

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

HOW THE CRIPPLE HELD THE PASS.

Hans Anderson was the son of a poor widow in a village in Switzerland. He was a cripple and sickly. Though able to walk and even run, after his crippled fashion, his weak spine would not permit much of such violent exercise. Now, although his body was weak, Hans had an ambitious and noble spirit. He loved his mother, and, as he grew older, and heard the older people of the village talk, and learned the history of his country, he came to feel proud he was a Swiss.

Dame Anderson was a good and trustful soul, and, despite the hardness of her lot, was content that she had food, shelter and clothing, although she was not well supplied with any of these. They both worked all working days, and often on holidays, and from early to late.

One holiday, when the young men were dressed in their best and were enjoying their games, Hans sat at his work until afternoon, and then, putting his work aside, sat for a long time with his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands. His mother watched him for some time, and finally, laying her hand on his shoulder, said: "Come, Hans, put on your hat and go to the village and see the sports. It will make you cheerful. Don't sit here at home and nurse bad thoughts."

Hans turned his tear-filled eyes up to his mother, and as she leaned over toward him he took her face between his hands and kissed her. She was well acquainted with Hans' moods, and, patting him on the shoulder, said: "Come, Hans, I will go with you. Let us go to the village."

"Oh, mother, I can't. Why did God make a cripple of me, when you need a strong son to help you? What good can I be to you or my country? All the young men are armed and drilled ready to defend the valley in case Napoleon's soldiers come this way, but I am no good. I have prayed God to take me away, I am no good here."

"Trust God, my son. Don't be impatient. God has his plan for every man, and He has His plan for you."

"Yes, mother, I do trust God, but it does seem so hard!"

Brushing the tears from his eyes, Hans rose to his feet, and, embracing his mother, said: "Few young men have as good a mother as I have. I'll be patient and trust God, mother. He has His plan for every man, and He has His plan for me. Let us go to the village."

This happened in a Swiss village that stood just below a pass in the Alps that was the only entrance or exit for the village above; a pass where a few resolute men could hold an army at bay. Napoleon at this time was over-running Europe and subjecting everything to his rule. The villages of this valley had watchers stationed with signal fires prepared, and everything ready to sound the alarm. The principal signal-pile was at the pass itself, a little above the narrow gorge that was the point to be defended. A night and day watch was set, and men were told to sleep with guns by their sides, clothed and ready to rush to the pass.

It was coming on evening when Hans and Dame Anderson arrived at the scene of merriment. Hans noticed that some of the young men, who he had supposed were that day on the watch at the signal-pile, were among the merry-makers, and on inquiring of some of them, their indifferent answers showed that their thoughts were more on the games than their duty. This disturbed Hans still more, and, later on, as the moon rose over the tops of the mountains, he left his mother and walked toward the pass. The cool of the evening encouraged him on, and his anxious thoughts spurred him into a faster walk than was his custom. It did not seem so very long before he was entering the gorge,

and as he found no guard there his heart rose within him as he thought: "Can it be possible that the guards have left the signal-pile above deserted? How could they do such a thing? No, it cannot be! At least one has been left." But the thought gave him fresh energy and he pressed on up the mountain.

He could not long stand the pace, and stopped to rest a moment. The still night air brought to his now acute ears faint sounds of the revelry going on in the village, and gave him new strength. On, up, up, he went, until finally, after a seemingly endless climb, he reached the signal-pile, completely exhausted. He threw himself upon the ground, and when he had in some measure recovered himself he began to look around to assure himself that the pile was indeed deserted.

Hans, after examining the pile, began to search for the torch, tinder and flint, and soon found them under the shelter of a large rock close at hand. Although he had brought no blankets or wrap to protect him against the night air that in the mountains is quite sharp, he now determined to watch until relief came.

After the first feeling of excitement had passed away he fell upon his knees and thanked God for the opportunity now offered of being of service to the people of the valley. As he rose from his knees he felt stronger, and, carefully hiding himself in the shade of the rock next to the pile, he strained his ears and eyes to hear and see anything that might come.

The moonlight bathed the side of the mountain and gave fantastic shapes to the rocks. After he had sat there about an hour, feeling quite chilled, he thought he would walk about to warm himself, but his quick ear detected a sound of stealthy footsteps, and, peering into the moonlight, he saw a French soldier step into full sight from behind a rock not fifteen paces away. After taking a look around the soldier withdrew, evidently to notify his comrades that the coast was clear.

