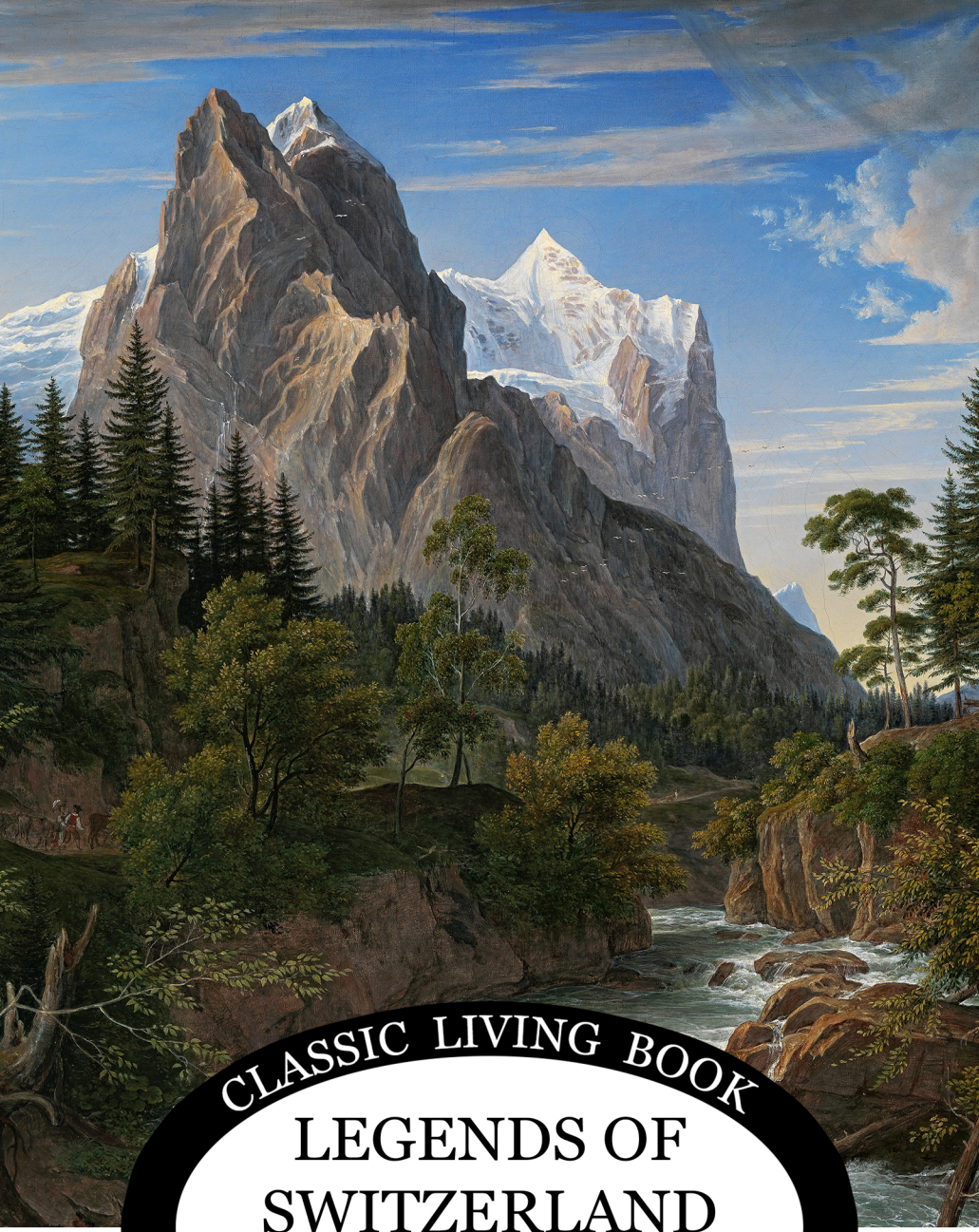

CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

LEGENDS OF SWITZERLAND

Helene A. Guerber

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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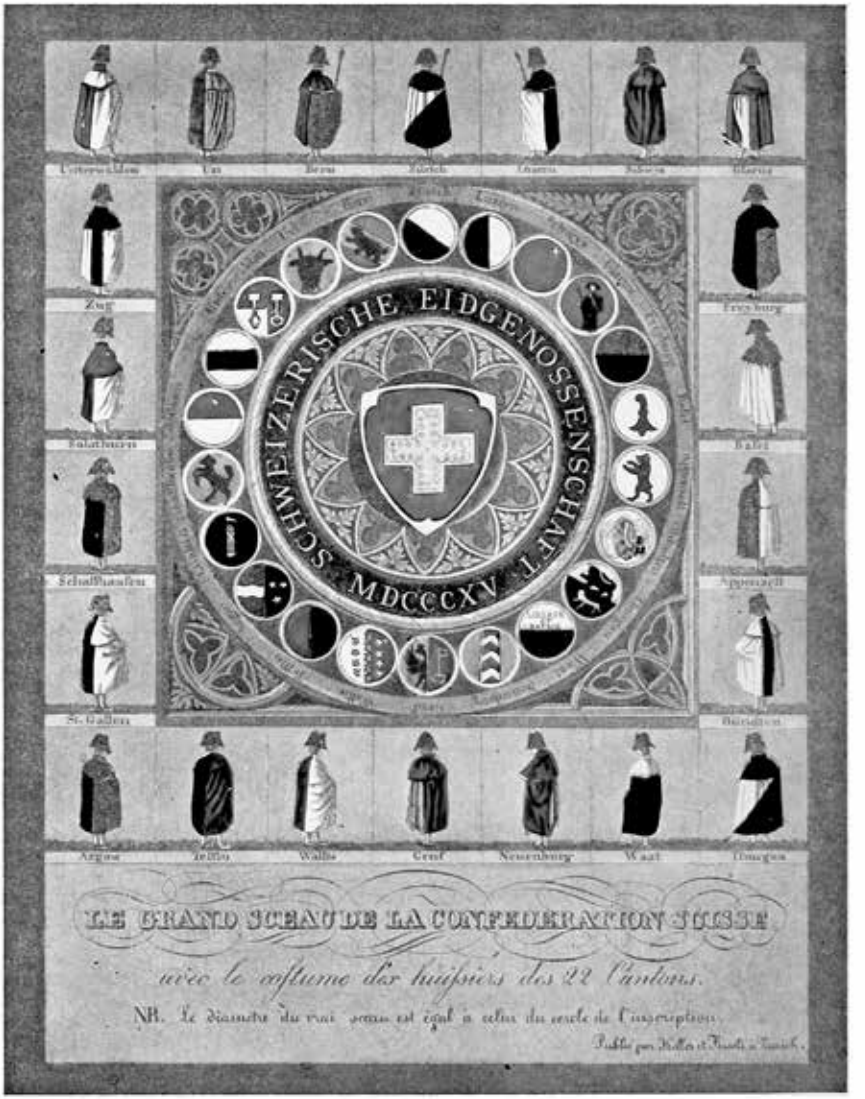

