

JEROME OF THE DRAGON'S DALE

The hermit deliberately entered the hut, soon to return with a cake of coarse black bread. Again the wolf started, but the man rebuked him.

"First, we must thank God."

The man knelt by the fire, and the beast regarded in silence.

"We thank thee, O Father of all mercies, for food and for another day of life in which we may prove ourselves repentant of our sins, and more obedient to Thy will, *sic oramus in nomine nostri delecti Domini, Jesu Christi: Amen.*"

The "Amen" was answered by a yelp; the wolf rose on his hinder legs. The man broke the cake into halves scrupulously equal, and cast one to the beast who caught it with his teeth, growled gently, and began to devour. His master seemed in no haste to eat. It lacked an hour of evening. The slant sunshine through the trees streamed in a witching brightness. The air grew warm. From the pines bird answered to bird. The man went across the narrow clearing, drew from his girdle a keen knife, and cut a notch upon a sturdy fir. Many notches were there al-