

THE ICE-MAIDEN AND OTHER TALES

and Other Tales.

Hans Christian Andersen

Translator : Fanny Fuller

Table of Contents

1. [The Ice-maiden](#)
 1. [I: Little Rudy](#)
 2. [II: The Journey to the New Home](#)
 3. [III: The Father's Brother](#)
 4. [IV: Babette](#)
 5. [V: Homewards](#)
 6. [VI: The Visit to the Mill](#)
 7. [VII: The Eagle's Nest](#)
 8. [VIII: The News Which the Parlour-cat Related](#)
 9. [IX: The Ice-maiden](#)
 10. [X: The God-mother](#)
 11. [XI: The Cousin](#)
 12. [XII: The Evil Powers](#)
 13. [XIII: In the Miller's House](#)
 14. [XIV: The Visions of the Night](#)
 15. [XV: Conclusion](#)
2. [The Butterfly](#)
3. [The Psyche](#)
4. [The Snail and the Rose-tree](#)

THE ICE-MAIDEN

I: LITTLE RUDY

Let us visit Switzerland and look around us in the glorious country of mountains, where the forest rises out of steep rocky walls; let us ascend to the dazzling snow-fields, and thence descend to the green plains, where the rivulets and brooks hasten away, foaming up, as if they feared not to vanish, as they reached the sea.

The sun beams upon the deep valley, it burns also upon the heavy masses of snow; so that after the lapse of years, they melt into shining ice-blocks, and become rolling avalanches and heaped-up glaciers.

Two of these lie in the broad clefts of the rock, under the Schreckhorn and Wetterhorn, near the little town of Grindelwald. They are so remarkable that many strangers come to gaze at them, in the summer time, from all parts of the world; they come over the high snow-covered mountains, they come from the deepest valleys, and they are obliged to ascend during many hours, and as they ascend, the valley sinks deeper and deeper, as though seen from an air-balloon.

Far around the peaks of the mountains, the clouds often hang like heavy curtains of smoke; whilst down in the valley, where the many brown wooden houses lie scattered about, a sun-beam shines, and here and there brings out a tiny spot, in radiant green, as though it were transparent. The water roars, froths and foams below, the water hums and tinkles above, and it looks as if silver ribbons were fluttering over the cliffs.

On each side of the way, as one ascends, are wooden houses; each house has a little potato-garden, and that is a necessity, for in the door-way are many little mouths. There are plenty of children, and they can consume abundance of food; they rush out of the houses, and throng about the travellers, come they on foot or in carriage. The whole horde of children traffic; the little ones offer prettily carved wooden houses, for sale, similar to those they build on the mountains. Rain or shine, the children assemble with their wares.

Some twenty years ago, there stood here, several times, a little boy, who wished to sell his toys, but he always kept aloof from the other children; he stood with serious countenance and with both hands tightly clasped around his wooden box, as if he feared it would slip away from him; but on account of this gravity, and because the boy was so small, it caused him to be remarked, and often he made the best bargain, without knowing why. His grandfather lived still higher in the mountains, and it was he who carved the pretty wooden houses. There stood in the room, an old cup-board, full of carvings; there were nut-crackers, knives, spoons, and boxes with delicate foliage, and leaping chamois; there was everything, which could rejoice a merry child's eye, but this little fellow, (he was named Rudy) looked at and desired only the old gun under the rafters. His grandfather had said, that he should have it some day, but that he must first grow big and strong enough to use it.

Small as the boy was, he was obliged to take care of the goats, and if he who can climb with them is a good guardian, well then indeed was Rudy. Why he climbed even higher than they! He loved to take the bird's nests from the trees, high in the air, for he was bold and daring; and he only smiled when he stood by the roaring water-fall, or when he heard

a rolling avalanche.

He never played with the other children; he only met them, when his grandfather sent him out to sell his carvings, and Rudy took but little interest in this; he much preferred to wander about the rocks, or to sit and listen to his grandfather relate about old times and about the inhabitants of Meiringen, where he came from. He said that these people had not been there since the beginning of the world; they had come from the far North, where the race called Swedes, dwelt. To know this, was indeed great wisdom, and Rudy knew this; but he became still wiser, through the intercourse which he had with the other occupants of the house—belonging to the animal race. There was a large dog, Ajola, an heir-loom from Rudy's father; and a cat, and she was of great importance to Rudy, for she had taught him to climb. "Come out on the roof!" said the cat, quite plain and distinctly, for when one is a child, and can not yet speak, one understands the hens and ducks, the cats and dogs remarkably well; they speak for us as intelligibly as father or mother. One needs but to be little, and then even grandfather's stick can neigh, and become a horse, with head, legs and tail. With some children, this knowledge slips away later than with others, and people say of these, that they are very backward, that they remain children fearfully long.—People say so many things!

"Come with me, little Rudy, out on the roof!" was about the first thing that the cat said, that Rudy understood. "It is all imagination about falling; one does not fall, when one does not fear to do so. Come, place your one paw so, and your other so! Take care of your fore-paws! Look sharp with your eyes, and give suppleness to your limbs! If there be a hole, jump, hold fast, that's the way I do!"

And Rudy did so, and that was the reason that he sat out on the roof with the cat so often; he sat with her in the tree-tops, yes, he sat on the edge of the rocks, where the cats could not come. "Higher, higher!" said the trees and bushes. "See, how we climb! how high we go, how firm we hold on, even on the outermost peaks of the rocks!"

And Rudy went generally on the mountain before the sun rose, and then he got his morning drink, the fresh, strengthening mountain air, the drink, that our Lord only can prepare, and men can read its recipe, and thus it stands written: "the fresh scent of the herbs of the mountains and the mint and thyme of the valleys."

All heaviness is imbibed by the hanging clouds, and the wind sends it out like grape-shot into the fir-woods; the fragrant breeze becomes perfume, light and fresh and ever fresher—that was Rudy's morning drink.

The blessing bringing daughters of the Sun, the sun-beams, kissed his cheeks, and Vertigo stood and watched, but dared not approach him; and the swallows below from grandfather's house, where there were no less than seven nests, flew up to him and the goats, and they sang: "We and you! and you and we!" They brought greetings from home, even from the two hens, the only birds in the room; with whom however Rudy never had intercourse.

Little as he was, he had traveled, and not a little, for so small a boy; he was born in the Canton Valais, and had been carried from there over the mountains. Lately he had visited the Staubbach, which waves in the air like a silver gauze, before the snow decked, dazzling white mountain: "the Jungfrau." And he had been in Grindelwald, near the great

glaciers; but that was a sad story. There, his mother had found her death, and, "little Rudy," so said his grandfather, "had lost his childish merriment." "When the boy was not a year old, he laughed more than he cried," so wrote his mother, "but since he was in the ice-gap, quite another mind has come over him." His grand-father did not like to speak on the subject, but every one on the mountain knew all about it.

Rudy's father had been a postilion, and the large dog in the room, had always followed him on his journeys to the lake of Geneva, over the Simplon. In the valley of the Rhone, in Canton Valais, still lived Rudy's family, on his father's side, and his father's brother was a famous chamois hunter and a well-known guide. Rudy was only a year old, when he lost his father, and his mother longed to return to her relations in Berner Oberlande. Her father lived a few hours walk from Grindelwald; he was a carver in wood, and earned enough by it to live. In the month of June, carrying her little child, she started homewards, accompanied by two chamois hunters; intending to cross the Gemmi on their way to Grindelwald. They already had accomplished the longer part of their journey, had passed the high ridges, had come to the snow-plains, they already saw the valley of their home, with its well-known wooden houses, and had now but to reach the summit of one of the great glaciers. The snow had freshly fallen and concealed a cleft,—which did not lead to the deepest abyss, where the water roared—but still deeper than man could reach. The young woman, who was holding her child, slipped, sank and was gone; one heard no cry, no sigh, nought but a little child weeping. More than an hour elapsed, before her companions could bring poles and ropes, from the nearest house, in order to afford assistance. After great exertion they drew from the ice-gap, what appeared to be two lifeless bodies; every means were employed and they succeeded in calling the child back to life, but not the mother. So the old grandfather received instead of a daughter, a daughter's son in his house; the little one, who laughed more than he wept, but, who now, seemed to have lost this custom. A change in him, had certainly taken place, in the cleft of the glacier, in the wonderful cold world; where, according to the belief of the Swiss peasant, the souls of the damned are incarcerated until the day of judgment.

Not unlike water, which after long journeying, has been compressed into blocks of green glass, the glaciers lie here, so that one huge mass of ice is heaped on the other. The rushing stream roars below and melts snow and ice; within, hollow caverns and mighty clefts open, this is a wonderful palace of ice, and in it dwells the Ice-Maiden, the Queen of the glaciers. She, the murderess, the destroyer, is half a child of air and half the powerful ruler of the streams; therefore, she had received the power, to elevate herself with the speed of the chamois to the highest pinnacle of the snow-topped mountain; where the most daring mountaineer had to hew his way, in order to take firm foot-hold. She sails up the rushing river on a slender fir-branch—springs from one cliff to another, with her long snow-white hair, fluttering around her, and with her bluish-green mantle, which resembles the water of the deep Swiss lakes.

"Crush, hold fast! the power is mine!" cried she. "They have stolen a lovely boy from me, a boy, whom I had kissed, but not kissed to death. He is again with men, he tends the goats on the mountains; he climbs up, up high, beyond the reach of all others, but not beyond mine! He is mine, I shall have him!"—

And she ordered Vertigo to fulfil her duty; it was too warm for the Ice-Maiden, in

summer-time, in the green spots where the mint thrives. Vertigo arose; one came, three came, (for Vertigo had many sisters, very many of them) and the Maiden chose the strongest among those that rule within doors and without. They sit on the balusters and on the spires of the steep towers, they tread through the air as the swimmer glides through the water and entice their prey down the abyss. Vertigo and the Ice-Maiden seize on men as the polypus clutches at all within its reach. Vertigo was to gain possession of Rudy. "Yes, just catch him for me" said Vertigo. "I cannot do it! The cat, the dirty thing, has taught him her arts! The child of the race of man, possesses a power, that repulses me; I cannot get at the little boy, when he hangs by the branches over the abyss. I may tickle him on the soles of his feet or give him a box on the ear whilst he is swinging in the air, it is of no avail. I can do nothing!"

"We *can* do it!" said the Ice-Maiden. "You or I! I! I!"—

"No, no!" sounded back the echo of the church-bells through the mountain, like a sweet melody; it was like speech, an harmonious chorus of all the spirits of nature, mild, good, full of love, for it came from the daughters of the sun-beams, who encamped themselves every evening in a circle around the pinnacles of the mountains, and spread out their rose-coloured wings, that grow more and more red as the sun sinks, and glow over the high Alps; men call it, "the Alpine glow." When the sun is down, they enter the peaks of the rocks and sleep on the white snow, until the sun rises, and then they sally forth. Above all, they love flowers, butterflies, and men, and amongst them they had chosen little Rudy as their favourite.

"You will not catch him! You shall not have him!" said they. "I have caught and kept stronger and larger ones!" said the Ice-Maiden.

Then the daughters of the Sun sang a lay of the wanderer, whose cloak the whirlwind had torn off and carried away. The wind took the covering, but not the man. "Ye children of strength can seize, but not hold him; he is stronger, he is more spirit-like, than we; he ascends higher than the Sun, our mother! He possesses the magic word, that restrains wind and water, so that they are obliged to obey and serve him!"

So sounded cheerfully the bell-like chorus.

And every morning the sun-beams shone through the tiny window in the grandfather's house, on the quiet child. The daughters of the sun-beams kissed him, they wished to thaw him, to warm him and to carry away with them the icy kiss, which the queenly maiden of the glaciers had given him, as he lay on his dead mother's lap, in the deep icy gap, whence he was saved through a miracle.

II: THE JOURNEY TO THE NEW HOME

Rudy was now eight years old. His father's brother, in Rhonethal, the other side of the mountain, wished to have the boy, for he thought that with him he would fare and prosper better; his grandfather perceived this and gave his consent.

Rudy must go. There were others to take leave of him, besides his grandfather; first there was Ajola, the old dog.

“Your father was post-boy and I was post-dog,” said Ajola. “We have travelled up and down; I know dogs and men on the other side of the mountain. It is not my custom to speak much, but now, that we shall not have much time to converse with each other, I must talk a little more than usual. I will relate a story to you; I shall tell you how I have earned my bread, and how I have eaten it. I do not understand it and I suppose that you will not either, but it matters not, for I have discovered that the good things of this earth are not equally divided between dogs or men. All are not fitted to lie on the lap and sip milk, I have not been accustomed to it; but I saw a little dog seated in the coach with us and it occupied a person's place. The woman who was its mistress, or who belonged to its mistress, had a bottle filled with milk, out of which she fed it; it got sweet sugar biscuits too, but it would not even eat them; only snuffed at them, and so the woman ate them herself. I ran in the mud, by the side of the coach, as hungry as a dog could be; I chewed my crude thoughts, that was not right—but this is often done! If I could but have been carried on some one's knee and have been seated in a coach! But one cannot have all one desires. I have not been able to do so, neither with barking nor with yawning.”

That was Ajola's speech, and Rudy seized him by the neck and kissed him on his moist mouth, and then he took the cat in his arms, but she was angry at it.

“You are getting too strong for me, and I will not use my claws against you! Just climb over the mountains, I taught you to climb! Never think that you will fall, then you are secure!”

Then the cat ran away, without letting Rudy see how her grief shone out of her eye.

