HEIDI

(ILLUSTRATED EDITION)

BY

JOHANNA SPYRI

TRANSLATED BY

ELISABETH P. STORK

ILLUSTRATED BY

MARIA L. KIRK

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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HEIDI
JOHANNA SPYRI

Introduction

Unassuming in plot and style, "Heidi" may none the less lay claim to rank as a world classic. In the first place, both background and characters ring true. The air of the Alps is wafted to us in every page; the house among the pines, the meadows, and the eagle poised above the naked rocks form a picture that no one could willingly forget. And the people,

from the kindly towns-folk to the quaint and touching peasant types, are as real as any representation of human nature need be. Every goat even, has its personality. As for the little heroine, she is a blessing not only to everyone in the story, but to everyone who reads it. The narrative merits of the book are too apparent to call for comment.

As to the author, Johanna Spyri, she has so entirely lost herself in her creation that we may pass over her career rather rapidly. She was born in Switzerland in 1829, came of a literary family, and devoted all her talent to the writing of books for and about children.

Since "Heidi" has been so often translated into English it may well be asked why there is any need for a new version. The answer lies partly in the conventional character of the previous translations. Now, if there is any quality in "Heidi" that gives it a particular charm, that quality is freshness, absolute spontaneity. To be sure, the story is so attractive that it could never be wholly spoiled; but has not the reader the right to enjoy it in English at least very nearly as much as he could in German? The two languages are so different in nature that anything like a literal rendering of one into the other is sure to result in awkwardness and indirectness. Such a book must be not translated, but re-lived and re-created.

To perform such a feat the writer must, to begin with, be familiar with the mountains, and able to appreciate with Wordsworth

The silence that is in the starry sky, The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

The translator of the present version was born and reared in a region closely similar to that of the story. Her home was originally in the picturesque town of Salzburg, and her father, Franz von Pausinger, was one of the greatest landscape painters of his country and generation. Another equally important requisite is knowledge of children. It happens that this translator has a daughter just the age of the heroine, who moreover loves to dress in Tyrolese costume. To translate "Heidi" was for her therefore a labor of love, which means that the love contended with and overcame the labor.

The English style of the present version is, then, distinctive. It has often been noticed that those who acquire a foreign language often learn to speak it with unusual clearness and purity. For illustration we need go no further than Joseph Conrad, a Pole, probably the greatest master of narrative English writing to-day; or to our own fellow-citizen Carl Schurz. In the present case, the writer has lived seven years in America and has strengthened an excellent training with a wide reading of the best English classics.

Many people say that they read without noticing the author's style. This is seldom quite true; unconsciously every one is impressed in some way or other by the style of every book, or by its lack of style. Children are particularly sensitive in this respect and should, therefore, as much as is practicable, read only the best. In the new translation of "Heidi" here offered to the public I believe that most readers will notice an especial flavor, that very quality of delight in mountain scenes, in mountain people and in child life

generally, which is one of the chief merits of the German original. The phrasing has also been carefully adapted to the purpose of reading aloud—a thing that few translators think of. In conclusion, the author, realising the difference between the two languages, has endeavored to write the story afresh, as Johanna Spyri would have written it had English been her native tongue. How successful the attempt has been the reader will judge.

Charles Wharton Stork
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Part I: Heidi's Years of Learning and Travel

I. Going Up to the Alm-Uncle

The little old town of Mayenfeld is charmingly situated. From it a footpath leads through green, well-wooded stretches to the foot of the heights which look down imposingly upon the valley. Where the footpath begins to go

steeply and abruptly up the Alps, the heath, with its short grass and pungent herbage, at once sends out its soft perfume to meet the wayfarer.

