

# **The Adventures of Mirror-Swabian**

## **How the Seven Swabians go their separate ways and Mirror-Swabian joins the Allgauer.**

On the following day, the two drinking cronies, Thunder-Swabian and Mirror Swabian, were sitting together at first light in the 'Golden Cross' at Überlingen, each with a tankard of good cherry brandy; for the wine of the previous day had eaten away at their stomachs, which they thought to heal with this cordial. Yellowfooter was, by this time, over hill and dale; Lace-Swabian had also cleared off, to be with his ma; Knoeple-Swabian was still lolling in bed, snoring so loudly that everyone took the sound for a mill-wheel; and the Allgauer was checking the oxen in the stall. So the two were able to talk together quite familiarly, with no one to vex or cramp them. They talked about the return journey and which road they would take. Mirror-Swabian said, "I'm not going through Memmingen." But Thunder-Swabian observed: It was the shortest road to the countship of Schwabeck, and he had to make haste to kiss Käthe's arse. And he tried to persuade Mirror-Swabian to return home to his wife. "I'd rather go to the Devil's grandmother," he said. And he downed a glass – not exactly to her health. Thunder-Swabian felt a noble sympathy for him, and he remarked: "Surely, marriage must be a sorry state when two hearts don't beat as one." "Indeed," said Mirror-Swabian, "and it's as sorry as can be when it's two hands doing the beating!" – While they were speaking thus, the Allgauer walked into the room. Mirror-Swabian said to him, "Allgauer, I'm going with you." – "By God!" said the Allgauer, "and I'm going with you, so the two of us are going with each other." A while later, however, he asked Mirror-Swabian: "But listen, what will we do about the reckonings?" For he

well knew that Mirror-Swabian had a stomach like a sponge and always drank like a fish. Mirror-Swabian said: “Fry me a sausage or two, and I’ll quench your thirst for you.” This suited the Allgauer just fine, and they shook hands on it. Then they took their leave, and Mirror-Swabian said to give Käthe his regards, and Thunder-Swabian replied he was welcome to stop by if he came that road. – So, let the man go along whom it suits to go, and may the man whom it doesn’t suit not stop them.

### **How Mirror-Swabian and the Allgauer came to Constance and what they got up to there.**

“We’ll go by Lake Constance,” said the Allgauer; “then we’ll come to the mountains, and after that we can’t put a foot wrong.” – “Listen, brother, to what I have to say to you,” replied Mirror-Swabian; “What do you think about our first travelling a little on and across the German Sea?<sup>1</sup> The opportunity is very seasonable, and we don’t have it every day. Also, Lake-Hare said that on the other side there’s a city called Constance; where you only have to ask: Stomach, what’ll you have? and you find yourself in the Land of Milk and Honey; and the main thing is, he says, it costs nothing, and that’s where the city gets its name from.”<sup>2</sup> – “By God!” said the Allgauer, “that would be just the job, if it were only true.” – “We can at least try it,” replied Mirror-Swabian, “trying is free.” – So they crossed over to Constance on the passage-boat, and the first inn to meet their eyes was the ‘Blue Bock’<sup>3</sup>; and just look! on the sign there was written:

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<sup>1</sup> Lake Constance.

<sup>2</sup> There is a play on “Kostnitz” (Constance) and “kost nits” (kostet nichts = costs nothing).

<sup>3</sup> Bock is the name of a beer and also the word for a billy-goat.

‘Everything is scot-free tomorrow.’ “By God!” said the Allgauer, “this time, Lake-Hare wasn’t lying.” – “It’s just a shame,” said Mirror-Swabian, “that we came a day too early.” So they stopped in at the ‘Blue Bock.’ That evening, when they paid their small reckoning, Mirror-Swabian asked the innkeeper: “Are they really true, those words on your sign?” – “Yes,” said the host, “one man – one word!” So they sat as if stuck in their seats for the whole of the next day, carousing from early morning until late at night, remembering the words written on the sign. And the host and the hostess went busily to and fro and took delight in the pot-companions, and particularly in Mirror-Swabian’s drolleries and pleasantries. When the innkeeper asked him why they had come to Constance, if it was perhaps in honour of the large Devil,<sup>4</sup> Mirror-Swabian answered: “Yes,” for, he said, it was a good idea to try to enlist good friends in all places. To the question if they also intended to go to see the Great God of Schaffhausen,<sup>5</sup> the Allgauer replied: “No; for,” he said, “we Swabians have our own – by God! – Swabian Saviour and need no Swiss one.”

### **How Mirror-Swabian related the true story of the Swabian Hare-hunt.**

Among other matters, the conversation turned to the Swabian Hare-hunt, news of which had reached the far shores of the lake. “People say this and that about it,” the innkeeper remarked, and if he were to make a frank admission, the “this and that” was nothing which did the Swabians particular honour. – He could and would give him a true and faithful report, said Mirror-Swabian, for he and his companions had been there

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<sup>4</sup> A giant statue that was the emblem of the city.

<sup>5</sup> A 22-foot wooden crucifix in the minster in Schaffhausen, Switzerland.

themselves. "So you should know," he continued, that the Devil had formed the resolve, for sport, to fill people with fear and put their courage to the test. And he took on the form of a hare; understand, of a monster in hare-form, and he was so big and terrible, words can't describe it. At first, he showed himself in Italy, where he has dealings often enough as it is. But the Italians took to their heels in all directions and left the field to the Devil. Then the Devil thought to himself: "Now I'll try it on the valiant Germans"; and he came to the land of Swabia, where he knew that the bravest of them live, and that they, as the saying goes, would take on the very Devil in the open field. The Swabians, on seeing the monster, did not shilly-shally but sent messengers to every region of Germany demanding, in the Empire's name, a contingent from every land. And so Bavarians and Austrians presented themselves, and Franconians and Saxons, together with those from the Upper and the Lower Rhine; only the Swiss failed to appear, the cow-milkers, the milksops, the cheese-adulterators. But at the head, we marched, the Swabians, seven of us. And we came upon the enemy not far from Überlingen on the shores of Lake Constance. But, look! as we were advancing, we Swabians hot for the fray, ever onwards, the others all ran away, the Franconians at the head, then the others, with the Austrians covering the retreat; and we, the Seven, were left there utterly alone and came through the adventure to the eternal glory of Swabia. – That is the true story of the Swabian Hare-hunt, and anyone who tells it otherwise out of envy is lying, say I. And just tell everyone that I've said this, I, Mirror-Swabian."