The hens ran about the floor; one had lost her tail; a traveller, who wished to be a hunter, had shot it off, because the creature had taken the hen for a bird of prey!

“Rudy is going over the mountain!” said one hen. “He is always in a hurry,” said the other, “and I do not care for leave-takings!” and so they both tripped away.

And the goats, too, said farewell and cried: “Mit, mit, mah!” and that was so sad.

There were two nimble guides in the neighbourhood, and they were about to cross the mountains; they were to descend to the other side of the Gemmi, and Rudy followed them on foot. This was a severe march for such a little chap, but he had strength and courage, and felt not fatigue.

The swallows accompanied them a part of the way. They sang: “We and you! You and us!” The road went over the rapid Lütchine, which rushes forth from the black clefts of the glacier of Grindelwald, in many little streams. The fallen timber and the quarry-stones

serve as bridges; they pass the alder-bush and descend the mountain where the glacier has detached itself from the mountain side; they cross over the glacier, over the blocks of ice, and go around them. Rudy was obliged to creep a little, to walk a little, his eyes sparkled with delight, and he trod as firmly with his iron-shod mountain shoes, as though he wished to leave his foot-prints where he had stepped. The black mud which the mountain stream had poured upon the glacier gave it a calcined appearance, but the bluish-green, glassy ice still shone through it. They were obliged to go around the little ponds which were dammed up by blocks of ice; during these wanderings they came too near a large stone, which lay tottering on the brink of a crevice in the ice. The stone lost its equilibrium, it fell, rolled and the echo resounded from the deep hollow paths of the glacier.

Up, ever up; the glacier stretched itself on high—as a river, of wildly heaped up masses of ice, compressed among the steep cliffs. For an instant Rudy thought on what they had told him, about his having laid with his mother, in one of these cold-breathing chasms. Such thoughts soon vanished; it seemed to him as though it were some other story—one of the many which had been related to him. Now and then, when the men thought that the ascent was too difficult for the little lad, they would reach him their hand, but he was never weary and stood on the slippery ice as firm as a chamois. Now they reached the bottom of the rocks, they were soon among the bare stones, which were void of moss; soon under the low fir-trees and again out on the green common—ever changing, ever new. Around them arose the snow mountains, whose names were as familiar to Rudy as they were to every child in the neighbourhood: “the Jungfrau,” “the Mönch,” and “the Eiger.”

Rudy had never been so high before, had never before trodden on the vast sea of snow, which lay there with its immoveable waves. The wind blew single flakes about, as it blows the foam upon the waters of the sea.

Glacier stood by glacier, if one may say so, hand in hand; each one was an ice-palace for the Ice-Maiden, whose power and will is: “to catch and to bury.” The sun burned warmly, the snow was dazzling, as if sown with bluish-white, glittering diamond sparks. Countless insects (butterflies and bees mostly) lay in masses dead on the snow; they had ventured too high, or the wind had borne them thither, but to breathe their last in these cold regions. A threatening cloud hung over the Wetterhorn, like a fine, black tuft of wool. It lowered itself slowly, heavily, with that which lay concealed within it, and this was the “Föhn,”^[1] powerful in its strength when it broke loose. The impression of the entire journey, the night quarters above and then the road beyond, the deep rocky chasms, where the water forced its way through the blocks of stone with terrible rapidity, engraved itself indelibly on Rudy’s mind.

On the other side of the sea of snow, a forsaken stone hut gave them protection and shelter for the night; a fire was quickly lighted, for they found within it charcoal and fir branches; they arranged their couch as well as possible. The men seated themselves around the fire, smoked their tobacco and drank the warm spicy drink, which they had prepared for themselves. Rudy had his share too and they told him of the mysterious beings of the Alpine country; of the singular fighting snakes in the deep lakes; of the people of night; of the hordes of spectres, who carry sleepers through the air, towards the wonderful floating city of Venice; of the wild shepherd, who drives his black sheep over the meadow; it is

true, they had never been seen, but the sound of the bells and the unhappy bellowing of the flock, had been heard.

Rudy listened eagerly, but without any fear, for he did not even know what that was, and whilst he listened he thought he heard the ghost-like hollow bellowing! Yes, it became more and more distinct, the men heard it also, they stopped talking, listened and told Rudy he must not sleep.

It was the Föhn which blew, the powerful storm-wind, which rushes down the mountains into the valley and with its strength bends the trees, as if they were mere reeds, and lifts the wooden houses from one side of the river to the other, as if the move had been made on a chess-board.

After the lapse of an hour, they told Rudy that the storm had now blown over and that he might rest; with this license, fatigued by his march, he at once fell asleep.

They departed early in the morning; the sun showed Rudy new mountains, new glaciers and snow-fields; they had now reached Canton Valais and the other side of the mountain ridge which was visible at Grindelwald, but they were still far from the new home. Other chasms, precipices, pasture-grounds; forests and paths through the woods, unfolded themselves to the view; other houses, other human beings—but what human beings! Deformed creatures, with unmeaning, fat, yellowish-white faces; with a large, ugly, fleshy lump on their necks; these were cretins who dragged themselves miserably along and gazed with their stupid eyes on the strangers who arrived among them. As for the women, the greatest number of them were frightful!

Were these the inhabitants of the new home?

[1] A humid south wind on the lakes of Switzerland, a fearful storm.

III: THE FATHER'S BROTHER

The people in the uncle's house, looked, thank heaven, like those whom Rudy was accustomed to see. But one cretin was there, a poor silly lad, one of the many miserable creatures, who on account of their poverty and need, always make their home among the families of Canton Valais and remain with each but a couple of months. The wretched Saperli happened to be there when Rudy arrived.

Rudy's father's brother was still a vigorous hunter and was also a cooper by trade; his wife, a lively little person, had what is called a bird's face; her eyes resembled those of an eagle and she had a long neck entirely covered with down.

Everything was new to Rudy, the dress, manners and customs, yes, even the language, but that is soon acquired and understood by a child's ear. Here, they seemed to be better off, than in his grandfather's house; the dwelling rooms were larger, the walls looked gay with their chamois horns and highly polished rifles; over the door-way hung the picture of the blessed Virgin; alpine roses and a burning lamp stood before it.

His uncle, was as we have said before, one of the most famous chamois hunters in the neighbourhood and also the most experienced and best guide.

Rudy was to be the pet of the household, although there already was one, an old deaf and blind dog, whom they could no longer use; but they remembered his many past services and he was looked upon as a member of the family and was to pass his old days in peace. Rudy patted the dog, but he would have nothing to do with strangers; Rudy did not long remain one, for he soon took firm hold both in house and heart.

"One is not badly off in Canton Valais," said his uncle, "we have the chamois, they do not die out so soon as the mountain goat! It is a great deal better here now, than in the old times; they may talk about their glory as much as they please. The present time is much better, for a hole has been made in the purse and light and air let into our quiet valley. When old worn-out customs die away, something new springs forth!" said he. When uncle became talkative, he told of the years of his childhood and of his father's active time, when Valais was still a closed purse, as the people called it, and when it was filled with sick people and miserable cretins. French soldiers came, they were the right kind of doctors, they not only shot down the sickness but the men also.

"The Frenchmen can beat the stones until they surrender! they cut the Simplon-road out of the rocks—they have hewn out such a road, that I now can tell a three year old child to go to Italy! Keep to the highway, and a child may find his way there!" Then the uncle would sing a French song and cry hurrah for Napoleon Bonaparte.

Rudy now heard for the first time of France, of Lyons—the large city of the Rhone—for his uncle had been there.

"I wonder if Rudy will become an agile chamois hunter in a few years? He has every disposition for it!" said his uncle, and instructed him how to hold a rifle, how to aim and to fire. In the hunting season, he took him with him in the mountains and made him drink the warm chamois blood, which prevents the hunter from becoming dizzy. He taught him

to heed the time when the avalanches roll down the different sides of the mountain—at mid-day or at night—fall—which depended upon the heat of the rays of the sun. He taught him to notice the chamois, in order to learn from them how to jump, so as to alight steadily upon the feet. If there was no resting place in the clefts of the rock for the foot, he must know how to support himself with the elbow, and be able to climb by means of the muscles of the thigh and calf, even the neck must serve when it is necessary. The chamois are cunning, they place out-guards—but the hunter must be still more cunning and follow the trail—and he can deceive them by hanging his coat and hat on his alpine stick, and so make the chamois take the coat for the man.

One day when Rudy was out with his uncle hunting, he tried this sport.

The rocky path was not wide; indeed there was scarcely any, only a narrow ledge, close to the dizzy abyss. The snow was half-thawed, the stones crumbled when trodden upon, and his uncle stretched himself out full length and crept along. Each stone as it broke away, fell, knocked itself, bounded and then rolled down; it made many leaps from one rocky wall to another until it found repose in the black deep. Rudy stood about a hundred steps behind his uncle on the outermost cliff, and saw a huge golden vulture, hovering over his uncle, and sailing towards him through the air, as though wishing to cast the creeping worm into the abyss with one blow of his wing, and to make carrion of him. His uncle had only eyes for the chamois and its young kid, on the other side of the cleft. Rudy looked at the bird, understood what it wanted, and laid his hand on his rifle in order to shoot it. At that moment the chamois leaped—his uncle fired—the ball hit the animal, but the kid was gone, as though flight and danger had been its life's experience. The monstrous bird terrified by the report of the gun, took flight in another direction, and Rudy's uncle knew nought of his danger, until Rudy told him of it.

As they now were on their way home in the gayest spirits—his uncle playing one of his youthful melodies on his flute—they suddenly heard not far from them a singular sound; they looked sideways, they gazed aloof and saw high above them the snow covering of the rugged shelf of the rock, waving like an outspread piece of linen when agitated by the wind. The icy waves cracked like slabs of marble, they broke, dissolved in foaming, rushing water and sounded like a muffled thunder-clap. It was an avalanche rolling down, not over Rudy and his uncle, but near, only too near to them.

“Hold fast, Rudy,” cried he, “firm, with your whole strength!”

And Rudy clasped the trunk of a tree; his uncle climbed into its branches and held fast, whilst the avalanche rolled many fathoms away from them. But the air-drift of the blustering storm, which accompanied it, bowed down the trees and bushes around them like dry reeds and threw them beyond. Rudy lay cast on the earth; the trunk of the tree on which he had held was as though sawed off, and its crown was hurled still farther along. His uncle lay amongst the broken branches, with his head shattered; his hands were yet warm, but his face was no longer to be recognized. Rudy stood pale and trembling; this was the first terror of his life, the first hour of fear that he had ever known.

Late in the evening, he returned with his message of death to his home, which was now one of sorrow.

The wife stood without words, without tears, and not until the corpse was brought home

did her sorrow find an outburst. The poor cretin crept to his bed and was not seen all day, but towards evening he came to Rudy, and said: "Write a letter for me. Saperli cannot write! Saperli can take the letter to the post office."

"A letter for you," asked Rudy, "and to whom?"

"To our Lord Christ!"

"What do you mean?"

And the half-witted creature gave a touching glance at Rudy, folded his hands and said piously and solemnly: "Jesus Christ! Saperli wishes to send him a letter, praying him to let Saperli lie dead and not the man of this house!"

And Rudy pressed his hand, "the letter cannot be sent, the letter will not give him back to us!"

It was difficult for Rudy to explain the impossibility to him.

"Now you are the stay of the house!" said his foster-mother, and Rudy became it.

IV: BABETTE

Who is the best shot in Canton Valais? The chamois knew only too well: "Beware of Rudy!" they could say. Who is the handsomest hunter?—"It is Rudy." The young girls said this also, but they did not say: "Beware of Rudy!" No, not even the grave mothers, for he nodded to them quite as amicably as to the young girls. He was so bold and gay, his cheeks were brown, his teeth fresh and white and his coal-black eyes glittered; he was a handsome young fellow and but twenty years old. The icy water did not sting him when he swam, he could turn around in it like a fish; he could climb as did no one, and he was as firm on the rocky walls as a snail—for he had good sinews and muscles that served him well in leaping—the cat had first taught him this, and later the chamois. One could not trust one's self to a better guide than to Rudy. In this way he could collect quite a fortune, but he had no taste for the trade of a cooper, which his uncle had taught him; his delight and pleasure was to shoot chamois, and this was profitable also. Rudy was a good match if one did not look higher than one's station, and in dancing he was just the kind of dancer that young girls dream about, and one or the other were always thinking of him when they were awake.

"He kissed me whilst dancing!" said the schoolmaster's Annette to her most intimate friend, but she should not have said this, not even to her dearest friend, but it is difficult to keep such things to one's self—like sand in a purse with a hole in it, it soon runs out—and although Rudy was so steady and good it was soon known that he kissed whilst dancing.

"Watch him," said an old hunter, "he has commenced with A, and he will kiss the whole alphabet through!"

A kiss, at a dance, was all they could say in their gossiping, but he had kissed Annette, and she was by no means the flower of his heart.

Down near Bex, between the great walnut trees, close by a rapid little stream, dwelt the rich miller. The dwelling-house was a large three-storied building, with little towers covered with wood and coated with sheets of lead, which shone in the sunshine and in the moonshine; the largest tower had for a weather-cock a bright arrow which pierced an apple and which was intended to represent the apple shot by Tell. The mill looked neat and comfortable, so that it was really worth describing and drawing, but the miller's daughter could neither be described nor drawn, at least so said Rudy. Yet she was imprinted in his heart, and her eyes acted as a fire-brand upon it, and this had happened suddenly and unexpectedly. The most wonderful part of all was, that the miller's daughter, the pretty Babette, thought not of him, for she and Rudy had never even spoken two words with each other.