Hans' heart beat high, but, hiding behind the rock, he struck the flint with the steel, and, quickly blowing the tinder into a blaze, fired the torch, threw it upon the signal-pile and started on a run toward the pass.

The French advance guard by this time was coming forward. They fled, expecting a volley from the signal guard. This gave Hans a moment of time to get somewhat ahead. As no firing came, the soldiers rushed forward, some to destroy the now blazing pile and the others to look for the guard.

The latter saw a boy running down the mountain and fired a volley after him. The bullets whistled around Hans and one struck him, lodging in his shoulder. Spurred on by the excitement, ignoring the pain and the blood he now felt running down his back, Hans kept on. As he reached the pass and staggered on, he saw that the signal fires were burning on the mountains and that the valley was aroused, and he thanked God that he had been the means of doing it.

As he came out on the other side he met some guards and a host of the villagers rushing to the pass to defend it.

"Who lit the pile?" they cried.

"I did," said Hans, "the French are there."

Now that friends were met, Hans could hold out no longer, and fell fainting at their feet. He was quickly taken in strong arms and borne to the village.

As Hans was carried to his home his name was passed from mouth to mouth as the one who had lit the fire. As he lay on his bed in pain, with his life-blood slowly ebbing away, he told what he had done, and when the news came of how the French had been driven back, and how he was hailed as the deliverer of the valley, he turned to his mother and said: "Mother dear, God has his plan for every man, and

he had his plan for me. May he forgive me for my impatience and want of trust!"

The people of the valley erected a monument here to his memory. It bears this inscription:

HANS ANDERSON.

"God has His plan

For every man,

And he had His plan for me."

—*Christian Endeavor World.*

ADELE'S MILLION GUESTS.

"Mamma! Mamma! Mamma!" screamed Adele rushing downstairs to the sitting-room. "There's a million big flies in my room, a whole million!"

"Why, dearie!" said Mrs. Green. "How can you say such a thing? Don't you know it is a very bad fault for any one, even a little girl, to exaggerate? It is telling an untruth to make things larger than they really are in speaking about them."

"But, mamma, you just come and see," said the little girl. "I know there's a million, sure. The room is just full of them."

So Mrs. Green had to leave her work and go up the pretty blue and white chamber that belonged to Adele. Adele was only six, and she had been sleeping alone in her dear little room just a week. "There may be a few flies in the room because papa took the screen out to mend it," said Mrs. Green on the way upstairs, "but not a million, of course."

But when she opened the door she hastily slammed it shut again.

"Dear! Dear!" she exclaimed. "What can be the matter? Adele, your flies are honey bees."

The little room was full of a buzzing, humming mass, and the insects were crawling over everything. "There must be a swarm somewhere," said Adele's mamma, running out into the yard. "Dearie, I don't wonder you thought there was a million."

When they reached the lawn, they found that a swarm of bees were hanging on the limb of a pear tree, right against the window, and that a great many had gone through the open window. "Will they never come out, mamma?" asked Adele, ready to cry. "Will they always stay in my little room?"

Just then an old gentleman from across the way came hunting the lost bees, and he was very glad to see them on the pear limb. "Don't you cry, Adele," he said. "I'll soon have your visitors in their own little house."

From a safe distance Adele watched him sprinkle the mass of bees with water, and then carefully saw off the limb on which they were hung. Slowly he came down the ladder, and when he shook the bees in front of the hive a little brown procession started right in as if to begin the housekeeping at once. A little more water sprinkled on them hurried the procession, and very soon they were going back and forth as if moving was a very easy task.

"Mamma, you said guests should always be treated nicely," said Adele, when she could use her room again, "but we drove mine out. They gave me a kind of surprise party, and I didn't wait for it. I guess when visitors invite themselves they never get treated very nice, do they? Anyway, mine didn't."—*Journal and Messenger.*

According to an electrical engineer, bed is the safest place in a thunderstorm. Mattresses are non-conductors. Once between the sheets, he adds, one can snap one's fingers at the lightning. So far, good. But on the very next page (says the "Daily Chronicle") we find reported the case of a railway porter who was struck and stunned by lightning as he lay in bed. The only explanation would seem to be that the unlucky porter must have forgotten to snap his fingers.