**How they played Blindman's Buff with the innkeeper for the reckoning,  
and who had to pay it.**

Early the next day, after they had downed another couple of pints for the good of their soul, they finally set themselves ready to depart, and they said to the innkeeper: "Many thanks for your gracious hospitality!" – "That's what I owe my customers," said the innkeeper. "But, by your leave!" he added, "let's now see what *you* owe." And he went to the slate and calculated. "Hey," cried Mirror-Swabian, "what's all this? Just what is that on your sign?" – "A bock," the innkeeper said with a laugh, "that turns people blue." – "But the words underneath?" – "I stand by my words: Everything is scot-free tomorrow – but not today, not yesterday, and not the day before yesterday. Understand?" – "By God!" said the Allgauer, "have you seen what the chalk comes to?" But Mirror-Swabian thought: It takes a rogue to catch a rogue, and he very soon had an idea, which he whispered into the Allgauer's ear. At once they both calmly took out their wallets and rattled them, as if they contained something to shake; and Mirror-Swabian said to the Allgauer, "Leave it, *I'll* pay!" – "By God!" said the Allgauer, "I won't be deprived of the honour – *I* will pay." Thus did they wrangle for a while. Finally, Mirror-Swabian said to the innkeeper, who was showing them the reckoning-slate: "You see that the two of us can't agree, simply on account of honour; so the best thing to do has to be to let chance decide. You know what? So we can have some fun, for our last dance let's play Blindman's Buff; whomever you catch, he pays – and that's that!" The innkeeper liked the frolic and let his eyes be bound; the two pulled off their slip-shoes, and now there was a whizzing and zipping around the parlour, up and down and

hither and thither. Soon the Allgauer was out the open door; and Mirror-Swabian, after making another dart or two, crept out after him, but he then looked in through the judas-window to see what leaps and grabs the Blue Bock was making. Meanwhile, the hostess walked in through the doorway; the innkeeper ran at her and cried, "You must pay." – The Swabians' trick was now known, and the innkeeper wanted to go after the vagabonds, but his wife said: "Let the hungry Swabians run! They freed us from the hare, the monster that would have eaten up our children and cattle in the end, didn't they?" So they both got out of Constance without expense and crossed over to Lindau in the passage-boat.

### **How Mirror-Swabian gives himself out to be a Worm-doctor<sup>6</sup> in Lindau.**

Lindau is called the German Venice. The city and the waters are, to be sure, considerably smaller than the Italian ones, but it's charming there nonetheless, and a pretty and grand place. Particularly when you stand at the harbour: there, it teems with people, and folk come together here from all parts of the world, even from Switzerland. So Mirror-Swabian thought that this would be a good place to be if you only had money. – Need teaches us to pray, and to do something more besides. In short, he had the idea of acting as a Worm-doctor to come into money. The Allgauer, to whom he confided his plan, shook his head and said they could be caught in the deception; but the other said he should just let him worry about that; "and in a nutshell: *mundus vult,*<sup>7</sup>" he said, "just believe me, Allgauer!" – "I suppose

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<sup>6</sup> A quack who claimed that all ailments were caused by worms in the body.

<sup>7</sup> *Mundus vult decipi*: The world wants to be deceived.

I'll have to," said the Allgauer, poking around in his empty purse. And so they assiduously collected everything dry and everything wet they could find on the road, and they divided up the former, the powder, into little packets, and they put the latter, the electuary, into a pan they had walked off with. On the following day, the stage was set up on the pier; Mirror-Swabian appeared as a doctor, in cloak and cap and adorned with a Van Dyke beard which he had torn off from a black goat; while the Allgauer, who played the zany, had on a large coarse woollen blanket like a babe-in-arms, and looked not unlike the stone Steffel of Ulm.<sup>8</sup> In these outfits did they mount the stage, and the zany cried out: "Here, all kinds of miraculous cures are to be had," and he then recited a whole litany of maladies and palsies that the doctor, his master, could heal. And the people came up and bought; and when they asked him, "What's it for?" then he answered, "For everything"; the only thing he could not do was make young women out of old ones; otherwise, he said, he'd surely be rolling in money.

### **How Mirror-Swabian tells the folk of Lindau their fortunes and what sign he shows them.**

"These people are stupid enough," thought Mirror-Swabian to himself, "for me to take things a bit further." He therefore cried out that he could also tell fortunes and cast people's horoscopes. Now the reader should know that he had been plying this trade for a long time, and that with the greatest success. He had a thoroughly simple artifice: he prophesied no good. So if the bad came true, he was right; but if it did not come true, that

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<sup>8</sup> Refers to a statue. Proverbially, a "stone Stephen" is a simple, clumsy person.

was all the better. And so he cried himself up far and wide to have the reputation of being the greatest fortune-teller, and people went to him, trembling, it was true, but they went nonetheless. The people of Lindau, being curious folk, were gulled by this sham also; and when they saw one person after another walking away with a pensive expression, and letting his head droop, then they were ever more fortified in the opinion that he was hitting the nail on the head. And by and by, all the people of Lindau came and brought him their bear-batzen.<sup>9</sup> At last, he had had enough – for his bag was full – and he stood up and said to the crowd, who were standing round: “Actually, dear people, all of my fortune-telling will be of no use to you; for within three days from today all of the city of Lindau will go to ruin, with man and mouse, in any case. Would you have a sign? I’ll give you one. You shall see it in the sky, and it is no ordinary one; not, say, fire and sword, but, dear people, a real foxtail.” The people of Lindau opened their eyes wide and pricked up their ears and did not know what to think. “Come along,” said the doctor as he descended from the stage, “and you shall see a wonder.” They followed him. He stood still before the house of a furrier who had hung up a foxtail in place of a sign. “Now look,” he said to those standing around, “do you not see the foxtail in the sky?” They looked; others pressed towards them, more and more, and they all saw that they had been duped, and laughed at each other. In the meantime, Mirror-Swabian had quietly crept away and scampered off. But to this day, the people of Lindau look at the Foxtail in the Sky and take it as read that their town will, sooner or later, go to ruin.

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<sup>9</sup> Coins which featured a bear, the coat-of-arms of St. Gallen (or Bern) in Switzerland.

## **How the Allgauer pays Mirror-Swabian's reckoning to the people of Lindau.**

As the master had escaped, the people of Lindau wanted to get a hold of the servant. "At 'im! 'E's from Ulm!" they cried, one and all. And they seized him and tanned and milled his every limb. But the Allgauer at length succeeded in freeing himself from his disguise; and then you should have seen how he handled the people of Lindau. As a wild bear shakes off the hounds that pursue him, so did he flick the one over there, and the other over yonder; every part of him was at work: he grabbed with his hands, he kicked with his feet, he bit with his teeth; he acted like a man possessed. Thus did he clear a way for himself through the town up to the bridge; where he finally seized a couple of poor wretches who were pursuing him and threw them, one to the left and one to the right, over the parapets down into the lake. Now the people of Lindau let him leave in peace. On the other side of the bridge, Mirror-Swabian was waiting for him, having watched the brouhaha with delight from afar. However, he pretended not to have noticed anything, but simply said these verses, as if to himself, to taunt and tease the Allgauer:

"Hansel, don't you learn too much,  
You'll only suffer and struggle much;  
If the calf possessed more sense,  
It wouldn't run against the fence,  
Don't slaughter more than you can flavour,  
Or cook what you can't grease and savour.