LE GRAND SCEAU DE LA CONFEDERATION SUISSE

avec le costume des huissiers des 22 Cantons.

NB. Le diamètre du vrai sceau est égal à celui du cercle de l'inscription.

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PREFACE

Aside from the picturesque, historical, and geological interest connected with a journey in Switzerland, that country also boasts of a rich fund of legends, delightfully characteristic of the people at whose firesides they have been told for centuries.

The grand scenery, terrific storms, sudden earthquakes, landslides and avalanches, together with the barbaric invasions and fierce wars which have swept over it for thousands of years, have all left their indelible stamp, not only upon the face of nature, but also in the imagination and folklore of the people.

In varying keys, and touching upon many chords and themes, these legends refer to saints and to sinners, to heathen gods, giants, ghosts, dwarfs, the Devil, and fairies, as well as to kings and queens, knights and ladies, monks and nuns, besides dwelling particularly upon shepherds, pastures, cattle, and game.

The rustic crudity of some of these tales, the mediæval halo of romance around others, added to the poetic subtle charms of a few, have been rendered as faithfully as possible, to enable the reader to gain a nearer insight into the life and thoughts of the sturdy race which has established the most lasting republic in modern Europe.

Life-long familiarity with the official languages, some knowledge of the peculiar dialects, together with prolonged sojourns in the country, and diligent study of its principal works on national folklore, have enabled the writer to collect these legends, some of which are now laid before the English-speaking public for the first time.

Trusting they may enhance the pleasure of a trip to Switzerland for all those who have the good fortune to enjoy one, remind former travellers of matchless scenes, and amuse and interest even stay-at-homes, this book is sent out into the world with the sincere hope that it may meet with a kindly welcome.

LEGENDS OF GENEVA

The crescent-shaped Leman, or Lake of Geneva, the largest and bluest of all the Swiss lakes, has been sung by all the poets and praised by every writer who has had the good fortune to behold it in its native splendour.

The fertile slopes on the northern bank, the charming resorts and drives to the east and south, and the glorious view of Mont Blanc, in Savoy, as seen from Geneva itself, bewitch all those who are privileged to enjoy them. Countless steamboats and sailboats are constantly plying to and fro over the lake, and stopping at picturesque points along the shore, whence delightful excursions can be made either among rich pastures, orchards, and vineyards, or up into the mountains from which, rippling and roaring, torrents and streams pour down to fill the basin of this beautiful lake. The most picturesque craft on the Lake of Geneva are the lateen-sailed market-boats, hovering like birds over waters whose colour reminds one of the Mediterranean, the only other body of water in Europe where such vessels are frequently seen.

A legend claims that in olden times a fairy boat of this peculiar shape was often seen flitting from point to point along the shores of Lake Leman. Its sails catching every gleam of golden light, it shone like the face of the new moon in a summer sky. Drawn by eight large snow-white swans, it glided gently over the waters, to the song both weird and sweet of these graceful birds, accompanied by the thrilling chords of a harp touched by the invisible fingers of the Spirit of the Winds.

Standing by the mast of this ship, was a tall woman of dazzling beauty, whose golden locks streamed out in the breeze, while the sunset flush on the snow-mountains seemed no more delicate than the bloom on her dainty cheeks. Clad in flowing robes of purest white, she stood there, smiling gently at countless winged and chubby sprites, hover-

ing around her like butterflies about a rose, and scattering handfuls of flowers and fruit at her feet.

It is said that wherever the fairy ship touched the shore, the soil bore flowers and fruit in abundance, and any one who was so fortunate as to catch a glimpse of the lucky vessel was sure of the fulfilment of any desire, expressed or unexpressed. Even when buried so deep in the hidden recesses of the heart that the owner was scarcely conscious of its existence, the fairy's melting blue eyes were sure to discover this wish, and her heart was so tender that, once discovered, she could not but grant it.

