Chapter IX. A parting, but not forever.

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THE day before she was to start, the grandmamma had sent off a letter to the Alm, so that her arrival would not take them by surprise. Peter brought this letter as he came up toward the pasture. The Alm uncle had already come out before the hut with the children, and stood ready with Schwänli and Bärli by his side. The goats shook their pretty heads in the fresh morning breeze, while the children patted them, and wished them a happy journey to the pasture. The uncle looked with satisfaction first at the fresh faces of the

children, and then at his clean, well-fed goats. His face wore a very happy expression.

At this moment Peter made his appearance. When he saw the little group he drew near very slowly, held his letter out to the uncle, and the moment it had left his hand he sprang back timidly and looked quickly behind him, as if something might be coming of which he was afraid; then with one leap he was off, and up the mountain.

"Grandfather," said Heidi, who was much surprised at this queer conduct on the part of the goatherd, "why does Peter behave exactly like the big Turk, when he sees a rod behind him?"

"Perhaps Peter sees a rod behind him, that he deserves," replied her grandfather.

The lad ran up the nearest slopes at one pull. As soon as he was out of sight of the hut, it was different; then he stopped and turned his head in a scared fashion in every direction. Suddenly he gave a jump and looked behind him, as frightened as if some one had seized him by the nape of his neck. From behind every bush, out of every thicket, he thought the police from Frankfort might be ready to spring upon him. The longer this anxious dread lasted the more unhappy Peter was, and he had at last not one quiet moment.

Heidi soon went into the hut, to put everything in order; for she wished the grandmamma to find it looking very neat when she came. Klara found so much amusement in watching these proceedings on the part of Heidi, that she always came

in to look on, while her friend worked. They were both so well employed that the early morning hours slipped away, and it was almost time for the visitor to arrive, before they knew how late it was. Then they came out, and seated themselves to await the great event.

The grandfather joined them; he had taken a walk that morning, and brought home a big bunch of dark-blue gentians, which looked so beautiful in the bright sunlight that the children exclaimed at the sight. He carried them into the hut. Every now and then Heidi sprang up from the bench, in hope to descry some sign of the grandmamma's procession.

There it was, at last, just as Heidi had expected it would be! First came the guide, then the grandmamma on her white

horse, then the porter with his basket piled with wraps, for the lady never would go up the mountains without plenty of means of keeping dry and warm. They came nearer and nearer. Now they had reached the summit, and the grandmamma from her horse caught sight of the children.

"What do I see, Klara, my child? What is this? You are not sitting in your chair!" the grandmamma cried quite startled, and hastened to dismount. But before even she reached the children she clasped her hands together, and said: "Is it you, Klara, or is it not? Your cheeks are red, and round as apples. Child, I should not know you!"

The good lady darted towards her grandchild; but in a trice Heidi had slipped from the bench, Klara had risen

quickly, supporting herself on her little friend's shoulder, and the two girls were calmly taking a little walk. The grandmamma stood perfectly still, at first from fright. She thought that Heidi was undertaking some unheard-of thing.

But what was it that she saw? Upright and steady Klara was walking by Heidi's side; the children came back after a few minutes, both with rosy cheeks, both with beaming faces. Now the grandmamma threw herself upon them. Laughing and crying at once she clasped Klara in her arms, then Heidi, and then again embraced her granddaughter, finding no words to express her joy.

Presently she espied the uncle, who was standing by the bench looking at the group with a contented smile. The grandmamma

took Klara by the arm, and with increasing surprise and delight that it was indeed so, that the child was indeed walking by her side, moved with her toward the bench. Then she stopped, and seized the uncle by both hands.

"My dear, good uncle! How can we ever thank you? This is your work! It is your care and nursing—"

"And our good Lord's sunshine and mountain air," added the uncle, smiling.

"Yes, and Schwänli's good sweet milk, too," added Klara. "You must see how I drink the goat's milk, grandmamma, and how good it is!"

