

* * * * *

THE
ICE-MAIDEN:
AND OTHER TALES.

By
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

TRANSLATED
By
FANNY FULLER

PHILADELPHIA: F. LEYPOLDT.
1863.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863, by
F. LEYPOLDT,
In the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States in
and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

PRINTED BY KING & BAIRD.

CONTENTS.

	Page
THE ICE-MAIDEN	7
THE BUTTERFLY	139
THE PSYCHE	149
THE SNAIL AND THE ROSE-TREE	183

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 Luetschine, 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 Moench," 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 "Foehn,"[A] 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 Foehn 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!

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