The miller was rich, and riches placed her much too high to be approached; "but no one," said Rudy to himself, "is placed so high as to be unapproachable; one must climb and one does not fall, when one does not think of it." *This* knowledge he had brought from home with him.

Now it so happened that Rudy had business at Bex and it was quite a journey there, for the railroad was not completed. The broad valley of Valais stretches itself from the glaciers of

the Rhone, under the foot of the Simplon—mountain, between many varying mountain—heights, with its mighty river, the Rhone, which often swells and destroys everything, overflowing fields and roads. The valley makes a bend, between the towns of Sion and St. Maurice, like an elbow and becomes so narrow at Maurice, that there only remains sufficient room for the river bed and a cart way. Here an old tower stands like a sentry before the Canton Valais; it ends at this point and overlooks the bridge, which has a wall towards the custom—house. Now begins the Canton called Pays de Vaud and the nearest town is Bex, where everything becomes luxuriant and fruitful—one is in a garden of walnut and chestnut trees and here and there, cypress and pomegranate blossoms peep out—it is as warm as the South; one imagines one’s self transplanted into Italy.

Rudy reached Bex, accomplished his business and looked about him, but he did not see a single miller’s boy, not to speak of Babette. It appeared as though they were not to meet.

It was evening, the air was heavy with the wild thyme and blooming linden, a glistening veil lay over the forest—clad mountains, there was a stillness over everything, but not the quiet of sleep. It seemed as though all nature retained her breath, as if she felt disposed to allow her image to be imprinted upon the firmament.

Here and there, there were poles standing on the green fields, between the trees; they held the telegraph wire, which has been conducted through this peaceful valley. An object leant against one of these poles, so immoveable, that one might have taken it for a withered trunk of a tree; but it was Rudy. He slept not and still less was he dead; but as the most important events of this earth, as well as affairs of vital moment for individuals pass over the wires, without their giving out a tone or a tremulous movement, even so flashed through Rudy, thoughts—powerful, overwhelming, speaking of the happiness of his life; his, henceforth, “*constant thought.*” His eyes were fixed upon a point in the trellis—work, and this was a light in Babette’s sitting room. Rudy was so motionless, one might have thought that he was observing a chamois, in order to shoot it. Now, however, he was like the chamois—which appears sculptured on the rock, and suddenly if a stone rolls, springs and flies away—thus stood Rudy, until a thought struck him.

“Never despair,” said he. “I shall make a visit to the mill, and say: Good evening miller, good evening Babette! One does not fall when one does not think of it! Babette must see me, if I am to be her husband!”

And Rudy laughed, was of good cheer and went to the mill; he knew what he wanted, he wanted Babette.

The river, with its yellowish white water rolled on; the willow trees and the lindens bowed themselves deep in the hastening water; Rudy went along the path, and as it says in the old child’s song:

— — — Zu des Müllers Haus,
Aber da war Niemand drinnen
Nur die Katze schaute aus!^[2]

The house—cat stood on the step, put up her back and said: “Miau!” but Rudy had no thoughts for her language, he knocked, no one heard, no one opened. “Miau!” said the cat. If Rudy had been little, he would have understood the speech of animals and known that

the cat told him: "There is no one at home!" He was obliged to cross over to the mill, to make inquiries, and here he had news. The master of the house was away on a journey, far away in the town of Interlaken—*inter lacus*, "between the lakes"—as the school-master, Annette's father, had explained, in his wisdom. Far away was the miller and Babette with him; there was to be a shooting festival, which was to commence on the following day and to continue for a whole week. The Swiss from all the German cantons were to meet there.

Poor Rudy, one could well say that he had not taken the happiest time to visit Bex; now he could return and that was what he did. He took the road over Sion and St. Maurice, back to his own valley, back to his own mountain, but he was not down-cast. On the following morning, when the sun rose, his good humour had returned, in fact it had never left him.

"Babette is in Interlaken, many a day's journey from here!" said he to himself, "it is a long road thither, if one goes by the highway, but not so far if one passes over the rocks and that is the road for a chamois hunter! I went this road formerly, for there is my home, where I lived with my grandfather when I was a little child, and they have a shooting festival in Interlaken! I will be the *first* one there, and that will I be with Babette also, as soon as I have made her acquaintance!"

With his light knapsack containing his Sunday clothes, with his gun and his huntsman's pouch, Rudy ascended the mountain. The short road, was a pretty long one, but the shooting-match had but commenced to-day and was to last more than a week; the miller and Babette were to remain the whole time, with their relations in Interlaken. Rudy crossed the Gemmi, for he wished to go to Grindelwald.

He stepped forwards merry and well, out into the fresh, light mountain air. The valley sank beneath him, the horizon widened; here and there a snow-peak, and soon appeared the whole shining white alpine chain. Rudy knew every snow mountain, onward he strode towards the Schreckhorn, that elevates its white powdered snow-finger high in the air.

At last he crossed the ridge of the mountain and the pasture-grounds and reached the valley of his home; the air was light and his spirits gay, mountain and valley stood resplendent with verdure and flowers. His heart was filled with youthful thoughts;—that one can never grow old, never die; but live, rule and enjoy;—free as a bird, light as a bird was he. The swallows flew by and sang as in his childhood: "We and you, and You and we!" All was happiness.

Below lay the velvet-green meadow, with its brown wooden houses, the Lüttschine hummed and roared. He saw the glacier with its green glass edges and its black crevices in the deep snow, and the under and upper glacier. The sound of the church-bells was carried over to him, as if they chimed a welcome home; his heart beat loudly and expanded, so, that for a moment, Babette vanished from it; his heart widened, it was so full of recollections. He retraced his steps, over the path, where he used to stand when a little boy, with the other children, on the edge of the ditch, and where he sold carved wooden houses. Yonder, under the fir-trees was his grandfather's house,—strangers dwelled there. Children came running up the path, wishing to sell; one of them held an alpine rose towards him. Rudy took it for a good omen and thought of Babette. Quickly he crossed the bridge, where the two Lüttschines meet; the leafy trees had increased and the walnut trees gave deeper shade. He saw the streaming Swiss and Danish flags—the white cross on the

red cloth—and Interlaken lay before him.

It was certainly a magnificent town; like no other, it seemed to Rudy. A Swiss town in its Sunday dress, was not like other trading-places, a mass of black stone houses, heavy, uninviting and stiff. No! it looked as though the wooden houses, on the mountain had run down into the green valley, to the clear, swift river and had ranged themselves in a row—a little in and out—so as to form a street, the most splendid of all streets, which had grown up since Rudy was here as a child. It appeared to him, that here all the pretty wooden houses that his grandfather had carved, and with which the cup-board at home used to be filled, had placed themselves there and had grown in strength, as the old, the oldest chestnut trees had done. Each house had carved wood-work around the windows and balconies, projecting roofs, pretty and neat; in front of every house a little flower garden extended into the stone-covered street. The houses were all placed on one side, as if they wished to conceal the forest-green meadow, where the cows with their tinkling bells made one fancy one's self near the high alpine pasture-grounds. The meadow was enclosed with high mountains, that leaned to one side so that the Jungfrau, the most stately of the Swiss mountains, with its glistening snow-clad top, was visible.

What a quantity of well dressed ladies and gentlemen from foreign countries! What multitudes of inhabitants from the different cantons! The shooters, with their numbers placed in a wreath around their hats, waiting to take their turn. Here was music and song, hurdy-gurdys and wind instruments, cries and confusion. The houses and bridges were decked with devices and verses; banners and flags floated, rifles sounded shot after shot; this was the best music to Rudy's ear and he entirely forgot Babette, although he had come for her sake.

The marksmen thronged towards the spot where the target-shooting was; Rudy was soon among them and he was the best, the luckiest, for he always hit the mark.

“Who can the strange hunter be?” they asked, “He speaks the French language as though he came from Canton Valais!” “He speaks our German very distinctly!” said others. “He is said to have lived in the neighbourhood of Grindelwald, when a child!” said one of them.

There was life in the youth; his eyes sparkled, his aim was true. Good luck gives courage, and Rudy had courage at all times; he soon had a large circle of friends around him, they praised him, they did homage to him, and Babette had almost entirely left his thoughts. At that moment a heavy hand struck him on the shoulder, and a gruff voice addressed him in the French tongue:

“You are from Canton Valais?”

Rudy turned around. A stout person, with a red, contented countenance, stood by him and that was the rich miller of Bex. He covered with his wide body, the slight pretty Babette, who however, soon peeped out with her beaming dark eyes. The rich peasant became consequential because the hunter from his canton had made the best shot and was the honoured one. Rudy was certainly a favourite of fortune, that, for which he had journeyed thither and almost forgotten had sought him.

When one meets a countryman far from one's home, why then one knows one another, and speaks together. Rudy was the first at the shooting festival and the miller was the first at Bex, through his money and mill, and so the two men pressed each other's hands: this

they had never done before. Babette also, gave Rudy her little hand and he pressed her's in return and looked at her, so—that she became quite red.

The miller told of the long journey which they had made here, of the many large towns which they had seen—that was a real journey; they had come in the steam-boat and had been driven by post and rail!

“I came by the short road,” said Rudy, “I came over the mountains; there is no path so high, that one can not reach it!”

“But one can break one's neck,” said the miller, “you look as though you would do so some day, you are so daring!”

“One does not fall, when one does not think of it!” said Rudy.

And the miller's family in Interlaken, with whom the miller and Babette were staying, begged Rudy to pay them a visit, for he was from the same canton as their relations.

These were glad tidings for Rudy, fortune smiled upon him, as it always does on those that rely upon themselves and think upon the saying: “Our Lord gives us nuts, but he does not crack them for us!” Rudy made himself quite at home with the miller's relations; they drank the health of the best marksman. Babette knocked her glass against his and Rudy gave thanks for the honour shown him.

In the evening, they all walked under the walnut trees, in front of the decorated hôtels; there was such a crowd, such a throng, that Rudy was obliged to offer his arm to Babette. “He was so rejoiced to have met people from Pays de Vaud,” said he, “Pays de Vaud and Valais were good neighbourly cantons.” His joy was so profound that it struck Babette, she must press his hand. They walked along almost like old acquaintances; she was so amusing, the darling little creature, it became her so prettily Rudy thought, when she described what was laughable and overdone in the dress of the ladies, and ridiculed their manners and walk. She did not do this in order to mock them, for no doubt they were very good people, yes! kind and amiable. Babette knew what was right, for she had a god-mother that was a distinguished English lady. She was in Bex, eighteen years ago, when Babette was baptized; she had given Babette, the expensive breastpin which she wore. The god-mother had written her two letters; this year she was to meet her in Interlaken, with her daughters; they were old maids, over thirty years old, said Babette;—she was just eighteen.

The sweet little mouth was not still a minute; everything that Babette said, sounded to Rudy of great importance. Then he related how often he had been in Bex, how well he knew the mill; how often he had seen Babette, but she of course had never remarked him; he told how, when he reached the mill, with many thoughts to which he could give no utterance, she and her father were far away; still not so far as to render it impossible for him to ascend the rocky wall which made the road so long.

Yes, he said this; and he also said how much he thought of her; that it was for her sake and not on account of the shooting festival that he had come.

Babette remained very still, for what he confided to her was almost too much joy.

The sun set behind the rocky wall, whilst they were walking, and there stood the Jungfrau

in all her radiant splendour, surrounded by the dark green circle of the adjacent mountains. The vast crowd of people stopped to look at it, Rudy and Babette also gazed upon its grandeur.

“It is nowhere more beautiful than here!” said Babette.

“Nowhere!” said Rudy, and looked at Babette.

“I must leave to-morrow!” said he, a little later.

“Visit us in Bex,” whispered Babette, “it will delight my father!”

[\[2\]](#) The cat looked out from the miller’s house,
No one was in, not even a mouse!

V: HOMEWARDS

Ah! how much Rudy carried with him, as he went home the next morning over the mountains. Yes, there were three silver goblets, two very fine rifles and a silver coffee pot, which one could use if one wished to go to house-keeping; but he carried with him something far, far more important, far mightier, or rather *that* carried him over the high mountains.

The weather was raw, moist and cold, grey and heavy; the clouds lowered over the mountain-tops like mourning veils, and enveloped the shining peaks of the rocks. The sound of the axe resounded from the depths of the forest, and the trunks of the trees rolled down the mountain, looking in the distance like slight sticks, but on approaching them they were heavy trees, suitable for making masts. The Lütshine rushed on with its monotonous sound, the wind blustered, the clouds sailed by.

Suddenly a young girl approached Rudy, whom he had not noticed before; not until she was beside him; she also was about crossing the mountain. Her eyes had so peculiar a power that one was forced to look into them; they were so strangely clear—clear as glass, so deep, so fathomless—

“Have you a beloved one?” asked Rudy; for to have a beloved one was everything to him.

“I have none!” said she, and laughed; but it was as though she was not speaking the truth.

“Do not let us take a by-way,” continued she, “we must go more to the left, that way is shorter!”

“Yes, so as to fall down a precipice!” said Rudy; “Do you know no better way, and yet wish to be a guide?”

“I know the road well,” said she, “my thoughts are with me; yours are beneath in the valley; here on high, one must think on the Ice-Maiden, for they say she is not well disposed to mankind!”

