the snows drive men and cattle home.

The wonderful fact, in the cow parade, that reminds one of a fairy tale, is the way these horned creatures organize, of their own accord, and drill. They fall into line and march, as if they were playing soldiers, or were a company of real warriors, or cavalry horses, going to war. Each milker knows her place, and, if any young heifers try to be fresh, and show off too much, they get a hint from the horns of the old ladies of the herd, that they had better know and keep their place. Such snubs and punishments are [114]not forgotten. After such discipline, a young snip of a cow behaves better, until grown up. Then, with more sense, she takes and holds her place, in good bovine society.

The herds, when bound for the Alps, number from twenty to two hundred. Three magnificent cows, brindle, dun, or white, lead the procession and they feel their honors, as fully as a lieutenant, just fresh from West Point, feels his. On the neck of each, is a wide

leather strap, often decorated with metal bosses, or knobs, to which is hung a bell, often as big as a bucket. Most proudly, with heads up in the air, the leaders step forward. The other cows, all having names, follow, each with a smaller strap and bell on her neck. Here are a few of the names, expressed in English: Star, Crow, White Stocking, Youngster, Mirror, White Horn, and Lady.

The boy who is on his first venture up with the herd, dressed in his best clothes, leads the flock of goats, which are put under his special charge. Each one has a name and he knows them all. They will give him plenty to do, for they are great tramps and vagrants. Nobody knows how a goat will behave. We get our word "caprice," and "capricious," from his Latin name.

Back of the columns, is the big sow, with her litter of little pigs, all of them. They are glad enough to go, and they look on the whole thing [115] as a picnic. For now, instead of living on dry winter feed, they will get the juicy grass and herbage of the summer pasture. Mrs. Hog is certainly proud of her young porkers, but her music is hardly up to the carillon standard, for it consists chiefly of grunts, and this is the only language, in which the education of the piggies is carried on.

Feeling quite as important as any, and always wanting to hurry along, and go ahead faster, is the dog Tiger. This pet of the family and the terror of the goats, that give him a butt, when he gets too lively, looks more like a mastiff, than a collie, or one of his cousins, the stately St. Bernard dogs.

Finally, as the rear guard, is the daddy of the family. He leads the horse, on which are packed and strapped the cheese caldron, for boiling the milk and cream. From his position, Daddy can round up the unruly members of the herd, cows, goats, or pigs, that have too much genius, or temperament, or are too original, or independent,

to obey rules. Just as often, in a marching army, the rear guard is the place of honor, so the last cow, usually a superb animal, carries the milking stool between her horns.

The cows' parade marks a heyday for the whole village. The girls are all out, and in their best dresses. Most of them will not see their [116]brothers, their beaux, or their lovers, until autumn. So they make the most of the fun for a day.

During the summer, and until October, there are few of the male sex, except old men and small boys, left in the mountain or dairy villages. Many are the farewells and handwavings, until the procession disappears around the curve of the mountains. Then the yodel music, the Ranz des Vaches, the Song of the Swiss, for centuries, is raised and echoed among the hills. The words are, in most cases, very old, and in a sort of French, that is never heard in Paris, or at the universities. The notes are very much as their Swiss ancestors sung them, before America was discovered. The words are, in many of the songs, quite witty. In one form or another, they are in praise of the work and craft of the cattle, or dairy men.

The yodel music will never die. The herds may change in breed, form, or numbers, but never the song. When heard near at hand, there is too much jingle, with many discords; but distance lends enchantment to the sound. When far away, all notes melt into sweetness and accord.

Once up in the regions near the sky, while the echoes, coming back from the peaks, make angelic sweetness, and heavenly harmony, the Swiss boy has a fine time in both work and play. [117]At no other season are the meadows more beautiful. He soon finds out, however, the difference between cows and goats. The larger animals stay on the levels, obey the rules, and are faithful, punctual, and well drilled. They always move homewards when the horn calls, or

the yodel music sounds. On the contrary, the goats are often obstinate, and act as if imps and elves were in them. Then, too, they love to climb and wander. It is, with them, a game of Johnnie Jump Up, pretty much all the time. They leap and scramble out of the meadows, and up over the rocks, climbing thousands of feet towards the mountain tops, and into the most difficult places, as if they loved to play hide and seek and plague the shepherds. This gives the boy plenty to do in hunting them, for it is hard to hear their bells tinkling, when the wind blows roughly, or in the wrong direction.

In autumn, when Jack Frost returns, and storms are many and frequent, and the snows heavy, the march back and down is made in good order. Then, all the village folk turn out again, to welcome the shepherds. As the men, cows, goats, pigs and horses return, the latter are well loaded with cheeses. These will be sold and sent to the cities in foreign countries, and especially across the sea to America. [118]

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THE TAILOR AND THE GIANT

All giants behave in about the same way, in every country; so each one of the big-boned fellows in Switzerland was like his relations in other lands. He had two legs, each as thick as a telegraph pole, arms like crowbars, and a body that made one think of a hogshead. His bone box, called a skull, had only a spoonful or two of brains inside of it, for his head was no bigger than a cocoanut. Usually he went about roaring like a bull, and carried a club in his right hand, as long and thick as a young fir tree. Although he was as strong as an ox, he could hardly run as fast as an elephant, and any smart dog could move around more quickly than he. That is the reason why a nimble princess, with a needle, could outwit him, or any clever young fellow could trap him in a pit, and then crack his skull with a pickaxe.

The monstrous fellow had a stomach equal to that of a rhinoceros. At one meal, he could chew up a sirloin of beef, eat a half bushel of rice, and gulp down a firkin of milk. With his club, he [119]could smash a hay wagon; but, besides eating and bullying, he was not good for much. In fact, when it came to a game of hard thinking, and using his two spoonfuls of brains, any clever boy or girl twelve years' old could beat him. Some giants, of course, were more intelligent than others, but as a rule, a giant got very soon and very much tired out, when he had to use his mind.

They do say that the reason why giants are so stupid is because that, when they were quite little babies, their skull bones closed tight, too soon; so that their brains never grew any larger, while the bone became thicker and thicker. That is the reason why some people usually called the big lout, "Mr. Bone Head, with the big club."

There were other people, however, who believed that the heads of the giants were made of wood, and some always thought of the big clumsy fellows as belonging to the tribe of Wooden Heads.

One exception, to the general run of Swiss giants, was a bulky fellow named Kisher, who served the great Charlemagne, when this mighty general was fighting the savages, called Huns and Avars. This giant could wade all rivers, no matter how deep. If his horse, which was bigger than a hippopotamus, was afraid to step in, and cross over, Kisher would grab hold of his tail and pull him backwards, through the deep water and [120]over to the other shore. When fighting with his long sword, in front of Charlemagne's army, one would think, from the way he cut down the enemy, and left their corpses in swathes, that he was a sort of mowing machine.

After the battle, Kisher poked his spear into eight or ten of the carcasses of the defunct savages. Then, stringing them on his spear shaft, like a pile of pretzels, he threw the load over his shoulders. Trudging to his general's tent, he shook off the dead savages on the ground, as though he was dropping sausages from a fork.

Thereupon, his general rewarded him by naming him Einheer, which means that the giant was a whole army in himself. He also ordered that the big fellow should have all the sausages, and barley cakes, and dried apples, that he wanted.

In fact, it was necessary to have plenty of eatables ready for the giant, for fear lest, when very hungry, he might swallow the dishes, chew up the napkins, eat up the table cloth, and gulp down the table, legs and all. So terrible was his appetite, that the mothers, when they saw Einheer coming down the hill, or up the street, called all their children inside the house, for fear lest a pretty plump girl, or a nice fat boy, should be seized, to fill up the mammoth cave that he kept under his belt.

When no food was at hand, and the giant had [121]to do without his dinner, he set up a roar, like a lion, until people thought it was distant thunder echoing among the far off mountains. Then old Kisher—for the people often forgot his new title—used to pull his belt tighter. He would even let the buckle tongue go into two or three holes further back, in the strap. This took off the edge of his appetite for a while, but only for a few hours. Then he began to roar once more. Again the mothers clasped their babies in their arms and locked the doors, for fear he might get in and eat them out of house and home. The farmers took the harness off the horses, so that even if he broke into the stables, he would help himself only to the animals, and not devour also the traces and horse collars. But after all this, the giant never knew enough to pick a lock, or get into barns, when the doors were properly barred. Even a trained monkey could beat him at this sort of smartness.

Now there was a young tailor, who was tired of this giant's boasting. Although the people often laughed at this man of shears and measuring tape, and called him "one-ninth," and the boys at times shouted "Cabbage" at him, he was really a brave fellow. Besides being an expert with needle and thread, he was really as clever as any one in town. Indeed, he thought himself, in this respect, equal, even to the judges, in the [122]court, who put big wigs on their heads, to look as if theirs contained more brains than common people have. He read stories of famous heroes and dragon slayers and wanted to be like them and even excel. He boasted that, with a bag and a pair of scissors, he could get the better of any giant living. But when he declared he would some day show them the giant's carcass, they laughed and said, "That's only a tailor's promise." Yet he always retorted, "You'll see."

At any rate, the tailor made up his mind that cunning could accomplish as much as force. So he studied the habits and tastes of

giants, to see what they liked best to eat. He soon found that this monster in human shape was very fond of rice pudding, with plenty of sauce and sugar on it. But the tailor never said a word to the giant about knowing this special weakness of his.

One day, while walking on the road to the next town, to take home a suit of clothes to a customer, he suddenly came upon the giant, who at this time was, as usual, very hungry. They both glared at each other, but the giant, speaking first, roared out:

“Here, you fraction of a fellow, come now let us have a trial of strength. I’ll hang you on a tree, if I beat you, and you can skin me alive, if you win.”

At first, the little tailor was so frightened that [123]his knees knocked together, and his hat fell off; but, quickly feeling brave again, he answered:

“All right, I’m not afraid of you. Come on, we’ll try.”

The tailor knew that a brainy fellow, with a clear head and a sharp tongue, was more than a match for the big bonehead, any day. So, when the giant picked up a boulder, weighing a ton or so, and threw it into the lake, and then dared the man to do likewise, the tailor answered:

“Bah! that’s nothing. Why don’t you give me something that’s hard to do? I can pick up the hardest pebble and squeeze water out of it with my hands. I’ll wager a gold coin you can’t do it.”

Thus dared, the giant picked up a bit of hard rock and nearly broke his finger bones trying to crush it, or make it yield water. Mad as fire, he called the tailor a rascal, and said he told fibs. Then he dared him

to try his hand at it. He got his club ready to smash the man into a jelly, if he failed.

Now the tailor, not expecting to get home until night, had brought a fresh cheese ball and some crackers, to eat on the way. He turned his back to the giant and bent over, pretending to pick up a hard round stone from the ground. Then he pressed this cheese between his two hands so hard, that a drop or two, of what looked like water, [124]came out. As the moisture glistened in the sun, the astonished giant dropped his club. Then, rushing up to the tailor, he grasped his hand and cried out:

“Comrade and brother you are. Don’t skin me. Come along with me; we’ll skin other people, and I’ll make you rich and famous.”

The tailor, pretending to be as merciful, as he thought himself brave, and being very ambitious, walked along with the giant, until they came to a castle. The tailor wanted to get rich quick and marry a princess, or at least an heiress.

Strange to say, they found everybody inside the castle shedding tears, so that there were barely handkerchiefs enough to go round. Even the sentinel at the castle gate was weeping and had already used up four. Secretly, the tailor wished he had brought along his whole stock of linen, for here he might have driven a good bargain, and made large sales at a high profit. But he told no one his thoughts.

In one breath, both the tailor and the giant asked, “What’s the matter?”

Then the man-at-arms told them the trouble. A dragon, living up in the mountains, in a cave had been roaring all night for food. The citizens wanted to feed the criminals, then in prison, to the monster,

but he refused such common nourishment. In fact, he was the most particular [125]dragon, as to his diet, that ever came to Switzerland. He required one maiden a day to appease his hunger. He never would be satisfied with boys, or men, or even with ladies, that were either slender or bony.

Now the supply of plump and beautiful girls had actually run so low, that the new victims had to draw lots. This very day, the lot had fallen on the King's only daughter, and at sunrise the next day, she was to be swallowed up.

As soon as the news had spread abroad in the city, after sunrise, the stock on hand, in all the shops that kept mourning goods, or black silk, or muslin, or grief-bordered handkerchiefs, was sold out before noon, and there was not time enough to import a fresh supply of crêpe from Paris. So everybody was sighing and groaning, and the sounds were appalling. Some were shedding tears copiously, for real grief; but others, because their old mourning garments were out of fashion. With others, it was a case of economy, rather than grief, for black goods saved their best clothes.

But the tailor, though feeling sad at first, saw a chance of coining wealth and getting into society, for he had quickly learned that the king had offered his daughter, in marriage, to any one who would fight and kill the dragon, besides [126]making a gift outright, of a thousand pounds of gold.

So when the pair of heroes, the tailor and giant, proffered their services, the monarch gave the monstrous fellow an iron bar, as big as the rail for a locomotive to run on.

But when the king saw that the little tailor had only a pair of scissors, he laughed, until he forgot his grief. Then he offered the little man a battle axe. It was as sharp as a razor, and heavy enough

to chop open a knight clothed in steel. Thus armed, the two were all ready to set out together to the dragon's cave.

Pretending that one of his shoe laces had broken and he needed to tie it up, the tailor told the giant to go on, and carry both axe and iron club, and he would catch up with him. When the two were together, the giant was about to hand his companion the battle axe, when the tailor began at once to talk about rice pudding. He smilingly asked the giant whether he liked raisins in it, and would take it with grated nutmeg, sprinkled over the top; or, would he have it plain?

The subject was so interesting to the giant, that his eyes sparkled at once. He forgot that he was carrying both of the two heavy things, axe and bar. He never dropped them, until they reached the dragon's lair. [127]

But, while they were arguing which should go in first, the dragon rushed out and swallowed the little tailor at a gulp, without chewing him up.

The giant noticed that not a bit of butter, nor drop of gravy, was necessary, for the tailor had slid down, and disappeared, in a jiffy. Thereupon, the giant gave the monster a mighty wallop upon the head, with the iron bar. It was so terrific, that he fell dead and stiffened out, ten yards long. The giant waited to be sure he was defunct. Then, opening the monster's wide mouth, he thrust his big fist down the dragon's throat, pulled up the little tailor, and stood him on his feet.

The tailor was out of breath, for a moment; but, quickly regaining both his wind and his wits, he took off his cap and began to rub his head.

“What’s the matter?” asked the giant. “Don’t you feel all right?”

“Why, no! You nearly dented my skull, when you struck the dragon with your club. Why are you not more skillful? I can handle such monsters better than you. Can’t you see that I just leaped into the dragon’s mouth, in order to cut his throat, with my scissors?” With this, he flourished his shears, which were all bloody.

The stupid giant was dumbfounded, but he did not know enough to contradict the tailor, who told the big fellow to shoulder the dragon, and [128]they would both go back to the king’s court, and demand the promised reward. So, with much pulling and hauling, lifting and dragging, the giant did all the work. The clumsy carcass was laid before the royal throne. The princess, looking on, wondered which one of the two heroes was to be her husband.

She did not feel, just then, like marrying either of them, big or little. When, however, she thought it over, she believed she could live on her income better with the tailor, than with the giant, who was already beginning to ask when dinner would be ready.

As for the king, he could not decide which was the hero, for both laid claims to the princess and to the gold. So, for the time being, the giant was fed all the beans, and pork, and barley, and turnips, he could eat; but, even then, the tailor saw that the big fellow was not satisfied, and would rather have rice pudding.

The king and his wise men kept on debating for several days, for neither would give in. Then they became alarmed, when the steward whispered, in the royal ear, that provisions were running low. In fact, both the larder and the cellar were nearly empty. This was on account of the giant’s enormous appetite. By the following Sunday, nothing would be left except an extra hogshead of rice. [129]

The tailor overheard the steward's talk, and at once he proposed a plan, by which the contest between the two claimants could be settled. Let that hogshead of rice be made into one enormous pudding. It must be well sweetened, and with plenty of raisins and powdered nutmeg on top, and then divided into two parts, or piles. Whichever ate up his portion, most quickly, should be hailed as the hero, marry the princess, get the money, and be publicly announced, by the trumpeters, as the royal son-in-law and successor to the throne.

"Now I'll keep my promise," said the tailor to himself, "as to what I could do, with only a pair of scissors and a bag."

So, when the boiled rice, smoking hot, was piled on trenchers, and served on a long table, with a small shovel beside each large wooden plate, the trial began. The giant went at his mess, as if he were himself a dragon. To his astonishment, however, the tailor made the rice pudding disappear as fast as he himself could. Even after unbuckling his belt, and letting out, first, two, and then four holes, in the leather, the tailor kept on.

Finally the giant had to stop. He rolled over on the floor and cried out:

"I'm beaten. Give the tailor the princess and the money; but don't let him skin me alive." [130]

All the while, the tailor, who had a pal, under the table, to hand him bag after bag, as he dropped into them the shovelfuls of rice pudding. He filled, first, one big bag, strapped to his bosom, and when that was full, he put on another. The giant was so occupied with gorging himself, that he did not notice anything, but the rice before him.

Meanwhile the man, whom the tailor had paid to do it, kept on handing fresh bags to the tailor. When all of these, except several, towards the last, were used up, he took the tailor's scissors and cut open the bags at the bottom of the pile, for fear the supply of bags might run out. Meanwhile, he filled a tub near by. So the castle people were saved from starvation, but they all, from king to scullion, had only cold rice to eat the next day.

