

"Only a sprain," he answered: but he felt sick and faint, and could say no more.

"Lie still," said the girl, quietly. "You will be better soon. I will fetch you water." She went to make another cup, fastening it together better with thorns. While she was gone, the child came clambering up, and held out to him for comfort one of those garlands of beech-leaves which the country folk make; it was a treasure to him: Lisa had made it.

Presently, he was well enough to finish his descent, with Lischen's arm to help him. Englishmen have not the happy self-satisfaction which enables them to look sentimental in such light afflictions; they generally feel that they are looking foolish, and so felt Harry Thorpe. He was by no means happy to be hopping along the road, though leaning on the arm of the most beautiful girl, to his mind, that he had ever seen. It was a "horrid bore" and "a nuisance." He could not get back to his hotel, and the Weinwirtschaft had looked by no means inviting or even cleanly. He had formed no plan, when they reached old Müller's hut, Lischen's home.

"Come in, sir," she said. "Father Müller has oils and cordials that will do you good."

A sudden inspiration flashed across him.

"Do you think I may stay here?" he asked.

"Here? In our poor little hut?"

"You see I cannot walk," he rejoined, with a depth of cunning. She pondered gravely.

"No, you cannot walk: and Frau Knatage is not too clean. Perhaps—we must ask the mother. The beds have just been washed and are new filled with straw."

The cottage-door opened, and Father Müller came out with a look of mild surprise, enhanced in effect by the erectness of his few grey hairs, and the horn spectacles pushed up upon his forehead. Lischen explained and so did Harry, in his best German, and in the same he proffered his request. The old man shook his head. He could say nothing till the Hausfrau should come home; but the stranger was welcome to rest. The kitchen was clean as German country kitchens ever are, with their little black pots and pans in which such good savoury things are cooked, and Lischen moved about in her household work.

"Will the child never go home?" thought Harry, watching Röschen still on the doorstep; but the little cart came scrooping up the hill, and baby was packed in by Lischen, and drawn home triumphantly by her brothers. Then came Frau Müller, a stout, sour-faced woman; but she too remembered the beds were fresh-washed, and she was keen for the money which would ensue; and thus at last, Harry Thorpe took up his abode for three weeks in the Müllers' cottage.

It was a happy and a good time to him and happier still to Lisa.