One bright sunny morning in June, a tall, vigorous maiden of the mountain region climbed up the narrow path, leading a little girl by the hand. The youngster's cheeks were in such a glow that it showed even through her sun-browned skin. Small wonder though! for in spite of the heat, the little one, who was scarcely five years old, was bundled up as if she had to brave a bitter frost. Her shape was difficult to distinguish, for she wore two dresses, if not three, and around her shoulders a large red cotton shawl. With her feet encased in heavy hob-nailed boots, this hot and shapeless little person toiled up the mountain.

The pair had been climbing for about an hour when they reached a hamlet half-way up the great mountain named the Alm. This hamlet was called "Im Dörfli" or "The Little Village." It was the elder girl's home town, and therefore she was greeted from nearly every house; people called to her from windows and doors, and very often from the road. But, answering questions and calls as she went by, the girl did not loiter on her way and only stood still when she reached the end of the hamlet. There a few cottages lay scattered about, from the furthest of which a voice called out to her through an open door: "Deta, please wait one moment! I am coming with you, if you are going further up."

When the girl stood still to wait, the child instantly let go her hand and promptly sat down on the ground.

"Are you tired, Heidi?" Deta asked the child.

"No, but hot," she replied.

"We shall be up in an hour, if you take big steps and climb with all your little might!" Thus the elder girl tried to encourage her small companion.

A stout, pleasant-looking woman stepped out of the house and joined the two. The child had risen and wandered behind the old acquaintances, who immediately started gossiping about their friends in the neighborhood and the people of the hamlet generally.

"Where are you taking the child, Deta?" asked the newcomer. "Is she the child your sister left?"

"Yes," Deta assured her; "I am taking her up to the Alm-Uncle and there I want her to remain."

"You can't really mean to take her there Deta. You must have lost your senses, to go to him. I am sure the old man will show you the door and won't even listen to what you say."

"Why not? As he's her grandfather, it is high time he should do something for the child. I have taken care of her until this summer and now a good place has been offered to me. The child shall not hinder me from accepting it, I tell you that!"

"It would not be so hard, if he were like other mortals. But you know him yourself. How could he *look* after a child,

especially such a little one? She'll never get along with him, I am sure of that!—But tell me of your prospects."

"I am going to a splendid house in Frankfurt. Last summer some people went off to the baths and I took care of their rooms. As they got to like me, they wanted to take me along, but I could not leave. They have come back now and have persuaded me to go with them."

"I am glad I am not the child!" exclaimed Barbara with a shudder. "Nobody knows anything about the old man's life up there. He doesn't speak to a living soul, and from one year's end to the other he keeps away from church. People get out of his way when he appears once in a twelve-month down here among us. We all fear him and he is really just like a heathen or an old Indian, with those thick grey eyebrows and that huge uncanny beard. When he wanders along the road with his twisted stick we are all afraid to meet him alone."

"That is not my fault," said Deta stubbornly. "He won't do her any harm; and if he should, he is responsible, not I."

"I wish I knew what weighs on the old man's conscience. Why are his eyes so fierce and why does he live up there all alone? Nobody ever sees him and we hear many strange things about him. Didn't your sister tell you anything, Deta?"

"Of course she did, but I shall hold my tongue. He would make me pay for it if I didn't."

Barbara had long been anxious to know something about the old uncle and why he lived apart from everybody.

Nobody had a good word for him, and when people talked about him, they did not speak openly but as if they were afraid. She could not even explain to herself why he was called the Alm-Uncle. He could not possibly be the uncle of all the people in the village, but since everybody spoke of him so, she did the same. Barbara, who had only lived in the village since her marriage, was glad to get some information from her friend. Deta had been bred there, but since her mother's death had gone away to earn her livelihood.

She confidentially seized Deta's arm and said: "I wish you would tell me the truth about him, Deta; you know it all—people only gossip. Tell me, what has happened to the old man to turn everybody against him so? Did he always hate his fellow-creatures?"

"I cannot tell you whether he always did, and that for a very good reason. He being sixty years old, and I only twenty-six, you can't expect me to give you an account of his early youth. But if you'll promise to keep it to yourself and not set all the people in Prätiggan talking, I can tell you a good deal. My mother and he both came from Domleschg."