"I can see that by your cheeks, Klara. No, I really do not know you; you have grown round and plump, as I never dreamed you could be. Is it really my Klara? We

will not lose one moment, but telegraph to my son in Paris; he must come to see you immediately. I will not tell him why; it will be the greatest happiness of his whole life. How shall we arrange this, my dear uncle? You have sent the men down again, I suppose?"

"Yes, they have gone; but if you are in such haste, we can send the goatherd down; he will have time enough."

The grandmamma stood to it that she would send a despatch at once to her son, he ought not to be deprived of this happiness a single hour. So the uncle went a little to one side, and gave such a searching whistle through his fingers that the echo came back from the rocks far above them. Before long Peter came running down. He was as white as chalk, for he

thought that the uncle was whistling him down to be punished. Only a bit of paper was given to him, however, which the grandmamma had in the mean time written, and he received the order to take this paper to the post-office in Dörfli. The uncle said he would attend to the payment later, for it was not safe to give Peter too much to do at once. Thus Peter set out quite relieved, his paper in his hand, for the uncle had not whistled him to his deserts, and no policeman was to be seen.

The party now seated themselves comfortably at the table, and everything that had passed was rehearsed to the grandmamma from the beginning. It took a long time to finish the story, for they were constantly interrupted by questions, and expressions of thankful surprise. "And

my weak, pale, lame little grandchild is transformed into this blooming, round-faced maiden! It is a fairy tale, I do believe," cried the grandmamma, and delighted the children by showing how completely their plan of surprise had succeeded.

Mr. Sesemann, in his turn, had planned a surprise. He had set out one fine sunny morning from Paris, and travelled on to Basle without stopping, and on again the following day as quickly as possible, for he had been seized with an irresistible desire to see his daughter, from whom he had been separated all summer. He had arrived in Ragatz just as his mother had left for the Alm; had followed in a carriage to Mayenfeld, and on to Dörfli, for he thought the walk up the Alm would be enough for him to undertake.

He was quite right, moreover; the steep climb was very fatiguing to him. He saw no cottage anywhere; and he knew, too, that half-way up he should have found the dwelling of goat-Peter, for he had heard the description of the mountain path often enough. There were little footpaths visible everywhere, crossing and recrossing each other. Mr. Sesemann began to be afraid that he was mistaken, and that the mountain cottage lay on another part of the Alp. He looked about, hoping to see some human being. It was perfectly quiet, nowhere a sound to be heard, not a living creature to be seen; only a mountain breeze fanned the air, while insects hummed, and a bird sang in the clear sky. Mr. Sesemann stood still, and let the Alpine wind cool his heated brow.

Somebody came running down the mountain. It was Peter, with his despatch in his hand. He ran as the crow flies, not following the path, on which Mr. Sesemann was standing. As soon as the runner was near enough, Mr. Sesemann beckoned to him. Hesitatingly and timidly Peter advanced, sidewise, not in a straight line, and as if he could not put one foot before the other properly, but must drag one behind him.

"Well, my lad, this way!" said Mr. Sesemann encouragingly. "Just tell me if by this path I shall come to the cottage, where an old man lives with a child called Heidi, and where the people from Frankfort are staying?"

A smothered cry of fear was the only answer, and Peter dashed away with such

tremendous force that he went heels over head down the steep slope, and rolled in involuntary somersets farther and farther, just as the bath-chair had done, only fortunately Peter did not come all to pieces like the chair. Meanwhile the despatch received terrible treatment, and flew away, torn into bits.

"A singularly bashful mountaineer," said Mr. Sesemann to himself, for he supposed this conduct to have been caused by the unexpected appearance of a stranger before the simple Alpine boy; and after he had watched Peter's powerful movement down the hillside for a little, he went on his way.

Peter could not stop himself, no matter how he struggled. He rolled on and on, and now and then over and over. But

this was not the worst for him at this moment; the worst was the knowledge that the policeman had arrived from Frankfort, for Peter did not doubt that the stranger who had asked the way to the Alm uncle's hut was he. At last he tumbled into a bush, about half-way down the last slope towards Dörfli, and there he stuck fast. He lay still for a moment to collect himself, and think what to do next.