“I do not fear her,” said Rudy, “she was forced to let me go when I was a child, so I suppose I can slip away from her now that I am older!”

The darkness increased, the rain fell, the snow came; it shone and dazzled. “Give me your hand, I will help you to ascend!” said the girl, and touched him with icy-cold fingers.

“You help me,” said Rudy, “I do not yet need a woman’s help in climbing!” He strode quickly on, away from her; the snow-shower formed a curtain around him, the wind whistled by him and he heard the young girl laugh and sing; it sounded so oddly! Yes, that was certainly a spirit in the service of the Ice-Maiden. Rudy had heard of them, when he had passed a night on high; when he had crossed the mountain, as a little boy.

The snow fell more scantily and the shadows lay under him; he looked back, there was no one to be seen, but he heard laughing and *jodling* and it did not appear to come from a human being. When Rudy reached the uppermost portion of the mountain, where the rocky path leads to the valley of the Rhone, he saw in the direction of Chamouni, two bright stars, twinkling and shining in the clear streaks of blue; he thought of Babette, of

himself, of his happiness and became warmed by his thoughts.

VI: THE VISIT TO THE MILL

“You bring princely things into the house!” said the old foster-mother, her singular eagle-eyes glistened and she made strange and hasty motions with her lean neck.

“Fortune is with you, Rudy, I must kiss you, my sweet boy!”

Rudy allowed himself to be kissed, but one could read in his countenance, that he but submitted to circumstances and to little household miseries. “How handsome you are, Rudy!” said the old woman.

“Do not put notions into my head!” answered Rudy, and laughed, but still it pleased him.

“I say it once more,” said the old woman, “fortune is with you!”

“Yes, I agree with you there!” said he; thought of Babette and longed to be in the deep valley. “They must have returned, two days have passed since they expected to do so. I must go to Bex!”

Rudy went to Bex, and the inhabitants of the mill had returned; he was well received and they brought him greetings from the family at Interlaken. Babette did not talk much, she had grown silent; but her eyes spoke and that was quite enough for Rudy. The miller who generally liked to carry on the conversation—for he was accustomed to have every one laugh at his witty sayings and puns—was he not the rich miller?—seemed now to prefer to listen. Rudy recounted to him his hunting expeditions; described the difficulties, the dangers and the privations of the chamois hunter when on the lofty mountain peak; how often he must climb over the insecure snow-ledges, that the wind had blown on the rocky brink, and how he must pass over slight bridges that the snow-drifts had thrown across the abyss. Rudy looked fearless, his eyes sparkled whilst he spoke of the shrewdness of the chamois, of their daring leaps, of the violence of the Föhn and of the rolling avalanches. He observed that with every description he won more and more favour; but what pleased the miller more than all, was the account of the lamb’s vulture and the bold golden eagle.

In Canton Valais, not far from here, there was an eagle’s nest, very slyly built under the projecting edge of the rock; a young one was in it, but no one could steal it! An Englishman had offered Rudy a few days before, a whole handful of gold, if he would bring him the young one alive, “but everything has a limit,” said he, “the young eagle cannot be taken away, and it would be madness to attempt it!”

The wine and conversation flowed freely; but the evening appeared all too short for Rudy; yet it was past midnight, when he went home from his first visit to the mill.

The light shone a little while longer through the window and between the green trees; the parlour-cat came out of an opening in the roof and the kitchen-cat came along the gutter.

“Do you know the latest news at the mill?” said the parlour-cat, “there has been a silent betrothal in the house! Father does not yet know it, but Rudy and Babette have reached each other their paws under the table, and he trod three times on my fore-paws, but still I did not mew, for that would have awakened attention!”

“I should have done it, nevertheless!” said the kitchen-cat.

“What is suited to the kitchen is not suited to the parlour,” said the parlour–cat. “I should like to know what the miller will say, when he hears of the betrothal!”

Yes, what the miller would say! That was what Rudy would have liked to know, for Rudy was not at all patient. When the omnibus rumbled over the bridge of the Rhone, between Valais and Pays de Vaud not many days after, Rudy sat in it and was of good cheer; filled with pleasing thoughts of the “Yes,” of the same evening.

When evening came and the omnibus returned, yes, there sat Rudy within, but the parlour–cat, was running about in the mill with great news.

“Listen, you, in the kitchen! The miller knows everything now. This has had an exquisite ending! Rudy came here towards evening; he and Babette had much to whisper and to chatter about, as they stood in the walk, under the miller’s chamber. I lay close to their feet but they had neither eyes nor thoughts for me. ‘I am going directly to your father,’ said Rudy, ‘this is an honourable affair!’ ‘Shall I follow you?’ asked Babette, ‘it may give you more courage!’ ‘I have courage enough,’ said Rudy, ‘but if you are there, he will be forced to look at it in a more favourable light!’ They went in. Rudy trod heavily on my tail! Rudy is indescribably awkward; I mewed, but neither he nor Babette had ears to hear it. They opened the door, they entered and I preceded them; I leaped upon the back of a chair, for I did not know but that Rudy would overturn everything! But the miller reversed all, that was a great step! Out of the door, up the mountains, to the chamois! Rudy can aim at them now, but not at our little Babette!”

“But what was said?” asked the kitchen–cat.

“Said? Everything. ‘I care for her and she cares for me! When there is milk enough in the jug for one, there is milk enough in the jug for two!’ ‘But she is placed too high for you,’ said the miller, ‘she sits on gold dust, so now you know it; you can not reach her!’ ‘Nothing is too high; he who wills can reach anything!’ said Rudy. He is too headstrong on this subject! ‘But you cannot reach the eaglet, you said so yourself lately! Babette is still higher!’ ‘I will have them both!’ said Rudy. ‘Yes, I will bestow her upon you, if you make me a present of the eaglet alive!’ said the miller and laughed until the tears stood in his eyes.

“‘Thanks for your visit, Rudy! Come again to–morrow, you will find no one at home. Farewell, Rudy!’ Babette said farewell also, as sorrowfully as a kitten, that cannot see its mother. ‘A word is a word, a man is a man,’ said Rudy, ‘do not weep Babette, I shall bring the eaglet!’ ‘I hope that you will break your neck!’ said the miller. That’s what I call an overturning! Now Rudy has gone, and Babette sits and weeps; but the miller sings in German, he learned to do so whilst on his journey! I do not intend to trouble myself any longer about it, it does no good!”

“There is still a prospect!” said the kitchen–cat.

VII: THE EAGLE'S NEST

Merry and loud sounded the *jodel* from the mountain-path, it indicated good humour and joyous courage; it was Rudy; he was going to his friend Vesinand.

“You must help me! We will take Ragli with us; I am going after the eaglet on the brink of the rock!”

“Do you not wish to go after the black spot in the moon? That is quite as easy,” said Vesinand; “you are in a good humour!”

“Yes, because I am thinking of my wedding; but seriously, you shall know how my affairs stand!”

Vesinand and Ragli soon knew what Rudy wished.

“You are a bold fellow,” said they, “do not do this! You will break your neck!”

“One does not fall, when one does not think of it!” said Rudy.

About mid-day, they set out with poles, ladders and ropes; their path lay through bushes and brambles, over the rolling stones, up, up in the dark night.

The water rushed beneath them; the water flowed above them and the humid clouds chased each other in the air. The hunters approached the steep brink of the rock; it became darker and darker, the rocky walls almost met; high above them in the narrow fissure the air penetrated and gave light. Under their feet there was a deep abyss with its roaring waters.

They all three sat still, awaiting the grey of the morning; then the eagle would fly out; they must shoot him before they could think of obtaining the young one. Rudy seemed to be a part of the stone on which he sat; his rifle placed before him, ready to take aim, his eyes immoveably fastened on yon high cleft which concealed the eagle's nest. The three huntsmen waited long.

A crashing, whizzing noise sounded high above them; a large hovering object darkened the air. Two rifle barrels were aimed as the black eagle flew from its nest; a shot was heard, the out-spread wings moved an instant, then the bird slowly sank as if it wished to fill the entire cliff with its outstretched wings and bury the huntsmen in its fall. The eagle sank in the deep; the branches of the trees and bushes cracked, broken by the fall of the bird.

They now displayed their activity; three of the longest ladders were tied together; they stood them on the farthest point where the foot could place itself with security, close to the brink of the precipice—but they were not long enough; there was still a great space from the outermost projecting cliff, which protected the nest; the rocky wall was perfectly smooth. After some consultation, they decided to lower into the opening two ladders tied together and to fasten them to the three already beneath them. With great difficulty they dragged them up and attached them with cords; the ladders shot over the projecting cliffs and hung over the chasm; Rudy sat already on the lowest round.

It was an ice-cold morning, and the mist mounted from the black ravine. Rudy sat there like a fly on a rocking blade of grass, which a nest-building bird has dropped in its hasty flight, on the edge of a factory chimney; but the fly had the advantage of escaping by its wings, poor Rudy had none, he was almost sure to break his neck. The wind whistled around him and the roaring water from the thawed glaciers, the palace of the Ice-Maiden, poured itself into the abyss.

He gave the ladders a swinging motion—as the spider swings herself by her long thread—he seized them with a strong and steady hand, but they shook as if they had worn-out hasps.

The five long ladders looked like a tremulous reed, as they reached the nest and hung perpendicularly over the rocky wall. Now came the most dangerous part; Rudy had to climb as a cat climbs; but Rudy could do this, for the cat had taught it to him. He did not feel that Vertigo trod in the air behind him and stretched her polypus-like arms towards him. Now he stood on the highest round of the ladder and perceived that he was not sufficiently high to enable him to see into the nest; he could reach it with his hands. He tried how firm the twigs were, which plaited in one another formed the bottom of the nest; when he had assured himself of a thick and immovable one, he swung himself off of the ladder. He had his breast and head over the nest, out of which streamed towards him a stifling stench of carrion; torn lambs, chamois and birds lay decomposing around him. Vertigo, who had no power over him, blew poisonous vapours into his face to stupify him; below in the black, yawning abyss, sat the Ice-Maiden herself, on the hastening water, with her long greenish-white hair and stared at him with death-like eyes, which were pointed at him like two rifle barrels.

“Now, I shall catch you!”

Seated in one corner of the eagle’s nest was the eaglet, who could not fly yet, although so strong and powerful. Rudy fastened his eyes on it, held himself with his whole strength firmly by one hand, and with the other threw the noose around it. It was captured alive, its legs were in the knot; Rudy cast the rope over his shoulder, so that the animal dangled some distance below him, and sustained himself by another rope which hung down, until his feet touched the upper round of the ladder.

“Hold fast, do not think that you will fall and then you are sure not to do so!” That was the old lesson, and he followed it; held fast, climbed, was sure not to fall and he did not.

There resounded a strong *jodling*, and a joyous one too. Rudy stood on the firm, rocky ground with the young eaglet.

VIII: THE NEWS WHICH THE PARLOUR-CAT RELATED

“Here is what you demanded!” said Rudy, on entering the house of the miller at Bex, as he placed a large basket on the floor and took off the covering. Two yellow eyes, with black circles around them, fiery and wild, looked out as if they wished to set on fire, or to kill those around them. The short beak yawned ready to bite and the neck was red and downy.

“The eaglet!” cried the miller. Babette screamed, jumped to one side and could neither turn her eyes from Rudy, nor from the eaglet.

“You do not allow yourself to be frightened!” said the miller.

“And you keep your word, at all times,” said Rudy, “each has his characteristic trait!”

“But why did you not break your neck?” asked the miller.

“Because I held on firmly,” answered Rudy, “and I hold firmly on Babette!”

“First see that you have her!” said the miller and laughed; that was a good sign; Babette knew this.

“Let us take the eaglet from the basket, it is terrible to see how he glares! How did you get him?”

Rudy was obliged to recount his adventure, whilst the miller stared at him with eyes, which grew larger and larger.

“With your courage and with your luck you could take care of three wives!” said the miller.

“Thanks! Thanks!” cried Rudy.

“Yes, but you have not yet Babette!” said the miller as he struck the young chamois hunter, jestingly on the shoulder.

“Do you know the latest news in the mill?” said the parlour-cat to the kitchen-cat. “Rudy has brought us the young eagle and taken Babette in exchange. They have kissed each other and the father looked on. That is just as good as a betrothal; the old man did not overturn anything, he drew in his claws, took his nap and left the two seated, caressing each other. They have so much to relate, they will not get through till Christmas!”

They had not finished at Christmas.

The wind whistled through the brown foliage, the snow swept through the valley as it did on the high mountains. The Ice-Maiden sat in her proud castle and arrayed herself in her winter costume; the ice walls stood in glazed frost; where the mountain streams waved their watery veil in summer, were now seen thick elephantine icicles, shining garlands of ice, formed of fantastic ice crystals, encircled the fir-trees, which were powdered with snow.

The Ice-Maiden rode on the blustering wind over the deepest valleys. The snow covering lay over all Bex; Rudy stayed in doors more than was his wont, and sat with Babette. The wedding was to take place in the summer; their friends talked so much of it that it often

made their ears burn. All was sunshine with them, and the loveliest alpine rose was Babette, the sprightly, laughing Babette, who was as charming as the early spring; the spring that makes the birds sing, that will bring the summer time and the wedding day.

“How can they sit there and hang over each other,” exclaimed the parlour-cat, “I am really tired of their eternal mewling!”

IX: THE ICE-MAIDEN

The early spring time had unfolded the green leaves of the walnut and chestnut trees; they were remarkably luxuriant from the bridge of St. Maurice to the banks of the lake of Geneva.