If the spoon should have no handle,  
God gives to some a dimmer candle.”

The Allgauer perceived only too clearly that his companion was levelling this at him, but he pretended not to understand his drift. However, when Mirror-Swabian, unable to leave off mocking, asked him a while later if he had paid the reckoning in good order, then the thread of his patience snapped, and grabbing him by the collar, he said, “Yes, by God! and now I’ll settle the score with you.” Mirror-Swabian, seeing that he was in earnest, changed his tune and said: Brothers don’t take things so to heart; and the next time, he would pay for him. This time, the Allgauer left it at that, particularly as his companion showed him the pennies he had received and which he would share with him in brotherly fashion. And so they continued on their way in harmony.

### **How the Allgauer walked with Mirror-Swabian to Hindelang, the Allgauer’s home village.**

Mirror-Swabian wanted to travel from Lindau towards Kempten by way of Wangen and Isny because he could have free board and lodging with his relations all along that route; and it is a shame this did not happen, for there would have been much to tell about the birds who perch and hatch in those nests. But the Allgauer stuck to his guns and would not be deterred from heading straight home, along the mountains, even though this is a landscape not much better than that of the Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz), which is known to belong to the Devil<sup>10</sup>; and Mirror-Swabian had plenty of

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<sup>10</sup> “When God apportioned the Earth, a small corner was left over which no one wanted to take. Then God offered it to the Devil, but it was too bad even for him, and he replied: ‘Pfalzt’s’

time in which to fast and to pray; but all he did was curse. At last they arrived in Sonthofen. Here, on Mount Calvary, facing the Grindten mountain, the Allgauer performed his devotions; for he had vowed to do this before he undertook the adventure with his companions. Meanwhile, Mirror-Swabian looked out over the region, at the high mountains and down at the green alpine meadows, and it was greatly to his liking. "It's not beautiful just now," said the Allgauer, "but on Holy Cross Day, when the cattle come together down there from the Alpine pastures, oxen and cows and nanny-goats and sheep and billy-goats, all in a jumble, with masses of people: Boy, it's a beautiful sight to see!" – "The country is, on my oath! not bad," said Mirror-Swabian, and I'd be quite happy to live here." They continued on and their road led past a farmer's house. In front of it, an old man was sitting on the bench and crying. "What's wrong with you, Uri?" the Allgauer asked him. "Um," he said, "Pa hit me, because I let grandpa fall." The Allgauer consoled the child and said these wouldn't have been the first blows he had received. And when they had resumed their journey, he told Mirror-Swabian the state of affairs. In that house, the grandfather still lived, he was a hundred and twenty years old, and his grandson full eighty; and the father, a hundred years of age, was still the head of the household. Mirror-Swabian was amazed at this and said: "Then people in your neck of the woods must live for donkey's years." – "That's how it is," said the Allgauer, "but you just have to live your life accordingly. My father is into his seventies but is still as vigorous as a forty-something." – "However has he managed that?" the other asked. "I don't rightly know," the Allgauer replied, "he doesn't do

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(behalt es = keep it.)"

anything special, but acts like other people, only that he drinks nothing but water.” – “That must be it,” said Mirror-Swabian, “Water! Yes, water! To drink only water!” – “By God! I don’t quite know about that,” said the Allgauer, “:my father has a brother who is a year older than him and is sozzled every day.” – “Strange!” said Mirror-Swabian, “but it’s certainly true: every man has his own talent.”

### **The story of the curdled milk, with an edifying moral.**

This conversation brought them into Hindelang. The area in which the village lies is as cosy and homely as a manger. The first steps the Allgauer took at his home were into the stall to see how Leafy and Merry<sup>11</sup> were doing. Then he walked into the parlour and greeted Pa and Ma. The mother at once placed a bowl full of curdled milk before her boy, and brought bread and goat’s cheese and said to the stranger: “Have some!” and to the father: “How, father, help yourself.” And she crumbled the bread and said, “Now tuck in.” The father hereupon took the spoon and stirred the cream in the bowl into the milk, making everything into a mixture. “You can’t leave off your bad habit, can you,” his wife scolded him, “what will our guest think?” The old man said, “That’s just my habit; may the gentleman note: Eating curdled milk is a very peculiar thing, and I’ll explain this to the gentleman. But first, I must tell him the story of how I came to have this habit. When I entered into service with the neighbour over there – God rest his soul! – as undergroom, curdled milk was served up to us. The farmer took the spoon and waved it as if making the sign of the cross over the bowl, saying: ‘In the

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<sup>11</sup> Draught-oxen were often named after months of Spring: Leafy translates Laubi (Laubmonat – an old name for April) and Merry is used for Lusti (Lustmonat – an old name for May).

name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,' and he swept all the cream over to his side. That vexed me; for I realised that he did this out of knavery and meanness and envy, and I can't for the life of me stand those – and so I also took the spoon and said: 'In the name of the Holy Trinity,' and I stirred everything in together. Since that time, whenever I see curdled milk served up with cream, I remember that stirring, and I can't help it, I must do it. But the gentleman will admit that I'm right if he has ever, in his life, noticed how every human passion bobs up to the surface and comes into play when someone's eating curdled milk. Just look at children: the timid one hardly dares take a hearty spoonful; the miserly one neatly skims on the right and on the left, but not at his place; the envious one guzzles and gulps it down as if he couldn't have too much; the irascible one hits the spoon and the hand of anyone who reaches out too far; but it doesn't occur to anyone to slip someone else a good chunk or, like the mother of our house there, to just look on to see how it goes down." – "God bless it!" she said. "That's also the way with us adults," said Mirror-Swabian, "and in the world at large." – "And so it's surely a good thing," said the old man, "that our dear Lord also stirred everything in together; that way, there is less conflict and quarrelling and more contentment among mankind." – "But He often takes a man's cream away," said Mirror-Swabian, "and gives him only the milk or even only the whey." – "It is His gift, all the same," the old man said, "and we just have to make do with what He sets down before us."