"This is first-rate, here comes another," said a voice close to Peter. "And who will get a shove to-morrow, I wonder, and come tumbling down like a half-made potato-sack?"

It was the baker who was joking in this wise. He had come up the hill a little way, to refresh himself after his hot day's work, and had quietly watched Peter as he

rolled, not unlike the bath-chair, down the steep mountain-side.

The lad hastened to regain his feet. A new fear had seized him. Now the baker knew, too, that the chair had been shoved down. Without a single glance backward, Peter turned again up the mountain. If he could have had his way he would have liked to creep into his bed, for he felt safest there. But his goats were up above, and the uncle had strictly charged him to come back quickly, because they ought not to be left very long alone. He was afraid of the uncle, and had never yet ventured to disobey him. Peter groaned aloud and limped on; it must be, he must go up again. But he could not run; the anxiety, and the manifold bruises that he had just received, distressed him too much. So on

he went, limping and groaning all the way up the Alp.

Mr. Sesemann reached the first cottage soon after he had seen Peter, and when he thus knew that he was on the right path, he went on more courageously. At last he saw his goal before him. There stood the Alm hut, and there the dark treetops of the old pines waved to and fro.

Mr. Sesemann went gayly along the last ascent, picturing to himself his daughter's pleased surprise. He was quickly discovered and recognized by the party before the hut, where a surprise was ready for the father of which he had no idea. As he came up the last steps of the hill, two figures came towards him; a large girl, with fair hair and a rosy face, supporting herself upon the smaller Heidi, out of

whose dark eyes streamed glances of happiness. Mr. Sesemann started; he stood still, and stared at the approaching children. Suddenly great tears rolled down his cheeks. What remembrances were rising in his heart? It was the image of Klara's mother that rose before him, so had she looked, such golden locks, such rosy cheeks. Mr. Sesemann did not know if he were awake or asleep.

"Papa, do you not know me again? Am I really so much altered?" And with the words Klara was clasped in her father's arms.

"Yes, you are altered! Is it possible? Is it reality?" The father drew a step or two backward, to see if the picture would not vanish from before his eyes; then again he folded her in his arms, and then held

her off from him, to gaze on her rosy cheeks and to see how firmly she held herself.

By this time the grandmamma had come up, for she could not wait another moment, she was so desirous of seeing her son's happy face.

"What do you say, my son? The surprise you have given us is good; but ours for you is far better, is it not?" and she kissed her son affectionately; "but now you must come up to the hut to make the acquaintance of the uncle, who is our great benefactor."

"Certainly, and I ought to say a word to our little friend here," said Mr. Sesemann, as he shook Heidi's hand. "How is it? Fresh and healthy once more on the Alp? But it is useless to ask, no

Alpine rose could look more blooming. This is a pleasure to me, child, a real pleasure."

Heidi looked affectionately up into Mr. Sesemann's face. How good he had always been to her! and that now, here on the Alp, such a great happiness should have befallen him, made Heidi's heart beat rapidly for joy.

Mrs. Sesemann carried her son off now to see the Alm uncle. The two men stood holding each other's hands, and Mr. Sesemann expressed his gratitude and astonishment at what seemed to him almost a miracle; and the grandmamma turned away, for she had said all this a few moments before, and she wished to have another look at the old pines. Here, under the shade of the trees, where the

broad branches left a free place, stood a great cluster of most wonderful dark-blue gentians, as fresh as if they grew there naturally. She clasped her hands with pleasure and astonishment.

"How splendid! How lovely! What a sight! Come here, Heidi, my dear child, did you arrange this for me? It is perfectly wonderful!"

The children were by her side in a moment. "No, no, I did not do it," said Heidi; "but I know who did."

"That is just the way it looks up in the pasture, and more beautiful yet," said Klara. "But guess, grandmamma, who brought you these flowers early in the morning from the pasture!" and Klara smiled so merrily that the grandmamma began to think the child had been up there

herself before her arrival. But that indeed was a thing impossible.

