

*JEROME OF THE DRAGON'S DALE*

Without a word or look to right or left, he lifted the basket, and strode directly toward the rock. Not till the wall was arm's length away could a stranger have discovered how one boulder thrusting before another opened a passage, narrow, tortuous, dark, betwixt the masses of sandstone. The defile was scarce wide enough for two to pass. Underfoot trickled a shallow stream. The stone walls were mantled with green moss and myriad ferns and harebells. Often the rocks locked closer, throwing the gorge into twilight, or opening, disclosed the grassy hillslopes fifty feet on high. The solitary went onward, heedless of gloom, until, after following this uncanny path for nigh two hundred yards, the rocks sprang apart, and as by art-magic the long-prisoned sun burst forth, and shot his glory over the greenwood. Instantly all the beeches' leafy clusters were glistening with diamonds, the sheen of the grassy slopes grew dazzling, the brook flashed on its way, with a rainbow in every ripple, whilst right over the massy Wartburg hung a true "Bow of the Promise" in full splendour.

The stranger mounted the slope, till castle