

BRIGHT DAYS IN STORE.

"Bright days in store,"
For those who can bravely wait,
With unshrinking hearts bearing life's burden on;
Uttering no hasty words,
Bearing the ills of fate,
Still working and loving and journeying on.

"Bright days in store,"
For the gentle and trusting,
Those who with charity judge one another;
Whose heart's tenderest feelings
Are never left rusting,
When there's a prospect of helping a brother.

"Bright days in store,"
For the lonely and loveless,
Craving a help-mate to share every thought;
Our God in his bounty
Hath made no heart mateless;
Despair not, remember—'With Love is Love bought!'

"Bright days in store,"
Oh, believe it, ye mourners,
Our God in his wisdom hath portioned our woes;
And He who sends sorrows
To chasten sojourners—
On world-weary pilgrims His pity bestows.

"Bright days in store,"
Oh! be steadfast and cheerful,
Perform every duty your hand finds to do;
Neglect not the helpless,
The suffering and fearful,
And God in His mercy will not neglect you!

Quebec, 4th August, 1876.

F. CHESLA.

GEIER-WALLY:

A TALE OF THE TYROL.

CHAPTER I.

GEIER-WALLY.

"With dreamy eyes down the rugged steep
Gazes the mountain maid, so proud and shy;
Beneath the foliage of her bosom faced
Her young heart throbs with feelings pure and high.
Ever so the Alpine rose, on some lone cliff,
Lies its soft petals to the summer sky.
Not rocks it mid the stones and masses gray,
Tis never discerned by any human eye."

SCHNEFFEL.

A traveller was walking through the Oetzthal. Far above him, on a giddy height, stood a girlish figure, looking from the valley no larger than an Alpine rose, but sharply relieved against the blue sky and gleaming ice-clad peaks of the mountains. She stood firmly and quietly, though the wind plucked and tore her garments, gazing steadily down into the depths, where the Asche dashed foaming through the ravine, and a slant ray of sunshine painted glimmering prismatic colors on the cliff in its spray. She saw the traveller and his guide advancing along the narrow bridge that spans the Asche, and which from above looked like a straw, but did not hear what they were saying, for no sound, save the thundering roar of the water, rose from the abyss. She did not notice that the guide, a handsome chamois hunter, raised his arm with a threatening gesture, pointed to her and said to the stranger, "That is surely Geier-Wally, (Eagle-Wally), for no other girl would dare to stand on the narrow ledge so near the edge of the precipice; see, one would think that the wind would blow her over, but she always behaves entirely unlike any sensible person."

They now entered a dark, damp fir-wood. Once more the guide paused and looked upward with an eagle glance to where the young girl stood and the little village rested on the narrow mountain plateau in the full light of the morning sun, which as yet scarcely dared cast a glance ashore into the narrow, gloomy ravine. "You needn't look down so defiantly, there's a way up," he muttered, and disappeared with the traveller. As if in contempt of the threat, the girl uttered a loud *jodel*, so shrill that, repeated by all the cliffs, a winged echo bore the tones far into the deep silence of the fir-wood, dying away with a mysterious sound, like the faint shout of the hostile fauns of the Oetzthal.

"Yes, shout! I'll drive you away," he said, angrily, and, throwing back his head, poured forth, in tones as clear and shrill as a post horn, a song of derision and mockery. Will she hear it?

"Why do you call that girl Geier-Wally?" asked the traveller in the dark, damp-wood below.

"Because, sir, when she was a child she robbed an eagle's nest and fought with the old bird," said the Tyrolean. "She's the handsomest and strongest girl in the Tyrol, and immensely rich, and it's a shame the way she drives the boys off. No can boast that he ever conquered her. She's as coy as a wild-cat, and so strong that the lads say no one can get the better of her. If any of them comes near her she strikes him down. Well, if I should ever try it, I'd conquer her or tear the chamois beard and feather from her hat."

"Why haven't you tried your luck with her, if she is so rich and beautiful?" asked the stranger.

"Why, you see, I don't like girls who are half-boys. To be sure, she can't help it; the old man—Stromminger—is a very bad fellow. He used to be the best fighter and wrestler among the mountains, and the memory of it still clings to him. He has always beaten the girl shamefully, and brought her up like a boy; she never had a mother, for Stromminger's wife died directly after her birth. That's why she has grown up so fierce and violent." Such was the story the Tyrolean related to the traveller, and he was not wrong. The girl who stood on the verge of the lofty precipice was Wallburga Stromminger, the *Hochstbauer's* (the most in-

fluential peasant in the village) only child, also called Geier-Wally, and he told the truth; she deserved the name. Her courage and strength were as boundless as if she possessed the wings of an eagle, her nature as stern and inaccessible as the rugged peaks where these proud birds build their nests, and whose summits tear the clouds of heaven.