A slight noise was just then heard under the pines. It was made by Peter, who had just got back. When he saw from afar who was there with the Alm uncle, he had made a wide circuit, and was creeping secretly along under the trees. The grandmamma recognized him, and a new idea took possession of her. Peter must have brought these beautiful flowers down for her, and now was hiding himself for bashfulness. No, that could not be permitted, he must have a little recompense.

"Come, my lad, come here; quick, don't be afraid!" said the grandmamma, and peered, as she spoke, through the trees at Peter.

The lad stood still, stiff with fear. Es-

cape was no longer possible to him. He had but one idea left, "It is out!" His hair stood on end, and pale and trembling he crept out from behind the pines.

"Come, my boy, don't stay there," said the grandmamma, meaning to encourage him. "Now tell me, did you do it?"

As Peter did not raise his eyes, he did not see where the lady was pointing. He did see that the uncle was standing not far off at the corner of the hut, piercing him with his clear gray eyes, and that the most dreadful of all people in the world, the policeman from Frankfort, was standing by his side. Trembling and quivering in every limb, Peter gave forth a loud cry; it was "Yes!"

"Now, now," said the grandmamma, "what does all this fright mean?"

"Because — because — it is all broken to pieces, and can never be mended," stammered the lad, and his knees shook so that he could no longer stand.

The grandmamma went towards the corner of the hut. "My dear uncle," said she compassionately, "is that boy really cracked?"

"No, not in the least," said the uncle reassuringly; "the boy is only the wind, that chased the bath-chair down the mountain, and now he is expecting his well-earned punishment."

The grandmamma could hardly believe this, for she did not find Peter at all mischievous in appearance; and then, he had no reason for destroying this very useful bath-chair. The uncle, indeed, had only a suspicion to sustain his assertion, a sus-

picion that he had conceived directly after the deed. The scowling looks that Peter had cast at Klara from the very beginning, and all the signs of dislike he had manifested towards the visitors to the Alp, had not escaped him. He had put this and that together, and was quite convinced that he understood the whole story which he now confided to the grandmamma. When he had finished, the lady declared with great energy: "No, my dear uncle, no, no, the poor boy has been quite enough punished. One must be merciful. Here come strange people from Frankfort and carry off his Heidi from him, for whole weeks at a time, his only happiness, and truly a great happiness, and he sits up there alone day after day, and looks on. No, no, one must be forgiving. Anger

has overpowered him, and driven him to a revenge which was rather a stupid one, I must acknowledge, but anger makes us all stupid."

With this the grandmamma went over to the poor fellow, who was still trembling and shaking violently. She sat down on the bench under the pines, and said kindly: "Now come here, my lad, I have something to say to you. Stop shivering and shaking, and listen; you must obey me. You pushed the bath-chair down the mountain, to break it in pieces. It was very wrong, and you knew it; and that you deserved to be punished you knew also, and so you tried very hard to prevent anybody from finding out what you had done. But now you see, whoever has done a wrong deed, and thinks that no one knows it, deceives

himself. The good God sees and hears everything, and as soon as he sees that anybody has done wrong, and wishes to hide it, he wakens quickly in that person the little watchman, that he has placed in everybody at his birth, and that is allowed to sleep until that person has done something wrong. The little watchman has a little sting in his hand, and with that he keeps pricking the wrong-doer, until he has not one moment's peace. And then he worries the tormented person with his voice, for he calls out continually, 'Now they are coming to punish you! Now it is all found out!' So he is always anxious and frightened, and has no comfort, not one bit. Have you not felt something like this, Peter, just now?"

Peter nodded quite abashed, but consentingly, for the description was exact.

"And yet, in one way, you were wrong in your calculation," said the grandmamma further. "Just see how that wrong thing that you did has turned out to be the best, the very best, for the person towards whom you felt so unkindly. Because Klara had no chair, in which she could be carried up the mountain to see the lovely flowers, she made great exertions to get to them; and so she learned to walk, and walks better and better every day. If she stays here, at last she will be able to go to the pasture whenever she chooses; much oftener than if she had to be rolled up in her chair. So you see, Peter, the good God can turn anything that is meant to be wicked into something good for the person who was to be hurt. And only the evil-doer has the sorrow and harm.

