

*JEROME OF THE DRAGON'S DALE*

ing, but all the trees were hung with pearls, and shook down showers at every sweeping breeze. The air was suddenly grown warm. The last hundred paces, Johann seemed walking into a sheer wall of rock, whence the stream crawled from under a tiny fissure. What dwelt beyond — dog-men who fed on babes, or only ordinary and commonplace devils, Johann did not care to guess. Ten paces from the precipice he halted, crossed himself as a precaution, laid down the basket, and turned to a sapling whence dangled a rusty helmet by a leathern thong.

Thrice he beat with a stick, and the metallic booms sent new quakings, not appeased by a voice which proceeded from the centre of the beetling rock.

"Who is this that comes to the Dragon's Dale?"

"I, Johann of the 'Crown and Bells';" and Johann's teeth rattled.

"Have you brought the basket?"

"Surely, holy father; bread and cheese as always on the first of the month."

"Christ then abide with you and your good parents. In the helmet you will find the