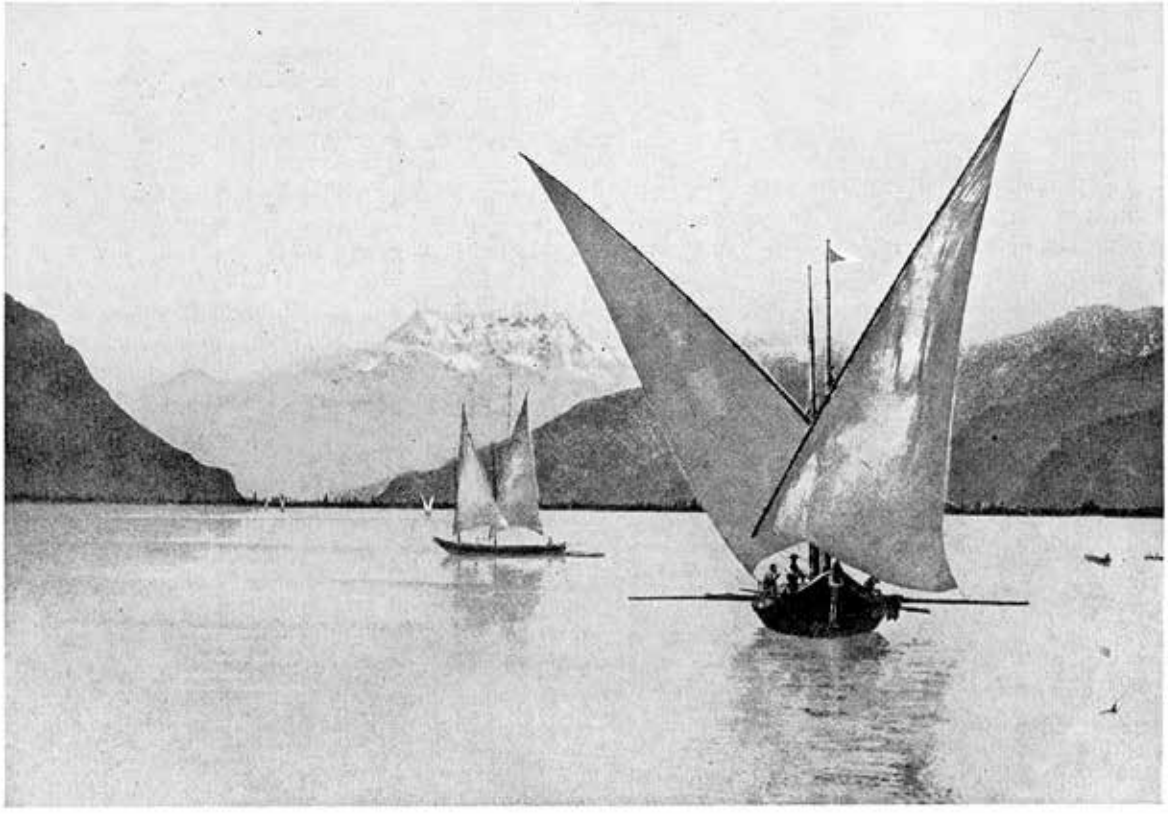
The fairy skiff of Lake Geneva haunted its shores for many years, and might still be seen there, had not the giant swans been frightened away by the puffing and snorting steamboats which furrow the blue waves. None but the oldest inhabitants ever mention this ship, of which they caught fleeting glimpses in their early youth, when they sat by the lakeside during the long moonlight nights, in hopes of securing the realization of their dearest hopes.

But the luck-ship figures not only in the tales told by the peasants around the fireside during the long winter evenings; it is also often seen in effigy upon Genevan holiday and birthday cards. Then "Good Luck," or "Happy New Year," is inscribed across the wing-like lateen sails, and such a card is supposed to bring the happy recipient as much good fortune as an actual glimpse of the swan-drawn vessel of mythic fame.

An interesting old legend is connected with the church of Ste. Marie Madeleine in Geneva, and with a local yearly festival celebrated there on the twenty-second of July.

In the days when the Madeleine church was founded, Geneva, after having been the main stronghold of the Allobroges before Christ, and a Roman camp from the days of Cæsar until the fifth century, was the capital of a Burgundian kingdom. The Christians in that part of the country, desirous of building a church where they could worship God, selected a site just outside of the city fortifications, and then began to solicit contributions on all sides.

In those days there dwelt in Geneva a very good and pious girl, noted far and wide for her deftness in spinning, and for the unusual beauty



LAKE OF GENEVA, WITH DENT DU MIDI.

and fineness of her thread. As soon as this virtuous maiden heard that funds were needed for a church to be dedicated to her patron saint, she made a solemn vow to consecrate to that good purpose all the thread she could spin, and immediately set to work.

From early morn until far into the night, Madeleine now spun on unweariedly, selling skein after skein of thread to purchase stones and mortar for the new building. As is always the case, the zeal and gifts of many of the Christians soon ebbed, but Madeleine twirled her distaff faster and faster, working without respite day after day, to make up for all deficiencies.

The workmen, who contributed their labour, soon depended upon her alone for materials, and fearing lest her strength or courage should fail before the church was finished, they called out to her every time they passed her house to keep up a good heart and work on. This cry,—

> "Tiens bon, Marie Madeleine,
> Tiens bon, Marie Madelon!"

was taken up by all the Christians in town, and now forms the refrain of a song sung at Geneva's yearly festival.

Thus encouraged, Marie Madeleine went on spinning until the building was completed, and as most of the stones were purchased with the proceeds of her industry, the workmen carved spindles and spinning-wheels all over the church. On the festival of Ste. Marie Madeleine, illuminations and processions are the order of the day in Geneva, and the statue of a spinner is carried along all the principal streets of the town, to the rhythmic chant of the old distich, which commemorates alike the maiden's piety and her extreme diligence.