### **How Mirror-Swabian came into new company.**

When they had said "God be with you" to each other, the Allgauer

squeezed his hand once more, so firmly that all his knuckles cracked. "Swine!" cried Mirror-Swabian in pain, shaking his hand. The Allgauer laughed and said, "It's only a greeting from the people of Lindau, which I wanted to pass on." So they parted as good friends. Mirror-Swabian took the road to Kempten. And he soon found company again. For before Kempten he met – guess, dear reader! – Knoeple-Swabian. The poor simpleton, when all his companions had left him, hobbled after Thunder-Swabian on the road to Memmingen. But the latter ran so fast – his longing for Käthe spurred him on – that he could not keep pace with him and was left behind. The worst of it was that his money had run out, with the result that he had not got his chops round a single Knoeple for a full twelve hours. It was impossible to look at him without sympathy: his eyes were as dull as old church-windows, his stomach hung in folds like an empty bellows; the whole man waddled along as if he were walking on fence-posts. In his fear and anguish, he said, he had intended to look up the Allgauer, in the hope that he would save him from dying of hunger, as he had saved him from drowning in the Iller. Mirror-Swabian felt sorry for his companion, although everywhere he went he was as out of place as dried cod on Easter Day<sup>12</sup>; and he said: he should just come along with him now; he would look after him and see that he came safely home. Nobody could have been happier than Knoeple-Swabian; for he hoped to be able to eat his fill one more time before he died. So they arrived in Kempten together. However, Mirror-Swabian, who was always having crazy whims, told him he had a matter to attend to in the New Town, and the companion should just go on

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<sup>12</sup> Stockfish (dried cod) was Lenten fare, which people would be heartily sick of by Easter.

ahead and down into the Old Town and stop off at the inn, 'The Stupid Beast.' The house was by the road, in the Schrankenplatz, on the left after you entered through the gate; he could not miss it.

**Of a troublesome affair which Mirror-Swabian brought about but then sorted out.**

In the Schrankenplatz, on the left-hand side, Knoeple-Swabian saw a house with a sign hanging before it, and he did not know what to make of this. So he went in and opened the parlour door and asked if this here was 'The Stupid Beast.' A pot-bellied man was sitting at table, engaged in drinking from a pot of beer. It seemed he had not understood the words aright; he set down his pot and asked, "What's the matter?" and raised it to his lips again. Knoeple-Swabian doffed his cap and asked in a louder voice if this here was 'The Stupid Beast.' "Just you wait, you loafer!" cried the fat man, "I'll show you the stupid beast!" And he ran after him – no; he could not run, no more than Knoeple-Swabian could; but it looked as if they wished to run a race, for the one kept pace with the other. Thus did they come to the middle of the square. Mirror-Swabian was standing there. He called to the innkeeper, "Where are you going, so het up, my friend?" – "The scoundrel," panted the innkeeper. "Don't take it amiss," Mirror-Swabian whispered in his ear, "I just wanted to present my compliments to you through him over there." Then he turned to Knoeple-Swabian and said, "Don't you see, you blind crow, the ox over there on the sign? And is the ox not a stupid beast? Beast, stupid!" – "Yes," admitted Knoeple-Swabian, "but you said: on the left!" – "Certainly on the left," said Mirror-Swabian, "after

you come in through the gate.” – “I see!” said Knoeple-Swabian; and he apologised to the innkeeper, and they went into the house, and drank and ate in good spirits.

### **Two anecdotes from the chronicle about Kempten and Memmingen.**

Now the reader should know that the Old Town of Kempten has no gate to the New Town but only an open hole, through which the seminarians can enter without impediment. This comes from the time, so they say, when the goat ate the bar of the gate. And it happened like this: On a sudden attack by the seminarians, the tower-watchman, having sought the gate bar in vain, placed a cabbage-stalk in the brackets. But while he was blowing for the townsmen to gather, a goat came by and ate the cabbage stalk, causing the gate to spring wide open and give the enemy easy access. The gate was at once pulled down and has not been rebuilt. Since that time, there has been peace and unity between town and gown. – So goes the tale; whether it appears exactly so in the Chronicle of Kempten, I cannot say. In short: Mirror-Swabian was alluding to this, as to another anecdote, when he asked the innkeeper how the titmouse hunt was going. The innkeeper pulled his earlobe and said, “Ho, my friend! – Pray tell me,” the innkeeper then said, “what happened to the cuckoo in Memmingen.” – “I know nothing about that; you’ll have to ask the people of Ulm about it.”<sup>13</sup> – “Well, well!” said the innkeeper, “you Memmingers are stupid enough for people to believe such a thing of you.” And so they twitted

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<sup>13</sup> An allusion to a comic tale about the people of Schildburg, who were said to have had two men carry a cuckoo out of a cornfield on a stretcher so it would not trample the crops. The people of Memmingen make those of Ulm the leading figures in this farce.

one another in turn, as Swabians like to do to each other as good countrymen. – But I'll tell you the anecdote in confidence, dear reader, if you make sure it goes no further. The Mayor of Kempten's titmouse escaped one day; the command was instantly issued for all gates to be closed and for the citizens to search every street and house to see if the titmouse could not be found. And even today, when a Kemptner searches a nook, people say he wants to catch the titmouse. For this reason, the people of Kempten are called titmouse-catchers by their countrymen. But I will not vouch for the truth of the story; for many things are said of Swabians which are lies that cry to the heavens. But fortunately, they have a broad back and can take it.

### **What report Mirror-Swabian makes of his wife.**

Now while they were regaling themselves with a jug of beer, the gossip, to pass the time, asked after his wife – what was she up to, the shrew. Mirror-Swabian, this question rattling his cage, answered in a rage: “She is the same old, cold, sloppy, floppy, grubby, tubby, shabby, flabby, nagging hag as always, the besom that sweeps all away. With every year, she becomes more vicious and capricious, more mithering and blithering, more pugnacious and disputatious, more blustering and flustering, more catty and ratty. Living with her in your hair is just more than a man can bear; her everlasting din spoils the mood I'm in; her rude humour scares away my good humour; her tongue is the scourge of my days and the dirge of my nights; she is the taint of my house and the complaint of the neighbourhood, who gives my rest a death-dealing clubbing and my peace a breath-stealing

drubbing. She is contradiction made manifest, a vixen to put your faith to the test; if I'm silent, she jumps down my throat, if I talk, that gets her goat; if I laugh, she bawls, if I joke, she caterwauls; if I drink, she's down in the dumps, if I eat, she has the hump; if I go, she kicks up a fuss, if I stay, she does nothing but cuss. Her supercilious humour is not to be quelled, her rage for bilious rumour not to be dispelled; she won't suffer me to cuff her; if I praise her to the skies, she thinks it's all pretence and lies; if we bicker and brawl, I gain no ground at all; if I beseech and implore, my credit is no more, and if I wait and hope, that makes me an utter dope. I am, indeed, a constrained, disdained, subjugated, deprecated, tattered, shattered, oppressed, distressed, anguished, vanquished, married man and harried man." – "Oh, poor Jack Adams!" said the gossip, and he laughed so hard his stomach convulsed and the veins in his neck pulsed.