When the tailor explained, to the giant, that he had an extra stomach, and cut open the first one, after enjoying the taste of the rice pudding, and then filled the second one, the giant, foolishly hoping still to eat more, and thinking it was the proper thing to do, cut open his big stomach with a sword. But that was too much even for a giant.

So on Monday, the next day, the giant's funeral took place, and on Tuesday, the day after, [131]the tailor married the princess, and they lived happily ever after. He had several sons and daughters, and people said his boys and girls looked like their father, on whose coat of arms was a leather wallet and a pair of scissors. [132]

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THE DWARF'S SECRET

There is one curious thing about the little brown fellows of the mountains, called dwarfs, that seems very funny to us. Instead of thinking of themselves as less than men, they consider themselves fully as clever as human beings. Indeed, some of them strut about, slapping their stomachs and saying "who wants to be a man?"

Instead of rating men as greater than themselves, they are more apt to talk about human beings as slow, and dull witted. The dwarfs declare that they have secrets which no boys or girls, or even wise men, can ever find out.

Most of the dwarfs live in caves, or down in the mines. They are very expert in using fires, forges, bellows, anvils, hammers, tongs, pincers and the tools of blacksmiths and machinists. They often make very handsome weapons, ornaments and things of use, such as guns, ploughs, swords, armor, milkpans, and cheese caldrons.

Now there was a hunter named Walter, who lived in the Alps. This man went out every day [133]to get food for his wife and his large family of boys and girls, who all had good appetites. He never shot at any creature, or ever killed anything that had life, out of mere sport. He was always pleasant to the dwarfs also.

So all these folks, in the caves and mines, got to like this hunter. Even the chamois, that he chased, knew that he was not cruel. Besides, they heard good things about him from the birds, that could talk the languages of goats, ibexes and chamois.

Occasionally Walter the hunter shot a bear, and then he had a big fur robe, out of which to make a bed, besides bones for all his dogs

to gnaw upon. Moreover, he was looked upon by the village people as a hero, and his sons felt very proud of their father.

Yet it was not so easy, as some might think, to feed his large family, for each of these youngsters seemed to have a cave, growing in their stomachs, which, three times a day, apparently enlarged, as meal time drew near. Only a few potatoes and cabbages could be grown in their garden, and every wisp of hay, and all the dry leaves, had to be saved, to keep warm in the Swiss winter, which lasted eight or nine months.

Buttermilk and potatoes, and corn meal, boiled in goat's milk, was what was on the bill of fare for Walter's family, most of the time. They [134] were too poor to live down in the valleys, or villages, where the land was all owned by well-to-do people. So the entire family, old and young, were kept busy at work, every moment of daylight in summer, when the snow was off the ground. There were many things to do, to get fuel, to keep the roof from leaking, and to prepare for the awful cold, from September to May.

Walter's chief trouble was with his poor gun, the barrel of which was a smooth bore, which could not shoot a bullet straight forward, very far, so that the hunter could not be sure of hitting anything that was over fifty yards away.

Sometimes, Walter would spend many hours, or even a whole day, while out hunting, in climbing over rocks and up the steep mountain sides, to get even a distant shot at a chamois, only to miss his aim. Or, what was even worse, to this kind-hearted hunter, the leaden ball, going out of its course, only wounded the poor animal, so that it ran away, to suffer a long time and then die in pain. In this manner, Walter very often lost a dinner for himself and his hungry children, while he grieved over inflicting pain upon innocent creatures. More than once, he threw down the gun, in his anger,

calling it names, as if it were an animal, or, at the worst, a "blunder buss."

Now, so many of the chamois had complained [135] to their friends and protectors, the dwarfs, about the cruelty of hunters, and the sufferings of their fellows, especially the doe and fawn, that all these little people held a congress, in a cave, and to see what could be done. Nearly a hundred dwarfs attended the meeting, and both graybeards and youngsters were invited to give their opinions. All agreed that men were stupid fellows, and had to be helped out, in all their needs and plans, as well as to have their wits sharpened, by the dwarfs.

"Here is a really good and kind hunter, Walter. He is using a blunderbuss, because he has nothing better. He ought to help him improve his weapon. But what can be done?"

"We must first find out the reason why this fellow Walter, and others like him, inflict so many wounds upon the chamois; for we know he is our friend, and is full of pity for the animals," said a venerable old chap, who seemed to be chairman of the meeting.

The talk went on for hours. At last a good looking dwarf, with a big head and very long white beard, slowly arose to speak. Usually, he never said a word, but listened carefully, until every one else had had his say. Then, if asked, he would give his own opinion, which always proved to be the sense of the whole meeting. Every one wondered how his head could carry all [136] he knew, and how he could remember what each one had said. So he was generally known, by one or the other of two names, which, in the dwarf language, mean "Thought Includer," or "Clarifier of Ideas."

The chairman at once recognized him, called him by name, and bade him come up in front and speak where all could hear him. He was

very modest at first, and held back a moment, but fearing that some of the other dwarfs might twist their necks off, in turning them too far around to get a good look at him, and knowing that some of the old fellows were nearly deaf, he strode forward. Stepping upon a platform of rock, where all could hear him easily, he began thus:

“The trouble with our friend Walter, and with all other hunters, good and bad, especially with those who are poor shots, is that with all their good intentions, they are too stupid. They need the help of us dwarfs.”

Here he was interrupted by applause, and cries of “well said,” and “go on.”

“Now,” he resumed, “from what has been already remarked, by the honorable speakers in this company, I propose:

“1. That we prevail upon the prettiest fairy in the Alps to lure this man Walter up into one of our caves, so far up toward the peaks that, getting very tired, he will fall asleep quickly. [137]

“2. Then, while in slumber, one of our best soothsayers will make him dream of a gun that never misses fire, or fails to deliver its bullet to the mark.

“3. Finally, that our best craftsman shall invent a new kind of weapon, with improved barrel and lock. Then, when Walter wakes up, I propose he be shown how to use it.”

On hearing this, all the dwarfs clapped their hands and the meeting broke up, every one feeling sure that men needed only the brains of dwarfs to help them. Now, they declared, there would be few wounded chamois to suffer pain.

The chairman then selected, from the dwarfs that were passing out, one handsome fellow to take the message, in the most polite manner and correct language, to the fairy maids. These were to choose one of their number, as the Queen of Beauty, to lead the hunter to the cave, in which the dwarf's secret was to be revealed.

To another was given the task of conjuring up the dream for the sleeping hunter.

Then a committee of four, of the cleverest dwarfs, was appointed to invent the new gun, and show the hunter how to use it.

Now the cave selected, to which the prettiest of the fairies was to lead the hunter, was one just opened, a few days before, by an avalanche. In tumbling down the slopes, this colossal ball of [138]snow and ice, well loaded with rocks, had struck off a part of the mountain which had bulged out. In a moment the rocky crust was broken open.

Then as if a curtain had been lifted, a great cave, like a hall lighted with crystal chandeliers, was suddenly opened to view. As the sunbeams struck the walls, the vast space was seen to be full of topaz, glittering at a thousand facets, like cut and polished diamonds.

The lovely fairy elected to allure the hunter was told about this new cave of jewels. She was perfectly delighted, with both the task given her to do and with the jewel parlor. She met the hunter, who was struggling upwards, on his way to the high peaks, after a chamois. She first appeared in his path, and greeted him with a smile. She then led him towards the topaz cavern. Her beauty so dazzled him, that, while she went ahead, talking to him, he quickly forgot the miles he had traveled. Occasionally, she would sing a sweet song.

Soon she had led him into the topaz hall of the great cave, but no sooner had he crossed the threshold than he fell down, exhausted, upon the shining floor. In a moment he was in a deep sleep, from which he was not to awake for many days.

Meanwhile, the master dwarfs were busy at the forges, making a new kind of fire arm. Instead [139]of leaving the barrel smooth inside, they made grooves, along its whole length, which curved and twisted round. Or, as they said, they made it *reiffelin*, which kept the leaden ball perfectly straight on its course. When finished, a master dwarf asked the fairy to fly across the ravine and set up on the face of the cliff, a hundred yards off, a flat round bit of smoky rock crystal, only as big as a thaler, or a watch face.

First the dwarf loaded the gun and then, with a mallet, pounded on the ramrod, to drive the lead of the bullet well into the grooves. Then, taking aim, he pulled the trigger. The bullet struck the disc, knocking the pretty crystal to pieces.

By this time the hunter, asleep in the cave, began to dream, and the fairy whispered the secret in his ear. With both sight and hearing, he saw and understood all.

Awaking, the hunter found his old blunderbuss gone. In its place lay the rifle, and a beauty it was, lighter to carry, more graceful in shape, and requiring less powder and lead. For one who had to climb mountains, this was a great benefit. So he at once loaded his new piece, so as to be ready for the first chamois he should see. He thought it would be fine fun to carry home a prize, in addition to his new weapon.

He had hardly stepped out of the topaz cave, [140]which seemed to close like a door behind him, than there appeared in view four chamois, each full grown and with splendid horns. Putting his rifle to

his shoulder and taking careful aim, though the distance was great, he fired. Instantly, there fell the finest of the animals, while the others scampered away.

Retrieving his prize, Walter started down the mountain with the buck on his back. Reaching home, his wife embraced him, and all his children gathered round him, while his dog frisked about him in delight. Then he told the whole story.

The next day, he walked to the village and showed the gunsmith the rifle barrel, which he had cleaned and scoured inside, until, when unscrewed from the stock, it shone like a mirror. At first, the craftsman laughed at him, but on looking down into the muzzle, as a sunbeam struck the touch hole and lighted it up along the whole length, the gunsmith opened his eyes wide in surprise. Besides a sight of it, he put his little finger in and at once discovered the secret. His eyes gleamed and his face lighted to a smile of joy. He begged the hunter to let him try the weapon. Walter gladly allowed him, for the gunmaker was an expert. At a hundred yards, he knocked a hole in a plough handle. On a second shot, he cut the stem of a lone leaf remaining on a maple tree. At his success, the gunsmith [141]fairly yelled with delight. Thenceforth the hunter was called Mr. Walter Reiffler.

The gunsmith, with the happy hunter's permission, set up, as a sign over his shop, the picture of a disc or circle, with eight dots showing the grooves in the gun. From this time forth, he could not make rifles enough to supply the chamois hunters. Each man wanted the new weapon. There was rejoicing, even among the dumb animals, for the dwarfs told them what had happened and why it was that none of their number suffered pain any more, or died in agony from the hunters' missing fire.

So a new joy came into the life of Walter the hunter. After this, he could always get enough meat to supply his family's need. From the skins and fur, the horns, and the heads, stuffed and mounted, with bright eyes made of glass, and sold in the village shops and hotels, and to visitors, he had plenty of pocket money. For his wife, he bought a tortoise shell comb, besides a linen and lace cap, and silver chains for her bodice. To each of his daughters, he gave enough spending money for them to save up sufficient to buy all the pretty things they needed, and also to lay in a store of linen, for their dowry. His sons, trained early to the use of the rifle, won prizes at the shooting matches, which now grew to be so popular as to become in time a national [142]institution. This enabled the Swiss people to fear none of the despotic rulers of Europe, who hated republics. When one proud visiting emperor asked one of Walter's sons, who was a dead shot, what the Swiss, in little Switzerland, would do, if an army corps from Germany were to invade their land, he answered:

"We should, each one of us, shoot twice, your Majesty," answered the brave boy.

All the other hunters were happy, too, for chamois meat was plentiful in every chalet. Nevertheless, so many of the herds were, in time, so depleted and the total number in the mountains so lessened, that laws were passed forbidding any hunter, young or old, and no matter how famous, from shooting more than one hundred, during his life time. Yet, even then, there was plenty of meat for all, and very much more than in the old days.

All the world rejoiced, also, for now, armed with the rifle, the wild beasts, even lions, tigers and grizzly bears that had so long destroyed millions of human beings, were no longer able to drive

men away. Even women hunters dared to go into the jungle and face the terrible creatures.

In time, the rifle was made lighter to carry, prettier to look at, and easier to charge. Men discovered that the old way of loading was at the wrong end, and used the breech, instead of [143]the muzzle, to put in the cartridges. So the heavy mallet and ramrod were left behind and forgotten, and wars became shorter and less dreadful.

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THE FAIRY OF THE EDELWEISS

Every child in Switzerland has heard of the Golden Age, long, long ago, when no ice or snow covered the mountains. Then grass grew, and flowers bloomed, clear up on the highest summits. Those barren and rocky heights, such as we see now, where nothing can live, but the big horned woolly ibex, were unknown; for they were then clothed with forests and verdure. One could walk all the way up to the peak's top, amid beautiful trees, lovely shrubs and blossoming plants and sweet-smelling herbage.

Summer then reigned for at least ten months in the year. The cows grazed on the delicious aromatic grass, that makes the breath of kine so sweet. Where now are only masses of snow and ice, and rivers called glaciers, were flowery meadows, full of birds and bright dragon flies, and musical with bees, crickets and singing insects. Then the cows were so big and fat, that they gave their milk, that was rich in cream, three times a day. Pastures were everywhere, and nobody [145]went hungry, for food was as cheap as leaves or pebbles.

The old people still tell us that, during this period, all that one had to do was to ladle out the milk from tanks, as large as ponds, or pick big red cherries, by putting out your hands. Then the fairies were happy. On every moonlight night, they held dancing parties in the meadows.

But by and bye, the terrible Frost Giants, that live up around the North Pole, heard of this Land of a Thousand Mountains, where the chief rivers of Europe were born and still have their cradles. Then these greedy fellows that in winter tie up all things fast, or freeze

them solid, except for a few hours on warm days, when the sun is shining, said one to the other:

“Come on, fellows, let us go down and conquer this mountain country, that is so rich in honey, and cream, and flowers. We shall pile up the snow flakes, leagues high, and freeze solid the falling snow and cold water. We shall turn these into sheets of ice, that will cover the land thousands of yards thick, and kill all living things. We shall drive off all the flowers, blow the grass away, and chill the noses of the cows, so that they cannot graze. That will prevent men from having houses, and milk churns, and stores of cheeses. We must drive off the hens, too, so the [146]people can have no eggs. If the sun tries to stop our work, we’ll laugh at him, so we will.”

Thus spoke the Frost King, while the mists rolled out in clouds from his mouth, as he boasted of what he could do.

“Yes, yes, indeed we shall,” cried all the Frost Giants, and a shower of snow flakes and ice particles filled the air, for even their icy breath turned solid and was deadly to all plants.

When the North Wind blew down the news to the Swiss fairies, there was much sadness and even terror. Where could the fairies dance, when the meadows were gone and the flowers dead?

How could they float in the air, clad only in gauzy garments? How could they see each other, if mist and storm and darkness filled the air, and ice covered the ground? And how could they live without the blossoms? One fairy actually wept tears, in sympathy for the poor cows, that were certain to starve. And as for the children, whom the fairies loved, where could they play, if there were no fields to play in, or roses or violets to pick?

One bold fairy looked defiance and spoke out loud in the meeting:

“I’m not afraid of these Frost Giants, from the North Pole. They are nothing but big, boasting bullies. Let our Fairy Queen change [147]me into a flower, and clothe me warm enough, and I’ll defy even the Frost King to hurt me.”

“Bravo, bravo!” cried all the fairies in chorus.

“But how could you stay all the time up there, with no living thing near you, and all alone? You will have no neighbors, except the rocks and crags, and even they will be all bare, and swept by the fierce winds. Can you stand that?” asked an old fairy, doubtfully.

“Yes, if for nothing else, than to show that we fairies are not afraid of the Frost Giants, I should be willing to live alone. Besides, our fairy queen will see that, by and bye, there will be others like me, and then I shall have company. The more of us, the merrier, I am sure. In a few thousand years, we’ll make an army and a victorious one, too.”

Seeing this brave one, of her company, so ready and willing, the Queen of the Fairies put on her thinking cap. She spent a whole night in planning how to turn this volunteer fairy into a flower. Then she would bundle her up in furs, and dress her so warmly, that even the biggest and coldest of the Frost Giants could not kill her with his icy breath.

And this was the way this volunteer, from the fairy ranks, was clothed and made ready to fight, in the long war with cold and storm, so that for ages, this little thing has been able to live far [148]up on the mountain heights and, all the time, to smile and be joyful, and laugh, in the face of the Frost Giants. In fact, so happy is she, among the rock crags and sunshiny crannies, and so amused at herself, in looking down over the terrible precipices, to the rocks, thousands of feet below, that she would not exchange places or

climates, with even the cloves and nutmegs; no, not even with the tea roses and coffee blossoms in the Spice Islands of the southern seas.

Now it is customary in all happy families, when father and mother are expecting the cradle soon to be filled, to choose a name for the baby, and to have its clothes ready. This is done, so that the poor little thing, on coming into the world, will not get a chill, or sneeze, or have a cough, and die. Moreover, if it have a name, no one will mistake one baby for another, unless they arrive as twins, when some mark, such as a blue ribbon for a boy, and a pink one for a girl, is necessary.

So the old fairies put their heads together, to find a proper name for the new fairy flower-baby, that was to live among the cold mountain tops and refuse to be frightened, or frozen, or be driven down lower, or to be cuddled up in meadows, near men's houses, where it was warm.

"What say you?" asked the Queen, of the wisest of the fairies, who was considered a sort of [149]sage or prophet, and who had a wonderfully long head. "What name do you give?"

With a loud voice, almost like a roar, this fairy, that wore clothes the color of an old man's beard, called out "Anawphilis Margarita."

At this, every fairy looked at each other, as if to say, "What a mouthful," "How strange a name," or "So big for a little fairy!" or "Why does she talk Latin?"

There were questions in their eyes also, but none asked "What does the name mean?" for all fairies are very shy about confessing ignorance.