Have you understood all that I have said, Peter? Well, then, think on it; and every time you have an inclination to do something wrong, think of the little watchman inside of you with his sting and disagreeable voice. Will you promise me that?"

"Yes, I will," replied Peter, still more depressed, for he did not know in the least what the end of this was to be; there was the policeman, standing all this time beside the uncle.

"Well, that is good. Now the thing is settled," returned the grandmamma. "But I mean to give you something in remembrance of the people from Frankfort, something that you will like to have. So now tell me, have you ever wished for anything very much? What is it? What would you like best to have?"

At this Peter raised his head, and stared at the grandmamma with big round eyes. He had been expecting something horrible to happen to him, and now he was to get something that he wanted very much! He scarcely knew what to think.

"Yes, yes, I am in earnest," said the grandmamma, "you shall have something that you will like very much, to remind you of us, and to show you that we do not remember what you have done to harm us. Do you understand, my boy?"

At this Peter's prospect began to clear up a little, and he understood that he had no punishment to fear, and that the good woman before whom he stood would save him from the power of the police. He felt a sense of relief as if a mountain were lifted that had been weighing him

down to the ground. He had also learned that it is wiser to acknowledge at once what one has done that is wrong, than to wait until it is found out; so he said, "And I lost the paper too."

The grandmamma had to ponder a little over this abrupt announcement, but she soon discovered the connection, and said kindly: "Yes, yes, that is very good of you, to tell it. Always confess anything you have done that is wrong, and then it can be repaired. Now tell me what you wish for."

Peter realized now that he had leave to wish for anything in the world, and he felt almost dizzy. The whole fair at Mayenfeld swam before his eyes, with all the beautiful things that he had stood for hours looking at and never even hoping to possess; for

Peter's fortune was never so great but that everything there cost at least its double. There were the handsome red whistles, which he could use for his goats so nicely; there were the tempting knives with round handles, toad-stickers they were called, with which one could do a lively business in the hazel copses.

The boy stood deep in thought, trying to decide which of these two was the more desirable, and he found it impossible to choose. Presently a luminous idea came to him, by which means he could wait until the next fair, and have time to think it well over.

"A two-cent piece," he said, quite decided.

The grandmamma laughed.

"That is not extravagant. Come here!"

She drew out her purse, and took from it a big round dollar, upon which she placed two two-cent bits. "We will make a little calculation," she said. "Here we have as many two-cent bits as there are weeks in the year. You can take two cents every Sunday, and so have a bit every week all the year round."

"All the rest of my life?" asked the boy innocently.

At this the grandmamma began to laugh so immoderately that the uncle and Mr. Sesemann broke off their conversation, to hear what it was about.

The grandmamma kept on laughing.

"You shall have it, my lad; there shall be a clause in my will to that effect — do you hear, my son? Two cents a week to the goat-Peter, as long as he shall live."

Mr. Sesemann nodded approvingly, and joined in the laugh.

Peter gazed at the money in his hand, to see if it were really true; then he said, "Thank God!" and ran off in a most unusual fashion; but this time he kept his feet, for he was not driven by fear but by joy, a joy such as Peter had never yet known. All fear and anxiety were gone, and he was to have a two-cent bit every week for all the rest of his life!

Later in the day, when the party had finished their merry dinner before the hut, and sat there talking over all sorts of things, Klara took her father, whose face beamed more and more with joy each time he looked at her, by the hand, and said, with a sprightliness that no one had ever observed in the delicate and languid child:

"O papa, if you only could know what the grandfather has done for me! So much every day that it would be impossible to tell it all, but I shall never forget it in all my life. And I shall always be thinking how I can do something for him, or send him a present, that will give him half the happiness that he has given me."