### **How Mirror-Swabian journeys on and arrives in Kaufbeuren, and how that place pleases him.**

On the next day, Mirror-Swabian journeyed on towards Kaufbeuren. Once out of Kempten, on the Berwangen Steig,<sup>14</sup> the view is stunning when you look back, and so there is a legend that the Devil brought Christ the Lord, when he was tempting Him, onto the Berwangen Steig and promised Him the land around Kempten; which can readily be believed. – That same day, late in the evening, Mirror-Swabian arrived in Kaufbeuren, and just at the time when the people of that town celebrate their annual guild festival. In this, the children, in strange masquerade, pass through the

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<sup>14</sup> A steep path over hills or mountains that has to be negotiated on foot.

town into the festival-copse<sup>15</sup> with drums and fifes and flags and cries of “Gee!”, and there are games and dancing and feasting, and this delights the little ones and pleases the big ones. And the little fancy-dress fools look very smart, as do the bigger minxes who dance in the round. “It’s good here,” said Mirror-Swabian, “and here I’ll stay, until my last ninepence is spent.” And so having given Knoeple-Swabian his marching orders – for he was an uncouth, disgusting companion, who always suffered from the Bohemian Sickness<sup>16</sup> –, he lodged at the Stag Inn, and he quaffed to the bottom of his purse. For as has been mentioned, Kaufbeuren pleased him immensely; it is a merry people who live there; even the weavers eat chicken every day, and in short: year out, year in, the days in that place are like fair-days. – The priest of Oberbeuren knew this and reproached them for it, and, to warn his sheep about these wolves, he told them, only last Easter, the following little tale: “I dreamed I was standing at the gate of Hell. And Lucifer came out, and a crowd of devils subservient to him. And he said to one of them: ‘Go hence to Obergünzburg and corrupt me the people there. And you,’ he said to a second one, ‘go hence to Oberdorf and do likewise. And you to Thingau; and you to Kaufbeuren’; and so he sent them all away and divided them and ordered them to report to him on the mischief they had done. After a while, they came back, one after another; and the devil from Obergünzburg said: ‘I have tempted them to gluttony and boozing.’ And the Oberdorfer said: ‘I have led them to robbery and murder.’ And thus one after another made his report. Finally, the one from Kaufbeuren came back. Lucifer said to him: ‘Give a report on what you

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<sup>15</sup> This festival, the “Dinzelfest,” took place in the so-called “Dinzelhölzle.”

<sup>16</sup> “die böhmische Krankheit” is a humorous term for “idleness.”

have done.’ The devil replied: ‘I haven’t done anything but dart up onto the roof of the tower-watchman’s house and sleep.’ Lucifer was about to punish him for this, but the devil said: ‘The people of Kaufbeuren need no devil; they corrupt one another by themselves.’”

### **How Mirror-Swabian encounters a Franconian.**

When Mirror-Swabian had run through all of his money in Kaufbeuren save a Kasperl<sup>17</sup> and a couple of bear-batzen, he took to the road again, intending to go through Buchloe to Meitingen to his friend, Thunder-Swabian. Before Buchloe, on the hill where the famous gallows stands – it is a really lovely location and prospect – he met a pedlar<sup>18</sup> who was having a rest. Mirror-Swabian, being as he was of an affable disposition, greeted his German countryman, who returned the greeting. And on asking wherefrom and whither, he learnt that the other was from Ochsenfurt – it is a small town in Franconia, not far from Schweinfurt – and that he was going peddling through the Empire as the servant of a Nuremberg merchant.<sup>19</sup> Now Swabians and Franconians, being blood relations, have always liked to associate with one another; and Mirror-Swabian finding himself in such good company, he at once fetched bread, sausages, and brandy out of his knapsack; for he never travelled unprovisioned, in order, as he was wont to say, that his stomach would not

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<sup>17</sup> A silver coin, worth a quarter of a Krontaler (the latter being equivalent to a British crown piece, or five shillings), named after the price of admission to the Kasperl-Theater in Vienna. Kasperl (Casper), originally a clown, soon came to be associated with the puppet-theatre.

<sup>18</sup> “Krächsentrager” – literally, “dossier-carrier.”

<sup>19</sup> “Pfeffersack” – literally, “pepper-sack” – a nickname for merchants from Nuremberg on account of their trade in spices from the Levant. [-Auerbacher’s note.] The name was applied to merchants in other cities who grew rich through pepper. [-Translator’s note.]

spring a leak in hot weather and all its contents run out. The Franconian chattered a lot, but said little of import, as is the habit of his compatriots, by and large; and he did not let the Swabian get a word in edgeways. At last Mirror-Swabian interrupted him and asked his companion if he, begging his pardon! were a Jew. And when the other had most solemnly sworn that he was not, he said: "Judging from your talk, if you're not a Jew, you must at least have been apprentice to one." The other denied this also. "Well then, in that case, tell me," said Mirror-Swabian, "Did the Jews learn to talk from you Franconians, or you Franconians from the Jews?" Now the Ochsenfurter understood the joke, and he said, "You know, I think we both learned from each other." – After a while, Mirror-Swabian asked him: Which city would be more beautiful, Augsburg or Nuremberg? The other replied: "In Franconia, they say it's Nuremberg, but in Swabia they say it's Augsburg. For every cock crows on his own dung-hill." Mirror-Swabian liked this answer, and they drank to the honour of both cities.

### **How Mirror-Swabian has a gallows-meal with good countrymen.**

While the two companions were talking thus, a sow-gelder from Filzhofen, the peasant's Bavaria, came down the road from Buchloe. He halted, and propping his hands on his stick, and his head on his hands, he looked at the two who were sitting up there under the gallows. Mirror-Swabian walked up to him and looked him over, front and back. "Why are you looking at me like that?" asked the sow-gelder. "Have you never seen a Bavarian before?" "Truly!" said Mirror-Swabian, "In all my born days, I've never yet come across an animal that looks so like a human being."

The sow-gelder would not have hung back, but would have started a quarrel in the good Bavarian way. However, Mirror-Swabian, patting him with the one hand and holding a bottle out to him with the other, said: "Steady now, pal! or you'll spill my drink." Then, when the spayer tasted the brandy, he soon cooled down, and he drank and joined the two others. – Now as they sat there together, the three countrymen, in peace and harmony, under the gallows, Mirror-Swabian related his travels and strange adventures, which amused them greatly. Then, when he had finished, he said: "You could both tell the rest of us about similar tricks, I don't doubt." – "Indeed," said the Franconian, "but we're not fool enough to tell them." And the Bavarian said, "Just you come into our country, to Weilheim, there you can have antics and capers by the cartload." Thus did they rib and josh each other, just as good companions customarily do. And there was such a prattling and tattling among the three that even the piglets which rooted around them, and the jackdaws which sat over their heads, could no longer understand one another. Finally, after they had sworn eternal friendship, they went their separate ways.