But the Fairy Queen, who knew almost everything, put on a look of great dignity, and discreetly inquired, of the sage, if her everyday talk was in Latin. She did not mean to be sarcastic, however.

“Why would you call me by the ‘Pearly Lion’s Foot,’ if I were to volunteer?” asked a bright young fairy.

“For two reasons, your Majesty,” answered the old oracle, addressing, not the young volunteer, but the Queen, as was proper.

“First, to reward valor and virtue, by giving an august name; and second, to let the Frost Giants, the insolent fellows from the North Pole, know, that when even one of us fairies puts her foot down, it is like a lion’s. No one can move, or lift, or push, or drive it away. We [150] thrust forward this fairy flower, as our banner, to say to the enemy, ‘We shall not surrender, and we defy you!’”

The Fairy Queen, full of admiration, replied:

“We bow to your wisdom, and so it shall be written in our books. Nevertheless, both mortals and fairies must have also a short name for everyday use. How about the second, or personal part, Margarita?”

“As you will, your Highness, but may I suggest even a better term, in the speech of the mortals of this mountain land? They will love anything that you may clothe and adorn, I am sure.”

After this ending of her speech, the wise old fairy curtsied most politely.

The Fairy Queen looked very lovely, as thus flattered, by the fine tact, and the charming speech, of this oldest member of the family; and, besides, as she loved the brave Swiss nation, she said.

“You are always wise. So please let me have a name that will be popular with the Swiss people.”

“Well, your highness, if it be your pleasure, we shall clothe your pet in purest white, like ermine, rivalling even the snow, without spot, or stain, or any dark tint. So, we may justly call it, the Edelweiss, that is, the Noble White.” [151]

At this, all the fairies shouted with delight. Even the Queen herself smiled, and then made answer.

“You have well spoken; ‘Edelweiss’ it shall be.”

Now that the name was ready, the Queen called for the attendant maids of the brave fairy volunteer and, then and there, the custom was begun, which mortals always afterwards followed, of robing a princess, who was to marry a husband in a foreign country. She must drop off all her former clothing, even to her glistening skin. Then, entering another room, in the new land, she must apparel herself in the garments that are fashionable in her new home—as in the case, for example, of the Belgian lady, who, long afterwards, came as a bride to the Castle of the Hawk, in the Land of the Swiss.

Stripped of all her pretty gauzy skirts, bodice, and chemise, and standing forth as nude as a baby in the bath tub, the Queen bade her brave fairy look at her new wardrobe, which lay piled up and as white as any snowdrift. Then, before all the other fairies, the Queen put this question:

“Are you willing, to leave the company of your fellows in fairy land, and be a flower, to remain rooted in the rocks, and amid the cold forever?” [152]

“Yes, truly, with all my heart,” answered the brave one.

“And will you cast seed every year and multiply your family, that will bear your noble name?”

“Surely, for the more of us there are, and the more we can resist the cruel enemy, the Frost Giants, and make mortals glad, the happier we shall be.”

“You have spoken wisely,” said the Queen. “We shall clothe you very thickly, in white robes, that look like flannel, but that are even warmer. So, no giant can hurt you, when he bites with frost, no snow storm chill you, or ice choke you, or North Wind make you shiver. We shall give you roots, that dig their way down deep in the crannies, and that will nourish your life. Besides, we have searched the world over, and, whatever of hair, or fur of arctic animals, or wool of sheep, or down of birds can show or suggest to us, we have used to weave a garment so warm, that the biggest of the giants, with the iciest breath and a beard of icicles, cannot even give you a chill. With your long hair, and woolly coat, and roots that resist frost bites, you can tickle his nose when he comes too near and even laugh in his face.”

“Indeed I will,” answered the fairy defiantly.

“And will you do even more? Will you keep ^[153]your eye on the cracks and crevices, that hold the sun’s warmth, so that your children can creep up higher every year?” asked the Queen.

“The sun in the heaven helping me, I will,” replied this “Fairy of the Vanguard,” as some of her sisters already spoke of her.

Then the Queen lifted her wand tipped with a star. She touched the forehead of the Fairy of the Lion’s Foot, which was her war name; while in the talk of mortals, she was called Noble White, though still the fairies, quite often, use the name Margarita.

Then they stood fairy Edelweiss on a pile of rocks, filled in with sand and earth, to show the others where, and how, in the new world, Edelweiss was to live and grow and enlarge her kingdom.

It was a strange and wonderful transformation, as the fairy's pretty feet turned into rootlets, that quickly thrust themselves deeply downwards, gripping the rough rock and drinking in the moisture and juices in the soil. Grandly the Edelweiss showed her pride, in belonging to the great family which a famous man first named after the Little Frogs, because they love moist, damp and soft places.

Yet all this was beneath.

Above, there first rose a stalk, a few inches high, until it reached half a foot. Then the [154]arms multiplied and stretched out. They were densely covered, like sleeves of overcoats, with thick coverings, each resembling white flannel, or velvet, and as warm as the fur of an ermine.

"Looks as if she had on an ulster," said one of the many fairies, some of whom thought she looked too sweet for any use.

And yet, so far, there was no real flower, but only a defence, like armor, against those worst enemies of a plant, cold and frost.

"Now for beauty and for glory," said the Queen.

Out of, and on top, the dense star-like mass of warmth and coziness, as if robed for a skiing or skating party, there blossomed forth many round-headed tufts, or rosettes, that were pearly white.

Now, not only thickly clothed, but beautiful and strong, the Noble White was given a home at once in a rock cranny. Like a new-born baby, that, as soon as it arrives, sticks its thumb in its mouth, as

much as to say, "This world is all right; I am going to like it," the Edelweiss rooted itself at once and began to grow.

Years passed by, and the lovely white flower, flourishing where only the chamois and the ibex among animals lived, or the red Alpine rose could bloom, multiplied. Like a brave army, it moved steadily forward, occupying every crevice, [155]cranny and hollow. These the hardy plants held, like forts, against all cold comers; yes, even resisting the avalanches, that tried to crush these little strangers.

In a few hundred years, thousands of the Noble White plants dotted, or made beautiful, the bare rocks, or hung over the precipices. In vain did the icy breath of polar winds, or the blasts of the rude Frost Giants, or even the hurtling avalanches, drive the Edelweiss away. Nor was the hot south wind, the Föhn able to wither it.

Swiss maidens made this flower the emblem of their own purity, and also of the tenacity of faithful lovers. At the wrestling and shooting matches, the young men wore its flowers in their hats, or twisted them among the ropes, which marked off the boundaries of their games and wrestling bouts. To heroes, it was the symbol of perseverance, endurance and that quiet force which compels victory. Patriots so loved it, because of its resisting power—the spirit of advance instead of retreat—that they would gladly make it the national flower. Switzerland—the Edelweiss among nations—has held its own for ages, maintaining her life and independence despite the alien power of invaders and tyrants, and the Swiss still sing their national hymn, "Stand fast, O Fatherland!" [156]

So also Edelweiss, the Noble White, remains forever as the Swiss emblem of their republic, and of its beauty and permanence. To destroy this flower, the Frost Giants make their continual assaults in vain. Just as mighty monarchs have tried again and again to overwhelm, as with avalanche of invasion, the freedom of the Swiss,

and have always failed, so the Edelweiss never yields. Its white banner hangs forever on the heights. To every boy and girl, it is, as a living motto, bearing, amid snow and ice, the message of Excelsior—Higher yet and ever onward! [157]

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THE AVALANCHE THAT WAS PEACEMAKER

Sometimes judges and lawyers advise people, that have a quarrel, to settle their case outside of court. When a person thus decides between two, who are not agreed, we say that they are judicially minded. Now there was once, in Switzerland, an avalanche, that did what peacemakers and honest judges could not accomplish. So it was called the Judicial Avalanche.

Now, in the path of this avalanche, as it began to roll, was a rounded rock, called the Pagoda Curve. This was because it had a turn up and backward, like a sleigh runner. At a distance, it looked like one of the roofs, which they build in Peking, Soochow, and other Chinese cities. Once in a while, the ladies of the village on the slope below held tea parties on it, drinking out of egg shell china cups. Then the maidens pretended they had little feet, and ate candied ginger, and stuck pear blossoms in their hair. On their part, the boys wore pigtaails [158] of horsehair, behind their caps and shot off fire crackers, to make believe they were Chinese mandarins of the old style.

One summer's day, this tremendous avalanche came rolling and thundering down the mountain side, and Pagoda Curve was directly in its path. When it struck this rounded rock, there was not enough of the bulge or re-curve, to stop the avalanche, but only to give an upward joust, or bounce, toward the sky. Then the big ball which, for a moment, was poised high in air, hung directly over the houses, five hundred feet below.

This dorf, or village, had a name, which, in English, means Tell's Apple. Most of the houses stood on a flat place, among the

mountains which rose round about it, like sentinels in ice-armor. The people who built it, long ago, were great admirers of the famous archer, who shot the apple off his little son's head. The place where they kept the pig pens was named Gessler, after the cruel governor.

Now in this place, and just at this time, there was a very ugly and dilapidated old house of worship, which had been erected several hundred years before, and was now almost ready to tumble to pieces.

For a long time, the question, of tearing down the old church and erecting in its place a new one, in modern style, had so vexed the community, [159]that a disgraceful squabble had broken out. The people of one party would not speak to, or have anything to do with, those of the other way of thinking; and all on account of this old building. The young people were hot for a new edifice. They hoped to get an architect from Zurich, who had gone from their village, and had his plans all ready, which the young ladies all said were "just lovely."

Against these, the old folks held to the idea of keeping the holy house yet a while longer. The aged people were especially anxious that the venerable tower should not be touched, but be kept; and they even wanted to give it a new coat of paint, for which, of course, the younger party would not vote.

On this very afternoon, the choir had gathered to practice to sing the hymns for Sunday. The organist had put his foot on the pedals and struck the keys, and the soprano had just opened her mouth, when down thundered the avalanche!

This was far worse, than when a June bug had once flown into her mouth—as had happened on a Sunday night, a few weeks before.

She stopped and the tenor's face turned white, as if the crack of doom had been heard.

The sexton was outside, sitting on the steps smoking his pipe, when a lump of ice knocked [160]the pipe out of his mouth, scattering fire and tobacco, down into his vest bosom and over his best trousers. Then followed a crash, as stone and brick, and the lightning rod, fell on the paving stones of the street.

All thought the world had come to an end, but when they lifted up their eyes to note the damage, they all declared that this was the most obliging and considerate avalanche, that had ever visited that region. It simply knocked over the old tower, and enough of the church walls to compel rebuilding.

The mighty mass rolled past one corner of the village, upsetting a farmer's barn, but doing no further hurt or damage, except to a bob-tailed cat of vicious character.

This animal had fought with many dogs, and one, that it had scratched pretty badly, had bitten off its tail, so short, that even a rabbit would be ashamed of the measly tuft, left on the end, for, only what looked like a furry plug was visible.

Now this old puss, known as "Stumpy," was just that minute about to sneak up to a bird box, in which were four very hungry little birdies. The mother bird was out, seeking worms for her little folks' dinner.

Stumpy was just about to thrust in one of its front paws, through the little round hole, in the [161]bird box, hoping to claw and drag out the four squabs, one by one, and eat them all up; when down came the edge of the avalanche, like ten billion of bricks. It just grazed the bird box, without doing any harm, or hurting the young ones inside,

but it flattened out that puss, so that it crawled away alive, but limping, and meowing most piteously, and with one ear ground off by a bit of sharp ice. The mother bird, returning at this moment, seeing the cat, danced around and chirped out what sounded like the Japanese "aru beki" (served you right).

The avalanche was last seen, when rolling down the valley in the direction of the vineyards, apparently with the fell purpose of overwhelming them all in one common ruin. But, on its way, it struck again, right in the face, of an outjutting rock, on the side of a mountain, which made it roll around in another direction.

As for the church question, that was settled. There must be a new building and there was one soon, which, when finished, toned up the whole dorf. At a later meeting, one frivolous youth proposed a resolution of thanks to the avalanche, but this was voted down. Then the pertinacious fellow brought in a proposition to give thanks for the special Providence, that had opened the way to peace in the church. This was carried by a [162]majority vote, all the young people being on the affirmative side.

The way that judicial avalanche behaved, was a scandal among the Frost Giants. The old style had been to toss donkeys, and their drivers, down within glacier crevices, into cold storage, a thousand feet deep; to crush houses, kill cattle, and bury more people in one day than the undertakers could put into coffins in a month. Besides this, old fashioned avalanches used to lay waste orchards, and fruitful fields, and spoil vineyards.

The conduct of this avalanche, which seemed bent on settling quarrels, was more like that of a nun, a monk, a parson, or an old grandmother. It happened to be about the time that the great Napoleon was upsetting the world like a political avalanche, and the Empress Josephine was covering up the red arms of peasant girls,

now wives of generals, with long white kid gloves reaching up to the arm pits.

Now, in a certain house in the dorf, an old fashioned mother was scolding her frivolous young daughter, named Angelette, for aping Paris and Napoleonic fashions. She remarked that things had come to a pretty pass, when a young snip of a girl needed the leather of a whole goat to clothe her arms. Daddy had also joined in the conversation, but only to lose his temper. In his gestures, the cover of his pipe dropped [163]off, spilling the hot ashes all over his daughter's low-necked frock. The sparks made her jump, besides reddening the skin of her neck, even more than her arms.

The girl Angelette was dressing for the evening dance, on the green, and was quite put out by the accident. In fact, the old man had seized the tip of Angelette's middle finger of her glove and had pulled off the half yard or more of white kid, when the avalanche flew past. It flung a bit of rock, like the bolt of a catapult, right through the window, sending the glove, all muddy and torn, out of the other.

Thinking his last day had come, the old daddy fell on his knees to pray, but he was quickly awakened to his senses, by hearing a regular concert in the barn yard. Outside, the donkeys were braying, the horses neighing, the roosters crowing, the geese cackling, the hens clucking, and the dogs barking—and all in joy. As for the old billy goat, he stood up on his hind legs and cut up such capers, that the whole family of kids began to imitate him by frisking in a circle.

Where, a minute or two before, had been ominous stillness, there had come, in the twinkling of an eye, a salvo of rejoicing in the animal world. It was as if the boarders in Noah's ark had been let loose and were having a concert. It's a way the animals have, of showing their [164]joy, with a kind of music, all their own, which they

can make, when the danger they feared is over and deliverance has come.

There was also a bride, the daughter of the richest man in the dorf, who was dressing for her wedding. All the other girls of her set were collecting their old shoes and handfuls of rice, ready to fling after the young couple's carriage for good luck.

The bride's kid boots, ordered from Paris, had cost fourteen dollars. The mail wagon having arrived, with the letters and the salt, at the Post Office, had just stopped in front of the bride's house and handed out the long waited package. The servant maid was bringing the lovely white buttoned shoes upstairs, when, along and downward, thundered the avalanche. According to a way that avalanches have, this one flung off, at the sides, stones, rocks, gravel, ice and mud. Now, like cannon balls in a bombardment, one mass of wet snow, not quite so big as a fat elephant, struck the maid. It knocked her heels over head, sent her slippers flying, and her feet in the air, until one could see the color of her stockings, from toe to knees. As for the box from Paris, it was shot, as out of a gun, into the pig pen. The bride screamed, but nobody was hurt, and the maid quickly smoothed out her [165]hair and dress, put on her slippers, and she was soon presentable.

It was weeks after the honeymoon, and return of the couple, that, after searching up hill and down dale, the remains of what were once a pair of white kid boots from Paris, were found in the black mire, among the pigs. Not knowing what it was, the porkers had crushed it under their hoofs. After trial with their teeth, unable to eat it, or its not tasting nice, the pigs thought it was not worth a turnip. One piggy, without chewing, had actually attempted to swallow it. Not finding it suited to a hog's diet, the animal had dropped it with a grunt, and trampled on it. When fished out with the long handled

pitchfork, it was recognized as a Paris shoe, by the two white buttons, which had escaped the blackening of the mire.

By this time the proceedings of this avalanche, which had started out to settle quarrels, had become positively frivolous. Wabbling about, here and there, reeling like a man with a quart of brandy in his stomach, the mighty ball rolled down the long road, leading into a larger village.

“Now,” fancied the Frost Giants, that were watching from aloft, “it surely will uphold the reputation of the family and act like other avalanches, in turning villages into cemeteries, and [166] farms and vineyards into deserts.” Vain thought!

This lively chit of an avalanche followed the road, far enough to tumble, flat into the ditch, some drunken fellows, who had just come out of the gin house, and were staggering homewards. It was like ironing out clothes, to see the way that avalanche flattened out those toppers. It left them for hours on the roadside, faces downwards, and sleeping off their debauch. When they woke up, as out of a cold bath, they shook off the snow and trudged homeward, only to get, from their sharp-tongued wives, the scoldings they richly deserved.

Many another adventure did that judicial avalanche have, before it had scudded past other villages, but hurting next to nothing, avoiding forests, farmhouses and vineyards, until it reached a glacier, over which it rolled.

Scratching, cracking, dropping out dirty stuff, rock and gravel, it acted like a dredge box. It sprinkled out its contents, to fill up the great deep green crevasses in the ice, until it finally reached a big open space of waste land, that had nothing on it, but rocks and bushes. Then, with a roar, as if laughing at itself, it broke up, spread

open, and left the place strewn with more rocks and stones and lumps of ice.