Wherever any dangerous feat was to be performed, Wally had always appeared and put the lads to shame. Even when a child, she was as wild and unruly as her father's young bulls, whom she controlled. When scarcely fourteen, a peasant had discovered on the side of a steep cliff a golden eagle's nest, containing one fledgling, but no one in the village dared to capture it. Then Stromminger, in scorn of the young men, said his Wallburga would get it. And Wally, to the horror of the women and the indignation of the lads, instantly announced herself ready. "You are tempting Providence," Stromminger said the men. But the former must have his jest; every one must learn that the race of Stromminger, from generation to generation, was still peerless.

"You shall see that a girl who has the Stromminger blood is worth ten of your boys," he exclaimed, with a proud laugh, to the peasants who flocked to witness the unprecedented sight. Many pitied the beautiful young girl, who would perhaps fall a victim to her father's malicious boast. But they all wanted to look on. As the wall of the rock was almost perpendicular, and afforded no resting place for any human foot, a rope was fastened around Wally's waist. Four men, her father at the head, held the end, it is true, but it was terrible to the spectators to behold the brave child, armed only with a knife, advance to the edge of the plateau, and with a sudden bound descend into the abyss. Suppose the knots of the rope should break, the eagle tear her to pieces, or her skull be crushed against some unseen projection of the cliff as she was hurriedly down up! It was a wicked deed on the part of Stromminger to carelessly risk the life of his only child. Meantime Wally descended fearlessly through the empty air to the nest, half-way down the precipice, where with delight she perceived the eaglet, that ruffled its downy plumage and pecked angrily at her with its little beak. Without the least hesitation she seized with her left hand the young bird, which now uttered a pitiful cry, and put it under her arm. Just then there was a rushing sound in the air, darkness surrounded her, and blows rained like hail upon her head. "Your eyes, save your eyes," was her only thought, and, pressing her face closely against the cliff, she blindly struck with her knife at the furious bird, which attacked her with beak, claws and pinions. Meantime the men above drew her rapidly up. The battle in the air still continued; suddenly the eagle shot down into the valley. Wally's knife must have wounded it, while the child, bleeding and with her face torn by the rocks, reached the top of the precipice, still clasping the young bird, which she would not have relinquished at any cost.

"But Wally," cried the peasants, "why didn't you drop that young bird? then you would have got rid of the eagle."

"Oh," she answered, simply, "the poor thing can't fly yet; if I had dropped it, it would have fallen down the precipice and been killed."

This was the first and only time in her life that her father ever kissed her; not because Wally's generous compassion for the helpless bird had touched his heart, but because she had performed a heroic act, which did honor to the hardy race of Stromminger.

This was the girl who was now standing on the ledge of a rock scarcely a foot wide, gazing dreamily down into the abyss; for, with all her impetuosity, a strange reverie sometimes took possession of her, and she looked mournfully into vacancy, as if she saw something for which she longed, yet could not attain. It was a vision that always remained the same, whether she saw it in the gray dawn of morning or the glow of noon, the sunset glory or the pale moonlight, and it haunted her constantly for a year, wherever she went, down in the valley and up on the mountains, and whenever she was alone, and her large chamois eyes wandered over the gleaming glaciers or down into the dark ravine where the waves of the Asche thundered; she sought him whom the vision resembled, and if now and then a traveller, looking in the distance like a tiny speck, passed by, she thought it might be he, and a strange thrill of joy overwhelmed her at the idea of seeing him, although she could distinguish nothing except a human figure no larger than the puppets in a peep show. When the two pedestrians now passed, she again thought it might be he. Then her chest seemed oppressed with some heavy weight, her lips parted, and her joy burst forth like a freed lark in a ringing *jodel*. And as the chamois hunter in the silent wood below heard the faint echo, a sound of his reply reached her also, and she listened to the distant note with rapture. It might be his voice! The roscate reflection of a warm emotion suffused the wild, defiant face. She had not heard the mocking tone in the shout. If she had, she would probably have clenched her fists and tried the strength of her arms, while dark shadows swept over her face till it was as pale as the glaciers after sunset. She now sat down on the ledge that supported her, and, swinging her feet, which hung over the terrible abyss, rested her head on her hands, and again recalled the wonderful events of the day when she saw him for the first time.