### **How Mirror-Swabian saves the travelling scholar Adolphus from the gallows.**

When Mirror-Swabian was pressing on towards Buchloe, a procession came towards him, but it was one without cross and flags. That is to say: a malefactor was being conducted to the gallows. But what a start he gave when he recognised the condemned criminal to be the travelling scholar Adolphus. On inquiring what crime the wretch had committed, he

received by way of reply: He must be a spy, for papers were found on him that are in an incomprehensible language, in the Meissen dialect,<sup>20</sup> which is probably a thieves' Latin; but this much had been gleaned from it, that it took a pop at the Swabians; and therefore the conclusion was reached that he intended to betray the land, which was true to the Emperor, to Prussia, and consequently the sentence was passed that his papers be burned by the hangman's hand, while he himself be executed by hanging, by rights, as is right. Mirror-Swabian at once realised that those papers had been nothing other than a compilation of Swabian capers, and he therefore quickly made up his mind to save the poor devil. He went to the criminal justice and said he was the Executioner of Memmingen, and he might allow him the honour of being able to exercise his profession in Buchloe, the famous gallows-locality, just this once, such a good opportunity presenting itself. He was immediately granted permission. Now when he led the scapegrace up the ladder, he whispered in his ear: "Adolphus, be ready to jump!" Meanwhile he took out his pocket-knife without anyone noticing, and when he put the rope round the wretch's neck, he cut so far through the noose that only the rope would hold – the load attached to it would not. So in the moment when he cast the condemned man from the ladder, the rope tore, and Adolphus fell and stood below, like a cat, on all fours. According to the Gallows-Laws of Buchloe, every condemned man who escapes the gallows is free; this is also true elsewhere. Thus was the travelling scholar Adolphus saved from the gallows by Mirror-Swabian's cunning.

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<sup>20</sup> A once prestigious dialect of Saxony: the language of Luther's Bible was based on the chancery language of the Margravate of Meissen. It lost its prestige with the decline of Saxony and rise of Prussia following the Seven Years' War (1756-63).

### **Words of defence and defiance from the author.**

Many of my countrymen, reading this, will not be able to forgive Mirror-Swabian for freeing the student, the rascal, from the gallows. These people, however, should know and understand that a joke is a joke and should not be taken in earnest. And moreover, I shall freely state my opinion, in defiance of those countrymen of mine, that it is a crying shame the travelling scholar Adolphus's magnificent collection of Swabians' antics was burnt and lost. For when the knowledge of these antics has quite died out, what will good compatriots tease one another with? And what are we to laugh at if not ourselves, we who know best what manner of men we are? – But as far as those outside are concerned, who are not part of the Empire, they really have no cause to reproach the Swabians; for it is known throughout the world that e.g. the Austrians are Bottle-bearers<sup>21</sup> and Foodbags<sup>22</sup> and the people of Salzburg Bull-washers; that the Silesians ate a donkey,<sup>23</sup> the Moravians tapped a mare for a barrel of beer, that the Thuringians fought amongst themselves over a herring's nose, and that the Bohemians ate a maggoty dog which they took for a parmesan cheese. As for those who live farther north, there really is nothing to be said.

### **How Mirror-Swabian moves on towards Landsberg and what he encounters on the way.**

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<sup>21</sup> On journeys, they carried bottles of must in "Flaschenzöger" or containers for bottles hung over their shoulders.

<sup>22</sup> "Kostbeutel" – derogatory slang that derided their keen appetites and costumes.

<sup>23</sup> Believing it to be a rabbit. An anecdote told by Martin Zeiler (1589-1661) in his *Itinerarium Germaniae novae antiquae: teutsches Reyssbuch durch Hoch- und Nider-Teutschland* (Strasburg: 1632, p. 505).

In Buchloe, where he had consumed his hangman's fee down to the last batzen, Mirror-Swabian ruminated over which road he should take next. Then he remembered the words of the sow-gelder, and that Bavaria was a paradise for merry and thirsty companions; and he accordingly determined to make a detour in that direction, and headed straight for Landsberg. But because he had sat bending his elbow too long at Buchloe, it was already beginning to grow dark when he ascended the Stoffelsberg. Now while he sauntered on down the road, he noticed a fire in the woodland to one side, around which several people were lounging. He walked towards it and now saw that they were gypies who were bedding down here for the night. Of all people, these were his favourite, because he knew that something could be learned from them of the secrets of sorcery and the Skill of Passau.<sup>24</sup> He therefore joined them and sat down by the fire without further ado. They grinned at him, and he did likewise to them. Thus was acquaintance made. An old woman, whom he was sitting beside, wanted to read his palm; and she prophesied for him first something good, and thereupon something bad. And that is what came to pass. For opposite him there sat a young gypsy-maid with a delightful figure and face. In her head there sparkled a pair of eyes like two glittering gems, and her coral lips with her two rows of ivory teeth shone forth in the most charming manner from her nut-brown face. Mirror-Swabian had a heart like touchwood, and it was very soon set alight. He could not turn his gaze from the enchantress, and they made sheep's eyes at each other. Then she suddenly leapt to her feet and

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<sup>24</sup> The supposed art of rendering someone invincible. In 1611, the Passau executioner Kaspar Neidhart gave soldiers in a Passau Mercenary Army small slips of paper with magical characters which would, he said, make them invulnerable. These slips were either swallowed or sewn into a bag and carried at the breast.

beckoned to him, and he followed her into the bushes. But when he was just about to grab her, someone else grabbed him from behind and threw him to the ground like a block of wood. It seemed to him that he felt teeth in the nape of his neck. And this was indeed the case; for a Great Melac<sup>25</sup> had set him down on the damp moss, so firmly that it seemed he would never get back on his feet. The Swabian cried for help. But the minx laughed at him; and she turned to the Captain of the gypsies, who lay not far away, and related what had occurred. He laughed even more. And the dog kept guard over him as over an animal wounded in the hunt; and it snuffled all up and down his body; and if the wretch moved, it seized him by the neck again and pressed his face deeper into the moss. – And so Mirror-Swabian, lying on his stomach, had to spend the long, long night in mortal fear; and he had time to reflect on himself and the misery of the human condition. In the morning, Melac and the gypsy captain let him go; but he needed a long time to free himself from the ground, which he believed himself to have grown into. He did not send the most pious of wishes after the heathens, I can tell you.

**How Mirror-Swabian makes his entry into Landsberg, the Bavarian border-town, and how the toll-collector demands the Jew's-tax of him.**

It is told that: Our Lord, when he was wandering round the world, also came to the Bavarian border-town of Landsberg. There, the toll-collector at the gate shouted at him the query: “Who are you? Where d’you come from? Where you goin’? And what you doin’?” The stranger did

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<sup>25</sup> A catch-dog such as a lurcher, named after Ezéchiél du Mas, Comte de Mélac, a French soldier who devastated south-western Germany in the 1680s and 1690s.

say, "I am Our Lord, and I wish to enter Bavaria to seek my sheep."  
Hereupon the toll-collector did say, "Then you're on the wrong road; there's no sheep in this here land, only pigs." – This story is told not to mock the Bavarians, but simply because they trade their pigs all over the world, which brings them neither scathe nor shame. – Mirror-Swabian was also asked by the toll-collector who he was and where and what he wished to go and do. His reply: He was, save Your Reverence, a Swabian, and he wished to pass into Bavaria, firstly to experience a Weilheim Folly, secondly to see the Fool of Passau,<sup>26</sup> and thirdly to drink a bock in Munich. Whereupon the toll-collector: He might do that; but before all else, if he desired admission, he would have to pay the Jew's tax.<sup>27</sup> "Bloody bleeding blinking Hell!" said Mirror-Swabian, "does the gentleman perhaps think I'm a Jew? I can show the gentleman my Christian passport, if the gentleman wishes to have it - - ." The toll-collector said: Swabia was simply stuffed with nests of Jews; but he would believe that he was a Christian man, without looking at his passport, because he could swear like the biggest heathen, and he was therefore free to go wherever he wished. So he went whither he wished. But he had not advanced many steps before the bell rang in his ear and drew him in. And there we shall leave him sitting.