Then a troop of fairies came riding on the hot, [167]dry, south wind. They blew, with their breath, on the snow mass, and quickly melted it into the river, so fast, indeed, that men wondered at the high water in the distant lakes and the rivers in France. In lovely Switzerland, new soil was made, where today are farms and vineyards. In time, billions of purple clusters are plucked, and willing tourists are happy, in taking the grape cure; while they walk over the place where once, a judicially minded avalanche had laughed so hard, that it burst. [168]

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THE FAIRIES AND THEIR PLAYGROUND

Once upon a time in Switzerland, there was a Golden Age for cows and people. This was before the country had become the playground of Europe and the Land of a Thousand Hotels. It was before men climbed mountains for pleasure; or, imitating the New Hampshire Yankees on Mount Washington, had built railways to their summits, and filled the land with wires and rails. Not then, could the Edelweiss be bought in a drygoods store, or in the markets. Not then did lazy and soft-muscled tourists pay money to have burnt upon alpenstocks the names of a hundred mountains, which they never even saw, except from a hotel porch, or distant window, or from the train.

Then, as the old ladies tell us, summer lasted during ten months of the year and the very mild winter only eight weeks. Flowers were everywhere and the bees were so busy that immense caverns were stored with the honey combs, which hives could not hold. Colossal stalactites, [169]and mosses, big as cabbages, were common. Then the land was so rich in clover and grass, that grew up to the very tops of the highest mountains, that the cows had to be milked three times a day. They were so large and fat, that the milk was poured by the bucket full into tanks, so big that the milk men went round in boats to skim off the cream for the making of cheese. These balls and disks were so thick and so big around, that the dairy men had to be very careful in piling them up in the store houses.

For, if, when rolling one inside the door, it broke loose and went trundling down the valley, it might destroy a village and people might think it an avalanche.

In those days, there were no mists, or storms, or barren rocks, or danger of landslides. On the day for churning out the butter from the cream, they used to employ the giants and give them big dinners for their wages, for the churns were like towers, for height.

This was the story of the Golden Age, as told by the old folks, who sat on their stone seats in front of the quaint wooden houses. As told, year after year, everything grew in size, just as an avalanche starts as a snowball and is finally able to wipe out a whole village, including modern hotels, as is done occasionally in our day. [170]

But what happens always, when people get too rich or prosperous, followed in this case also. It went to their heads. Then they become proud, lazy and often cruel. Gold got to be as common, as iron or lead had been, yet many old frumps and codgers wanted more. Then misers became numerous. Such fruit grew out of the root of all evil. It seemed as if there was nothing more deceitful, than those very riches which their ancestors knew nothing about. In such prosperity, the farmers and shepherds had foolishly thought, lay the secret of all joy. They had imagined that, if they could only get and increase what they could sell for money, it would make them, as they used to say, "perfectly happy."

The climate changed and gradually the whole land grew colder. Snow covered the mountain tops. Rocks, storms, fog, mist, and clouds lay long over the land. Land slides occurred often, and avalanches ruined the meadows and villages. Huge rivers of ice, called glaciers, leagues long, and hundreds of yards deep, were formed. These covered up the flowers. Summers grew shorter and winters grew longer. Grapes and fruit shriveled up to their present size and cows and goats were no longer such givers of food as of old. Milkmaids, who had to work with a cow thrice a day to get two small pails of milk between daybreak and [171]dark, wondered at the

story of the Golden Age, which the old folks constantly told. They wished they had lived then, when a boat, instead of a bucket, was the sign of a dairy man's shop.

Many looked wistfully up at the ruins of an old tower, now ivy grown, where the owls hooted at night. They wondered, when told that, in the Golden Age, this was the Giant's Churn, in which boat loads of cream were turned into butter by the good natured monster, who ladled out the yellow delicacy, with a shovel, as big as a pine tree.

In the Golden Age, the fairies were very numerous, of many kinds and always busy.

Some were rough, and loved to play tricks on stingy farmers, bad tempered milk maids, rude boys and naughty girls; but most of them were always glad to do something nice and pleasant, and, especially, to help kind people in their work.

But when the age of steam and smoke and puffing locomotives, and boats, with iron chimneys, that breathed out choking gas from their furnaces, and left clouds of blackness on the beautiful blue lakes and landscape, had come, the happy days changed to gloom. Men made railroads up to the very tops of the mountains and stuck their big hotels in the prettiest places, even on the high Alps. They spoiled the village [172]dances, drove away the poor people from their old amusements in summer, and even turned thousands of the once honest Swiss folks into money-grubbers. Then the fairies lost all patience, and determined to call an out door congress, such as the mortals do at the Landsgemeinde, or town meetings, when they talked politics and voted by thousands, raising their hands, to mean "yes" or "no."

One fairy, that was the lawyer and politician of the Swiss fairy world, was especially angry, when it was learned that even the children

were taught by their parents to tell lies about their mother being dead—when she was waiting in the chalet, for the money the little girls got by telling doleful tales and thus moving the pity of travelers.

One day, after hearing some of these dreadful stories, the fairy took the form of a Yankee pedestrian tourist, and walked along a well beaten path in the mountains. Coming to a closed gate, which shut off the passage, it was opened for him by a little girl, not ten years old, who said plaintively with tears in her voice:

“Meine Mutter ist gestorben,” (My mother is dead).

At this, the kind hearted fairy, in Yankee clothes, nearly dropped his Alpenstock, out of sheer sympathy. Taking out his purse, he was [173]about to hand the child a silver coin; when, looking up at the doorway of the chalet near by, he saw a woman standing and peering out with keen interest. He hesitated a moment, and then inquired, of the little gate-opener, whether that were her mother. She, having learned to speak her piece, but not prompted as to any further question, replied at once “Yes.”

At this the fairy in disguise lost his temper and said to her “you little cheat!” Then he shut up his purse, and passed on.

Quickly changing into his former fairy form, messengers by the score were sent out by him over the mountain tops, down in the mines, under the lakes, over the pastures, and wherever fairies of any kind or sort lived. These were all summoned to the meeting.

The hour and place of gathering was named, and it was promised that all, whether pretty or ugly, slow or rapid of speech, and whether of land, water, air, or snow, should have a chance to talk, all being limited to a quarter of an hour each.

What was of the most importance, was the guarantee given, that all delegates should be excused, and the whole meeting break up before sunrise, so that no fairies would be turned into stone, when the sunbeams should strike them.

No ogres or man-eating giants, of either sex, [174]were invited to this meeting, for the Swiss fairies are a very respectable lot of folks. In some countries, they do not have anything to do with "gods," or "devils." They are very particular as to who or how or what they regard as fit for society, or look upon as equals. Such beings of uncertain reputation as "the gods," or "the fates," or "the devils" or any of their tribe, were not known in their fairy society. It is said that such beings used to live in the mountains, when the Romans were in the land.

Many people said that some of these used to live still further back and long ago, in certain mountains and caves which could be pointed out, but they went away forever, after the good saint Fridolin, and others came to St. Gall and Appenzell, from Ireland, a thousand years ago. When the idolators, in China or Japan, would build a temple for their idols, they inscribed it on their bells that "gods, as well as devils," have paid or subscribed money to help rear the structure.

But Swiss fairies are better educated, and they have nothing to do with either "gods" or "devils." These creatures have no reputation in Switzerland, and are not received into fairy society; for the Swiss fairies approve of churches and never hurt them, or the good people who go to them. [175]

In fact, what all the fairies resented most, and about which they were as mad as fire with mortals, was that they had brought in such creatures of their fancy into the country. Men described the worst

one of the lot as having hoofs, horns, a sooty skin, hooked nose, forked tail and sulphurous breath.

In other words, this fellow was something altogether different from any sort of fairy in earth, air, sky, water, cave, or mine. Besides, though the demons had the reputation of being always very busy and very smart, they never did anything good, nor helped honest mortals, as the fairies often did.

In truth, the fairies of every sort held their noses, and otherwise showed their dislike, or contempt, whenever any one made mention of the name or the deeds of demons, or devils.

What made the lovely fairies and the frost giants awfully mad, was, that human beings should name the pretty scenery, the wild crags, and the rocky valleys and mountains after one, they called His Infernal Majesty. A certain fairy told the story of a funny mortal, who had got mixed in his ideas. She had overheard one bumpkin find fault with the president of a college for inviting a popular preacher to address the students. "He's an atheist," said the fellow, [176]"for he does not believe in a personal devil;" at which, both fairies laughed heartily.

It was the general opinion, however, that mortal men could do wonderful things. They might build railroads up to the mountain tops, harness every waterfall, fill the valleys with electric machinery, and erect observatories to study the weather and the stars. For all this, the fairies paid them due honor.

It was acknowledged that, in one thing, some of the native mortals could beat the world, that is, in holding out their hands for a gift. Fairies thought this was because they had a disease, called itch of the palm; but they noticed that a coin always healed the trouble and caused the fingers to shut up finely on the silver.

But when human beings gave credit, for the smart things which the fairies used to do, to the monster they called the Devil, they were vexed indeed. Both the frost giants and the flower fairies declared that they would go on with their work, for who or what could stop either of them? Besides, no human beings could produce anything so pretty as a flower, or a snow crystal. At the idea of their making Edelweiss out of canton flannel, and selling these bogus things in the shops, they laughed again and again.

In spite of railways built up the mountains, or tunnels dug into them, the gnomes and the [177]kobolds declared, fiercely, that they should have their own way down below the ground, so long as there was any fire left in the earth.

The Undines and the Herwischers made their boast that, while glaciers melted and became rivers, and lakes were lakes, and marshes grew reeds, they, and all the water sprites, were determined to have a good time in their own way. They would enjoy their tricks and play their pranks on stupid mortals, as long as they pleased. There was too much fun in it for them to give up their old customs.

“Besides these foolish fashions, that will pass away,” said the president, “there was one place where machinery, or the jim-cracks of inventors, and all this chatter about science, or any thing else, can never destroy. None of these things can reach the hearts of the children.” Then he went on to say: “There will always be a new generation who love us. Even after all the learned men and scholars and prudes and fault-finders shall have had their way, and tried to drive out of the libraries such splendid fellows as Santa Claus or William Tell or Humpty Dumpty, they would climb through the window, go down the lightning rods, and from the chimneys into the nursery.

“Even if the prudes tried to abolish the fairies by law, and shut out all the fireplaces, and did [178]away with sleighs, for automobiles, and had aeroplanes, in place of wagons, even then a new lot of fairies and heroes would come in and take the place of the banished old friends of the children. They would sit in the chairs, peep in at the windows, live in the nursery, and refuse to be driven out. In Switzerland, they would hide in the milk churns, or behind rocks, or in the ice caverns. In a word, never having been born they could not die.”

A wise old gnome spoke for his companions, as follows:

“It is only those creatures that have bodies and have to be born and must eat and drink food every day, that get old, and have to be buried. Besides, every fairy knows that, while thousands of tourists come, year after year, in their bodies, as in sleeping cars and day coaches, very few ever really get into that Switzerland, which, after two thousand years, has grown up in the Swiss heart. These foreigners come and go, and eat and sleep, and drink, but what did they know of the Swiss soul?”

One ancient fairy that looked as if he might be several millions of years old, who had a name too long to be pronounced, but which means, when translated, “I told you so,” summed up in his speech what he had seen come to pass, since [179]mortals arrived on the earth. He had looked upon the lake dwellers, the Romans, the barbarians, the visitors of all sorts and times, and finally the hotels and tourists.

“There have been many changes of fashions since I paid any attention to mortals,” said he. Then he made them all laugh, by continuing: “Once, nobody cared for the mountains. Now, all human folks are writing poetry about them, or climbing them, or punching their faces with alpenstocks. Once no one loved the flowers of the

Alps. Now, foolish mortals, in both trousers and petticoats, come with their long purses, but they are too lazy to climb up to the real 'Alps,' and pick the blossoms where they grow. So they buy them, already and artificially made, in the market. They go shopping for canton flannel Edelweiss, as they would for soap, or tooth brushes. They stick these woolen things in their hatbands, and they have their alpenstocks branded with the names of places, whether they have been there or not. Or, they make belt bouquets of the Alpine roses, or glacier violets, and then strut about as if they were explorers. What fools these mortals be."

At this, all the fairies of every sort and kind, laughed and guffawed so uproariously, that the meeting adjourned in disorder. [180]

Yet they all went away happy, for they felt sure that whatever foolish mortals should do, Switzerland would still be the fairies' playground.

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THE KANGAROO POA

During millions of centuries a battle on, between the frost giants and the flower fairies. Occasionally, for a few tens of thousands of years at a time, the ice rivers and the snow avalanches would roll down the mountain sides and smother, or crush all the pretty blossoms. Rocks and stones in the glaciers would squeeze the leaves, and tear out the roots, so that nothing could grow. Then the whole land would become a cemetery of ice, or a graveyard covered with snow, for all the plants of every kind were frozen stone hard and were dead beyond hope.

Nothing could be seen but jagged rocks and sharp peaks rising up out of the desolation. No bird, beast, insect, or fish could live in such a world, for there was nothing for them to eat, or to grow with. Though there was plenty of water, there were no fish. Cows could not graze, or goats, or deer find any grass or moss, and dogs would die at once, for lack of meat.

But the sun in the sky was always the friend [182]of the flower fairies, and he kept on, fighting Jack Frost, and the glacier giants, melting the ice and snow and making rivers that carried off the cold water to the sea.

So by and bye, after a few millions of years had passed by, the fairies, who never die of old age, got together in a meeting. After talking the matter over, they resolved to have a flower that could fight the frost giants, by laughing in their faces, and keep on growing, no matter how hard the winds blew, or how deep the snow was, or how often the avalanches fell, or glaciers formed. Besides being able to live, and find its own food, by rooting itself deep in the

crevices of the rocks, such a flower ought to be sweet, and taste good to the cows.

In this way pastures would be coaxed to cover the meadows of the high Alps with their green glory, well spangled with blooms. Then men could get milk and make butter and cheese. The fairies liked good boys and girls, and were always glad to help their fathers and mothers, and they also loved meadows, with plenty of flowers and grass, for their moonlight dances. They never enjoyed this, their favorite amusement, so much as when, in the spring, the fields or the heights were both fragrant and beautiful.

But how could a pretty plant, such as they wanted, get clothes enough to keep from shivering [183]all winter? How could a flower be made hardy to laugh at Jack Frost, when he came to bite her?

The fairies young and old, all thought it over, but no one could tell how to begin or proceed. The young ones thought much of gloves and muffs, tippetts and leggings, hoods and ear muffs, thick stockings and fleecy lined gloves. Yet how could these be made to fit a plant?

It was natural for them to think in this way, for all their things to wear were on the outside, both for grown ups and those fairies that were more like big boys and girls. On the other hand, the fairy mothers were all the time thinking about the baby's life, and not only how to cover the young thing, but also to have it warmly wrapped up, when it was still very little. They brought to mind examples of papooses well bundled in furs for cradles and hung on the branches. Some told of Esquimaux babies, all swaddled in furs, that are given a lump of whale blubber, instead of candy, and skewered on a stick, so that it will not swallow the tidbit, all at once, and choke. Others told of Italian bambinos, wrapped up tight, and

Japanese akambos, held pick-a-pack style, on their big sisters, but none of these seemed to give the right idea of what was wanted.

At last, one old grandmother fairy made a [184]sign that she wished to speak, and all listened while she talked.

“You fairies had better stop thinking about human beings, for not one of them could live where we want this flower to grow. It is too cold, and the frost giants already own the country. Better look to the animals to show us how. Now I have heard of a two-legged creature, that yet is not a man nor a woman; and another one, with four legs that carries its babies, even a whole family, of four or five, in a pouch in front of its body, until the little ones can take care of themselves. In this way, they are kept free from danger, until they grow up and can provide for themselves.”

“Oh do tell us about these wonderful creatures,” cried all the young fairies at once; and, though the old folks were silent, they were just as eager to hear.

“Well, the four-legged creature is the opossum, and lives in America. The mother carries a whole family of her cubs in a chatelaine pocket, which she wears in the front of her dress. She can even climb up a tree with her family.

“Who can believe that?” whispered one fairy to another. “And the other?” she asked, hardly believing such a thing was possible.

“Let me tell you, then, about the kangaroo, that lives in Australia. She has a wallet, or [185]travelling bag where, or in which, she stows away her little folks, and there they are as cozy as if they were riding in a wagon. Yet, all the time, they can look out and see what is going on in the world. In this way, both the young opossums and

the kangaroos are kept warm, and are fed until they are grown. No wolves, or bears, or foxes can catch and run away with them."

"Can a kangaroo climb a tree?" asked a fairy, whose fancy had been greatly taken with the idea of a whole family being up a tree at once, and free from the wolves.

The old fairy felt insulted, or thought the questioner was trifling, and made no answer. So there was quiet for the space of three minutes.

"Well then," asked still another fairy, "can you furnish us with a vegetable kangaroo?" This was asked in a tone of contempt, as if she believed it were not possible to protect anything from Jack Frost and the giants, even though the sun helped with all his might.

"Well, not exactly the Australian jumper, or the American tree-climber; but, if we can persuade the sun to help us, we may get a plant to become more mother-like, and keep her babies at home, until they are weaned and warmly clothed. Then, when they grow up, they will [186]be able to find food, and set up housekeeping for themselves."

So it came to pass that the sun and earth, and the fairies, all agreeing together, they invited a plant, named the Poa, to come in their country to live and raise children, that could stand the cold.

As fast as the glaciers or ice rivers melted, the fairies coaxed the Poa family to multiply and come up higher. This the plants always did, increasing in numbers like a great army. They climbed higher and higher, until they formed acres upon acres of meadow land, for the cows and goats, that enjoyed the delicious taste of the ripened grass. When the glaciers had retreated and melted away, the Poa covered the land. Then the cows multiplied. They were fat and sleek, because of rich food, and men won wealth by making butter

and cheese. The young fairies watched how the Poa grew and cast its seeds, and they called it the kangaroo plant.