"How can you talk like that, Deta?" replied Barbara in an offended tone. "People do not gossip much in Prätiggan, and I always can keep things to myself, if I have to. You won't repent of having told me, I assure you!"

"All right, but keep your word!" said Deta warningly. Then she looked around to see that the child was not so close to them as to overhear what might be said; but the little girl was nowhere to be seen. While the two young women had

talked at such a rate, they had not noticed her absence; quite a while must have elapsed since the little girl had given up following her companions. Deta, standing still, looked about her everywhere, but no one was on the path, which—except for a few curves—was visible as far down as the village.

"There she is! Can't you see her there?" exclaimed Barbara, pointing to a spot a good distance from the path. "She is climbing up with the goatherd Peter and his goats. I wonder why he is so late to-day. I must say, it suits us well enough; he can look after the child while you tell me everything without being interrupted."

"It will be very easy for Peter to watch her," remarked Deta; "she is bright for her five years and keeps her eyes wide open. I have often noticed that and I am glad for her, for it will be useful with the uncle. He has nothing left in the whole wide world, but his cottage and two goats!"

"Did he once have more?" asked Barbara.

"I should say so. He was heir to a large farm in Domleschg. But setting up to play the fine gentleman, he soon lost everything with drink and play. His parents died with grief and he himself disappeared from these parts. After many years he came back with a half-grown boy, his son, Tobias, that was his name, became a carpenter and turned out to be a quiet, steady fellow. Many strange rumors went round about the uncle and I think that was why he left Domleschg for Dörfli. We acknowledged relationship, my mother's grandmother being a cousin of his. We called him uncle, and because we are related on my father's side to nearly all the

people in the hamlet they too all called him uncle. He was named 'Alm-Uncle' when he moved up to the Alm."

"But what happened to Tobias?" asked Barbara eagerly.

"Just wait. How can I tell you everything at once?" exclaimed Deta. "Tobias was an apprentice in Mels, and when he was made master, he came home to the village and married my sister Adelheid. They always had been fond of each other and they lived very happily as man and wife. But their joy was short. Two years afterwards, when Tobias was helping to build a house, a beam fell on him and killed him. Adelheid was thrown into a violent fever with grief and fright, and never recovered from it. She had never been strong and had often suffered from queer spells, when we did not know whether she was awake or asleep. Only a few weeks after Tobias's death they buried poor Adelheid.

"People said that heaven had punished the uncle for his misdeeds. After the death of his son he never spoke to a living soul. Suddenly he moved up to the Alp, to live there at enmity with God and man.

"My mother and I took Adelheid's little year-old baby, Heidi, to live with us. When I went to Ragatz I took her with me; but in the spring the family whose work I had done last year came from Frankfurt and resolved to take me to their town-house. I am very glad to get such a good position."

"And now you want to hand over the child to this terrible old man. I really wonder how you can do it, Deta!" said Barbara with reproach in her voice.

"It seems to me I have really done enough for the child. I do not know where else to take her, as she is too young to come with me to Frankfurt. By the way, Barbara, where are you going? We are half-way up the Alm already."

Deta shook hands with her companion and stood still while Barbara approached the tiny, dark-brown mountain hut, which lay in a hollow a few steps away from the path.

Situated half-way up the Alm, the cottage was luckily protected from the mighty winds. Had it been exposed to the tempests, it would have been a doubtful habitation in the state of decay it was in. Even as it was, the doors and windows rattled and the old rafters shook when the south wind swept the mountain side. If the hut had stood on the Alm top, the wind would have blown it down the valley without much ado when the storm season came.