LEGENDS OF VAUD AND VALAIS

LATE in the spring, when the grazing down in the valley is pretty well exhausted, farmers in Switzerland are wont to drive their cows up to the mountain pastures, which by this time are all covered with luxuriant grass and gemmed with dainty wild-flowers. The day set for the departure of the cattle is always a gala day. The people, dressed in their Sunday best, assemble in the villages through which the herds must pass, to exchange merry jests with the herdsmen, bid them God speed, and admire the fat sleek cows, wearing around their necks bells of different sizes and varying tones.

The head herdsman proudly walks in front of his cattle, wearing a bunch of gay ribbons or of fresh flowers in his hat or cap. His blue cloth coat, with its short sleeves, sets off a dazzlingly white shirt of coarse linen, and his costume is completed by knee-breeches, thick woolen stockings, and shoes whose soles are elaborately studded with bright nails. This man carries a bag full of salt, and an umbrella slung across his back; and from time to time, as he strides joyfully ahead of the herd, he offers a handful of salt to the foremost cows. Leaning on his stout staff, he sturdily climbs the mountain, giving vent to those long-drawn musical cries known as "huchées" or "jodels," according to the section of the country in which they are heard.

Close behind the herdsman comes the bull, with a ring in his nose, or a fine cow, the queen and leader of the cattle. Conscious of the honour of wearing the largest and deepest-toned bell, this animal steps proudly along, tossing a shapely head decked with bunches of bright flowers on either horn, and between them rests the milking-stool, a sign of particular distinction.

Cow after cow slowly files past, greeted by calls and loving pats from proud owners, and amid the tinkling of bells, the trample of hoofs, the lowing of kine, and the cheers of the people sound the resonant cracks

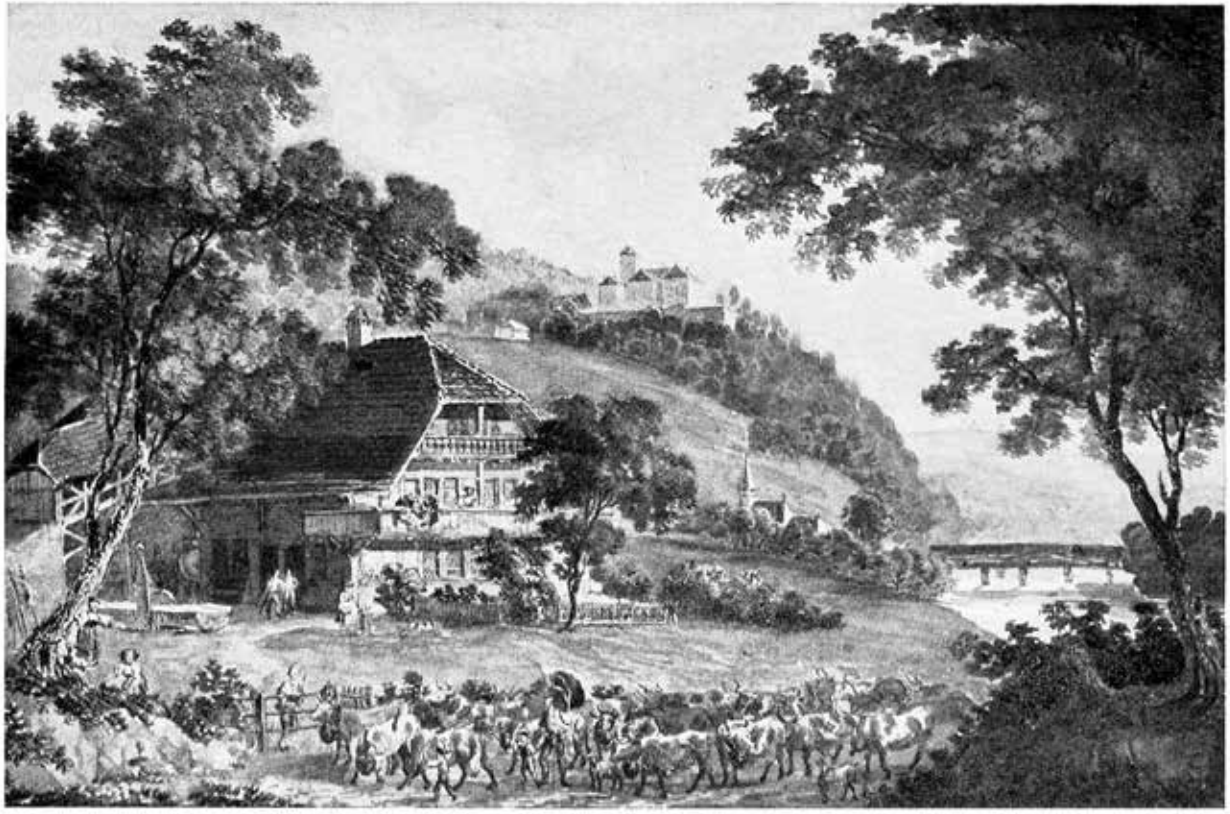
of the herdsmen's whips, which they snap incessantly to show their proficiency in that greatly admired branch of their calling.

The sight of such a herd going up the mountain invariably reminds the old people of happy summers long gone by, and while sitting on the benches in front of their stone or wooden houses at twilight, they entertain the younger generation with reminiscences of the joyful past, and a regretful sigh always heaves their aged breasts when they finally mention the Golden Age of Switzerland.

According to tradition, this was the time when none of the mountains—not even the highest—were ever veiled in cold mists, or covered with ice and snow. Neither were there any barren and rocky heights such as we see now. Luxuriant grass grew all the way up the steepest slopes, carpeting even the topmost ridges, and the climate was so genial that cattle dotted the hillside pastures during nine or ten months of the year. The cows were then far larger and fatter than any we see now, and their milk was so abundant that they were milked thrice a day into huge ponds, or tanks, where the herdsmen went about in skiffs to do the skimming.