And this was the reason why it was named, by the fairies, the Kangaroo Plant. Watching its opportunity, the Poa Alpina started every springtime, from the lower meadows, to go up on the mountain tops nearer the stars, in time becoming victorious, like an army. Instead of dropping its ripe seeds to the ground, or having them blown far by the winds, or letting them [187]leap out, like popcorn, or lending them the wings, which dandelions have, or trusting to birds, or sailors, or men who sell seeds to farmers, the Poa had a new way of its own. The mother stalk held her babies, that is the seeds, as long and as close to her, as an opossum keeps her cubs or a kangaroo her kittens.

Instead of first weaning them and then letting them go away to play or ramble abroad, out of her sight, she kept them all with her until they were full grown, that is, until they had both leaves and roots; for these are the legs and arms of a plant, whether it be a Johnnie Jump Up, or Sweet William, or Ragged Robin, or Dusty Miller, or Lady's Slipper, or Four o'Clocks, or what not. So, before Jack Frost could bite them hard, or the giants crush them, or a snow storm bury them, or an avalanche roll over and flatten them out, or a cow eat them up, they hid themselves in all the crannies, cracks, and crevices of the rocks and down deep too. Wherever any sand, or dust, or moss, or moisture was, there you would find a whole family of the young folks of the Poa family settled down, all growing up and able to take care of themselves.

Now like a great army they are, indeed. They laugh at winter's cold, or icy wind, or driving sleet, and even at that scorching south wind, the Föhn, that blows for over two weeks [188]in the spring time, and again, for a fortnight in the autumn. By and bye, in a little while,

according to the fairy clock, that is, in a million years or so, the Kangaroo Poa had spread all over Switzerland. Twenty thousand cows were made happy, for they loved to browse on the Poa pastures, and liked nothing better. Now, nearly two million of Swiss cows enjoy the summer feast, while their bells tinkle on the hillsides.

When the calves were too big for their mother's milk, and the lady cow got tired of being a restaurant for her booby calf, she pushed it away, and said, in cow language, "go and eat Poa." Sometimes the calf did not like to give up its baby habits, learned in the nursery. Then, it behaved like the naughty boy, who said "I'm hungry and bread I won't have. I want cake."

Then the mother cow tried another plan. She would give notice to the cowherd, in her own language, that she had done her part, and wanted him to attend to her naughty, and bad tempered, or sulky calf. Then the man would put a leather strap with sharp nails on it, over the calf's muzzle, so that, when calfy wanted refreshment, it would be like sticking pins into its mother. Then the cow would push the calf away and make it learn to eat Poa.

But once having taken a bite, the calf never [189]again wanted to eat anything else. It tasted as good as candy to a little girl. So Switzerland became one of the greatest countries in the world for butter and cheese. The fairies rejoiced, too, for the Poa, with its pretty blossom, made the meadows, which were their dancing hall, more beautiful, and for them, it was like waltzing on a cloth of gold.

And to this day, the Alpine Poa is as wonderful, among plants and grasses, as the opossum and kangaroo are among quadrupeds.

The fairies, that had succeeded in so clothing the edelweiss, that lives among the rocks, that it was able to resist the frost and cold, were now very happy over their second venture. Like a brave and

vigilant sentinel, the new flower kept guard. The Poa was clothed, so as to delight the cattle, while the edelweiss was dressed for beauty, and to please mortals. Thus, both man and beast were blessed.

And it is, even yet, the flowers that, with vigilance and valor, guard Switzerland against the assaults of the ice giants and the frost army. These would make the Land of the Edelweiss like the regions of the North Pole, if it were not for the flowers and the grass. That is the reason why the Swiss people are not like Esquimaux. Their beautiful country holds the chamois, and [190]the ibex, and the birds, instead of walruses and polar bears; and the people have bread, and honey, and cream, instead of seal meat and blubber. [191]

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THE SWISS FAIRIES IN TOWN MEETING

In Appenzell, and some other cantons in the heroic Swiss republic, many old democratic customs still prevail. One of these is seen in the Landsgemeinde, or meeting of all the men not only in a village, but in the whole canton, or district.

This long word means a mass meeting of voters. The people gather together in a great crowd, when they wish to settle matters of public interest. They vote, not by casting bits of paper in a box, or with a voting machine, but by raising their hands.

When the president of the meeting puts the question, tens of thousands of fingers at once go up in the air. This is the ancient form of the town meeting, which is still kept up.

The Swiss fairies follow Swiss customs, and, not long ago, one moonlight night, they met together on a glacier in a deep valley.

They had much to talk about. It was not all gossip, but after much friendly chat, that they [192]began. Not one said "How do you do?" For, none of them ever gets sick, or has influenza, or whooping cough, or the mumps, or the measles, or tooth ache. They never have doctors, or take doses of medicine, or wrap flannel round their necks, or swallow castor oil, or have the doctor visit them and feel their pulses or make them stick out their tongues.

Instead of all this, the fairies usually inquire, one of another, in this fashion, "How about those curious creatures called men?" Or, "How are mortals behaving?" Such questions, as "What are they up to now?" or "What are they doing to spoil our fun?" are very common also.

Some of them at this meeting wanted very much to tell about some of the tricks, which they had played on foolish men, or how they had done a good thing or two to people they liked. There was, however, no time for a long chat, for it was said that much business was on hand. Moreover, the meeting must break up before daybreak.

We shall not describe all that were present, for most of them looked like the fairies of other countries. Yet there were some entirely Swiss, and these are known, or heard of, only along the Rhine or the Rhone river, or on the mountains inside the country.

The water fairies, quite the most numerous, were present in full force. There were the [193]sprites, or "necks," that live in, and had come all the way from the river Neckar. They looked and behaved very much like the nixies of England.

Undine was the general name of one family of the female water fairies. All of these were in the form of pretty young women. They love to sit by the side of the brooks or water courses. Sometimes they lurk in the marshes among the reeds. They have very white hands and golden hair, which is full of waves or ripples, that can beat Marcel, or any other hair waver. On their heads they wear a fillet, or wreath, made of pond lilies, and often have on a long white veil-like mist. They are very sentimental and have tender emotions and whisper often and sigh a great deal. They delight in dancing along the shore, and go flitting from one water lily to another, opening the golden hearts and lovely white petals of these flowers that grow in the water.

These mist maidens were very attentive to all that was talked about, but they did not themselves say much. Like other pretty fairies, they were lovely to look at, but they had no soul, and if they had any brains, no one would ever know it. One would not expect to meet them at matinee parties, or at any daylight picnics, for they made it

a rule never to be seen, except on [194]moonlight nights. It was therefore useless to look for them at any other time.

Very much like Undine and her sisters were those in a delegation of fairies from the Grotto de Balme. This cave may be seen on the way to Chamounix, but high up above the level of the road, and has stalactites hanging from the ceiling. The story teller remembers it well, but when he was there, the fairies were all out, for it was broad daylight, when fairies do not allow themselves to become visible. How we two college boys wished we had spectacles, that could pierce the light and make the fairies to be seen.

These grotto folks, that were at this mass meeting of the fairies, looked much like human girls, with olive complexions; but if one looked carefully, he would see that they had no heels. Their hair was the most wonderful part of them, for they never wore any clothes. When any human person came near, they could cover themselves up entirely with their tresses, so that nothing but their roguish, laughing faces were visible.

They were great coquettes, and often appeared on mountain paths, to lure away young hunters; but old men only laughed at them, and hummed a tune and ditty about "The Spider and the Fly," for they knew all the tricks of these grotto girls. Sometimes these pretty creatures carried lights at night and danced in circles, so [195]it was very hard to tell one from another. Yet they looked very lovely, with their fresh faces, sparkling eyes and pretty manners. Besides these charms, they had, each one, a soft low voice. Of all these grotto girls, Funetta was the best known.

In fact, some of these fairies belonged to the same families as fairies in other lands, though they spelled their names differently and talked German, French or Italian, and, what sounded like the speech, which country people in Switzerland use.

For instance, there were several of the Herwisch folk, or first cousins to the Will-o'-the-wisp. Several dozen of little creatures of this family, not much bigger than dolls, were on hand. They live on marshy ground and delight in lighting their little lanterns at night. Then they entice bumpkins and other dull fellows, out of the regular path in the fields, into the mud and swamp. When the clumsy chaps are floundering deep in the water, and down among the frogs and tadpoles, the Herwisch put out their lights and leave the louts in the wet, all the while laughing at them. Stupid fellows from the grog and beer shops, with their brains befuddled, are the chief victims of these merry mischiefs. It is good to see how many a drunkard gets a ducking and cooling off from these tiny tots. [196]

Some of the Herwisch folk have wings like bats, and to the bold girl or boy that is too smart, and makes fun of them, they come and flap their wings in his or her face and this frightens them. Men, especially, who have drunk too much wine, get easily scared. After it is dark, most people are careful not to anger, or irritate the Herwisches in any way.

Quite different in their bearing and looks, as well as in their ideas and manners, was another set of delegates to this fairy convention. These were the gnomes, the kobolds, and the elves. They were near relations, and looked very much alike, especially in stature, in the color of their skin, and in all having beards. Most of them live underground and in the mines. These very industrious and lively little fellows are always busy. Many among them look like old men. When they talk to each other, their long beards and chins wag up and down, so the boys and girls call them "chin choppers." They wear funny, peaked caps, each with a tassel on the end of it. They have to do with gold mines, for they understand all about fires, forges, coal, crucibles, and what one sees in a foundry.

A long time ago, one of these gnomes amused himself and enriched the good people in a place called Plurs, by pouring liquid gold in a crevice of the rocks. But having thus gained plenty [197]of the precious metal, the people got to be very proud, like most mortals who get rich suddenly. They lost their good manners, and got drunk and fell into very bad habits. When the gnomes saw that the heads of these mortals were turned, and that their hearts were like those of bad potatoes, they threw down tons of dirt upon the villages and destroyed them, just as men burn up caterpillars and potato bugs.

It is true that at this meeting, the elves, gnomes and kobolds were, some of them, so black and sooty, and smelled so strongly of smoke and fire, that the more dainty fairies in gauzy dresses did not like to sit near them. Besides this, some of the kobolds came with their leather aprons on, and altogether they were such real blacksmiths, that the doorkeeper did not want to admit them. At least, the water fairies thought, they might have taken off their aprons and washed up a little.

Biggest of all, at the assembly, were the frost giants, and one of these, who towered above all, was chosen, by a show of hands, to be president of the meeting. A half acre was allowed him to sit down upon. When ready to tap for order, he picked up a boulder, for a gavel, which weighed a ton or more. With this, he pounded on a flat rock. At the sound, all stopped talking, looked up and listened. One minute before, [198]it was like the buzzing of bees. Now all was silence.

These frost giants, of whom a dozen or so were present, had ridden to the meeting each on his own avalanche, which he used for a bicycle. They all had long beards of icicles, that appeared like stalactites in a cave. Their big eyes looked, for all the world, like

locomotive headlights, and some of the little fairies were afraid to look at them.

Their sabots, or wooden shoes, were hollowed out of whole trunks of fir trees, and when they walked they made an awful stamping noise. Their breath, like mist, rolled out in great clouds over the assembly, so that at times some of the fairies could not see the speaker and several felt very chilly. Their voices, in speaking, sounded like rolling thunder. When the president pounded with his gavel, some of the fairies, sitting at the edge of the crowd, thought an earthquake had taken place.

During the debate, when some of the frost giants lost their tempers, it seemed at times, as if they would hurl rocks at each other, or gobble up some of the smaller fairies, such as the elves, or Undines. In fact, the gentle flower fairies, that were very thinly clothed in gauzy dresses and loved warmth, shivered, when a frost giant came near them, and some almost cried, lest they [199]should get frozen. In fact, one brave little fairy borrowed a white fur coat, made of edelweiss velvet, and boldly sat near the frost king—to the mingled fear, anxiety and admiration of her sisters. One of them even said she was “a pert hussy.”

On the other hand, one cunning summer fairy, with a fan of flowers in her hand, enticed a young frost giant to come and sit down beside her. Then she threw a spell over him, and he was so wrapped up in her charms, that she actually melted him with her beauty, so that when the meeting broke up, there was no frost giant there, but only a puddle of cold water; for that is what frost giants turn into, when the weather is too warm.

Each speaker mounted the platform, which was a big boulder, with a flat top. When any of the frost giants, who sat up in front, made a speech, it was noticed that, while there were gnomes and kobolds

out on the edge of the audience, who shouted "Louder, Louder;" some of the gentler fairies, who were nearer, put up their hands to their ears, for fear of being deafened. It was hard to please all, and at one time, when there were too many on their feet and all wanted to talk at once, the president roared out that he would adjourn the meeting, if there was not better order. [200]

As for the grotto girls, they were pointedly requested, several times, to stop whispering.

It was a pretty long session, for all were allowed to have their say, just as at a town meeting of mortals.

Yet when one of the big giants talked too long, or when a lovely and pretty fairy wandered in her thoughts, and prattled too much, without saying anything, the whole company coughed him, or her, down. After all, nothing much came of the meeting, for they could not agree.

Here the president of the meeting pounded hard, to call the long-winded fairy to order, lest he might keep on for a week. It would soon be sunrise, when they must all scamper.

So, at the first streak of light, in the east, down came the gavel of the president, with a force that split the rock, and, before half of those who wanted to speak, had opened their mouths, the congress was adjourned.



HER COMPANION LEAPED
WITH HER INTO THE LAKE



HER COMPANION LEAPED WITH HER INTO THE LAKE

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THE PALACE UNDER THE WAVES

Fashions change in the fairy world, as well as among mortals who live on the earth. The Swiss water fairies, called Undines, at times grew tired of living down below the surface of the lakes and rivers. When restless, they longed to mingle in the village gatherings. They wanted to hear the lively music of the young men and maidens, as they sang and danced. Their favorite time for waltzes and cotillions was on moonlight nights.

So it became quite common, at these times, for the fairy maids and swains to swim up to the shore. Then these Undines changed themselves into girls and young men. They put on clothes, that were deep green, the color of the waves. Slipping in among the dancers, they joined in the fun and merry making. In this manner, many a lad romped with a water fairy and even kissed her, thinking she was or might be his sweetheart; for, in the dim light of the moon, it was not always easy to see clearly the face of one's partner. Many a lassie received an embrace, [202] or a salute on the lips, from a lively dancer, whom she supposed was a new comer. He might not be well known in the village, she thought, though he appeared graceful and dressed very nicely, in sea green, gauzy clothes.

Yet no matter how hard these Undines might try to get their clothes entirely dry, they could never wring the water out wholly of their garments, so that they were always more or less damp. If they had changed their form too quickly, their clothes would drip, and make spots on the floor, or ground. Often the village folk felt dampness, on their limbs below the knees. Yet few ever gave the matter a second thought, for their minds were wholly set on having a good time, and they had it.

Sometimes the lady fairies started rather late in the evening to take their swim to the lake shore. Fearing to lose some of the fun, and thinking they might even find the dancing all over, and the people gone home to bed, they were in a great hurry, while on the strand, to change into the form of mortals and put on their human clothes. So it happened that, when they joined in the dance, one sharp-eyed fellow, who was playing the violin for the measures, noticed that something was wrong. In fact, he was so surprised, that he suddenly stopped fiddling. Then, instantly, everybody dropped arms and stood [203]looking around at the musician's stand, to see what was the matter. In a moment, it was as quiet as a church aisle, when the parson was praying.

What he saw made his eyes big and round. Then, most impolitely—as some of the girls thought—he pointed to a maiden's green petticoat, that was beneath her outer dress and that had come a little below her frock. It was dripping with water. Again, after looking with searching eyes at another, and a third, he screamed out:

"Folks and fellow villagers! Don't you know you've got the Undines among you? Look there, and there, and there!" Then he pointed, with his fiddle bow, to some of the prettiest of the female dancers. "Just feel the hem of their skirts, and you'll know what sort of guests have been dancing with you tonight."

Whereupon, every young man turned his female partner round, and some of them, most ungallantly, flapped their hands on their lower skirts. Feeling and finding that these were very damp, four or five of them at once lifted up their hands, which were wringing wet, and shook off the drops.

One bold fellow even went behind, and seized the tail of his partner's petticoat. She seemed to be the sloppiest-looking girl in the whole party, [204]and he actually wrung out a half pint of water.

Thereupon, a tall handsome fellow, leader of the Undine party of a half dozen or so, put his two fingers in his mouth and gave a sort of whistle. At once, all the Undines shouted and ran down to the water's edge. There, they stopped a minute or two, on the lake beach, and then leaped below the waves and disappeared. It sounded as if six big seals had made a dive.

One villager, who pretended to be an Undine, ran quickly after these water sprites and saw them for a moment on the shore, when they changed their form before resuming their old shapes.

He came back to tell a wonderful tale of what he had seen. When he examined the clothes they had left behind, he found that though they looked shiny, in the moonlight, the stuff was only that of some water plants like sea weed.

When arrived in their crystal palace under the waves, the king of the Undines gave the girl fairies a good scolding, for not, in the first place, being more punctual in both starting and coming home, and next, for being in too much of a hurry in changing themselves into mortals. As for the others, he punished these by forbidding them ever to dance again on that side of the lake.

Ever after that, when, on moonlight nights, the village lads and lasses came out to waltz, they [205]scrutinized each partner in the dance, before allowing him or her to join in when the music began. Some, among the younger set of girls, felt offended at such a severe examination; but it was necessary, and the other girls agreed to it.

Yet even then, the water sprites would sometimes join in; for, when everybody was lively, and the fun was fast and furious, each one of the lads and lasses was too much excited to notice the dress, or to be certain as to who was who, or which was which, or what was what, or even to see the face of a partner.