Here lived Peter the goatherd, a boy eleven years old, who daily fetched the goats from the village and drove them up the mountain to the short and luscious grasses of the pastures. Peter raced down in the evening with the light-footed little goats. When he whistled sharply through his fingers, every owner would come and get his or her goat. These owners were mostly small boys and girls and, as the goats were friendly, they did not fear them. That was the only time Peter spent with other children, the rest of the day the animals were his sole companions. At home lived his mother and an old blind grandmother, but he only spent enough time in the hut to swallow his bread and milk for breakfast and the same repast for supper. After that he sought his bed to sleep. He

always left early in the morning and at night he came home late, so that he could be with his friends as long as possible. His father had met with an accident some years ago; he also had been called Peter the goatherd. His mother, whose name was Brigida, was called "Goatherd Peter's wife" and his blind grandmother was called by young and old from many miles about just "grandmother."

Deta waited about ten minutes to see if the children were coming up behind with the goats. As she could not find them anywhere, she climbed up a little higher to get a better view down the valley from there, and peered from side to side with marks of great impatience on her countenance.

The children in the meantime were ascending slowly in a zigzag way, Peter always knowing where to find all sorts of good grazing places for his goats where they could nibble. Thus they strayed from side to side. The poor little girl had followed the boy only with the greatest effort and she was panting in her heavy clothes. She was so hot and uncomfortable that she only climbed by exerting all her strength. She did not say anything but looked enviously at Peter, who jumped about so easily in his light trousers and bare feet. She envied even more the goats that climbed over bushes, stones, and steep inclines with their slender legs. Suddenly sitting down on the ground the child swiftly took off her shoes and stockings. Getting up she undid the heavy shawl and the two little dresses. Out she slipped without more ado and stood up in only a light petticoat. In sheer delight at the relief, she threw up her dimpled arms, that were

bare up to her short sleeves. To save the trouble of carrying them, her aunt had dressed her in her Sunday clothes over her workday garments. Heidi arranged her dresses neatly in a heap and joined Peter and the goats. She was now as light-footed as any of them. When Peter, who had not paid much attention, saw her suddenly in her light attire, he grinned. Looking back, he saw the little heap of dresses on the ground and then he grinned yet more, till his mouth seemed to reach from ear to ear; but he said never a word.

The child, feeling free and comfortable, started to converse with Peter, and he had to answer many questions. She asked him how many goats he had, and where he led them, what he did with them when he got there, and so forth.

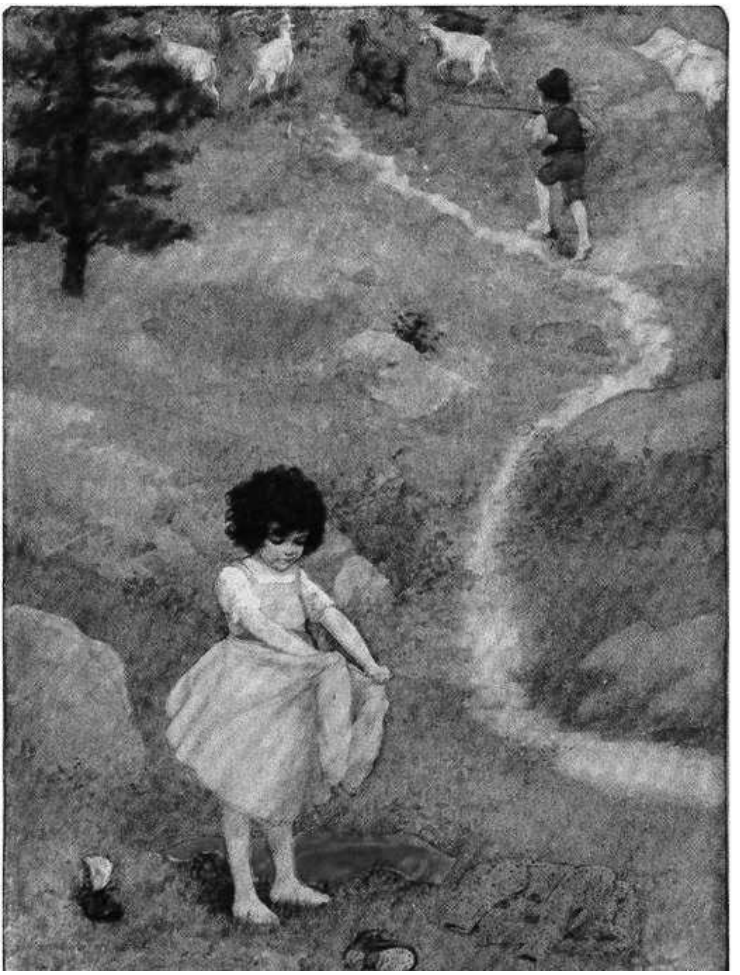
At last the children reached the summit in front of the hut. When Deta saw the little party of climbers she cried out shrilly: "Heidi, what have you done? What a sight you are! Where are your dresses and your shawl? Are the new shoes gone that I just bought for you, and the new stockings that I made myself? Where are they all, Heidi?"