One of these men is said to have once lost his balance and fallen head first into a lacteal lake, but although his mourning companions diligently sought for his corpse, and even dredged that huge natural milkpan, they could find no trace of him. When churning-day came round, however, and the big vats of thick cream were poured into a churn as large and tall as a castle tower, the dead man was suddenly discovered imbedded like a fly in the thick cream. The dairymen and milkmaids then mournfully laid his corpse to rest in a huge cave, lined with honeycombs so tall and massive that none was smaller than the city gates.

Such was the prosperity of all the farmers in the Cantons of Vaud and Valais, that their men used goat cheeses (*tommes*) instead of quoits for their daily games, and on Sundays played bowls with huge balls of the sweetest, hardest, yellowest butter that has ever been made. The fruit trees were as productive as the pastures; the grapes, for instance, being so large and juicy that faucets had to be inserted in each grape to draw off the juice, while the pears were so fine and heavy that their



THE MIGRATION OF THE HERDS.

stems had to be severed by means of a double hand-saw when came time to pick them.

The Golden Age of the Alps did not last long, however, for the unparalleled prosperity the people enjoyed filled their hearts with such inordinate pride that they became very insolent, and thereby called down the wrath of heaven upon their guilty heads. The brutality and avarice which they displayed was punished by earthquakes, storms, and landslides, which ruined their finest pastures, and by sudden and unwelcome changes in the temperature. Dense fogs swept over the mountains, and there were long and heavy snow-falls which swathed the mountains in a permanent casing of ice and snow. The summer season became far briefer than in the past, and fields and pastures much less productive. Cattle and fruit therefore soon dwindled down to their present comparatively small proportions, and unlimited plenty no longer reigned in the land.

In the Golden Age the country boasted of a few very large but quite benevolent giants. They roamed about at will, striding over mountains and forests, which seemed to them no larger than mole hills and tiny shrubs. The best known of these giants was Gargantua, renowned alike for his athletic proportions and for his childlike spirit. He was so huge that when he sat down to rest upon Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, or some other large mountain, his legs hung down on either side until his feet rested comfortably in the valleys. Sometimes, when indulging in a brief noonday nap, he used one of these peaks as pillow for his huge and sleepy head. His thick white beard and hair, falling around him on all sides, then gave these heights somewhat the same aspect they have now, with their fields of snow and rivers of ice. The sunken orbits of the giant's eyes and his wide-open mouth looked like valleys and crevasses, while his nostrils could be mistaken for deep and dark caves, and his ruddy cheeks for great patches of red rock peeping out among the snows.

When the weather was warm, Gargantua's breath seemed like the mist hovering on the mountain tops; but when the temperature fell, it rapidly congealed, spreading like a dense fog all over the country. His gentlest snores are said to have sounded like the distant rumble

of thunder, or the crash of avalanches; and when he stretched himself after a siesta, the whole country was shaken as by a violent earthquake.

Once, while the giant lay asleep, his head resting against a mountain, a large flock of sheep scrambled up over his prostrate form, and began to thread their way through his tangled hair and beard in quest of pasture. Awakened by a slight tickling sensation, the giant half opened his sleepy eyes. The sight of a host of little white creatures crawling around in his beard so angered him, that he took them up one by one between his thumb and index, and crushed and threw them away, thinking they were vermin.

During another nap a large herd of cows strayed into the giant's wide-open mouth, which they mistook for a cave. Their presence there, however, occasioned a prodigious coughing-fit, in the course of which the cows were ejected with such force that they flew through miles of space and landed in another country!

As simple and innocent as he was large, Gargantua delighted in playing in the dirt. To amuse himself, he hollowed out the Rhône valley, and scooped out a basin for the Lake of Geneva. There the marks of his fingers can still be seen, for having no other tools he freely used those nature provides, flinging handfuls of earth and stones on either side of him, or into a rude basket made of wattled pine-trees which he carried on his back.

At one time Gargantua elected to build a fine sand-heap, and carried load after load of dirt and stones to a point southeast of the present city of Geneva. There he dumped them one after another, and as the heap increased in size after each basketful, he gleefully cried: "Ça lève, ça lève!" (It is rising, it is rising!) This cry was overheard by the people in the neighbourhood, who ever after used it as a name for that mountain, changing the orthography to Salève.

Gargantua sometimes threw huge rocks around him in sport, or in petulant fits of anger, punched holes in and through the mountains, and dug out fistfuls of earth here and there to fashion his mud pies. He also liked to make gullies for the streams which trickled down the mountains. Once, while scratching out the Illiez valley he forgot the burden on his back and stooped to drink from the Rhône, which seemed

to him like a mere rill. By some mischance, however, he stubbed his big toe against the rocks of St. Triphon, and fell sprawling along the valley, spilling part of the dirt out of his basket. The simple fellow, amazed at this accident, picked himself up gravely and uttered the local substitute for "My goodness!" (Eh Monteh!). This exclamation was thereafter used by the natives to designate a mound of earth now covered with oak forests and known as Monthey.

In his wrath at having tripped and broken the straps fastening his basket to his back, Gargantua gave his burden an ill-tempered kick, which sent it flying some distance further on, where it dumped the rest of its contents. This heap of dirt formed the picturesque eminence on whose wooded heights the ruined tower of Duin now stands.

A similar accident occurring when the giant once tried to quench his thirst in the Sarine, is the alleged origin of the hill upon which rises the church of Château d'Oex. On another occasion, resting one foot upon the top of the Berra and the other upon the Gibloux, Gargantua bent down and took a draught from the Sarine, which drained it so dry that not a drop of water flowed along its bed for three whole days. During that time one legend claims that the giant laid the foundation for the bridge at Pont-la-Ville, near Fribourg, but another ascribes that construction to his Satanic Majesty in person.