One night, the daughter of the lord of the grand chateau, the Princess Babi, slipped out the castle gate, along with several of her maids, and joined the village youth in their fun. At the very height of the dance, a young man became her partner in the waltz, chiefly because of his elegant clothes and polished manners. Though he did not talk, but expressed his offers and wishes by signs and motions, she enjoyed mightily his dancing, which was both deft and graceful.

There was present, however, a sharp-eyed mother, a nurse, who had three nieces in the dance. She kept looking, like a lynx, at every lad in the party. At last, she noticed this unusually handsome and stylish fellow, who [206] seemed to wear finer clothes than most of the village boys.

The old woman's suspicions were fully aroused, when she saw the young couple linked, arm in arm, and, especially, as he turned his body round in the dance. For, when the moonbeams fell upon the skirt of his coat, it shone as only wet clothes could, in the silvery light. The color reflected was that of wave green.

Upon this, she made up her mind that this fine fellow was no other than the King of the Crystal Cavern, which was far down in the world under the waters.

She was about to give the signal, that would expose him, when her mouth was shut, and her limbs felt as if paralyzed by some unseen and unknown power, when she saw him offer to take, as his partner, the Princess Babi, the daughter of the castle lord.

Smilingly the lovely maiden put out her arms, in return for his embrace. All she thought of was the fun and merriment. Yet, within a few minutes after they had linked arms together, he started in a whirling dance. It was so rapid, that the mother and the older spectators, who sat watching the young people, were too fascinated

to speak or cry out. They noticed him whirling his partner around, but getting ever nearer the lakeside. Wider and wider were the [207]circles they made, but all the time he was bringing her nearer the beach; while she seemed delirious with delight, apparently oblivious to everything but the rapturous motion.

Reaching the shore, pausing hardly a moment, he leaped with her into the water, which was then silvered with the moonbeams and rippling with the breeze.

Down, down, below the sparkling waves, the King of the World under the Waters—for it was he—made her his wife and queen, but never would he let her go back home.

There, among the great coral trees and groves of gold and silver and amid heaps of shining gems, with a score of maidens to wait on her, valets and footmen and servants of a strange sort, and with food rich and abundant, pleasing and tempting to both eye and palate, and with the most entrancing music ever at her command, she was enraptured. So delighted was she, that the years passed away as days.

Yet even when touched with homesickness, and longing for those she had left behind on earth, in her castle home, she found herself watched and guarded. The gates, though made of emerald and sapphire, shut of themselves, because moved, by some secret spring, against her return. Having once eaten of fairy food, and accepted her husband's gifts, she could never again [208]leave either the palace or the World under the Waves. The crystal cavern was her prison. When she looked in the mirror, she found her teeth were wave green. She was now an Undine.

Yet in the village, where the story of the castle princess was told, it was declared that, on calm still nights, when the moon shone

brightest, the most delightful music could be heard coming up from the lake. Some of the fishermen were sure that, far below on quiet summer days, also when no wind blew, and the sunbeams struck deep into the waters, they could peer down into the depths and see the walls and towers of this crystal palace. [209]

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THE ALPINE HUNTER AND HIS FAIRY GUARDIAN

There is one variety of the Swiss fairies who manage to get along with very few clothes, and those very thin. The prettiest ones among them seem to live up among the highest mountain peaks. There, it is colder than anywhere else, but these fairies do not mind it. Furs are not in fashion, but only very filmy garments. On their backs are gauzy wings, by which they can fly around from one peak to another. They hover over the meadows also, which in summer glisten with blossoms of every tint and hue. They love to plague Jack Frost, and the old mountain giants, that have beards of icicles, and hair of snow streamers, and who try so hard to freeze out the flowers.

These fairies know all the secrets of the mountains. They find out where the largest and prettiest rock crystals are, and where the priceless minerals are to be found. They can tell just where the caves of sparkling topaz are situated, but they do not let any mortal know, unless he [210] is their favorite. They can lead a hunter to the spot where the chamois are feeding on the moss. When they want to reward a brave man, they bring him bullets that are sure to hit the buck, and win for the marksman a fine pair of horns; or, at the village shooting matches, plug the bull's eye of the target, and so secure the prize. To please his fairy guardian, the hunter must always promise to do what she bids him, or else her bad temper is roused. Then she scolds, and leaves him to his luck, which, after that time, is never good. It is not safe to quarrel with a fairy.

Now there was one of these lovely creatures, named Silver Wreath, because she looked as charming as the morning mists at sunrise, when shot through and through by the upspringing light. Then they

float off in the air, like glistening wreaths made of golden braid, or like scarves of silver. Sometimes, when illuminated by the sun's rays, they remind one of necklaces of pearls; or, when many are together, like white garments of burnished silver set with costly gems.

Silver Wreath, the fairy, was noted for living among the lofty peaks, where only the hardiest flowers, such as the Alpine rose, and the noble white flower, called the edelweiss, could grow. No animal or bird, ermine or ptarmigan, could [211]be whiter than her body, which glistened like snow crystals or hoar frost, when struck by the sunbeams. When she blushed, her whole body was like the wonderful Alpine glow that, after sunset, robes the mountain tops, and both for the same reason. The sky becomes rosy red, because the sun's rays are reflected from the snow, even after going down. So this fairy's beautiful body not only shone by its own light, but at times reflected the great luminary's loveliest tints. It was a way the sun had, of saying "good night" to the mighty mountains. So, also, fairy Silver Wreath blushed when, in the dawn of day, she made her farewell curtsy to her companions, for, after sunrise, the fairies disappear.

Now there was a brave hunter named Jeannod, who lived in a village of Uri. In his pursuit of the chamois, this stalwart youth was not afraid to follow this agile animal over the most dizzy precipices, and far up beyond the snow line. He did not hesitate to climb the most perpendicular mountain walls, to get a good shot. Hence, he was often compelled to spend a night, amid the cliffs and glaciers.

One evening, while on a hunting expedition, Jeannod caught sight of Silver Wreath, as she was flitting on her gauzy wings around a peak. At once, he fell in love with her. Happily for him, she was, after several meetings, enamored [212]of Jeannod, and he became her favorite. As they became better acquainted with each other, she

guided him over unknown paths and often warned him of danger. She directed him to the chamois herds, and fed him with the finest oat cake and cheese. When too wearied to retrace his way back, or to return home, for the night, she watched over him while he slept. There, far above, where the eagles flew, she guarded her lover from falling rock or ice, shielding him from every peril, seen and unseen.

In that way, it happened that for many months, the hunter was in luck and became the envy of his village companions. He never slipped or lost his balance, or fell over a precipice, or into an ice crevasse, or was hit by an avalanche, or lost his path. On every occasion he came back home with a fat buck on his shoulders, or a brace of ptarmigan birds, or a big rock crystal, and always looked rosy and healthy; all the young girls admired him, and the youth wanted to be like him. They hoped to learn the reason of his luck, which he kept a secret.

Silver Wreath soon found out what Jeannod liked most to eat, for while she was a fairy, he was a mortal, and had a stomach, and, always, a lively appetite. He was very particular, and rather fussy about the kind of cheese he ate, and he always bought the best that could be found [213]in the market. In fact, he would often walk many miles, and spend his last coin, to get a cheese of an especially good brand or flavor, no matter at what price.

The fairy soon found this out, about her lover's taste, and when Jeannod was hungry, after climbing the steep rocks, she fed him on a most delicious kind of cheese. He declared no mortal man or woman could make any equal to it, whether in taste, or in nourishment, or in flavor. On the other hand, he amused her by singing, rattling off rhymes, or telling her stories about men and women. One of these, about "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin-eater," seemed to her to be the funniest of all. After that, when he asked her what

he might bring her for a present, he was surprised to hear her say a "pumpkin shell." Then he laughed heartily. When he brought it to her, she kept the pumpkin shell in a rock crevice as a great curiosity and called it her doll house.

Jeannod was so happy in his love for fairy Silver Wreath, that he wanted to make her his wife. So one day, he kneeled before her and asked her to be his bride. He thought it would be easy for her to accept his love and care, after she had so helped and favored him.

But Silver Wreath, much as she loved Jeannod, did not welcome the idea of either changing [214]her nature, or leaving her mountain home. Either or both meant much to her, though little to him. She would have to put on women's clothes, and be bothered with changes in fashion, with which fairies are not troubled. She would be shut up in a house, among mortals, who get old and die. She would have to depart from heaven-high peaks, and things white, and vast, and glorious, and dwell among gossips and tale-bearers. Besides, she could not tell whether Jeannod would always be fond of her. One day, she remembered the story he had told her, in fun, of "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin-eater," and it frightened her, when she thought of Peter's wife. So she brooded, long and hard, over the matter as to whether she should say "yes" to Jeannod, and be his wife. Would he be a Peter, and keep her in a pumpkin shell?

Yet the hunter was so handsome and so brave! Besides, he did so love the mountains and the Alpine flowers! Every time he came to her, he had an Alpine rose in his coat as a symbol of his joy, which might, however, be for his lifetime only; but, in his hand, he held an edelweiss, as symbol of faith in the things eternal. This showed that he thought of both the affairs of the body and the life of the soul, in the true Swiss way. Besides, he so vehemently assured her that, whenever she should get homesick, he would take [215]her with him

up to her old haunts. Every time he went to hunt the chamois, she should be his companion. Last, but not least, he pressed his suit so ardently that, finally, she consented to marry him, and live in his home.

But she gave her promise, only on one condition. She would be a faithful and loving wife, and live truly as a mortal, provided he should agree to the rules, which she made about eating; and, if he would observe the table manners, which she approved. Knowing his weakness for cheese, she vowed to keep the larder furnished, always, with the same kind of this delicacy, upon which she had fed him in his hunting trips, when he made love to her.

“I’ll wed with you,” she said, “provided that, every time, when you eat and enjoy the cheese, you will leave one small portion, uneaten, on your plate.”

This one condition of wifehood seemed so simple, that he laughed out loud, and poked fun at his betrothed, at her being so childish. But she looked very grave, though she did not speak a word. Fairies are not fools, and it may be that even mortal women know more than men, in some things. Besides, the pumpkin shell had become to her such a spectre, that, one day, she smashed it with a rock, even after he had promised vehemently to obey her law as to table manners. [216] Then he gave her a kiss, and everything serious was forgotten in the mutual joy of lovers.

So the fairy put on a human form, keeping her beauty and loveliness, but leaving off her wings, and wearing bridal clothes. Then they were married in the village church. At the wedding, the maidens all marvelled at her wonderful dress and veil of silvery gauze. When the honeymoon was past, all declared that no more modest, sensible and pretty woman had ever come among them,

while they wondered where Jeannod could have met and won so lovely and so good a wife.

In her new home, the fairy lady seemed to be happy every hour. Days sped into weeks, and months into years, in the routine of household and village life. What with her flowers and her cuckoo clock, and her carved wooden spoons, and her well set table, and a flower garden, and vines on the house wall, that surpassed all her neighbors, her bee hives and dove cote, the home of Jeannod and Silver Wreath was a place of beauty and joy. She was at once the delight and envy of all the village brides and wives. The blossoming plants seemed to thrive and grow more beautiful, because she loved them so. On her dainty, well spread table, were set the richest cream, the most transparent and delicious honey, and the whitest rolls. Her cheese surpassed in taste everything made by the men in [217]the summer high pastures, who came back in the late September autumn, bringing their cheeses, which, since June, they had made in the chalets. In the chateau of Jeannod and Silver Wreath, it seemed to be always summer, and the food had the coveted June flavor all the year round.

While her butter, eggs, honey, milk and cream were the best, no one knew where she got such wonderful cheese, which excelled all. This was on the table, at every meal, and all the year round, from New Year's Day to Christmas Eve, and during the holidays. Her husband was not very curious and did not ask questions. So long as he had plenty to eat, he was satisfied, for he had a good appetite and he loved his fairy wife very dearly, and liked to look at her often with sincere affection.

While food was plenty, Jeannod always remembered the promise he had made and kept his good table manners. He never caused his sweet and loving mate to scold, or even to frown. Because of his

active life, hunger was the best sauce to sharpen appetite. Yet he always left a large part of the cheese uncut, for good manners. Even when returning from a chamois hunt hungry enough—so he laughingly declared—to swallow a cow, with its horns and tail, he kept at once his promise and his politeness to his sweet wife. [218]

But in one year, when midwinter came, the cold was so severe, the storms so much more frequent and the avalanches so much bigger and more destructive than usual, that the roads were covered, so as to hide even the great landmarks out of sight. Then hunting was impossible. The wind was so tempestuous, that the strongest men kept indoors. Apart from what his wife provided, Jeannod could bring little to the table. In such terrible weather, Jeannod, unable to use his rifle, could not provide meat, and even Silver Wreath could furnish only cheese. In such a case, the husband was often ravenously hungry, and an empty stomach who can bear very long? Even when wolves and lions become tame and helpless, through hunger, what strong man does not become weak?

One day, after trying many hours, to track a chamois, and get within range of it, with his rifle, Jeannod came back empty, and very low in his mind. He was so fiercely hungry, that he threw down his hat and forgot, not only what the edelweiss and Alpine rose had taught him, but even what he had promised.

When he opened the door, into the larder, he saw that there was nothing there, but a strip of cheese, left over, from the last meal. Indeed it was hardly more than a rind. Thinking of nothing, [219]but to satisfy his gnawing hunger, he seized and bit into it.

At that moment, Silver Wreath, his wife, entered the house. She saw him with the cheese in his hand, and cried out:

“Oh, my beloved, remember your promise that you would always keep a slice of cheese. Please do wait until midnight; and, at breakfast time, I promise you, you shall have all you want of the best; but now, please, please, leave even a small piece over.”

But the hungry and tired man was too obstinate to listen. From a thinking being, he had become a ravening beast. He gobbled up the last fragment.

No sooner had he swallowed the morsel, than his fairy wife cried out, “You’ve broken your promise and the rule of good manners in the fairy world. I cannot live with a glutton and promise-breaker. I must return to my mountains and fellow-fairies.”

Thereupon, all her clothing fell off. Her cap and comb, and her shoes, stockings and her pretty garments, one by one, dropped on the floor. In a moment more, her former filmy blue and pink robes covered her, while, from her back, grew out a pair of wings, like a butterfly’s, but larger, and mist-like. Waving a good-bye, she flew out of the door, which opened of its own accord. Soon, [220] on the lofty mountain heights, she rejoined her fairy family, while the hunter-husband was left alone in misery and hunger, and, worse than all, with an accusing conscience. [221]

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THE FAIRIES' PALACE CAR

Once upon a time, the fairies that live up near the mountain tops got together, and one said to another:

"Let us go travelling."

"We'll go as far as Geneva," said another.

"Agreed," they all shouted in chorus. "It will be like going from the North Pole to the Spice Islands. We can see all sorts of landscapes and go through many climates, before we get to Geneva. So let us all begin our journey today!"

It was not at all strange, that they should all start off at once. The fairies had no laundry to get home in time, nor new clothes to have made and fitted, nor trunks to pack, nor expressmen to bother with. There were no tickets to be bought, or reserved seats in the cars to look after, or handbags to carry, or telegrams to send, or letters to write. Neither did they fume or fret, because the taxicab man did not arrive on the split second. They had no watches to wind up, or to look at, lest they might miss the train, nor hunting cases to snap, nor sandwiches to carry, [222]in case there were no buffet or dining cars. No! Happily for them, all they had to do was to jump on their ice-chairs at once, and be off.

Now let us ask what was their palace car, in which they were to journey, from the top of Mont Blanc to the Rhone river, and over Lake Lemman and thence by ship to Geneva the Beautiful?

It was nothing less than a glacier, twenty miles long and two miles wide. This car, made of white snow and ice crystal, moves, as

everybody knows, steadily along, and down, from mountain top to the valley. It does not fly as fast indeed as the Empire State lightning express. Yet it starts on time, and is sure to arrive at its terminal. It takes only about a thousand years, from the mountain's tip top to the down below, or from snow flake to Rhone river.

When motion was begun, by the fairies in the air, several hundred of them caught, each, a snow flake at the summit, and rode on it from the clouds to the ground, until enough had fallen from the sky to make up the party, which sat, all together, on a snow bank, for awhile, till the train was all ready. Then the slide downhill began.

Every day the sun would tickle the ice mass and melt it, so it had to move on. Then, for the fairies, it was like coasting on a bob sled, and [223]they were as merry as if they were on a toboggan. So they mightily enjoyed the fun. The fairies did not have to sit on a narrow line, or hold on tight, lest they might fall off, bump against a post, or hit a tree, or a rock.

On the contrary, it was more like going on board a big ship, or promenading on the deck of an ocean liner. They played ball, and hockey, and shuffle board, and danced and waltzed, and had guessing and finger games, and leap frog for exercise. They sat in the cabins, which were crystal ice caverns. They played hide and seek in the crevices, and blindman's buff among the ice ridges. They leaped merrily over the hammocks, and they bathed and swam in the ponds of water, which the sun melted every day toward noon. In the baths, which lasted several hours, they sported around like a lot of mermaids.

In this way, they so amused themselves, that they forgot or did not care to remember the passing months, or years, or centuries. They were travelling for fun, and had no business or social engagements to attend to, or guide books, to tell where they were going. So they

were in no hurry, for the glacier only moved at the rate of half an inch an hour, or a few miles in a century. What cared they for rapid transit? There were no strikes or delay, no subway or tunnel rules, no hustler to make you "step lively," and shut [224]the car door on you, or tell you to "let 'em out," or "watch your steps." No policeman on foot, or motorcycle, to overtake and arrest you for speeding! It was all pure fun.

The fairies had a watcher, who sat on an ice pinnacle, like a man in the foretop of an ocean steamer. He it was, who announced anything new in the weather, or the country, or landscape through which they passed. Then, also, a lecturer came aboard, every ten or twenty years, to explain the history and point out the wonderful things along the route, or what had happened, at this or that place.