The child quietly pointed down and said "There."

The aunt followed the direction of her finger and descried a little heap with a small red dot in the middle, which she recognized as the shawl.

"Unlucky child!" Deta said excitedly. "What does all this mean? Why have you taken your things all off?"

"Because I do not need them," said the child, not seeming in the least repentant of her deed.



SHE UNDID THE HEAVY SHAWL AND THE TWO LITTLE DRESSES

"How can you be so stupid, Heidi? Have you lost your senses?" the aunt went on, in a tone of mingled vexation and reproach. "Who do you think will go way down there to fetch those things up again? It is half-an-hour's walk. Please, Peter,

run down and get them. Do not stand and stare at me as if you were glued to the spot."

"I am late already," replied Peter, and stood without moving from the place where, with his hands in his trousers' pockets, he had witnessed the violent outbreak of Heidi's aunt.

"There you are, standing and staring, but that won't get you further," said Deta. "I'll give you this if you go down." With that she held a five-penny-piece under his eyes. That made Peter start and in a great hurry he ran down the straightest path. He arrived again in so short a time that Deta had to praise him and gave him her little coin without delay. He did not often get such a treasure, and therefore his face was beaming and he laughingly dropped the money deep into his pocket.

"If you are going up to the uncle, as we are, you can carry the pack till we get there," said Deta. They still had to climb a steep ascent that lay behind Peter's hut. The boy readily took the things and followed Deta, his left arm holding the bundle and his right swinging the stick. Heidi jumped along gaily by his side with the goats.

After three quarters of an hour they reached the height where the hut of the old man stood on a prominent rock, exposed to every wind, but bathed in the full sunlight. From there you could gaze far down into the valley. Behind the hut stood three old fir-trees with great shaggy branches. Further back the old grey rocks rose high and sheer. Above them you

could see green and fertile pastures, till at last the stony boulders reached the bare, steep cliffs.

Overlooking the valley the uncle had made himself a bench, by the side of the hut. Here he sat, with his pipe between his teeth and both hands resting on his knees. He quietly watched the children climbing up with the goats and Aunt Deta behind them, for the children had caught up to her long ago. Heidi reached the top first, and approaching the old man she held out her hand to him and said: "Good evening, grandfather!"

"Well, well, what does that mean?" replied the old man in a rough voice. Giving her his hand for only a moment, he watched her with a long and penetrating look from under his bushy brows. Heidi gazed back at him with an unwinking glance and examined him with much curiosity, for he was strange to look at, with his thick, grey beard and shaggy eyebrows, that met in the middle like a thicket.

Heidi's aunt had arrived in the meantime with Peter, who was eager to see what was going to happen.

"Good-day to you, uncle," said Deta as she approached. "This is Tobias's and Adelheid's child. You won't be able to remember her, because last time you saw her she was scarcely a year old."

"Why do you bring her here?" asked the uncle, and turning to Peter he said: "Get away and bring my goats. How late you are already!"