Gargantua's feet were so large that one of his sandals could serve as bridge over the Rhône or Sarine, and his hands so strong that he tore great gaps in the Jura mountains to enable those two streams to make their way to the sea.

A mountain giant who roamed about in the mist, but never came down into the valleys, was known as Pathô. He delighted in terrifying the people in the lowlands by sudden wild cries, or by playfully rolling stones down upon them, their cattle, houses, or pastures.

Many of the Swiss giants were supposed to dwell in caves, or castles, on the tallest mountains, hidden from the eyes of men by ever-shifting clouds. To commemorate this superstition, Schiller wrote a charming ballad, telling how the daughter of one of these giants once strayed down into the valley, where, for the first time in her life, she beheld a farmer ploughing his field. In her delight and wonder, she bundled

man, horses, and plough into her apron, and quickly carried them home, where she proudly exhibited her new playthings to her father. The giant, who wished the puny human race no ill, immediately bade his little daughter carry the frightened peasant and kicking team back to the place where she had found them, gravely warning her never to meddle again with the people in the valley, whose diligent toil supplied giants as well as mortals with their daily bread.

* * * * *

THE monks who lived in the old abbey at Romainmotier, in the northern part of the canton of Vaud, once built a bridge over the rushing waters of the Orbe, to enable the throngs of pilgrims to reach a wonder-working image of the Virgin near Vallorbes. But as these monks were very eager to enrich their monastery, they also placed a toll-gate across the bridge, and would allow none to pass without paying a certain sum.

One night, the bridge-keeper was startled out of his peaceful slumbers by the rhythmic sound of rapid hoof-beats on the hard road, and he sprang to his window just in time to find himself face to face with a panting, foam-flecked steed, upon which sat a girl clad in garments apparently no whiter than her anguished face. In breathless tones the maiden bade the keeper open wide the gate and let her pass, for her beloved mother was dangerously ill, and she wanted to plead for her recovery at the foot of the miraculous image.

The gate-keeper listened unmoved to this passionate entreaty, and instead of opening the gate, held it shut tight while sternly demanding his toll. In vain the girl repeated she had forgotten to bring any money, and implored him to let her pass, promising to bring him the required amount on the morrow; he would not listen to anything she said.

Seeing it was useless to parley any longer with such an unfeeling man, yet determined to save her mother at any price, the brave girl urged her steed to the very edge of the bridge, and suddenly leaped over the low parapet into the rushing tide. For a few moments the horrified gate-keeper saw horse and rider struggling bravely to reach the opposite shore, but all at once their strength gave way, and they

were swept into a whirlpool in the middle of the stream. A moment later he saw them dashed against sharp rocks, and vanish beneath the foaming waters which were soon tinged red with blood.

The gate-keeper stole back to his couch, trembling in every limb, but told no one of the girl's visit or of her frightful death. At midnight on the anniversary of the tragedy, the conscience-stricken man was however again roused by a loud clatter of hoofs. Torn from his bed by invisible hands, he found himself on the bridge, face to face with the same unhappy maid, whose snowy garments were now all stained with blood. Still impelled by a force he could not resist, the gate-keeper suddenly dropped down on his hands and knees before her, and felt her spring lightly upon his back. A second later he was galloping wildly toward the shrine of the miraculous Virgin.

There the maiden dismounted and fervently prayed for her sick mother; then rising hastily from her knees, she again sprang upon her human steed, whom she urged on over the stony road by lashing him with a long wet reed. At the bridge, the spectre maiden vanished over the parapet, and the terrified gate-keeper straightened up once more, only in time to hear the gurgling cry of a drowning person rising above the roaring and splashing of the swollen stream.

This spectral apparition visited this man every year, and so shattered his nerves that he fell ill and died of fright. But before he breathed his last, he humbly confessed to one of the monks his cruel treatment of the girl, her pitiful end, and his awful punishment.

In memory of this event, an image of a man on all fours, and ridden by a beautiful maiden, was placed in the convent church, where it was long exhibited to pilgrims and tourists, to whom the above story is invariably told.

* * * * *

South of Romainmotier, on the road from Vallorbes to Lausanne, stands the small and very ancient town of La Sarraz, with its quaint castle. We are told that a statue was excavated there lately, which once stood in the chapel, and represented a knight, on whose cheeks and shoulder-

blades clung loathsome toads. The recovery of that peculiar statue recalled the olden tale of a young knight of La Sarraz, who, having won great distinction in warfare, aspired to the hand of a Count's daughter.

Although the maiden was far above him in station, her father consented to their union, provided the bridegroom gave her a castle and three hundred cows as wedding gift, or *morgengabe*. This condition filled the knight's heart with hopeless sorrow, for he could boast no property except his trusty sword, his stout suit of mail, and his fiery battle-horse.

His parents, perceiving his dejection, questioned him tenderly, and when they learned the cause of his sorrow, they joyfully exclaimed that he need not despair, for they would give him castle and cattle, which was all they had in the world. They confidently added that they knew their son would never let them want in their old age, even if they did bestow everything upon him, reserving naught for themselves.

The selfish son gladly accepted this proffered sacrifice, but when the marriage ceremony had been completed, and he and his wife were comfortably settled in their new home, he begrudged his old parents the little they required, and instigated by his wife, turned them out of the house one cold and stormy night.

