

COT AND CRADLE STORIES

BY

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AUTHOR OF "LOST IN THE BACKWOODS," "PEARLS AND PEBBLES;" OR,
NOTES OF AN OLD NATURALIST," ETC.

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thank the Giver of all good for them, and think their Switzerland the best country in the world. If it were not, they say, foreigners from all parts of the globe would not come to visit it as they do every year.

The Swiss are remarkable for industry, ingenuity and frugality. The men are brave, hardy and energetic; nor are the women less so than the men. Much of the field work is done by the women, while the husbands and sons follow the more difficult and perilous life of the hunter or guide in the wild passes of the mountains. The wives and daughters patiently cultivate the garden, carrying manure and earth on their backs in baskets to enrich some small field or flat on the side of the mountain, where they will raise a few bushels of oats and barley.

Such a field, of about half an acre in extent, had thus been made to yield a scanty supply of grain and roots by the widow Switzer and her children. This with the milk of a small flock of goats, a little honey from the hives of the wild rock bees, some hard cheese made from the goats' milk, and such small supplies of meat as they procured from snaring the mountain conies and hares, the family contrived to live, if not luxuriously, yet with comfort.

But hard times sometimes came. The cold late

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springs kept back the grain from ripening, floods swept the newly sown seed out of the ground, or the wild goats, the ibex and chamois, browsed upon the tender blade when it showed promise of a fair crop.

To prevent this last misfortune it was Herman's and Berta's task to rise at earliest dawn and watch the field and chase away the wild animals. Besides the larger animals they had to watch for, there were the rock conies and the Alpine mouse or marmot.

The children knew all the ways and habits of these wild creatures. They knew where the cautious chamois and the wary ibex hid their tender kidlings in the mountain gorges, spots where the foot of man, however venturous, had never dared to approach. Herman could point out to his sister the tall pine tree that had twisted its roots so deeply in the rifted rock that no storm could move it, and where the lordly eagle had its eyry and had built its nest and reared its young ones year after year unmolested by the hunter. He knew where the bright-eyed, sharp-winged falcon that soared so high above their heads, had its nest.

The simple loving nature of the boy took pleasure in watching and studying the habits of the birds and animals he met with in their native haunts. He could imitate the songs of the birds and the cries of