CHAPTER II.

BAREN-JOSEPH.

Just a year ago, at Whitsuntide, her father took her to Söhlen, to be confirmed; the bishop came there every two years, because a carriage road extended to the place. She felt a little ashamed, because she was sixteen years old and so tall. Her father would not allow her to be confirmed before; he thought lovers and a wedding would instantly follow, and there was still plenty of time for that. Now she feared the others would laugh at her. But no one noticed her. The whole village was in an uproar when they arrived, for it was said that Joseph Hagenbuck, of Sölden, had killed the bear that had appeared in Vintschgau, and for which the lads in all the other hamlets had vainly laid snares. Joseph then set out for the spot, and last Friday caught him. A messenger had brought the news early in the morning, and Joseph would soon follow him. The peasants waiting before the church were very proud that it was a Sölden lad who had accomplished the daring deed, and talked of nothing but Joseph, who was undeniably the strongest and handsomest fellow and the best shot among the mountains. The girls listened admiringly to the heroic tales related of the young hunter, how he found no mountain too steep, no road too long, no chasm too wide, and no danger too great. And when a pale, delicate-looking woman appeared, all rushed forward and congratulated her on having a son who did her so much honor.

"Your Joseph is a pattern to every one," said the men, kindly. "How your husband would rejoice if he were still alive!" cried the women.

The mother smiled. "Yes, he is a fine fellow and a good son; no one could have a better. But you may believe I am never free from anxiety about him; not a day passes that I don't think to-day he'll be brought home with broken limbs. It is a hard trial."

The tall figures of the priests now appeared on the square, and put an end to the conversation. The people thronged into the little church with the white-robed, flower-wreathed children, and the sacred service began.

But Wally could think of nothing but the bear-slayer, Joseph, and all the wonderful things he was said to have done; and how splendid it would be if one were so strong and brave, and held in such high esteem by every one. If he would only come while she was in Sölden, that she might see him, too; she fairly longed to do so.

At last the service was over, and the children received the bishop's blessing; just at that moment wild cheers arose. "He has him! He has the bear!" The bishop could scarcely finish the benediction, for all rushed out of doors, and with shouts of joy surrounded a young chamois hunter who, accompanied by a group of sturdy mountaineers from Schnalset and Vintschgau, was just crossing the square before the church. But tall and stately as were the lads of Schnalset and Vintschgau, now compared with him. He towered above all in height, and was so handsome—handsome as a picture. He looked like the St. George in the church. Over his shoulder was flung a bearskin, whose huge claws dangled on his broad breast. He moved as proudly as the emperor, and took but one step to the others' two, but still kept in advance. And they were making as much ado about him as if he were really the emperor disguised as a chamois hunter. One carried his gun, another his game-bag, and all shouted and cheered; he alone was calm and quiet. He modestly approached the priests, who came forward from the church, and raised his garlanded hat to them. The bishop made the sign of the cross over him, and said, "The Lord was strong in you, my son. By His help you have accomplished what no one else was able to do. Men must thank you, but you owe your thanks to God."

All the women wept, and Wally's eyes also grew dim with tears; it seemed as if now, for the first time, the devotion she had not felt in the church overpowered her, when she saw the stately hunter bend his proud head to receive the blessing of the priest. The reverend gentleman passed on. Joseph's first question was now, "Where is my mother? Isn't she here?"

"Yes," replied the latter, throwing herself into her son's arms, "here I am."

Joseph clasped her in a warm embrace, saying, "Ah! little mother, I should have been sorry for you if I had never come home again. You, dear little mother, you wouldn't have known what to do without me, and I, too, could not have died willingly until I had kissed you again."

Ah! it was so beautiful to hear him say that! A strange feeling stole over Wally, as if she envied the mother who leaned so quietly in her son's embrace, and clung so tenderly to his powerful figure. All eyes rested on the group with delight. A thrill of indescribable emotion shot through Wally's heart.

"But now tell us how it all happened," cried the peasants.