After closing the door upon them, to shut off the sound of their pitiful sobs and heartbreaking reproaches, the knight of La Sarraz strode back into the hall of his castle, where a huge beaker of strong beer and a fine game-pie were awaiting him near a good fire. Settling himself down comfortably in a big armchair, the knight removed the crusty cover of the pie. But no sooner had he done so than he started back in horror, for two live toads sprang straight out of it to his cheeks, where they buried their claws so deep that no one could remove them. Every effort was made to kill these animals or drive them away, but all in vain. The knight, in despair, finally sent for the neighbouring priest, thinking that his prayers might accomplish what force and skill had failed to effect.

No sooner did the priest behold the live toads imbedded in the knight's cheeks, however, than he exclaimed this must be a visitation from heaven, and bade him confess what grievous sin he had com-

mitted. But when the knight acknowledged that he had unmercifully driven his aged parents out of the house they had given him, the priest made a frightened sign of the cross, and bade him apply to the bishop, as he could not give absolution for so heinous a sin.

The bishop, equally shocked and horrified at the knight's confession, referred him to the Pope, who, seeing the man's plight, bade him return to his native land, find his aged parents, atone for his past cruelty by treating them kindly as long as they lived, and assured him that when he had obtained their forgiveness, the toads would certainly depart from his face.

The knight of La Sarraz therefore journeyed home again, and after a long and conscientious search discovered the dead bodies of his old father and mother lying side by side in an abandoned hermitage. At the pitiful sight of their wasted corpses, he fell on his knees, while tears of bitter repentance flowed in torrents down his cheeks. These tears effected what no other agent had been able to accomplish, for the toads suddenly loosened their hold, and sprang from the knight's cheeks, down to his shoulders, where they again burrowed and clung fast.

As long as the knight of La Sarraz lived, he bore these awful living reminders of his sin, but as he kept them carefully hidden from sight, no one suspected the tortures he endured for more than twenty years. It is this sin and its awful punishment which was commemorated by the odd statue in the chapel of La Sarraz.

* * * * *

In the tenth century, when all the western part of Switzerland formed part of the kingdom of Burgundy, good Queen Bertha rode through the land, visiting every castle, farm, and hamlet, and taking a kindly interest in the affairs of rich and poor.

Wherever she went, she encouraged high and low to be good and virtuous, setting them a shining example of industry by spinning diligently from morning until night. Such was her skill in handling the distaff, that she twirled it even while riding her snow-white palfrey from place to place. Those days were so peaceful and happy, that the

time "when Queen Bertha span," is still regarded in Switzerland as a synonym for the Golden Age. Of course, the memory of so virtuous a ruler has been kept green in the minds of the people, who have also carefully preserved her saddle with its hole for her distaff. This relic can still be seen in Payerne, where the virtuous Queen lies buried beside her husband and son.

Statues, pictures, and poems perpetuate Queen Bertha's fame, and people still relate anecdotes about her. One of these affirms that the queen, seeing a shepherd girl spin while tending her flock, was so delighted with her industry that she bestowed upon her a rich reward. The court ladies, wishing to secure similar benefits, presented themselves on the morrow, distaff in hand, before their royal mistress. Observing them for a moment in silence, the queen then archly remarked: "Ah, ladies! the peasant girl, like Jacob, received the blessing because she came first, but you, like Esau, have come too late!"

Queen Bertha was so good and charitable, that she was particularly loved by the poor, who claim that her spirit still haunts that region. Every year, towards Christmas time, she is said to wander through the villages after nightfall, peering in at every window to ascertain whether the women and girls have spun all their flax. Those who have been careful and diligent, and can show empty distaffs and skeins of fine, smooth thread, are rewarded by magic gifts. These consist of skeins which never end, or handfuls of leaves, twigs, shavings, or coal, which, if carefully put away, turn into gold before morning. But the maidens who have been careless or lazy are sure to be punished by sleepless nights, troubled dreams, tangled skeins, and numerous other petty mishaps.

We are told that Queen Bertha built the castle of Vufflens for a faithful servant who had become insane. As it was not safe to let him go abroad, the good Queen carefully selected this lovely spot so that the poor man could constantly feast his eyes upon the magnificent view of the lake, with Mont Blanc in the distance.

It is said that a thunderbolt put a sudden and merciful end to this madman's life. Then, as Queen Bertha was about to leave the country to join her married daughter in Lombardy, she bestowed the castle upon

Grimoald, a brother of the deceased, believing him to be good and honourable too, although he was really a base-hearted wretch whom every one feared.

Grimoald had not deemed it necessary to marry until then, but, wishing to have an heir for his new castle, he soon brought home a reluctant bride, forced by a stern father to accept his hand. He treated his wife, Ermance, moderately well until the birth of her first child. But when he heard that this babe was a girl, instead of the boy he desired, he flew into a towering rage, and vowed it should be confined in one of the corner turrets of the castle, to remain there with its nurse until he had an heir. Poor Ermance pleaded in vain for an occasional glimpse, or even for news, of her child. Then, she began a series of pilgrimages, and fasted and prayed without ceasing, hoping that Providence would give her a son. To her intense sorrow, however, she gave birth to daughters only, who as soon as they came into the world were consigned to separate towers, their cruel father reiterating ever more emphatically the remarks he had made at the advent of his first child.

When the fourth daughter came, the poor mother, clasping her passionately in her arms, begged permission to share her imprisonment and be her nurse. Grimoald, whose wrath by this time knew no bounds, then angrily said:

"Since you can give me nothing but daughters, you may go! But remember, I shall keep you in prison for ever. Every one shall believe you are dead, and I will take another wife, who, I hope, will not be such a fool as you!"