### **How Mirror-Swabian has a craving for Bavarian fare, and how it pleases his palate.**

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<sup>26</sup> A landmark of Passau: a huge stone head with large eyes and thick, grinning lips, presumed to be the remains of a statue that fell from the cathedral during the great fire of 1662.

<sup>27</sup> Also known as the "Leibzoll" ("body-tax"). A tax on Jews entering a city or crossing a boundary, present in many European states into the nineteenth century, which consisted of a payment or a humiliating act such as casting dice in memory of the Crucifixion.

When a Bavarian enters an inn, he calls for beer first and foremost; a Swabian, however wants to eat first and only then drink – as is more natural. A droll story regarding this strange habit of the Bavarians is told outside the land. Once upon a time, they say, a farmer was given the right to make three wishes by a fairy, and they would be granted. His first wish was for: a beer; his second wish was for: a couple of sausages: finally, after he had thought for a while, he made his third and final wish, for: lots of beer. And the Bavarians have continued this habit right up to the present day. But Swabians, as aforesaid, want to eat first, and to eat their fill. – And this is what Mirror-Swabian did at the Bell Inn in Landsberg. The hostess, a Swabian from Lametingen, asked her countryman: “What d’you want?” Her countryman asked back: “What d’you have?” To which: “A brown soup or liver spaetzle.” – “What else?” – “If your purse has the goods,” said the hostess, “my kitchen has everything. Just order it! D’you want a bread pudding, p’raps?” – “No,” Mirror-Swabian said crossly. “Or d’you want hare nuggets,<sup>28</sup> p’raps?” – “Why not bear-shit?” – “Or d’you p’raps want dumplings, noodles, or doughboys? Or a Gugelhupf?” – “I can have all of those at home in Swabia; but now I’m in Bavaria, and I want to taste Bavarian fare.” To which the hostess: “Then first, you can have a soup with escargots or daisies; second, you can have a roll-, plum-, or elderberry porridge; third, you can have steamed noodles, Bavarian ones, with dried pome sauce; fourth, you can have Bavarian turnips or Bavarian powder<sup>29</sup>; fifth, you can have an ox-muzzle – ” “Bring me an ox-muzzle,” said

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<sup>28</sup> “Hasenbollen” – small meatballs dipped in honey. The word also means “Hasenkot” (hare-shit), hence Mirror Swabian’s earthy rejoinder.

<sup>29</sup> “bayerisches Pulver”: white turnips cut small into a paste.

Mirror-Swabian. This was done, and the food was certainly common fare, but it was good.

### **How Mirror-Swabian liked Bavarian beer and the trick the innkeeper played on him.**

After Mirror-Swabian had eaten and wiped his mouth, he called to the waitress, demanding a pot of beer. She brought him the beer in a jug which had no lid; for she took him to be a hangman<sup>30</sup> by profession. Mirror-Swabian, noticing this, almost had a mind to pour the beer over her head. However, he wanted to try it first, to see if it would not be a shame about the drink were so much as a drop to be lost. And he drank. Meanwhile, the innkeeper walked in. Mirror-Swabian asked him what beer was made from in Bavaria. The innkeeper said, “Why, from what else but hops and malt?” – “Back in Swabia,” said Mirror-Swabian, “we make it from willow rods and woodchips.” – “What?” said the innkeeper, “that must be a devilish swill.” Whereupon Mirror-Swabian said: “It tastes exactly like this beer here.” – These words nettled the innkeeper, and he resolved to get one over on him, but he did not let his intention show. A while later, he asked him what his purpose was for travelling into Bavaria. And Mirror-Swabian said as he had to the toll-collector: For no other purpose than to experience a Weilheim Folly and to see the Fool of Passau and to drink a Munich bock. The innkeeper said: He could serve him a Munich bock; but to experience a Weilheim Folly, he would have to go to Weilheim

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<sup>30</sup> “Schinder”: a hated word. It meant “skinner,” but as this person usually hung criminals in Germany (as opposed to an executioner, who used a sword), it is best translated as “hangman” (Ebers dictionary A-G, 1796, entry for “Abdecker”).

in person. And he said, “Don’t let the time hang heavy on your hands until I come back, but have a look around the room in the meantime.”

Mirror-Swabian did this; and pretty pictures hung there depicting the exploits of Till Eulenspiegel. And a tablet hung beneath them, which had this inscription:

Behind this curtain you will see  
Your living likeness to a T;  
Receive this gift I offer you,  
Lift up and look, for it is true.

Mirror-Swabian raised the curtain, and he saw – yes, what did he see? –

The true picture of the Fool of Passau, with the fine inscription:

I am the Fool, great as can be,  
At Passau there are more of me,  
I’m sent to wander all around,  
On which account I’m so renowned.

Mirror-Swabian let the curtain fall down and crept back to his table. But the innkeeper, who had been watching through the kitchen-window, said: “It’s not a true likeness of him, the Fool; look into that mirror over there, and you’ll see his spitting image.” And he laughed at the Swabian, who did not say a word. Then he poured him a bock, and the Swabian drank, and he said: “Bloody Hell, what a drink!” – “God give you health of it!” said the innkeeper. And they drank to each other’s health.

### **Of two Swabian pseudo-heroes, Gnat-Swabian and Soup-Swabian.**

As they are drinking amicably together, the waitress appears and says there are two Swabians outside, Gnat-Swabian and Soup-Swabian; for a little drinking-money, they would show the hare, the monster, that the nine Swabians had killed up at Lake Constance. “What?” cried Mirror-Swabian, “nine Swabians? There were only seven of us. And as regards the hare ... in short, it’s all a cock-and-bull story.” The innkeeper said: They could see and hear it in any case, and they they might believe whatever they wished. And he had the two of them admitted.

Mirror-Swabian recognised both his compatriots to be those mockers and railers from Marchtal and Ehingen, whom all of Swabia knows, and he had his own private reasons to sit still and be silent. They now exhibited the stuffed hare, the monster, as those others do who, having killed a wolf or a lynx or a bear, parade its skin or its head around the land. At the same time, they told the story of the hare-hunt, but with quite different circumstances, causing Mirror-Swabian to mutter his “cock-and-bull story” into his jug time after time. Finally, they sang a ditty, which the man from Marchtal had made up himself – and the two of them sang like those who play Summer and Winter.<sup>31</sup>

#### The First

Oh, I can see the hare  
Crouched down over there;  
Heaven forfend!