These wise prompters were also expected to tell what famous trees or flowers lived, along the route, and in the various climates. Without a telescope, they could see little moving specks, looking like flies, or fleas, high up on the eternal snows. These were human beings, who had either, like wild flowers, escaped cultivation; or, perhaps, had fled from prison, or lunatic asylums, and were bound to get up to the mountain tops, as if their keepers were after them with guns. Occasionally an electric railroad, with snorting locomotive, on a track and pinion system of cog-wheels, with central rail, carried the passengers, fat or thin, who could not climb, or who were sane, or, it might be, lazy.

Occasionally, in rambling through the ice halls, [225]the fairies could discern, embedded in the crystal walls, black spots. Asking whether these were flies in amber, such as they had heard of, they were told that these specks were mortals, men and women, mountain climbers, who had fallen down precipices, or upon the ice, or slipped into crevices. Having ended their lives thus, they were kept in the

crystal for years, until their bodies were shot out on the moraines, or washed down the rivers. Sometimes the fairies found bits of rope and alpenstocks. They even learned to tell the difference between blondes and brunettes.

Often some of the fairies wondered how it would feel to be born as a baby, and drink milk, and eat candy, and first crawl over the floor, and then walk and grow up to be a man or a woman. They could only guess vaguely what it was to die. For that is the curious thing about fairies, they cannot die, because they were never born. They do not have to grow like human babies, or big elephants, or little kangaroos, or be hatched out of eggs, like chickens, or wriggle in the ponds, or swim in the water like frogs, or fishes, or whales, or porpoises. Once in a while, some fairy thought she would like to try it, just once, to live and die, just to see how it felt, but the other fairies, who did not admire her taste, only laughed at her. [226]

As a rule, these passengers on the glacier did not pay close attention to such matters. They were not much interested in mortals, but more in themselves, for they considered boys and girls, and men and women, to be very inferior creatures. They gave more attention to what they saw, as they traveled through the country, changing climate every few thousand feet and every century or so.

At first, all was snow, ice and rocks, with no birds, shrubs, or trees, or flowers, and not even moss. Indeed, some of them grumbled and declared they would not have left home, if they thought they were to see nothing more than mere human beings. But very soon, that is, after a few years, ten or twenty, perhaps, their ice chariot or train had carried them past this old scenery.

Now they began to see mosses and lichens, and occasionally a condor, or Alpine eagle, on a crag, eating his dinner—perhaps a young lamb, or a rabbit, or a marmot, or a chamois kid, or

something from a cow's carcass, which the big bird of prey had stolen from some butcher's slaughter house. This was the first sign of that uncanny thing they called life; which, inside of mortals and other animals, makes them move about. [227]

It was a stunning novelty, when the conductor called out the name of a new station:

"Flowers!"

Then they saw, overhanging the rocks, or near the edges of the precipices, or in the crevices and crannies of the cliffs, what they called flowers. Yet to us folks, who live in the house and nursery, these plants, so bundled up in white, hardly seemed to be flowers. They rather looked like babies, ready to be taken out to ride, for they were well swaddled in what appeared to be fur or flannel. In fact, their flowers, so called, were so woolly, and cushiony, and flat, and low, and they kept holding on so hard, as if for dear life, in the biting cold wind, that they looked bleak and ghostly. Some of these Alpine flowers were as downy as a duckling, and as hairy as a poodle. But this was to keep the plants warm. For life is warm. Death is cold.

Even more wonderful, to most of these fairies, that had lived so long up among the highest mountain tops, and had never been lower down than eight thousand feet or so, was another lovely sight—that of green meadows, spangled with blooms. It was that of the summer pastures.

Now they began to hear the tinkling of bells and saw many cows. They laughed uproariously, as they saw that the billy goats waved their chin beards, up and down, and stood on their [228]hind legs. On the roofs of the shepherds' chalets, they noticed the big stones. These were laid in rows, to keep down the strips of bark or shingles,

when the tempests roared. While they were wondering how funny it must feel, to be a boy or a girl, and live in a skin, with clothes on, they heard the Alpine horn. While listening to its sweet echoes, some of the fairies actually began to think that perhaps, after all, mortals might have a good time, and, possibly, as much enjoyment as fairies do, and always have had. Most of them, however, scouted the very idea.

A real epidemic of rapture broke out and went through the fairies, like measles among children, when they looked upon still greener meadows rich in grass, which were spangled with flowers and these of the loveliest hues, deep red, scarlet, crimson, pink, violet, blue and yellow. They saw the Alpine Poa, which the cows love so dearly.

When the lecturer described its kangaroo-like mothers and babies of this family of plants, the fairies laughed, so loud and merrily, that some of the shepherds thought that a swift horse, with a strap of silver sleigh bells, around its neck, was galloping over the ice.

Perhaps the greatest surprise of all was the sight of trees, which those fairies who had never traveled, had not seen before. In one country, [229]that is, on one level, they found only pines and firs, which rocked in the wind.

Several of the fairies jumped off the train, to pick up a handful of pine needles from the ground, and to play cradle-swinging in the tree branches. They were not afraid of being left behind, by the train rushing past them; for, after playing two or three years under the trees, these passengers jumped on again, and showed handfuls of the curious things that had fallen off the trees, and covered the ground like a brown carpet. Then there were many exclamations of wonder among those that had kept on the train.

Lower down, in another climate, or country, or level, they found forests of oak, birch, and maple. Yet they could not get any sweets out of this Swiss tree, for these fairies did not live in America, where the sugar maple grows.

Every once in a while, the fairy that was the conductor would get out and consult the thermometer. Then, with an air of great wisdom, like an owl, or grand daddy, it was announced that tomorrow—that is, a year, or two, from that date—they would come into a new climate, and to such and such a level, or place, so many feet above sea. Then they would see this and that sort of thing, such as houses, church spires, cheese factories, etc.

At last, having used up their old calendar, [230]through centuries, and into and out of many climates, they found that their palace car train had itself greatly changed within. In one place, where the mountain sides came close together, the road narrowed. Then the rate of movement slackened, so that the ice forming the train was all squeezed up high, and curled, and twisted up, like tooth-paste pressed out of a tube. The glacier was cracked and fissured in every direction.

Some of the fairies had feared, lest their train should run off the track, and bump into a hill, and a wreck follow; but the conductor assured them all was perfectly safe, and that no accidents ever happened on that line. One fairy tried to quote Latin, having once heard a parson say it, in his sermon. In attempting to say *Deo Volente*, she got it *Dic Volente*. So the knowing ones nicknamed this member of their family "Dick," and one, who was very irreverent, called her "Slippery Dick." She did not like a boy's name, but she could not help herself.

Dick warned them that they were near the end of the first part of their journey and that the train would stop, when at the level of five

thousand feet. Then the temperature would be so high, that they must all be prepared to jump overboard and swim.

At this bit of news, all the family laughed. They said they were glad, for already the palace [231]cars had got so wet with the thaw, inside, that the ceiling dripped on them continually, the seats were slippery, and fast melting away, while as for the floor, it was only a puddle, most of the time. It was a case of watering stock. After all, however, the fairies did not mind it much, and they were only in fun, when they pretended to grumble.

At last, the train, after having made a quick passage of a thousand years, or thereabouts, arrived at its terminal. Then it gradually melted away, becoming a noisy and very muddy river. One after another, the fairies turned themselves into water, and slid out into the stream, rolling about until they reached the beautiful Lake Lemman, at the end of which was Geneva. Here they expected to pay a brief visit, of four or five hundred years, before returning home to the mountain tops.

When they arrived at the entrance of the lake, and were well into the deep water, the fairies found waiting for them one of the prettiest craft that ever floated. It was a galley, of strange shape, with a high deck at the bow and the stern. There was plenty of room in the middle for the fairies to play and dance. With their pretty butterfly wings, and lovely gauzy robes, of every tint and hue, they looked so sweet!

On the prow of the ship stood their Queen, [232]who ruled over the lowlands and lake waters, and was captain of this fairy vessel. The smallest of the fairies were continually flitting round the queen, dropping flowers and fruits, and filling the air with perfumes. The vessel had sails of the shape called lateen, or leg-of-mutton. These were made of embroidered silk and cloth of gold. For even more

rapid movement, several snow white swans, swift of feet and bright of eye, were harnessed, with silver chains, to the front part, called the cut-water. These drew the ship along gracefully, all the time singing in chorus the sweetest songs imaginable. Accompanying this music was a large golden harp, set in front of the mast, and this, whispered to by the winds, made, with the swans' songs, the most delicious melody all day long.

Some of the fairies remembered the echo music of the Alpine horn, sent back by the lofty mountain peaks; which, however, lasted but a few seconds. Yet this lake melody continued from sunrise to sunset.

Whenever the Fairy Ship touched the shore, the ground, no matter how hard and stony it had been, at once became soft with soil. Then, grasses, and flowers, grain farms and orchards, and trees rich in luscious fruits, sprang up. Every boy and girl, always on the lookout, and adults, who were so fortunate as to catch a [233]glimpse of the Fairy Ship, would make a wish in their hearts, which was sure to be gratified. They got what they wanted, though often in fairy time, that is, years afterwards.

For years and years, the Fairy Ship plied up and down the lovely blue lake, stopping here and there. A moonlight night was the best time for catching a glimpse of it. Many old folks, still living, like to tell about the craft of good fortune, and also what they then wished for, when they were so happy as to see it coming, or sailing past them.

But bye and bye, when the black smoke of steamboats poisoned the air, and set the fairies sneezing and coughing, and roughened the throats of the swans, so that they could not sing any more, the Fairy Queen gave up her pleasure trips on the lake and ordered the snow fairies back to their mountains.

But, first, the mountain fairies had their visit to Geneva, where they saw the pretty shops and streets, and there these fairies still live, in the hearts of the children. Although nobody ever sees them nowadays, the old folks love to talk about them, and tell of the lovely times they had when children.

It is certain that the fairies left their blessing behind them, for to this day, on the great Genevan holiday, in the confectionery shops, on [234]birthday greetings, and on Christmas and New Year's cards, you may see a picture of the Fairy Ship, with its brightly colored lateen sails, inscribed with "Good Luck," or "Happy New Year," or "Many Joyful Returns of the Day." Sometimes, they who receive these cards feel as happy as if they had seen the Fairy Ship. [235]

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THE WHITE CHAMOIS

The dwarfs and chamois have always been good friends. This is chiefly because they are so much like each other, in being small. The short dwarfs look like little men. They have beards, and wear caps and clothes, but they are hardly as high as a yard stick, and measure up, only to the heads of quite small boys. In weight, some of them scarcely reach up to a calf. Occasionally, you find a little fellow that could be packed in a band box, or carried in a suit case. As for the baby dwarfs, one of them could be wrapped up in a napkin, and be dropped into a man's overcoat pocket.

Now the chamois is like the dwarf in this, that he is too small to be a goat, and not big enough to be a deer. He is a funny fellow to look at. His horns are only as long as from your elbow to your hand, and are turned around and backwards at the ends, so that they look like a pair of big, black fish hooks. He has a yellow head, with a dark band on it, and on each cheek is a strip of black, as if he were held in, with bridles [236] and bit. His coat of hair is brown, but his funny little tail is also black, and, oh, how bright his eyes are!

But when it comes to leaping, from rock to rock, the chamois is the Johnny Jump Up, among all animals, for he will skip over a chasm fifteen feet wide. Then, he will land on a tiny ledge of rock, so narrow that one could hardly imagine a cat could hold itself on. Putting his hind legs first, it gets a good footing, and then bounds forward.

These creatures are so agile, that one almost expects to see the strongest of them climb up trees, by hooking their horns on the branches, but they do not. They cut many capers, but not this one.

The wonderful thing is that the females, as well as the males, have horns also.

These chamois ladies, and the little folks of the family, that is, the doe and fawn, generally live down among the lower forests, while the daddies and strong young bucks stay, most of the time, up among the high rocks and peaks. They all eat the lovely flowers, grasses, mosses and aromatic herbs, that have a hot taste, and which keep them warm inside.

The very old chamois, with beards, often live alone and off by themselves. So the dwarfs and chamois are much alike, in this respect, that they are both chin choppers, in having hair growing, [237]like a tuft, under their chins, and both are able to whistle. For, when a hunter comes near and the wind blows from him to them, the sentinel, or watchman of the herd gives the alarm, by means of a short shrill sound. Then the whole party scampers far away.

Many thousands of stuffed heads of chamois, mounted, with their hooked horns and bright, artificial eyes, are seen on the walls of Swiss hotels and houses. After the invention of the rifle, so many chamois were killed, that laws were passed which forbade any one hunter to shoot more than one hundred during his lifetime. Then, when the herds of chamois went further and further away, men put telescopes on their long-range rifles, and were thus able to kill at a great distance—even a mile off.

Now among these four footed inhabitants of the high places near the sky, the white chamois is the king of the herds and the pet of the dwarfs. No hunter can kill this leader, for he is the property of the fairies. After a man has shot his hundredth animal, the white chamois appears, to give him warning to stop killing his fellow creatures. This king of the hook-horns can leap, as if it were flying,

over chasms. It moves through the deep snows far faster than the strongest man in the land.

To the good people, the white chamois is a [238]messenger of joy, telling of the safety of the herds, announcing also that there will be much sport for the brave hunter, and plenty of meat for the people, next summer, and for years to come; but, for the bad hunter who breaks the law and shoots over a hundred, whether bucks or does, or both, the white chamois is the messenger of death.

Now there was a very bad man, a hunter named Erni, who only said, "pooh pooh," and "fudge," when an old man informed him that a white chamois had been seen near the village, as if he had braved danger, in coming so near houses, in order to give warning.

But the man, instead of hanging up his trusty rifle on its pegs, sallied out very early one fine morning to shoot, if possible, this very creature, the white chamois, of which he had heard, but had never yet seen. It was still dark in the valley, when he started, but the man knew it would be bright light, by the time he should reach the peaks.

And so it was. Up over the rocks, and across the flowery meadows, that were more brilliant, with many colors, than any garden ever planted, or parlor carpet ever woven, the hunter made his way. When he came to the edge of a deep ravine, he slung his rifle over his back, and slid down. Then he climbed up to the top of a high [239]ridge. Balancing himself on the edge of the rocks, he looked across the terrible, yawning chasm. With his telescope, he swept the field of view, but instead of discerning anything brown, with a black tail, he saw, very clearly, a white chamois.

"Now for a good shot," he thought. "I'll show these old grannies and silly dotards, down in the village, what fools they are."

He unslung the rifle and then, for a moment only, looked down a thousand feet below, to the jagged rocks, wondering how he could get the body of the white chamois, if the bullet sped to its heart, and its carcass fell down.

But this was only for a second; for the bold fellow, familiar from his youth, with the mountains, laughed at any and all difficulties in his path. He was just about to level his weapon and take aim, when he heard a loud voice behind him, shouting:

“Erni, pull your cap down over your eyes.”

Astonished to hear his name called out at such a place, and struck with curiosity, he turned to see who and what it was.

There stood a dwarf, cap, beard, and all, with a stern look on his face. Pointing to the white chamois, he screamed:

“You had warning enough; down you go!”

Just then the hunter’s foot, with its hob-nailed [240]shoe, slipped upon a fragment of rock, and he fell. Over the cliff, down, down, down, the cruel man tumbled. A few minutes later, the Alpine condors were quarreling over his corpse. Later, the wolves picked his bones, that lay long upon the bare rocks. An awful warning!

After this, the chamois mothers, during the summer season, reared their kids in peace and quiet and all was happy in the high places, where the dwarfs and the chamois dwell as friends together. [241]

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THE SIREN OF THE RHINE

The Father of the Fairies, who used to live along and under the river Rhine, was not able always to control his daughters, after they had grown up. One of them, named Lorelei, a long time ago, used to appear above the current of the great stream, at the place where the water dashes over the rocks and foams high. It was very hard, in that place, or near it, for the sailors to steer their boats, so as not to have them dashed to pieces. Only with cool heads and strong arms could the boatmen get their vessels through in safety.

But if they should stop, to look at the pretty maidens, or to turn their heads to listen to the lovely music which they made, then, they were sure to lose their heads and have the boat go wrong and run upon the rocks. Then, of course, every one on board was thrown into the boiling waves, and drowned. The rocks are so sharp and jagged that, when the boat was upset, the poor people were thrown violently against these, and, even if spared by the waves, were sure to perish. [242]

The fairy, named Lorelei, paid no attention to their cries, but only laughed at them, as they struggled in the water.

This Lorelei, the chief of the river fairies, was never seen during the day, for during the sunlight she loved to sit among her jeweled caves, and remain far down below in the cool depths of the waters. During daylight hours, if any mortal tried to catch even a glimpse of her, he sought in vain. It thus happened that some people, and even boatmen on their way down to Rotterdam, laughed at the idea of there being a Lorelei, or any other fairy among the rocks.

But when the moon was at its full and shone brightest, and its silvery beams seemed to turn into a fairy-like gauze, woven of mist and moonbeams, the Lorelei was in her happiest mood.

As soon as the sun was down and twilight fell on the earth above, she called for her maidens to dress and adorn her lovely form with jewels. They plaited part of her golden hair, braiding it up over the top of her head and around at the back. This made a pretty, cap-like arrangement, while behind, and down her back, the other tresses fell in ripples, so that, in the faint evening wind, it would float out, and gleam, and rise and fall fitfully, on the breezes, seemingly now silvery, and again golden, in the moon's rays. A comb of gold, studded with rare gems, added to [243]the glory of her headdress, which, in the dim light from the night skies, would glisten like a cluster of stars.

No ordinary man could resist such a lure, for even apart from the entrancing music he would assuredly have the curiosity to see what this resplendent figure on the high rock could be.