The Rhone, which rushes forth from its source, has under the green glacier the palace of the Ice-Maiden. She is carried by it and the sharp wind to the elevated snow-fields, where she extends herself on her damp cushions in the brilliant sunshine. There she sits and gazes, with far-seeing sight, upon the valley where mortals busily move about like so many ants.

“Beings endowed with mental powers, as the children of the Sun, call you,” said the Ice-Maiden—“ye are worms! *One* snow-ball rolled and you and your houses and towns are crushed and swept away!” She raised her proud head still higher and looked with death-beaming eyes far around and below her. From the valley resounded a rumbling, a blasting of rocks, men were making railways and tunnels. “They are playing like moles,” said she, “they excavate passages, and a noise is made like the firing of a gun. When I transpose *my* castles, it roars louder than the rolling of the thunder!”

A smoke arose from the valley and moved along like a floating veil, like a waving plume; it was the locomotive which led the train over the newly built railroad—this crooked snake, whose limbs are formed of cars upon cars. It shot along with the speed of an arrow.

“They are playing the masters with their mental powers,” said the Ice-Maiden, “but the powers of nature are the ruling ones!” and she laughed and her laugh was echoed in the valley.

“Now an avalanche is rolling!” said the men below.

Still more loudly sang the children of the Sun; they sang of the “thoughts” of men which fetter the sea to the yoke, cut down mountains and fill up valleys; of human thoughts which rule the powers of nature. At this moment, a company of travellers crossed the snow-field where the Maiden sat; they had bound themselves firmly together with ropes, in order to form a large body on the smooth ice-field by the deep abyss.

“Worms!” said she, “as if you were lords of creation!” She turned from them and looked mockingly upon the deep valley, where the cars were rushing by.

“There sit those *thoughts* in their power of strength! I see them all!—There sits one, proud as a king and alone! They sit in masses! There, half are asleep! When the steam-dragon stops, they will descend and go their way! The thoughts go out into the world!” She laughed.

“There rolls another avalanche!” they said in the valley.

“It will not catch us!” said two on the back of the steam dragon;—“two souls and one thought”—these were Rudy and Babette; the miller was there also.

“As baggage,” said he, “I go along, as the indispensable!”

“There sit the two,” said the Ice–Maiden, “I have crushed many a chamois; I have bent and broken millions of alpine roses, so that no roots were left! I shall annihilate *them*! The thoughts! The mental powers!” She laughed.

“There rolls another avalanche!” they said in the valley.

X: THE GOD-MOTHER

In Montreux, one of the adjoining towns, which with Clarens, Vernex and Crin forms a garland around the northeast part of the lake of Geneva, dwelt Babette's god-mother, a distinguished English lady, with her daughters and a young relation. Although she had but lately arrived, the miller had already made her his visit and announced Babette's engagement; had spoken of Rudy and the eaglet; of the visit to Interlaken and in short had told the whole story. This had rejoiced her in the highest degree, both for Rudy and Babette's sake, as well as for the miller's; they must all visit her—therefore they came. Babette was to see her god-mother, and the god-mother was to see Babette.

At the end of the lake of Geneva, by the little town of Villeneuve, lay the steam-boat which after half an hour's trip from Vernex, arrived at Montreux. This is one of the coasts which are sung of by the poets. Here sat Byron, by the deep bluish green lake, under the walnut trees and wrote his melodious verses upon the prisoner of the deep sombre castle of Chillon. Here, where Clarens with its weeping willows, mirrored itself in the waters, once wandered Rousseau and dreamt of Heloïse. Yonder, where the Rhone glides along under Savoy's snow-topped mountains and not far from its mouth, in the lake lies a little island, indeed it is so small, that from the coast it is taken for a vessel. It is a valley between the rocks, which a lady caused to be dammed up a hundred years ago and to be covered with earth and planted with three acacia-trees, which now shade the whole island. Babette was quite charmed with this little spot; they must and should go there, yes, it must be charming beyond description to be on the island; but the steamer sailed by, and stopped as it should, at Vernex.

The little party wandered between the white, sunlighted walls, which surround the vineyards of the little mountain town of Montreux, through the fig-trees which flourish before every peasant's house and in whose gardens, the laurel and cypress trees are green. Half-way up the hill stood the boarding house where the god-mother resided.

The reception was very cordial. The god-mother was a large amiable person and had a round smiling countenance; as a child she must have had a real Raphael's angel head, but now it was an old angel's head with silvery white hair, well curled. The daughters were tall, slender, refined and much dressed. The young cousin who was with them, was clad in white from head to foot; he had golden hair and immense whiskers; he immediately showed little Babette the greatest attention.

Richly bound books, loose music and drawings lay strewn about the large table; the balcony door stood open and one had a view of the beautiful out-spread lake, which was so shining, so still, that the mountains of Savoy with their little villages, their forest and their snowy peaks mirrored themselves in it.

Rudy, who usually was so full of life, so merry and so daring, did not feel in his element; he moved about over the smooth floor as though he were treading on peas. How wearily the time dragged along, it was just as if one was in a tread mill! If they did go walking, why, that was just as slow; Rudy could take two steps forwards and two steps backwards and still remain in the pace of the others.

When they came to Chillon, (the old sombre castle on the rocky island) they entered in order to see the dungeon and the martyr's stake, as well as the rusty chains on the wall; the stone bed for those condemned to death and the trap-door where the wretched beings impaled on iron goads, were hurled into the breakers. It was a place of execution elevated through Byron's song to the world of poetry. Rudy was sad, he lent over the broad stone sill of the window, gazed into the deep blue water and over to the little solitary island with its three acacias and wished himself there, free from the whole gossiping society. Babette was remarkably merry, she had been indescribably amused. The cousin found her perfect.

"Yes, a perfect jackanapes!" said Rudy; this was the first time, that he had said something, that did not please her. The Englishman had presented her with a little book, as a souvenir of Chillon,—Byron's poem of "The Prisoner of Chillon," in the French language, so that Babette might read it.

"The book may be good," said Rudy, "but the finely combed fellow that gave it to you does not please me!"

"He looked like a meal-bag, without meal in it!" said the miller and laughed at his own wit. Rudy laughed and thought that this was very well said.

XI: THE COUSIN

When Rudy came to the mill, a couple of days afterwards, he found the young Englishman there. Babette had just cooked some trout for him and had dressed them with parsley in order to make them appear more inviting. That was assuredly not necessary. What did the Englishman want here? Did he come in order to have Babette entertain and wait upon him?

Rudy was jealous and that amused Babette; it rejoiced her, to learn the feelings of his heart, the strong as well as the weak ones.

Until now love had been a play and she played with Rudy's whole heart; yet he was her happiness, her life's thought, the noblest one! The more gloomy he looked, the more her eyes laughed and she would have liked to kiss the blonde Englishman with his golden whiskers, if she could have succeeded by so doing, in making Rudy rush away furious. Then, yes then, she would have known how much he loved her. That was not right, that was not wise in little Babette; but she was only nineteen! She did not reflect and still less did she think how her behaviour towards the young Englishman might be interpreted; for it was lighter and merrier than was seemly for the honourable and newly affianced daughter of the miller.

The mill lay where the highway slopes—under the snow covered rocky heights—which are called here, in the language of the country “Diablerets” close to a rapid mountain stream, which was of a greyish white, like bubbling soap suds. A smaller stream, rushes forth from the rocks on the other side of the river, passes through an enclosed, broad rafter-made-gutter and turns the large wheel of the mill. The gutter was so full of water, that it streamed over and offered a most slippery way, to one who had the idea of crossing more quickly to the mill; a young man had this idea—the Englishman. Guided by the light, which shone from Babette's window, he arrived in the evening, clothed in white, like a miller's boy; he had not learnt to climb and nearly tumbled head over heels into the stream, but escaped with wet sleeves and splashed pantaloons. He reached Babette's window, muddy and wet through, there he climbed into the old linden tree and imitated the screech of an owl, for he could not sing like any other bird. Babette heard it and peeped through the thin curtains, but when she remarked the white man and recognized him, her little heart fluttered with alarm, but also with anger. She hastily extinguished the light, fastened the windows securely and then she let him howl.

If Rudy was in the mill it would have been dreadful, but Rudy was not there; no, it was much worse, for he was below. There was loud conversation, angry words; there might be blows; yes, perhaps murder.

Babette was terrified; she opened the window, called Rudy's name and begged him to go; she said she would not suffer him to remain.

“You will not suffer me to remain,” he exclaimed, “then it is a preconcerted thing! You were expecting other friends, friends better than myself; shame on you, Babette!”

“You are detestable,” said Babette, “I hate you!” and she wept. “Go! Go!”

“I have not deserved this!” said he, and departed. His cheeks burned like fire, his heart burned like fire.

Babette threw herself on her bed and wept.

“So much as I love you, Rudy, how can you believe ill of me!”

She was angry, very angry, and this was good for her; otherwise she would have sorrowed deeply; but now she could sleep, and she slept the strengthening sleep of youth.

XII: THE EVIL POWERS

Rudy forsook Bex and went on his way home, in the fresh, cool air, up the snow-covered mountain, where the Ice-Maiden ruled. The leafy trees which lay beneath him, looked like potato vines; fir-trees and bushes became less frequent; the alpine roses grew in the snow, which lay in little spots like linen put out to bleach. There stood a blue anemone, he crushed it with the barrel of his gun.

Higher up two chamois appeared and Rudy's eyes gained lustre and his thoughts took a new direction; but he was not near enough to make a good shot; he ascended still higher, where only stiff grass grows between the blocks of stone; the chamois were quietly crossing the snow field; he hurried hastily on; the fog was descending and he suddenly stood before the steep rocky wall. The rain commenced to fall.

He felt a burning thirst; heat in his head, cold in all his limbs; he grasped his hunting flask, but it was empty; he had not thought of filling it when he rushed up the hill. He had never been ill, but now he was so; he was weary and had a desire to throw himself down to sleep, but everything was streaming with water. He endeavoured to collect his ideas, but all objects danced before his eyes. Suddenly he perceived a newly built house leaning against the rocks and in the doorway stood a young girl. Yes, it appeared to him that it was the schoolmaster's Annette, whom he had once kissed whilst dancing; but it was not Annette and yet he had seen her before—perhaps in Grindelwald, on the evening when he returned from the shooting-festival at Interlaken.

“Where do you come from?” asked he.

“I am at home,” said she, “I tend my flock!”

“Your flock, where do they pasture? Here are only cliffs and snow!”

“You have a ready answer,” said she and laughed; “below there is a charming meadow! There are my goats! I take good care of them! I lose none of them, what is mine, remains mine!”

“You are bold!” said Rudy.

“So are you!” answered she.

“Have you any milk? Do give me some, my thirst is intolerable!”

“I have something better than milk,” said she, “and you shall have it! Travellers came yesterday with their guide, but they forgot a flask of wine, such as you have never tasted; they will not come for it, I shall not drink it, so drink you!”

She brought the wine, poured it in a wooden cup and handed it to Rudy.

“That is good,” said he, “I have never drunk such a warming, such a fiery wine!” His eyes beamed, a life, a glow came over him; all sorrow and oppression seemed to die away; gushing, fresh human nature stirred itself within him.

“Why this is the schoolmaster's Annette,” exclaimed he, “give me a kiss!”

“Yes, give me the beautiful ring, which you wear on your finger!”

“My engagement ring?”

“Just that one!” said the young girl and pouring wine into the cup, put it to his lips and he drank. Then the joy of life streamed in his blood; the whole world seemed to belong to him. “Why torment one’s self? Every thing is made for our enjoyment and happiness! The stream of life is the stream of joy, and forgetfulness is felicity!” He looked at the young girl, it was Annette and then again not Annette; still less, an enchanted phantom, as he had named her, when he met her near Grindelwald. The girl on the mountain was fresh as the newly fallen snow, blooming as the alpine rose and light as a kid; and a human being like Rudy. He wound his arm about her, looked in her strange clear eyes, yes, only for a second—but was it spiritual life or was it death which flowed through him? Was he raised on high, or did he sink into the deep, murderous ice-pit, deeper and ever deeper? He saw icy walls like bluish green glass, numberless clefts yawned around, and the water sounded as it dropped, like a chime of bells; it was pearly, clear and shone in bluish white flames. The Ice-Maiden gave him a kiss, which made him shiver from head to foot and he gave a cry of pain. He staggered and fell; it grew dark before his eyes, but soon all became clear to him again; the evil powers had had their sport with him.

The alpine maiden had vanished, the mountain hut had vanished, the water beat against the bare rocky walls and all around him lay snow. Rudy wet to the skin, trembled from cold and his ring had disappeared, his engagement ring, which Babette had given him. He tried to fire off his rifle which lay near him in the snow but it missed. Humid clouds lay in the clefts like firm masses of snow and Vertigo watched for her powerless prey; beneath him in the deep chasm it sounded as if a block of the rock was rolling down and was endeavouring to crush and tear up all that met it in its fall.

In the mill sat Babette and wept; Rudy had not been there for six days; he who had been so wrong; he who must beg her forgiveness, because she loved him with her whole heart.

XIII: IN THE MILLER'S HOUSE

“What confusion!” said the parlour-cat to the kitchen-cat.

“Now all is wrong between Rudy and Babette. She sits and weeps and he thinks no longer on her, I suppose.

“I cannot bear it!” said the kitchen-cat.