"This is also my greatest wish, my dear child," said her father; "I am at this moment thinking of it, of how we can in some small measure repay what we owe to his kindness."

With the words Mr. Sesemann rose and went towards the uncle, who was sitting beside the grandmamma and talking with her very animatedly, but who rose as his guest came towards him. "My dear friend," said Mr. Sesemann, taking the old

man's hand very affectionately, "let me say a word to you! You can easily understand that for many years I have not known real happiness. What were all my money and possessions worth to me when I glanced at my child, and felt that I could never make her sound or well, no matter how much I might accumulate? Next to our good Heavenly Father I feel that you have healed her for me, and have given me, as well as the child, a new life. Now tell me how I can show you my gratitude. Recompense you I cannot, but what I possess I place at your disposal. Speak, my friend, is there anything I can do?"

The Alm uncle had listened in silence, while surveying the happy parent with a benevolent smile.

"Mr. Sesemann will well believe that I

have my share in the pleasure of this cure, which has been worked on my beloved Alm; my trouble is more than repaid," said he, in his decided manner. "I thank Mr. Sesemann for his kind offer, but I need nothing whatever. As long as I may live, I have enough for myself and for my grandchild. I have one wish, however, and could that be fulfilled, I should for this life feel no further concern."

"Name it, name it, my dear friend," begged Mr. Sesemann.

"I am old," continued the uncle, "and cannot live very much longer. When I go, I cannot leave the child anything, and she has no other relatives; no one person, who would take charge of her and care for her. If Mr. Sesemann will give me the assurance that Heidi need never go out

into the world to seek her bread among strangers, he will have richly repaid me for what I have done for his daughter."

"But, my dear friend," said Mr. Sesemann, "there can never be any question of that at all; the child belongs to us. Ask my mother, ask my daughter, if they would ever dream of allowing Heidi to go to anybody else, as long as they were living. But if it would be of the least comfort to you, here is my hand upon it. I promise you that this child shall never in her life go out to earn her bread amongst strangers. I will provide against that, now and after my death. I will say too that this child of yours is not made to live amongst strangers, no matter how favorable the circumstances might be; we have experienced that. But she has made

friends for herself. I know such an one; he is in Frankfort, he is closing up his affairs, to be able to go where he will and give himself some rest. That is my friend Dr. Classen, who means to return here in the autumn, and to establish himself, taking council with you, in this neighborhood, for he has never felt so well elsewhere, he says. So you see the child Heidi will have henceforth two protectors near her. May you both live long and happily together!"

"God grant this may be so," said the grandmamma, and she shook the uncle's hand for a long time with great cordiality. Then putting her arm round Heidi's neck, for the child stood near her, she said very tenderly: "And you, my dear child, you must also ask for something. Tell me

now, have you no wish that you would gladly have fulfilled?"

"Yes, indeed, I have," answered Heidi, and looked at the grandmamma with much satisfaction.

"Well, tell me at once, my child."

"I should like to have my bed from Frankfort with the high pillows and the thick coverlet, because the blind grandmother has to lie with her head down and can scarcely breathe, and then she will be warm enough under the coverlet, and not have to wear the shawl in bed because she is so cold."

Heidi had said this without stopping to breathe, she was in such haste to express this darling wish of hers.

"Oh, my dear Heidi, what are you saying?" cried the grandmamma, much

moved. "It is a good thing that you reminded me of this, for in great happiness it is so easy to forget one's duties. When God sends us everything that is good, we ought to think of those who are deprived of so much! We will telegraph to Frankfort at once. This very day Rottenmeier shall pack the bed, and it will get here in two days. God willing, the grandmother shall sleep well in it!"

Heidi danced round and round the grandmamma, as the easiest way to express her delight. But suddenly she stood still and said: "Now I must go down to tell the grandmother all about it; she will be anxious because I have not been to see her for so long."

"No, no, Heidi, what are you thinking of?" said her grandfather reprovingly.

"When one has visitors, it is not proper to run away and leave them."

But the grandmamma supported Heidi.