So, when Lorelei was arrayed in her gorgeous apparel, that so heightened her beauty, this fairy would rise out of the current. Then, swimming over to the base of the loftiest rock that rose from near the river's shore, she always had her harp with her. Perching aloft, on the top of the pinnacle, she would sweep the strings and make the most entrancing music.

Whenever she saw a boatful of mariners, coming up, or going down, the Rhine, she trilled her voice to particular sweetness. Then they could see her, among the moonbeams, with her long golden hair streaming out on the evening breeze, or lightly lifted and rippled, when the zephyrs were soft as a breath. It seemed as if her song music was loveliest, when the night wind was most faintly sighing.

No matter how vehemently even the most stout-hearted sailors might have promised, or even vowed, to pay no attention to anything they heard, while shooting the rapids, they were sure to drop oars and pole, to listen, when the melody [244]floated through the air. Then, the man who steered and had been the loudest, in saying that he would clap his hand over his ears, and be deaf to any strains, however sweet, was always the first to weaken. He would stand still, as if shot through, with an arrow, and forget all about his duties at the rudder. Then, very quickly, the boat would strike against the rocks. In a moment more, the whole crew would be struggling, soon to sink under the waves, while the boat drifted along, bottom upwards. In their last moments, the drowning men heard the fairies laughing, as if they were enjoying good sport.

Now it is said that the only one who ever basked in the favor of the Lorelei, was a young and very good looking fisherman's son, named Ulric. He was his mother's darling and his father's pride, yet none of his brothers were jealous of him.

Whenever he appeared at night, the Lorelei would get down from her rock throne, and walk along the river's strand to welcome the handsome lad. He never, however he might seek diligently, or call loudly, could find her, or catch a single glimpse of her, by day; but the moment he met her at night he would be in raptures over her beauty.

Sometimes she would sing for him, so that he never knew how fast the hours sped away. It [245]was often midnight, before Ulric reached home, and, once in a while, it was near daybreak in the east.

But, always before parting from him, Lorelei would point out to her lover the place in the river, where, on the next morning, the fish would be found most plentifully.

Ulric would then tell his father, and brothers, where to cast their nets, and then they always drew up a good boat load of fish. These they sold in the market at a high price, and so had nice clothes and plenty to eat. So they never asked Ulric where he had been, so long, the night before, and why he reached home after the household were all in bed, and only their faithful dog Fritz kept watch at the door.

His mother warned her youngest son not to go and see the Lorelei too often, but he only laughed, kissed her, and said he could stop going when he wanted to; which is the way many boys and girls talk, not knowing the power of habit, which binds like a chain.

But one night, the old fisherman's son did not return, and in the morning, when his mother looked into his room, expecting to call and wake him, she found it empty. The bed was in perfect order, as if no one had slept in it. Putting her hand under the covers, she found no warmth.

At once, she gave the alarm to her husband [246]and sons, who were then at their breakfast. Taking their faithful dog with them, they at once set out to find the lad. All day long, they searched among the reeds, along the river bank, along the rocks, and even in the woods and on the hills; but no sign of son and brother was found. It was believed that the siren Lorelei, madly in love with the handsome boy, and, though in the form of a pretty woman, having no human heart to feel for his mother, had dragged him down into her caves under the river and deep in the earth, to enjoy him as her companion forever.

Bye and bye, so many sailors having been drowned, and so large a number of merchants having lost their precious treasures, in the wrecked boats, it was determined to send a band of brave men to seize the Lorelei, and bind her as a prisoner. If she resisted, she was

to be put to death. Thus a danger, to be dreaded more than jagged rocks, or treacherous currents, would be taken away. Then the merchants, in Cologne and Rotterdam, would be made happy, by piling up fortunes to enjoy and leave to their children.

Before starting on the expedition to capture the siren, every man was taken into the cathedral, and, before the altar, made to cross himself on the breast, and swear not to listen to the Lorelei's [247]song. All of them wore helmets, with thick padded ear muffs, coming down over their ears, and tied tight. All the orders of the captain were to be given by signs without his speaking a word.

But what availed arrows, swords, and spears, helmets and armor, and what were the strong muscles of brave men, against a beautiful fairy? When the company had landed, silently, on the shore, without endangering their boats, by going near the rocks, they suddenly found that they could not move; for the Lorelei had cast a spell over them, so that not one could lift hand or foot. All night long, the captain and his soldiers stood upright and motionless, as if made of wax and in a museum, while the moonbeams were reflected from their helmets, weapons and armor.

Yet during all these night hours, they had the power of eyesight. They saw all that was going on, and this was what they witnessed.

Just as the first gleams of the upcoming sun were beginning to streak the midnight blue of the skies, with light, and make rosy the east, but while, at the same time, the moon cast a pale light on the strange scene, they discerned plainly the Lorelei. She was standing on the highest pointed rock that rose out of the Rhine. There, the beautiful creature was, as if in a waiting attitude, before a mirror, and about to retire to her [248]bed for sleep. She took off all her ornaments and jewels. She unbound the bands of her shining hair, and unplaited the braids, until her tresses fell, in one glorious mass,

like a cataract of gold. She threw away, one by one, her comb, her girdle, her splendid robes, and each of her pearls and gems, into the foaming waters. Then she chanted a spell, to draw the waters up to the very top of the rock, until the wavelets rolled over her shining feet.

At this moment, two white horses, with long flowing manes, rose up, pawing and snorting, out of the flood. In golden harness, they drew a chariot, made of a single emerald, with sapphire wheels. She mounted within the vehicle and at a word from the siren, the steeds drove away, with the swiftness of a lightning flash, and disappeared.

Gradually the river subsided to its usual low level. Minute by minute passed, and the spell over the soldiers was gradually broken. First, they could move their toes; then, their fingers; and, after a while, their arms and legs. When at last, by a sign, the captain gave the order to march, they faced about, towards the river. Embarking on their boats, they rowed down the Rhine to Basel and Cologne, and told their weird story.

Never again was the Lorelei seen by man. [249]The people, who live around the old place of moonlight music, say that the siren felt insulted at this invasion of her domain. In her view, what were the lives of a few sailors, and the loss of one fisherman's son, for a lover, compared with such music as she gave so freely?

So, to punish foolish men, she has never again left her shining caves, under the Rhine, to appear on earth. Yet, inspired by her example, the musicians have continued her sweet music, while the poets never weary of telling her story in their rhymes and stanzas.

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THE ASS THAT SAW THE ANGEL

In that part of the Swiss Republic, called the Grisons, there is a sharp mountain, thin and round, like a horn. Because it is red, its name has always been Rothhorn, or Red Peak.

In one of the towns near by, lived a proud man, named Gruntli, who scouted the idea of there being any fairies, or Santa Claus. To his view, there was no intelligence, or virtue, in dumb brutes. He did not believe in anything but what he could see, taste, smell, hear, or handle with his ten fingers. This was what he called "science."

This old fellow, Gruntli, boasted of being "a man of science." He considered that everything belonging to religion was superstition. Mule drivers, cow milkers, cheese makers, and such folk, whom he called "the ignorant common people," might have faith in such things, but not he.

Gruntli was rich. He had a large house, with one room full of books, but not one of these contained any poetry, or stories, or novels, or romances. He sneered at anybody who said they [251]believed in Santa Claus, and he openly insulted people who loved to think that William Tell, their national hero, ever lived. As for the exploits of Joan of Arc, or of Arnold of Winkelried, he used to say that what was told of them was only the same as nursery stories.

Nobody loved Gruntli, for he was a hard master with his servants. Though he called himself "a man of science," and sneered at the village folks, when they went to church on Sunday, he did nothing to help the poor people of the valley.

Part of the wealth, of this hard-hearted man, consisted in mules, of which he had twenty or more. These were sumpters, or pack animals, that carried the milk, butter, cheese, and produce of the valley, to be sold in the nearest large city, and to bring back what was needed.

Gruntli's favorite animal for the saddle was a pure-blooded white ass, which his father had given him, when a boy, so that he and the dumb brute were well acquainted with each other. Large in size and imposing in appearance, this animal was named Julius Cæsar; or, for short, "Gulick," for that was the way the great Roman conqueror's name was pronounced in the local dialect.

People used to say that this donkey was the only living creature for which Gruntli cared, or had any affection; or, that he even treated decently. [252]Occasionally, his master would allow this, his favorite beast, to be ridden by his overseer, or chief clerk—a privilege on which this head man set great store. The sure-footed creature carried its rider over the most dangerous passes. It seemed almost a miracle, the way in which, along narrow ledges of rock, the ass moved as if on a well-paved road.

Gulick seemed to measure with its eye, and gauge the width necessary, even making allowance for its load, for the pack saddle, or for the knees of the rider; so that, though a dumb beast, its reputation for safety was great in all the region. Muleteers often used to scold their stubborn animals, by calling them "rabbit-eared fools," and "not worth one hoof of Gulick," the paragon among long eared animals.

Nevertheless, there were times, when the donkey, Gulick, showed that it had a mind of its own. Then it could be stubborn, too. But this was what men thought, and not the animal's own opinion of itself. This usually took place, when it saw that the path ahead, or

the ledge of rock, over which it was expected to pass, with a pack load, or a stout lady in the saddle, or a big fat fellow, with both legs far out and taking up the room, between the ass and the rock.

Then, no amount of scolding, yelling, bad temper, hard names, or even beating, could move [253]the creature. The only thing to do was to get off and unload. In fact, the ass had a very poor opinion of some human beings. He even pitied them, because they had only two legs, while donkeys had four.

Not once, in all its long life, did Gulick lose its way, slip, fall down, or have an accident. In fact, its master could go to sleep, while riding home. When, as was often the case, the man was too full of strong wine, to sit up straight, this was a good thing; for a sober donkey has more brains than a drunken man.

Some people, who believed in fairies, even thought that Gulick was really a human being who, for doing something wicked, in another world, had been changed, by a fairy, into this creature with the shaggy hide, ropy tail and ears like a jack rabbit's.

An event, that seemed to furnish a fresh foundation for the common belief, took place near the village of Plurs. Then, the general idea, that a man had, somehow, got into an ass's skin, was confirmed.

One night, Gruntli's overseer was returning from Zurich. He reached the village of Plurs, late at night. There, the wine being good and the stabling cheap, he expected to make his stay, until next morning. So, stepping into the wine room, and calling for the hostler, he sat down [254]before the table, thinking that all was right, according to the usual way of beasts and man, until morning.

But when the stable boy went outdoors, he found the line of mules was some distance up the road, and that Gulick was leading them.

Running after the train, he brought the animals back, to the inn; but when, for a moment, being at the end of the line, he left the beasts, to open the stable door, off trotted Gulick and all the donkeys after their leader.

So the boy had another run and was in very bad temper. He seized the bridle of Gulick, and gave such a jerk, in his anger, that he nearly broke the strap, and pained the animal's jaw.

Nevertheless, for a third time, the sagacious beast ran away. When the stable boy, out of patience, rushed into the wine room, and told the overseer of the strange behavior of his donkey, Gulick, the man had sense enough to follow the mule train.

Well for him and his master, that he did so, for, when hearing a frightful noise, he looked behind him, from the top of the hill, he saw a landslide, from the mountain flank, wipe out the whole town, leaving the houses, people and cattle buried under one white pall of earth, rock and snow.

After this, one would suppose that the owner [255]of Gulick would fully trust the animal's wonderful instinct and unerring vision, as well as his sure footedness.

But this man, Gruntli was, as he called himself, "too much of a man of science" to consider such an affair, as that of Gulick and the landslide, as anything but an accident, a coincidence, or, as an example of "the doctrine of averages."

Wishing, however, to see the ruin wrought by the landslide, he mounted Gulick, clapped his ankles against the animal's sides, and was off. Gruntli wore spurs, more for show than for use, for Gulick instantly obeyed the pull of his master's bridle, or the clap of his

foot, and never was known to need urging. So there never had been any blood on the points of Gruntli's spurs.

But this day, the master was in very bad humor, because seven of his houses, which he owned in the village, were now destroyed. Much of his income was thus lost, for he could no longer collect rents from the people who had been his tenants.

Now, as they were jogging along, and approached near the scene of yesterday's horror, the ass suddenly stopped with a jerk, that threw its master forward, and nearly off the saddle.

There, in front of the animal in the middle of the road, stood an angel holding a naked sword. Of course, Gruntli could not see anything, for [256]his soul had nearly shriveled up, and Gulick had never before met such a being. Yet the ass, even though it was a dumb brute, had enough sense to know that it dare not, and ought not, to rush up against the apparition, whatever it might be. Had it been rock, stone, ice, a mountain path, a chamois, or anything usual, the Swiss donkey would have known what to do. But before such an unusual sight, Gulick stood still.

As for Gruntli, he, being a self-styled "man of science," without any faith, and very little imagination, could see nothing. So, when Gulick, to get out of the way, turned aside and out of the road, to make its way through the field, Gruntli, getting very angry, beat the animal and in his bad temper, even laid on several blows with his whip handle.

At this unusual action of his master, the ass was so surprised, that he actually stopped. He turned round, gave a rebuking glance at Gruntli, and then tried to go on, but in vain.

Then the man, in a worse temper than ever, not only beat the dumb brute again, but he drove his spurs into the sides of the faithful beast, until little drops of blood dropped on the ground.

At this, even patient Gulick lost his donkey temper, and lifting one of his hind legs tried to kick the man's heels. [257]

This enraged Gruntli still further, and he cried out:

"You stupid beast! If you want to climb up into the saddle and ride yourself, I'll jump off."

Then he clutched his whip more tightly, expecting to get down and thrash the animal with all his strength.

But Gulick moved on, the road narrowing down, between rocks, as many bridle paths in Switzerland do. Yet no sooner had the intelligent beast entered into the shadow, than again a shining angel appeared in the path in front of them, but this time in a threatening manner, and waving his glittering sword.

Startled at the sight, the ass again stopped, hoping its master would treat his own beast more kindly and see what was the matter.

But angry men are nearly always blind, and sometimes half insane, or even wholly so. Gruntli once more drove his already bloody spurs into Gulick's side.

At this, stung with pain, and fearing to rush against the angel, the beast dashed sideways against the rocky wall.

Maddened, almost to insanity, at this action, and smarting with a crushed ankle, Gruntli beat the ass with repeated and cruel blows.

In spite of such inhuman treatment, and even more awed by the apparition, than by the agony [258]it was suffering, the ass lay down flat under its rider, though without hurting him. It turned its head around and looked at him, as if in stern rebuke, at this treating an old friend, that had ever served faithfully.

Unmoved by the beseeching look in the eyes of what had been his pet, since childhood, Gruntli, in a fresh fury of rage, bellowed out:

“I just wish I had a sword to kill you,” and he rained blow upon blow on his faithful brute.

Then he jumped off the saddle, and, leaving Gulick in the rocky path, walked forward a few rods. All the time he was wondering what had so disturbed and checked the brute.

One look, as he turned away to the brow of the mountain, revealed to him a scene of frightful desolation. Rocks, gravel, ice, snow, and general débris, covered what had been his seven houses, and tenants and their cattle. Looking up, he noticed that the face of the mountain, whence the mass of earth had slipped down, was greatly changed in form.

Nevertheless, the landslide, for so it was, had opened a view, impossible before, of a rich pasture, where many kine were grazing. Looking intently at a cow that, having filled its stomach with grass, was about to lie down, Gruntli noticed that, before doing so, the dumb animal fell, first, on its front knees. [259]

“Now I see that I am a fool,” he cried, as he beat upon his breast. “That cow has more religion than I, for it kneels before it lies down; while, before tumbling into bed, my knee has been unbent, this many a year.”

Then going back, he patted the neck of his faithful Gulick, washed off the blood stains, threw his spurs away, and spoke so kindly to the ass, that it rose up, and actually began frisking around. Then it sidled up close to Gruntli, and seemed to invite him to get on its back again.

This the man did, and, riding to where the village had been, organized a corps of relief to help the wounded and hungry, who were left alive, and he paid for medicines out of his own purse. Then he built new and better houses for his tenants, the survivors, and for those who came from other parts of the Swiss country.

And when later, a devout worshipper in church and helper of his fellow men, Gruntli cared for and fed his ass Gulick, in a comfortable stable, until at last the beast died at a good old age.


The pastor of the rebuilt village came one day, and asked Gruntli to tell the story of his great change and the reason of it. Then the man made answer as follows:


“When it came to pass that an ass could see an angel before I, a man of science, could discern, [260]or hear him, I thought it time to believe. So I at once exchanged science, so called, for faith, as a little child, and, my pride of knowledge for help to my fellow men.”

THE END.

COLOPHON

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Metadata

Title: Swiss fairy tales

Author: William Elliot Griffis (1843–1928) **Info**
<https://viaf.org/viaf/62346855/>

Illustrator: George Leonard Carlson (1887–1962) **Info**
<https://viaf.org/viaf/308212833/>

File generation date: 2023-01-07 18:52:09 UTC

Language: English

Original publication date: 1920

Keywords: Fairy tales--Switzerland

Library of Congress: 20013979
<https://lcn.loc.gov/20013979>

Revision History

2023-01-07 Started.

Corrections

The following corrections have been applied to the text:

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v	[<i>Not in source</i>]	.	1
3	a	at	1
6	Winkelreid	Winkelried	2
7	yagers	Jäger	3 / 2
23, 35, 122, 127	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"	1
26	the	to	2
36, 149, 154	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"	1
45	'	[<i>Deleted</i>]	1
56	excell	excel	1
60	basketfull	basketful	1
95	shounders	shoulders	1
98	coming-out	coming out	1
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247	monbeams	moonbeams	1
251	Winklereid	Winkelried	4

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