“Nor I,” said the parlour-cat, “but I shall not worry myself any longer about it! Babette can take the red-whiskered one for a dear one, but he has not been here either, since he tried to get on the roof!”

Within and without, the evil powers ruled, and Rudy knew this, and reflected upon what had taken place both around and within him, whilst upon the mountain. Were those faces, or was all a feverish dream? He had never known fever or sickness before. Whilst he condemned Babette, he also condemned himself. He thought of the wild, wicked feelings which had lately possessed him. Could he confess everything to Babette? Every thought, which in the hour of temptation might have become a reality? He had lost her ring and by this loss had she won him back. Could she confess to him? It seemed as if his heart would break when he thought of her; so many recollections passed through his soul. He saw her a lively, laughing, petulant child; many a loving word, which she had said to him in the fullness of her heart, shot like a sunbeam through his breast and soon all there was sunshine for Babette.

She must be able to confess to him and she should do so.

He came to the mill, he came to confession; and this commenced with a kiss, and ended with the fact that Rudy was the sinner; his great fault was, that he had doubted Babette's fidelity; yes, that was indeed atrocious in him! Such mistrust, such violence could bring them both into misfortune! Yes, most surely! Thereupon Babette preached him a little sermon, which much diverted her and became her charmingly; in one article Rudy was quite right; the god-mother's relation was a jackanapes! She should burn the book that he had given her, and not possess the slightest object which could remind her of him.

“Now it is all arranged,” said the parlour-cat, “Rudy is here again, they understand each other and that is a great happiness!”

“Last night,” said the kitchen-cat, “I heard the rats say that the greatest happiness was to eat tallow candles, and to have abundance of tainted meat. Now who must one believe, the rats or the lovers?”

“Neither of them,” said the parlour-cat, “that is the surest way!”

The greatest happiness for Rudy and Babette was drawing near; they were awaiting, so they said, their happiest day, their wedding day.

But the wedding was not to be in the church of Bex, nor in the miller's house; the god-mother wished it to be solemnized near her, and the marriage ceremony was to take place in the beautiful little church of Montreux. The miller insisted that her desire should be fulfilled; he alone knew what the god-mother intended for the young couple; they were to

receive a bridal present from her, which was well worth so slight a concession. The day was appointed. They were to leave for Villeneuve, in time to arrive at Montreux early in the morning, and so enable the god-mother's daughters to dress the bride.

“Then I suppose there will be a wedding here in the house, on the following day,” said the parlour-cat, “otherwise, I would not give a single mew for the whole thing!”

“There will be a feast here,” said the kitchen-cat, “the ducks are slain, the pigeons necks wrung, and a whole deer hangs on the wall. My teeth itch just with looking on! To-morrow the journey commences!”

Yes, to-morrow! Rudy and Babette sat together for the last time in the mill.

Without was the alpine glow; the evening bells pealed; the daughters of the Sun sang: “What is for the best will take place!”

XIV: THE VISIONS OF THE NIGHT

The sun had gone down; the clouds lowered themselves into the Rhone valley—between the high mountains; the wind blew from the south over the mountains—an African wind, a Föhn,—which tore the clouds asunder. When the wind had passed, all was still for an instant; the parted clouds hung in fantastic forms between the forest-grown mountains. Over the hastening Rhone, their shapes resembled sea-monsters of the primeval world, soaring eagles of the air and leaping frogs of the ditches—they seemed to sink into the rapid stream and to sail on the river, yet they still floated in the air. The stream carried away a pine tree, torn up by the roots; and the water sent whirlpools ahead; this was Vertigo, with her attendants, and they danced in circles on the foaming stream. The moon shone on the snow of the mountain-peaks; it lighted up the dark forest and the singular white clouds; the peasants of the mountain, saw through their window panes, the nightly apparitions and the spirits of the powers of nature, as they sailed before the Ice-Maiden. She came from her glacier castle, she sat in a frail bark, a felled fir-tree; the water of the glaciers carried her up the stream out to the main sea.

“The wedding guests are coming!” was whizzed and sung in the air and in the water.

Visions without and visions within!

Babette dreamt a wonderful dream.

It appeared to her, as though she was married to Rudy, and had been so for many years. He had gone chamois hunting and as she sat at home, the young Englishman with the golden whiskers was beside her; his eyes were fiery, his words seemed endowed with magical power; he reached her his hand and she was obliged to follow him.

They flew from home. Steadily downwards.

A weight lay upon her heart and it grew ever heavier. It was a sin against Rudy, a sin against God; suddenly she stood forsaken. Her clothes were torn by the thorns; her hair had grown grey; she looked up in her sorrow and she saw Rudy on the edge of the rock. She stretched her arms towards him, but she ventured neither to call, nor to implore him; but she soon saw that it was not he himself, only his hunting coat and hat, which were hanging on his alpine staff, as the hunters are accustomed to place them, in order to deceive the chamois! Babette moaned in boundless anguish:

“Ah! would that I had died on my wedding day, my happiest day! Oh! my heavenly Father! That would have been a mercy, a life’s happiness! Then we would have obtained, the best, that could have happened to us! No one knows his future!” In her impious sorrow, she threw herself down the steep precipice. It seemed as if a string broke, and a sorrowful tone resounded.

Babette awoke—the dream was at an end and obliterated; but she knew that she had dreamt of something terrible, and of the young Englishman, whom she had neither seen, nor thought of, for many months. Was he perhaps in Montreux? Should she see him at her wedding? A slight shadow flitted over her delicate mouth, her brow contracted; but her smile soon returned; her eyes sparkled again; the sun shone so beautifully without, and to—

morrow, yes to-morrow was her and Rudy's wedding day.

Rudy had already arrived, when she came down stairs, and they soon left for Villeneuve. They were so happy, the two, and the miller also; he laughed and was radiant with joy; he was a good father, an honest soul.

“Now we are the masters of the house!” said the parlour-cat.

XV: CONCLUSION

It was not yet night, when the three joyous people reached Villeneuve and took their dinner. The miller seated himself in an arm-chair with his pipe and took a little nap. The betrothed went out of the town arm in arm, out on the carriage way, under the bush-grown rocks, to the deep bluish-green lake. Sombre Chillon, with its grey walls and heavy towers, mirrored itself in the clear water; but still nearer lay the little island, with its three acacias, and it looked like a bouquet on the lake.

“How charming it must be there!” said Babette; she felt again the greatest desire to visit it, and this wish could be immediately fulfilled; for a boat lay on the shore and the rope which fastened it, was easy to untie. As no one was visible, from whom they could ask permission, they took the boat without hesitation, for Rudy could row well. The oars skimmed like the fins of a fish, over the pliant water, which is so yielding and still so strong; which is all back to carry, but all mouth to engulf; which smiles—yes, is gentleness itself, and still awakens terror—and is so powerful in destroying. The rapid current soon brought the boat to the island; they stepped on land. There was just room enough for the two to dance.

Rudy swung Babette three times around, and then they seated themselves on the little bench, under the acacias, looked into each other’s eyes, held each other by the hand, and everything around them shone in the splendour of the setting sun. The forests of fir-trees on the mountains became of a pinkish lilac aspect, the colour of blooming heath, and where the bare rocks were apparent, they glowed as if they were transparent. The clouds in the sky were radiant with a red glow; the whole lake was like a fresh flaming rose leaf. As the shadows arose to the snow-covered mountains of Savoy, they became dark blue, but the uppermost peak seemed like red lava and pointed out for a moment, the whole range of mountains, whose masses arose glowing from the bosom of the earth.

It seemed to Rudy and Babette, that they had never seen such an alpine glow. The snow-covered Dent-du-Midi, had a lustre like the full moon, when it rises to the horizon.

“So much beauty, so much happiness!” they both said.

“Earth can give me no more,” said Rudy, “an evening hour like this is a whole life! How often have I felt as now, and thought that if everything should end suddenly, how happily have I lived! How blessed is this world! The day ended, a new one dawned and I felt that it was still more beautiful! How bountiful is our Lord, Babette!”

“I am so happy!” said she.

“Earth can give me no more!” exclaimed Rudy.

The evening bells resounded from the Savoy and Swiss mountains; the bluish-black Jura arose in golden splendour towards the west.

“God give you that which is most excellent and best, Rudy!” said Babette.

“He will do that,” answered Rudy, “to-morrow I shall have it! To-morrow you will be entirely mine! Mine own, little, lovely wife!”

“The boat!” cried Babette at the same moment.

The boat, which was to convey them back, had broken loose and was sailing from the island.

“I will go for it!” said Rudy. He threw off his coat, drew off his boots, sprang in the lake and swam towards the boat.

The clear, bluish–grey water of the ice mountains, was cold and deep. Rudy gave but a single glance and it seemed as though he saw a gold ring, rolling, shining and sporting—he thought on his lost engagement ring—and the ring grew larger, widened into a sparkling circle and within it shone the clear glacier; all about yawned endless deep chasms; the water dropped and sounded like a chime of bells, and shone with bluish–white flames. He saw in a second, what we must say in many long words. Young hunters and young girls, men and women, who had once perished in the glacier, stood there living, with open eyes and smiling mouth; deep below them chimed from buried towns the peal of church bells; under the arches of the churches knelt the congregation; pieces of ice formed the organ pipes, and the mountain stream played the organ. On the clear transparent ground sat the Ice–Maiden; she raised herself towards Rudy, kissed his feet, and the coldness of death ran through his limbs and gave him an electric shock—ice and fire. He could not perceive the difference.

“Mine, mine!” sounded around him and within him.

“I kissed you, when you were young, kissed you on your mouth! Now I kiss your feet, you are entirely mine!”

He vanished in the clear blue water.

Everything was still; the church bells stopped ringing; the last tones died away with the splendour of the red clouds.

“You are mine!” sounded in the deep. “You are mine!” sounded from on high, from the infinite.

How happy to fly from love to love, from earth to heaven!

A string broke, a cry of grief was heard, the icy kiss of death conquered; the prelude ended; so that the drama of life might commence, discord melted into harmony.—

Do you call this a sad story?

Poor Babette! For her it was a period of anguish.

The boat drifted farther and farther. No one on shore knew that the lovers were on the island. The evening darkened, the clouds lowered themselves; night came. She stood there, solitary, despairing, moaning. A flash of lightning passed over the Jura mountains, over Switzerland and over Savoy. From all sides flash upon flash of lightning, clap upon clap of thunder, which rolled continuously many minutes. At times the lightning was vivid as sunshine, and you could distinguish the grape vines; then all became black again in the dark night. The lightning formed knots, ties, zigzags, complicated figures; it struck in the lake, so that it lit it up on all sides; whilst the noise of the thunder was made louder by the echo. The boat was drawn on shore; all living objects sought shelter. Now the rain

streamed down.

“Where can Rudy and Babette be in this frightful weather!” said the miller.

Babette sat with folded hands, with her head in her lap, mute with sorrow, with screaming and bewailing.

“In the deep water,” said she to herself, “he is as far down as the glaciers!”

She remembered what Rudy had related to her of his mother’s death, of his preservation, and how he was withdrawn death-like, from the clefts of the glacier. “The Ice-Maiden has him again!”

There was a flash of lightning, as dazzling as the sunlight on the white snow. Babette started up; at this instant, the sea rose like a glittering glacier; there stood the Ice-Maiden majestic, pale, blue, shining, and at her feet lay Rudy’s corpse. “Mine!” said she, and then all around was fog and night and streaming water.

“Cruel!” moaned Babette, “why must he die, now that the day of our happiness approached. God! Enlighten my understanding! Enlighten my heart! I do not understand thy ways! Notwithstanding all thy omnipotence and wisdom, I still grope in the darkness.”

God enlightened her heart. A thought like a ray of mercy, her last night’s dream in all its vividness flashed through her; she remembered the words which she had spoken: “the wish for the best for herself and Rudy.”

“Woe is me! Was that the sinful seed in my heart? Did my dream foretell my future life? Is all this misery for my salvation? Me, miserable one!”

Lamenting, sat she in the dark night. In the solemn stillness, sounded Rudy’s last words; the last ones he had uttered: “Earth has no more happiness to give me!” She had heard it in the fullness of her joy, she heard it again in all the depths of her sorrow.

* * * * *

A couple of years have passed since then. The lake smiles, the coast smiles; the vine branches are filled with ripe grapes; the steamboats glide along with waving flags and the pleasure boats float over the watery mirror, with their two expanded sails like white butterflies. The railroad to Chillon is opened; it leads into the Rhone valley; strangers alight at every station; they arrive with their red covered guide books and read of remarkable sights which are to be seen. They visit Chillon, they stand upon the little island, with its three acacias—out on the lake—and they read in the book about the betrothed ones, who sailed over one evening in the year 1856;—of the death of the bridegroom, and: “it was not till the next morning, that the despairing shrieks of the bride were heard on the coast!”

The book does not tell, however, of Babette’s quiet life with her father; not in the mill, where strangers now dwell, but in the beautiful house, near the railway station. There she looks from the window many an evening and gazes over the chestnut trees, upon the snow mountains, where Rudy once climbed. She sees in the evening hours the alpine glow—the children of the Sun encamp themselves above, and repeat the song of the wanderer, whose mantle the whirlwind tore off, and carried away: “it took the covering but not the man.”

There is a rosy hue on the snow of the mountains; there is a rosy hue in every heart, where the thought dwells, that: “God always gives us that which is best for us!” but it is not always revealed to us, as it once happened to Babette in her dream.