"The child is right, my dear uncle," said she, "the poor grandmother has for a long time been deprived of enough on our account. We will all go together to see her, and I will take my horse from her cottage. Then we will go down to Dörfli, and will telegraph at once to Frankfort. What do you think of it, my son?"

But Mr. Sesemann had not yet had time to talk over his trip. He therefore begged his mother to be quiet a little while, and not to start off so hastily, as he wished to say a few more words to the uncle.

Mr. Sesemann had proposed to travel a little with his mother through Switzerland,

and to see if Klara were strong enough to make a short distance with them. Now, it was all so different; he could have the most delightfully interesting trip with his daughter, and he would make use of these beautiful late summer days for that purpose. He therefore proposed to pass the night in Dörfli, and the next day to take Klara away from the Alm, in order to journey with her to her grandmamma in Ragatzbad, and from there farther.

Klara was rather cast down at this sudden prospect of leaving the Alp; but it would certainly be a very delightful trip, and then this was not a time to show any disappointment.

The grandmamma had risen and taken Heidi's hand, ready to start on their walk, when she turned suddenly about, rather

startled, for she had just remembered her granddaughter. "But what in the world shall we do with Klara?" she said; "the walk will be far too long for her."

The uncle took his foster daughter on his arm, and followed with firm steps the grandmamma and Heidi. Last of all came Mr. Sesemann, and in this manner they went down the mountain.

Heidi went dancing and jumping along by the grandmamma's side, and the latter wished to know all about the poor blind woman, how she lived, and how everything went on in her house, especially in the cold winter. Heidi could tell all about this, for she knew how the grandmother sat drawn together in her corner, trembling with cold; knew, too, what she had to eat, as well as what she did not have.

The grandmamma listened with the liveliest interest to Heidi's account, until they reached the hut. Brigitte was just then busy hanging Peter's second shirt in the sun to dry, so that when he had worn the other long enough he could change. She caught sight of the company, and ran into the cottage.

"Now they are all going away, mother," she said; "there is a whole procession of them, and the uncle is carrying the sick child."

"Oh, must it really be?" sighed the grandmother. "Are they going to take Heidi with them? Did you see that? Oh, how I wish I could take her hand once more! If I could only hear her speak again!"

At this moment the door flew open, and

Heidi came leaping in, up to the corner where the old woman sat, and hugged her tightly. "Grandmother! grandmother! my bed is coming from Frankfort, and all the three pillows, and the thick coverlet. They will be here in two days, the grandmamma says so."

Heidi was not able to bring out her words fast enough, in her impatience to see the great delight of the grandmother, who smiled, but looked rather sad.

"Oh, what a good woman she is! I ought to be glad that she is taking you away with her, Heidi; but I shall not live long, after it."

"What? what? who told the good old grandmother such a thing as that?" It was the friendly voice of Mrs. Sesemann, and her hand grasped that of the blind

woman, which she pressed warmly. "No, no! there is no talk of any such thing. Heidi is going to stay with the grandmother, and always make her happy. We wished to see the child again, but we came to her. We shall come up to the Alm every year, for we have good reason to thank God for the goodness he has shown to us up here, where he has performed a miracle on our dear child!"

With this the light of true happiness came over the face of the grandmother, and with speechless joy she pressed the hand of the kind Mrs. Sesemann, while two big tears rolled slowly down her face. Heidi recognized the look of happiness, however, and was contented.

"It is true, grandmother, is it not?" she said, as she nestled closely up to the old

woman, "just as we read a while ago in the hymn-book. The bed from Frankfort is provided."

"Yes, Heidi, and all the many, many things that God gives me. How is it possible that there can be such good people, who will trouble themselves about a poor old creature like me, and do so much for her? It is not strange that we can believe in a good Father in heaven, who takes thought for the least of his creatures, when we learn that there are people who are full of kindness and pity for such a poor useless old woman as I am."

"My good grandmother, before our Father in heaven we are all alike pitiful," said Mrs. Sesemann, "and we are all equally in need of his care. And now farewell, but we shall soon meet again, for

we shall come next year, and not forget to visit you then. We will not forget that!" Mrs. Sesemann took the old woman's hand again, and shook it kindly.