Striding out of his wife's room, Grimoald then made all his arrangements. By his orders, the babe was carried to the turret, and Ermance covered with a sheet as if she were dead. Then a coffin was brought into the room by servants, who fancied their mistress had died of grief at losing her fourth child too. But during the night, Raymond, Grimoald's trusted henchman, put some stones into this coffin, nailed down the lid, and secretly conveyed his mistress to the fourth tower, which, like all the rest, then communicated with his own dwelling by secret passageways.

Years now passed by, during which Ermance devoted all her

thoughts to her last child, for her husband had made Raymond tell her that the other little girls were all dead. From a narrow window high up in the wall, she caught a glimpse of her funeral procession; but although she often saw her husband ride in and out of the castle yard, she never beheld a woman beside him, for now that his cruelty was known, no one would consent to marry him.

Although confined within the narrow limits of a little tower room, Ermance's youngest daughter throve like a flower, and became so pretty and attractive that she won the heart of her grim jailer. Before she was thirteen, Raymond could refuse her nothing, and when he fell ill, he sent his adopted son and daughter to wait upon her and her mother. In the company of these charming young people,—to whom mother and daughter felt equally attracted,—the prisoners spent many happy hours, and heard many tidings of the outside world.

In the meantime Grimoald was failing fast, and Raymond rushed into the tower one night to summon his mistress and her daughter to his master's death-bed. On entering her husband's chamber, Ermance was somewhat surprised to behold there Raymond's adopted children with two other beautiful girls. But she almost died of joy, when Grimoald faintly informed her that these three maidens were the children for whom she had mourned so long. Then, after begging and obtaining her forgiveness for all he had made her endure, Grimoald told her that Raymond's adopted son, the child of an elder brother, was to inherit the castle of Vufflens, where, however, she and her daughters might dwell as long as they pleased.

Neither Ermance nor her daughters could mourn greatly for a husband and father who had treated them so cruelly, and after he was laid to rest, they openly rejoiced to find themselves free to go wherever they pleased. The four girls, especially, were in a state of rapturous delight over everything they heard and saw; for, until then, their world had consisted of narrow turret chambers, with as much of the country as they could perceive from loop-hole windows.

In time, three of these maidens, who were noted for their great beauty, married the lords of Blonay, Châtelard, and La Sarraz, whose castles still exist to-day, while the fourth became the wife of Artus, the

new and gallant young lord of Vufflens. Unlike his uncle, this knight treated his wife and children with the utmost consideration, and the corner turrets were never again used as prisons for innocent babes.

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In journeying on eastward along the northern shore of the Lake of Geneva, one soon comes to a dense forest of pine and hickory, very near Clarens, where stands the famous overhanging "Scex que Plliau," or Raining Rock, of which the following romantic legend is told:

The son of a rich lord, whose castle was at Montreux, once fell desperately in love with Joliette, the daughter of a neighbouring mountaineer. All went well until the young man's father heard of this love affair, and peremptorily bade his son part for ever from the maiden who was too far beneath him in station ever to become his wife.

The young lover, unwilling to give up his beloved, yet not daring to see her openly, now began to roam about the country, ostensibly in quest of game, but in reality in hope of encountering by chance the fair Joliette. One day, the good fairies who watch over all true lovers of that region, brought both young people to a charming and secluded spot in the forest, and while they sat there under an overhanging rock, exchanging vows and confidences, the hours sped by unmarked.

They were still lingering there, hand in hand, listening to the soughing of the wind in the pines, and the ripple of the waters over the stony bed of Clarens Bay, when they were suddenly startled out of their love dream by the angry voice of the young man's father. Terrified beyond measure by this unwelcome interruption, Joliette fled for protection to the arms of her lover, who, clasping her close to his heart, gazed defiantly at his sire.

The baron of Chaulin, however, like all mediæval fathers, expected his son to obey him implicitly; so when he beheld this attitude, he angrily bade his followers hurl the disobedient lovers over the rocks into the ravine at their feet! But, before this fierce order could be carried out, Albert sprang in front of Joliette with drawn sword, swearing he would have the life blood of any one who dared to lay a finger upon his betrothed.

His resolute bearing checked for a moment the advance of the baron's

followers, who had tried to execute their master's order. While they stood there motionless, silently awaiting further directions, a fairy voice was suddenly heard, bidding the young people marry without fear, promising them her protection, and upbraiding the hard-hearted father for opposing their union. This speech, which somewhat encouraged the lovers, further exasperated the baron. He furiously bade his men seek for the witch and hang her on the nearest tree, adding that his son should marry Joliette when water dripped through the rock above them, but not before!

To emphasise this statement, the baron savagely kicked the stone with his mailed heel, and he was about to pour forth more abuse, when he suddenly beheld the rock turn damp and saw the first drop of water form and fall. All now gazed in open-mouthed wonder at the overhanging rock, to which clung countless big drops which fell one after another, with a gentle splash, while new ones formed above in their stead.

"The rock is raining, the rock is raining!" the baron's followers gasped; and then, seized with superstitious terror, they turned and fled, leaving their master alone with the lovers.

"Yes," cried the fairy's voice, "the rock is raining, and unless the baron of Chaulin breaks his word for the first time in his life, you young people can now marry without further delay."

Awed by this phenomenon, or too honourable to disregard his oath, the baron not only consented to the young people's union, but gave them such a grand wedding that all Montreux feasted and danced for a whole week.

Since then, water has constantly trickled from the overhanging Raining Rock, down on the moss and the shiny-leaved water plants beneath it; and the delicate fronds of the ferns, growing in every cranny, perpetually rise and fall with dainty grace as the huge drops fall down upon them, and glancing off, slowly roll from stone to stone until they find their way into the Lake of Geneva.

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North of Clarens, on the boundary of the cantons of Vaud and Fribourg,