THE BUTTERFLY

The butterfly wished to procure a bride for himself—of course, one of the flowers—a pretty little one. He looked about him. Each one sat quietly and thoughtfully on her stalk, as a young maiden should sit, when she is not affianced; but there were many of them, and it was a difficult matter to choose amongst them. The butterfly could not make up his mind; so he flew to the daisy. The French call her *Marguerite*; they know that she can tell fortunes, and she does this when lovers pluck off leaf after leaf and ask her at each one a question about the beloved one: “How does he love me?—With all his heart?—With sorrow?—Above all?—Can not refrain from it?—Quite secretly?—A little bit?—Not at all?”—or questions to the same import. Each one asks in his own language. The butterfly flew towards her and questioned her; he did not pluck off the leaves, but kissed each separate one, thinking that by so doing, he would make himself more agreeable to the good creature.

“Sweet Margaret Daisy,” said he, “of all the flowers you are the wisest woman! You can prophesy! Tell me, shall I obtain this one or that one? Which one? If I but know this, I can fly to the charming one at once, and pay my court!”

Margaret did not answer. She could not bear to be called a *woman*, for she was a young girl, and when one is a young girl, one is not a woman.

He asked again, he asked a third time, but as she did not answer a single word, he questioned her no more and flew away without further parley, intent on his courtship.

It was early spring time, and there was an abundance of snow-drops and crocuses. “They are very neat,” said the butterfly, “pretty little confirmed ones, but a little green!” He, like all young men looked at older girls.

From thence he flew to the anemones; but he found them a little too sentimental; the tulips, too showy; the broom, not of a good family; the linden blossoms, too small—then they had so many relations; as to the apple blossoms, why to look at them you would think them as healthy as roses, but to-day they blossom and to-morrow, if the wind blows, they drop off; a marriage with them would be too short. The pea blossom pleased him most, she was pink and white, she was pure and refined and belonged to the housewifely girls that look well, and still can make themselves useful in the kitchen. He had almost concluded to make love to her, when he saw hanging near to her, a pea-pod with its white blossom. “Who is that?” asked he. “That is my sister,” said the pea blossom.

“How now, is that the way you look when older?” This terrified the butterfly and he flew away.

The honeysuckles were hanging over the fence—young ladies with long faces and yellow skins—but he did not fancy their style of beauty. Yes, but which did he like? Ask him!

The spring passed, the summer passed, and then came the autumn. The flowers appeared in their most beautiful dresses, but of what avail was this? The butterfly’s fresh youthful feelings had vanished. In old age, the heart longs for fragrance, and dahlias and

gillyflowers are scentless. So the butterfly flew to the mint. “She has no flower at all, but she is herself a flower, for she is fragrant from head to foot and each leaf is filled with perfume. I shall take her!”

But the mint stood stiff and still, and at last said: “Friendship—but nothing more! I am old and you are old! We can live very well for one another, but to marry? No! Do not let us make fools of ourselves in our old age.”

So the butterfly obtained no one.

The butterfly remained a bachelor.

Many violent and transient showers came late in the autumn; the wind blew so coldly down the back of the old willow trees, that it cracked within them. It did not do to fly about in summer garments, for even love itself would then grow cold. The butterfly however preferred not to fly out at all; he had by chance entered a door-way, and there was fire in the stove—yes, it was just as warm there, as in summer-time;—there he could live. “Life is not enough,” said he, “one must have sunshine, liberty and a little flower!”

He flew against the window-panes, was seen, was run through by a pin and placed in a curiosity-box; one could not do more for him.

“Now I also am seated on a stalk like a flower,” said the butterfly, “it is not so comfortable after all! But it is as well as being married, for then one is tied down!” He consoled himself with this.

“What a wretched consolation!” said the flower, that grew in the pot in the room.

“One can not entirely trust to flowers that grow in pots,” thought the butterfly, “they have too much intercourse with men.”

THE PSYCHE

A large star beams in the dawn of morning in the red sky—the clearest star of the morning—its rays tremble upon the white wall, as if they wished to write down and relate, the scenes which they had witnessed during many centuries.

Listen to one of these stories!

A short time ago—(this *not long ago* is with us men—centuries)—my rays followed a young artist; it was in the realm of the Pope, in the city of the world, in Rome. Many changes have been made, but the imperial palace, was, as it is to-day, a ruin; between the overthrown marble columns and over the ruined bath-rooms, whose walls were still decorated with gold, grew fig and laurel trees. The Colosseum was a ruin; the church bells rang, the incense arose and processions passed through the streets with tapers and gorgeous canopies. The Church was holy, and art was lofty and holy also. In Rome dwelt Raphael, the greatest painter of the world, here also dwelt Michael Angelo, the greatest sculptor of the age; even the Pope did homage to them both, and honoured them with his visits. Art was recognized, honoured and rewarded. All greatness and excellence is not seen and recognized.

In a little narrow street, stood an old house, which had once been a temple; here dwelt a young artist; he was poor, he was unknown; it is true that he had young friends, artists also, young in feelings, in hopes, and in thoughts. They told him, that he was rich in talents and excellence but that he needed confidence in himself. He was never satisfied with his work and either destroyed all that he modeled or left it unfinished; this is not the proper course to adopt, if one would be known, appreciated and live.

“You are a dreamer,” said they, “this is your misfortune! You have not yet lived, you have not inhaled life in large healthy draughts, you have not yet enjoyed it. One should do this in youth and become a man! Look at the great master Raphael whom the Pope honours and the world admires,—he takes wine and bread with him.”

“He dines with the baker’s wife, the pretty Fornarina!” said Angelo, one of the merry young friends.

Yes, they all appealed to his good sense and to his youth.

They wished to have the young artist join them in their merry-makings, in their extravagances and in their mad tricks; he would do so for a short time, for his blood was warm, his imagination strong; he could take his part in their merry conversation, and laugh as loudly as the others; and yet “the merry life of Raphael,” as they named it, vanished from him like the morning mist, when he saw the godlike lustre which shone forth from the paintings of the great masters, or when he stood in the Vatican and beheld the forms of beauty, which the old sculptors had fashioned from blocks of marble, centuries ago. His breast swelled, he felt something so lofty, so holy, so elevated within him, yes, something so great and good, that he longed to create and chisel like forms from marble blocks. He desired to give expression to the feelings which agitated his heart; but how and in what shape? The soft clay allowed itself to be modeled into beautiful figures by his fingers, but

on the following day, dissatisfied, he destroyed all he had created.

One day he passed by one of the rich palaces, of which Rome has so many; he stood a moment at the large open entrance, and gazed into a little garden, full of the most beautiful roses, which was surrounded by archways, decorated with paintings. Large, white callas, with their green leaves, sprouted forth from marble shells, into which splashed clear water; a form glided by, a young girl, the daughter of this princely house, so elegant, so light, so charming! He had never seen so lovely a woman. Hold! yes, once, one made by Raphael, a painting of Psyche, in one of the palaces of Rome. There she was but painted, here she breathed and moved.

She lived in his thoughts and in his heart; he went home to his poor lodgings and formed a Psyche out of clay; it was the rich, young Roman girl, the princely woman, and he gazed at his work with satisfaction, for the first time. This had a signification—it was *She*. When his friends looked upon it, they exclaimed with joy, that this work was a revelation of his artistic greatness, which they had always recognized, but which now should be recognized by the whole world.

Clay is natural, flesh like, but it has not the whiteness, the durability of marble; the Psyche must obtain life from the block of marble—and he had the most precious piece of marble. It had been the property of his parents, and had been lying many years, in the court yard; bits of broken bottles, remains of artichokes were heaped over it and it was soiled, but its interior was white as the mountain snow; the Psyche should rise forth from it.

One day, it so happened—it is true, that the clear stars do not relate it, for they did not see it, but we know it—that a distinguished Roman party, came to view the young artist's work, of which they had casually heard. Who were the distinguished visitors? Poor young man! All too happy young man, one may call him also. Here in his room stood the young girl herself—with what a smile—when her father said: “You are that, living!” One cannot picture the look, one cannot render the look, the strange look with which she glanced at the young artist; it was a look which elevated, ennobled and—destroyed.

“The Psyche must be executed in marble!” said the rich man. This was a word of life, for the dead clay and for the heavy block of marble; it was also a word of life for the young man who was overcome by emotion. “I will buy it, as soon as the work is completed!” said the princely man.

It seemed as though a new era had dawned in the poor work-room; occupation, life and gaiety, lighted it up. The beaming morning star saw how the work progressed. Even the clay had been endowed with a soul, since *she* had been there, and he bent entranced over the well known features.

“Now I know what life is,” he exclaimed with delight, “it is love! it is the elevation of the heart to the divine, it is rapture for the beautiful! What my friends call life and enjoyment, is perishable, like bubbles in the fermenting lees, not the pure, heavenly wine of the altar, the consecration of life!”

The marble block was erected, the chisel hewed away large pieces; the labourer's part was done, marks and points placed, until little by little, the stone became a body, a shape of beauty—the Psyche—as charming as was the woman made by God. The massive stone became a soaring, dancing, airy, light and graceful Psyche, with a heavenly, innocent

smile, the smile that had been mirrored in the young sculptor's heart.

The star, in the rosy-tinted morning saw, and partly understood what was agitating the mind of the young man; it understood as well, the varying colour of his checks and the glance of his eye, whilst he created, as though inspired by God.

"You are a master like those in the days of the Greeks," said his enchanted friends, "the world will soon admire your Psyche!"

"My Psyche," he repeated, "mine, yes, that she must be! I am also an artist like the great departed ones! God has granted gifts of mercy to me, and has elevated me to the highly born!"

He sank, weeping, on his knees and offered up his thanks to God—but forgot him again for her, for her portrait in marble, for the Psyche form, that stood before him, as though cut out of snow, blushing, in the morning sun.

He should see her, the living, floating one, in reality; she, whose words sounded like music. He would himself carry the tidings, that the marble Psyche was completed, to the rich palace. He arrived, passed through the open court-yard, where the water splashed from dolphin's mouths into marble shells, where callas bloomed and fresh roses blossomed. He stepped into the large, lofty hall, whose walls and ceilings were gorgeous with brilliant colours, with paintings and armorial bearings. Well dressed and haughty servants, holding up their heads, (like sleigh horses with their bells,) were pacing up and down; some of them had even stretched themselves out comfortably and insolently on the carved wooden benches; they appeared to be the masters of the house. He named his business, and was conducted up the marble steps, which were covered with soft carpets. On each side stood statues. Then he came to richly decorated apartments, hung with paintings and with mosaic floors.

This pomp, this splendour made him breathe a little heavily, but he soon felt reassured; for the old prince, received him kindly, almost cordially. After they had spoken, as he was taking leave, he begged him to visit the young Signora, for she also wished to see him. The servants led him through magnificent chambers and corridors to her apartments, of which she was the glory and splendour.

She spoke with him! No Miserere, no church song could have melted the heart more, or have more elevated the soul, than did the music of her voice. He seized her hand and pressed it to his lips—no rose is so soft, but a fire proceeds from this rose—a fire streams through him and his breast heaves; words streamed from his lips, but he knew not what he said. Does the crater know that it throws forth burning lava? He told her his love. She stood there, surprised, insulted, proud, yes, scornful; with an expression on her face as though a damp, clammy frog had suddenly touched her. Her cheeks coloured, her lips grew pale, her eyes were on fire, and still black as the darkness of night.

"Frantic creature! Away, away!" said she, as she turned her back upon him. Her face of beauty seemed turned to stone, like unto the Medusa's head with its serpent locks. He descended to the street, a weak, lifeless thing; he entered his room like a night-walker, and in the rage of his grief, he seized his hammer, brandished it high in the air and sought to destroy the beautiful marble form. He did not observe—so excited was he—that Angelo, his friend, stood near him, and arrested his arm with a firm grasp.

“Have you become mad? What would you do?” They struggled with each other. Angelo was the stronger, and with a deep drawn breath, he threw the young artist on a chair.

“What has occurred?” asked Angelo, “Collect yourself! Speak!”

What could he say? What could he tell? As Angelo could not seize the thread of his discourse, he let it drop.

“Your blood grows thick with this eternal dreaming! Be human, like others and live not in the clouds! Drink, until you become slightly intoxicated, then you will sleep well! The young girl from the Campagna, is as beautiful as the princess in the marble palace, they are both daughters of Eve, and can not be distinguished one from the other in Paradise! Follow your Angelo! I am your good angel, the angel of your life! A time will come when you are old, when the body will dwindle and some beautiful sunshiny day, when everything laughs and rejoices, you will lie like a withered straw! I do not believe what the priests say, that there is a life beyond the grave! It is a pretty fancy, a fairy tale for children, delightful to think upon. I do not live in imagination, but in reality! Come with me! Become a man!”

He drew him away, he could do this now, for there was a fire in the young artist’s blood, a change in his soul; an ardent desire to tear himself away from all his wonted ways, from all accustomed thoughts; to forget his old self—and to-day he followed Angelo.

In the suburbs, lay an osteria, which was much frequented by artists; it was built in the ruins of a bathing chamber. Amongst the dark shining foliage, hung large yellow lemons which covered a portion of the old reddish-yellow wall. The osteria was a deep vault, almost like a hollow in the ruins; within, a lamp burned before the image of the Madonna; a large fire flamed on the hearth, for here they roasted, cooked and prepared the dishes for the guests. Without, under the lemon and laurel trees, stood tables ready set.