Now they went down to the valley, Mr. Sesemann and his mother, while the uncle took Klara up once more in his arms, and Heidi gambolled along by his side, up the Alm without stopping once to rest. She was indeed happy at the grandmother's good fortune.

There were hot tears shed the next morning when it was time for Klara to take leave; the girl was very loath to part from her friends, and from the beautiful Alm where she had felt well, as she had never felt before. But Heidi comforted her, saying: "It will be summer again before we think of it, and then you will

come again, and it will be more beautiful than ever. Then we can begin at once to walk about, and go up every day with the goats to the pasture, and see the flowers, and everything will be delightful from the beginning."

Mr. Sesemann came, as agreed upon, to fetch his daughter. While he stood talking with the grandfather, Klara wiped the tears from her eyes, for Heidi's words had comforted her a little.

"Give my good-bye to Peter," she said, "and to all the goats. I wish I could give Schwänli something, she has helped so much in making me well."

"You can do that easily enough," said Heidi. "Send her a little salt, you know how she likes to lick it from my grandfather's hand in the evening."

This counsel pleased Klara. "Oh, I will send a hundred pounds from Frankfort," she cried, "as a remembrance of me."

Mr. Sesemann here beckoned to the children, for he must be going. Mrs. Sesemann's white horse had been sent up for Klara. She could ride down now, she no longer needed a litter.

Heidi stationed herself on the most prominent point of the slope, and waved her hand to Klara until there was no longer a sign of horse or rider to be seen.

The bed from Frankfort has arrived, and the grandmother sleeps so soundly every night that she will certainly get new strength from it. The good grandmamma has also not forgotten the hard winter on the Alp. She has sent a big package to

the goat-Peter's cottage, and in it were all sorts of warm things, so that the grandmother could wrap herself up very snugly, and not shiver from the cold any more in her corner.

In Dörfli a great building is going up. The doctor has come from Frankfort, and has for the time being gone into his former quarters. By the advice of the uncle, the doctor has purchased the old building that he and Heidi lived in, which was formerly a fine house, as one might see from the room where the stove with the beautiful tiles stood. This part the doctor is to have arranged for his lodging. The other part will be put in condition for the uncle and Heidi, for the doctor recognizes in his old friend an independent man, who must have his own dwelling-

place. Quite at the back Schwänli and Bärli will have comfortable winter lodgings.

The doctor and the Alm uncle are daily more and more intimate, and as they walk about inspecting the progress of the building in Dörfli, their talk falls mostly upon Heidi, for their greatest pleasure in the new dwelling is that the happy child will here live with them.

"My dear friend," said the doctor recently to his companion, as they stood together on the walls, "you must look at the thing from my point of view. I share all your pleasure in the child as if I were her next nearest relative; I must also share all duties, and decide what will be best for her welfare. In this way I shall have a kind of right to our Heidi, and can hope

that she will care for me in my old age, and stay with me and nurse me. That is my dearest wish. She shall be recognized as my heiress, and when we leave her behind, you and I, we need not be anxious about her comfort."

The uncle pressed the doctor's hand long in silence. In his eyes were visible the emotion and pure joy that stirred his heart to its depths.

In the mean time, Heidi and Peter sat together at the grandmother's side, and the former had so much to tell and the latter so much to hear that they pressed closer and closer against the happy blind woman, who listened intently to the little girl's account of the exciting events of the past summer, when Heidi's visitors prevented her from going to the cottage.

And of the three who sat thus together, each looked happier than the other, because of being all once more together, and because of all the delightful things that had taken place. Perhaps the face of Peter's mother was the happiest of all, she had just now for the first time clearly understood from Heidi the true history of her son's two-cent pieces.

At last the grandmother said: "Heidi, read me a hymn of praise! It seems to me that I ought to do nothing but praise and glorify our Lord God in heaven, for all that he has in his mercy granted us, his poor children."

END OF VOL. II.