"Yes, yes, I'll tell you about it," he answered, laughing, and threw the bearskin on the ground, that they might look at it. A circle formed around him, and the inn-keeper ordered a cask of his best beer to be brought to the spot and tapped, for the lads must drink after church, especially on such an extra occasion, and his little room could not have held them all. The men and women, of course, pressed around the narrator, and the children who had been con-

* Bears-Joseph.

firmed mounted on benches and trees to look over their heads. Wally was the first to climb a pine, and could see his face distinctly; but the others envied her place, and, as she would not give it up, a quarrel arose. Then St. George looked at them, and his sparkling eyes rested on Wally's face, and lingered there for some time. The young girl felt as if all the blood in her body were rushing into her head, and she trembled so violently that it seemed as if she could hear her heart beat. She had never trembled before in all her life, and she knew not why she did so now. She only half heard what Joseph was saying; there was a buzzing in her ears; she could think of nothing but, "If he would only look up again!" And she did not know whether she wished or feared it. But when, during the story, it happened once more, she hastily averted her eyes, and felt as much ashamed as if she had been caught in doing something wrong. Was it wrong for her to look at him so? It must be. And yet she could not help it, though constantly trembling lest he should notice it. But he did not; why should he care about the child perched in the tree? He had glanced at her two or three times, as one looks at a squirrel—nothing more. She said this to herself, and a strange pang shot through her heart. She had never felt so before; she was only glad that she had drunk no wine on the way, or she would have fancied that she was intoxicated. In her agitation she began to play with her rosary. It was a beautiful new one, made of coral beads, with a real silver cross of artistic workmanship—a confirmation gift from her father. Suddenly, as she turned and twisted it, the string broke, and the red beads rolled down from the tree like drops of blood. "That is a bad sign," whispered a secret voice; "Luck and doesn't like to have anything break while one is thinking."

"Thinking of what?" Yes, of what was she thinking! She tried to remember, but could not. She really had not been thinking of anything in particular. Why did she feel so sorry that the cord broke at that moment? It seemed as if the sun suddenly grew pale, and a cold breeze swept over her. But not a blade of grass stirred, and the icy world glittered in the radiant light.

A cloud had cast its shadow—within or without? Meantime Joseph had finished the story of his adventure with the bear and shown the purse with the forty *florins* paid by the Tyrolean authorities, and there was no end of the praise and congratulations. Wally's father alone remained sulkily aloof. It vexed him to have any perform a heroic deed; nobody in the world ought to be strong except himself and his daughter. For thirty years he had been acknowledged the strongest man in the mountains, and now he could not endure to grow old and make room for the new generation. But when one of the villagers, in his delight, said to Joseph that it was no wonder he had grown into such a stout fellow—he had inherited it from his father, who had also been the best shot and best fighter in the neighborhood—the old man could no longer restrain himself, but burst forth with a thundering "Oh! don't bury a man before he is dead!"

All started at the threatening tones and cried almost alarmed, "Stromminger!"

"Yes, Stromminger is here and never knew before that Hagenbuck was the best fighter. With his tongue perhaps, but nothing else!"

Joseph turned like a wounded wild cat, and looked at Stromminger with flashing eyes.

"Who says my father was a braggart?"

"I say it, the Hochstbauer from the Sonnenplatte, and I know what I'm talking about, for I've thrown him scores of times like a sack."

"That's false," cried Joseph. "I won't allow my father's name to be blackened!"

"Hush, Joseph; it's the Hochstbauer; we must not quarrel with him," whispered the bystanders.

"What do I care for the Hochstbauer? If our Lord came down from Heaven and tried to abuse my father I wouldn't stand it. I know very well that Stromminger and my father never agreed, because my father was the only one who could vie with him. And he threw Stromminger just as often as he him!"

"It's a lie!" shouted Stromminger. "Your father was a simpleton compared to me. If any one of you old men has a spark of honor he'll say so; and if you don't believe it, then I'll beat it into you." But at the word simpleton Joseph had rushed furiously upon Stromminger. "Take that back, or—"

"Merciful God," shrieked the women. "Stop, Joseph," said his mother, "he is an old man, you must not attack him!"

"Oh," shouted Stromminger, scarlet with rage. "Do you want to make me out an old good-for-nothing? Stromminger isn't yet so weak that he can't cope with such a saucy young stripling! I'll show you that I've plenty of marrow in my bones. I wouldn't fear you if you had killed ten bears."

And the powerful man rushed like a furious bull on the young hunter, so that the latter involuntarily fell back under the shock. But Joseph only staggered a moment; his youthful frame was so muscular, so elastic, that, although bent, it instantly sprang back again, like the tall pines, which, rooted as if by iron wires in the bare rocks, allow themselves to be swayed by the four winds of heaven, and are obliged to bear up against mountain weight of snow. Stromminger might as well have tried to uproot such a tree as to lift Joseph from the ground. And after a short struggle Joseph's arms clasped Stromminger with a more and more suffocating