They were received merrily and rejoicingly by their friends; they ate little and drank much and became gay; they sang, and played on the guitar; the Saltarello sounded and the dance began. Two Roman girls, models of the young artists, joined in the dance and merriment; two pretty Bacchante! They had no Psyche forms, they were not delicate beautiful roses, but fresh, healthy flaming pinks.

How warm it was on this day, even warm at sundown! Fire in the blood, fire in the air, fire in every glance. The air swam in gold and roses, life was gold and roses.

“Now you have at last joined us! Allow yourself to be carried away by the current within and without you!”

“I never felt so well and joyous before!” said the young artist. “You are right, you are all of you right. I was a fool, a dreamer; man belongs to reality and not to fancy!”

The young man left the osteria, in the clear starry evening, with song and tinkling guitars, and passed through the narrow streets. The daughters of the Campagna, the two flaming pinks, were in their train.

In Angelo’s room, the voices sounded more suppressed but not less fiery, amongst the scattered sketches, the outlines, the glowing, voluptuous paintings; amongst the drawings on the floor there was many a sketch of vigorous beauty, like unto the daughters of the

Campagna, yet they themselves were much more beautiful. The six-armed lamp glowed brightly, and the human forms warmed and shone like gods.

“Apollo! Jupiter! I elevate myself to your heaven, to your glory! Methinks, that the flower of my life has unfolded within my heart!” Yes, it did unfold—it withered and fell to pieces; a stunning, loathsome vapour arose, dazzling the sight, benumbing the thoughts, extinguishing his sensual, fiery emotions, and all was dark. He went home, sat down on his bed, and thought. “Fie!” sounded from his lips, from the bottom of his heart.

“Miserable wretch! away! away!”—and he sighed sorrowfully.

“Away! Away!” These, her words, the words of the living Psyche, weighed upon him, and flowed from his lips. He bowed his head upon the pillows, his thoughts became confused and he slept.

At the dawn of day he started up.—What was this? Was it a dream? Were her words, the visit to the osteria, the evening with the purple red pinks of the Campagna but a dream?—No, all was reality; he had not known this before.

The clear star beamed in the purple-tinted air, its rays fell upon him, and upon the marble Psyche; he trembled whilst he contemplated the image of immortality, his glance even appeared impure to him. He threw a covering over it, he touched it once more in order to veil its form, but he could not view his work.

Still, sombre, buried in his own meditations, he sat there the whole day; he took no heed of what passed around him, no one knew what was agitating this human heart. Days passed by, weeks passed by; the nights were the longest. One morning, the twinkling star saw him rise from his couch—pale—trembling with fever; he walked to the marble statue, lifted the cover, gazed upon his work with a sorrowful, deep, long look, and then almost sinking under the weight, he drew the statue into the garden. There was a sunken, dried-up well, within it, into which he lowered the Psyche, threw earth upon it and covered the fresh grave with small sticks and nettles.

“Away! Away,” was the short funereal service.

The star in the rosy red atmosphere saw this, and two heavy tears trembled on the deathly pale cheeks of the fever sick one—sick unto death, as they called him.

The lay brother Ignatius came to him as a friend and as a physician. He came, and with the consoling words of religion, he spoke of the peace and happiness of the church, of the sins of man, of the mercy and peace of God.

The words fell like warm sun beams on the moist, fermenting ground; they dispersed and cleared away the misty clouds, from the troubled thoughts which had held possession of him; he gazed upon his past life; everything had been a failure, a deception—yes, *had been*. Art was an enchantress, that but leads us into vanity, into earthly pleasures. We become false to ourselves, false to our friends, false to our God. The serpent speaks ever in us: “Taste and thou shalt become like unto God.”

Now, for the first time, he appeared to understand himself, to have discovered the road to truth, to peace.

In the church was God’s light and brightness, in the monk’s cell was found that peace,

which enables man to obtain eternal bliss.

Brother Ignatius supported him in these thoughts, and the decision was firmly made—a worldling became a servant of the church;—the young artist took leave of the world, and entered the cloister.

How joyfully, how cordially the brothers greeted him! How festive the ordination! It seemed to him that God was in the sunshine of the church, and beamed within it, from the holy pictures and from the shining cross. He stood in the evening sunset, in his little cell, and opened his window and gazed in the spring—time over old Rome—with her broken temples, her massive, but dead Colosseum; her blooming acacias, her flourishing evergreens, her fragrant roses, her shining lemons and oranges, her palm trees fanned by the breeze—and felt touched and satisfied. The quiet, open Campagna extended to the blue snow—topped mountains, which appeared to be painted on the air. Everything breathed beauty and peace. The whole—a dream!

Yes, the world here was a dream, and the dream ruled the hours and returned to hours again. But the life of a cloister is a life of many, many long years.

Man is naturally impure and he felt this! What flames were these, that at times glowed through him? Was it the power of the Evil One, that caused these wild thoughts to rage constantly within him? He punished his body, but without effect. What portion of his mind was that, which wound itself around him, pliable as a serpent, and which crept about his conscience under a loving cloak and consoled him! The saints pray for us, the holy Virgin prays for us, Jesus himself gave his blood for us!

Was it a childlike feeling, or the levity of youth, that had induced him to give himself up to grace, and which made him feel elevated above so many? For had he not cast away the vanity of the world, was he not a son of the church?

One day, after many years, he met Angelo, who recognized him.

“Man,” said he, “yes, it is you! Are you happy now? You have sinned against God, and cast his gifts of mercy away from you; you have gambled away your vocation for this world. Read the parable of the entrusted pledge. The Master who related it, spoke but truth! What have you won and found after all? Do not make a dream life for yourself! Make a religion for yourself, as all do. Suppose all is but a dream, a fancy, a beautiful thought!”

“Get thee from behind me, Satan!” said the monk, and forsook Angelo.

“It is a devil, a devil personified! I saw him to—day,” murmured the monk, “I reached him but a finger, and he took my whole hand! No,” sighed he, “the wickedness is in myself; it is also in this man, but he is not tormented by it; he walks with elevated brow, he has his enjoyment; I but clutch at the consolation of the church for my welfare! But if this is only consolation! If all here consists of beautiful thoughts and but resemble those which beguiled me in the world? Is it but a deception like unto the beauty of the red evening clouds and like unto the blue wave—like beauty of the distant mountains! Seen near, how changed! Eternity, art thou like unto the great infinite, calm ocean, which beckons to us, calls us, fills us with presentiments, and if we venture upon it, we sink, we vanish—die—cease to be?—

“Deceit! away! away!”

He sat tearless on his hard couch, desolate, kneeling—before whom? Before the stone cross which was placed in the wall? No, habit alone caused his body to bend.

The deeper he read within himself, the darker all appeared to him. “Nothing within, nothing without! Life thrown away!” This thought, crushed him—expunged him.

“I dare confide to none the doubts which consume me! My prisoner is my secret and if it escape I am lost!”

The power of God, wrestled within him.

“Lord! Lord!” he exclaimed in his despair, “be merciful, give me faith! I cast thy gifts of mercy from me and my vocation for this world! I prayed for strength and thou hast not given it to me. Immortality! The Psyche in my breast—away! away!—Must it be buried like yon Psyche, the light of my life? Never to arise from the grave!”

The star beamed in the rosy red atmosphere, the star which will be lost and will vanish, whilst the soul lives and emits light. Its trembling ray fell upon the white wall, but it spoke not of the glory of God, of the grace, the eternal love which beams in the breast of every believer.

“Can the Psyche never die?—Can one live with consciousness?—Can the impossible take place?—Yes! Yes! My being is inexplicable. Inconceivable art thou, oh Lord! A wonder of might, glory and love!”

His eyes beamed, his eyes closed. The peal of the church bells passed over the dead one. He was laid in holy ground and his ashes mingled with the dust of strangers.

Years afterwards, his bones were exhumed and stood in a niche in the cloisters, as had stood those of the dead monks before him; they were dressed in the brown cowl, a rosary of beads placed in his hand, the sun shone without, incense perfumed within, and mass was read.—

Years rolled by.

The bones and legs fell asunder. They stood up the skulls, and with them, formed the whole outside wall of a church. There he stood in the burning sunshine; there were so many, many dead, they did not know their names, much less his.

See, something living moved in the sunshine in the two eye sockets; what was that? A brilliant lizard was running about in the hollow skull, slipping in and out of the large, empty sockets. This was now the life in the head, where once elevated thoughts, brilliant dreams, love for art and the magnificent had been rife; from which hot tears had rolled and where the hope of immortality had lived. The lizard leaped out and disappeared; the skull crumbled away and became dust to dust.—

Centuries passed. Unchanged, the star, clear and large, beamed on as it had done for centuries. The atmosphere shone with a red rosy hue, fresh as roses, flaming as blood.

Where there had once been a little street with the remains of an old temple, now stood a convent; a grave was dug in the garden, for a young nun had died, and she was to be lowered in the earth at this early hour of the morning. The spade struck against a stone

which appeared of a dazzling whiteness—the white marble came forth—it rounded into a shoulder;—they used the spade with care, and a female head became visible—butterfly wings. They raised from the grave, in which the young nun was to be laid on this rosy morning, a gloriously beautiful Psyche-form, chiseled from white marble.

“How magnificent! How perfect a master work!” they said. “Who can the artist be?” He was unknown. None knew him, save the clear star, which had been beaming for centuries; it knew the course of his earthly life, his trials, his failings; it knew that he was: “but a man!” But he was dead, dispersed as dust must and shall be; but the result of his best efforts, the glory which pointed out the divine within him, the Psyche, which never dies, which surpasses in brightness, all earthly renown, this remained, was seen, acknowledged, admired and beloved.

The clear morning star in the rosy tinted sky, cast its most radiant beams upon the Psyche, and upon the smile of happiness about the mouth and eyes of the admiring ones, who beheld the soul, chiseled in the marble block.

That which is earthly passes away, and is forgotten; only the star in the infinite knows of it. That which is heavenly surpasses renown; for renown, fame and earthly glory die away, but—the Psyche lives forever!

THE SNAIL AND THE ROSE-TREE

A hedge of hazel–nut bushes encircled the garden; without was field and meadow, with cows and sheep; but in the centre of the garden stood a rose–tree, and under it sat a snail—she had much within her, she had herself.

“Wait, until my time comes,” said she, “I shall accomplish something more than putting forth roses, bearing nuts, or giving milk, like the cows and sheep!”

“I expect something fearfully grand,” said the rose–tree, “may I ask when it will take place?”

“I shall take my time,” said the snail, “you are in too great a hurry, and when this is the case, how can one’s expectations be fulfilled?”

The next year the snail lay in about the same spot under the rose–tree, which put forth buds and developed roses, ever fresh, ever new. The snail half crept forth, stretched out its feelers and drew itself in again.

“Everything looks as it did a year ago! No progress has been made; the rose–tree still bears roses; it does not get along any farther!”

The summer faded away, the autumn passed, the rose–tree constantly bore flowers and buds, until the snow fell, and the weather was raw and damp. The rose–tree bent itself towards the earth, the snail crept in the earth.

A new year commenced; the roses came out, and the snail came out.

“Now you are an old rose bush,” said the snail, “you will soon die away. You have given the world everything that you had in you; whether that be much or little is a question, upon which I have not time to reflect. But it is quite evident, that you have not done the slightest thing towards your inward developement; otherwise I suppose that something different would have sprung from you. Can you answer this? You will soon be nothing but a stick! Can you understand what I say?”

“You startle me,” said the rose–tree, “I have never thought upon that!”

“No, I suppose that you have never meddled much with thinking! Can you tell me why you blossom? And how it comes to pass? How? Why?”

“No,” said the rose–tree, “I blossom with pleasure because I could not do otherwise. The sun was so warm, the air so refreshing, I drank the clear dew and the fortifying rain; I breathed, I lived! A strength came to me from the earth, a strength came from above, I felt a happiness, ever new, ever great and therefore I must blossom ever, that was my life, I could not do otherwise!”

“You have led a very easy life!” said the snail.

“Certainly, everything has been given to me,” said the rose–tree, “but still more has been given to you. You are one of those meditative, pensive, profound natures, one of the highly gifted, that astound the whole world!”

“I have assuredly no such thought in my mind,” said the snail, “the world is nothing to me! What have I to do with the world? I have enough with myself, and enough in myself!”

“But should we not all, here on earth, give the best part of us to others? Offer what we can!—It is true, that I have only given roses—but you? You who have received so much, what have you given to the world? What do you give her?”

“What I have given? What I give? I spit upon her! She is good for nothing! I have nought to do with her. Put forth roses, you can do no more! Let the hazel bushes bear nuts! Let the cows and sheep give milk; they have each their public, I have mine within myself! I retire within myself, and there I remain. The world is nothing to me!”

And thereupon the snail withdrew into her house and closed it.

“That is so sad,” said the rose-tree, “with the best will, I cannot creep in, I must ever spring out, spring forth in roses. The leaves drop off and are blown away by the wind. Yet, I saw one of the roses laid in the hymn-book of the mother of the family; one of my roses was placed upon the breast of a charming young girl, and one was kissed with joy by a child’s mouth. This did me so much good, it was a real blessing! That is my recollection, my life!”

And the rose-tree flowered in innocence, and the snail sat indifferently in her house. The world was nothing to her.

And years passed away. The snail became earth to earth and the rose-tree became earth to earth; the remembrances in the hymn-book were also blown away—but new rose-trees bloomed in the garden, new snails grew in the garden; they crept in their houses and spat. —The world is nothing to them.

Shall we read the story of the past again? It will not be different.