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<sup>31</sup> There were traditional singing-contests between personifications of Summer and Winter, each of whom would sing of the benefits they brought. One such song, “Der Streit zwischen Sommer und Winter” [The Altercation between Summer and Winter] is dated to 1819 and would be sung at people’s houses.

He looks at us so grim,  
I'll go no nearer him,  
I'd meet my end.

The Second

If he looks at me grim,  
I'll still go close to him,  
Met I my end.

The First

See how his ears rise,  
And see his flashing eyes  
That no fear know.

O, let it be, I pray,  
And put your gun away,  
Or blood will flow.

The Second

I won't leave off, I say,  
Or put my gun away,  
And should blood flow.

The First

I beg you, countryman,

Go back, while you still can,  
Don't hunt that hare!

Of pluck the beast is full,  
It's like a raging bull,  
Don't venture there.

### The Second

Let it of pluck be full,  
Let it rage like a bull,  
I'll venture there.

Then, after they had received a handsome gift from the innkeeper – Mirror-Swabian gave nothing – they upped and left. And from now on the innkeeper began to tease the Swabian and put him through the wringer, bringing up the jokes about “gan, stan, lan”<sup>32</sup> and “Swabian Baby-an,”<sup>33</sup> which Bavarians tend to tease and twit Swabians with. Mirror-Swabian said not a dicky-bird to all of this, but held his peace and boozed. At last, the innkeeper asked him what kind of Swabians he belonged to. “I,” he replied, “belong to the patient Swabians.” – And what were they like? “Well,” he said, “they lie down on their stomach and let people who make fun of them kiss their arse.”

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<sup>32</sup> This refers to the Swabian habit of using “gau” for “gehen” (to go), “stau” for “stehen” (to stand, to be), and “lau” for “lassen” (to let, to leave). To this is added: “wer die drei Sprachen nit kann, soll nicht nach Schwabenland gan” (If these three tongues you do not know, To Swabia you should not go”).

<sup>33</sup> “Schwäbisch ist gäbisch,” or “Swabians are awkward/clumsy/gawky.”

## **How Mirror-Swabian gives himself out to be a treasure-hunter and swindles the people of Landsberg out of their nest-eggs.**

Mirror-Swabian had only a Kasperl left in his pouch, but he wanted to travel a good way yet and stop off at all the inns and pay his way whenever he could. Now, being an inventive fellow, who knew how to extricate himself from every kind of difficulty, he conceived a new trick and decided to play the role of treasure-hunter. He therefore asked the innkeeper that evening, in private, if there were not treasure hidden somewhere in the surrounding district. The innkeeper said, "On the Schlossberg,<sup>34</sup> people say, there's a hidden treasure. But the Devil may find it, and it's probably his already; a Christian man may not." Mirror-Swabian said: He was the man who could do it, and he would stake his last Kasperl on his succeeding. The innkeeper said: "I want to see it; then I'll believe it." – "A Kasperl is neither here nor there to me." And so, as soon as the sun had set, the two of them secretly set out and went to the Schlossberg together. When they had arrived there, Mirror-Swabian paced up and down the extensive farmstead in order, so he said, to find the correct spot; and then, with much ceremonial, he made a hole in the ground and told the innkeeper to lay a Kasperl in it. Hereupon he spoke with ceremonious solemnity the words, which he remembered from his first Latin class: *hic haec hoc, horum harum horum, hibus* – ; then he secretly conjured his Kasperl beside the other one, filled in the hole, and drew a pentagram over it. With sunrise, he said, they would return, and then the innkeeper would find another Kasperl beside his own. And this did

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<sup>34</sup> A 700-metre high hill near Landsberg, in Upper Bavaria.

indeed happen. At once the innkeeper collected all of his savings, and his friends, whom he secretly told about this, did the same, and Mirror-Swabian was willing to repeat the trick if they went halves. So the money was buried the next evening, and while the spirits on the Schlossberg were believed to be dragging their treasure over, the companions caroused freely down in the town, at the Bell Inn. Mirror-Swabian, however, crept his way unseen through the muzzy-headed guests the next morning and lifted the breeding-pennies<sup>35</sup> in very good time, and made his exit. And so the people of Landsberg, when they came thither, did find a treasure in the hole, but not the right one, and they beat a long-faced retreat.

### **What next happened to Mirror-Swabian.**

It is said: the people of Landsberg had noticed the deception in good time and several of them pursued the vagabond and, having caught up with him, threshed him through and through and all over, like a full sheaf, so that his last treasure-penny fell from him and he was cleaned out. There are some, on the other hand, who maintain that the sheriff had picked him up and brought him before the court. But there he answered so masterfully that the lord could not lay anything to his charge, even though the people there would have been only too happy to see him, a Swabian, swinging and kicking. Mirror-Swabian said it had been agreed that he would have a half-share of the treasure, that was Point One; - and he took out that half-share, not a farthing more, that was Point Two; - if they had not received their share, the blame was not his, but their own, that was Point

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<sup>35</sup> "Heckpfennige" – magic pennies which were believed to multiply.

Three. And so he was in the right and they were in the wrong. Then Mirror-Swabian was acquitted. And he was, to be sure, as innocent in the matter as the goat of Mount Gingele.<sup>36</sup> He did, however, so the story goes, receive a little something from the judge to carry on his way, a kind of fool's bauble. Whoever wishes to know what kind may peruse the Landsberg Chronicle.

### **Treats of old and new acquaintance, and how Mirror-Swabian saves the honour of the Swabian dialect.**

On the road to Weilheim, Mirror-Swabian stopped off at a cheap inn. There he met the Tyrolean who peddled theriac and Schneeberg snuff throughout the land, and who was in the middle of singing a waggish ditty to himself. After they had greeted each other as old and good acquaintances, Mirror-Swabian asked: "Where did you come from, and where does your road lead to?" "From home, to the world," the Tyrolean replied. Mirror-Swabian: "What's new? Is it still snowing in the Tyrol?" "Yes," said the Tyrolean, "but between St. John's Day and St. James's Day<sup>37</sup> it becomes warm, whether our Lord likes it or not." Mirror-Swabian then asked: "Has it been a bumper year for fatheads in the Tyrol?" "Yes," said the Tyrolean, who had understood the joke,<sup>38</sup> "the cabbage turns out well every year." While they continued to talk with and tease one another, as good companions like to do, the innkeeper walked in, a slovenly pot-bellied boor

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<sup>36</sup> An unknown allusion.

<sup>37</sup> "Johannis" is St. John the Baptist's Day, or Midsummer's Day: June 24. "Jakobi," "St. James's Day" is July 25.

<sup>38</sup> Which is more than I do. There seems to be a pun on "Kröpfe" which in Swabian and Bavarian can mean "little [malformed] men" and has the same origin as "crops."

from Hallertau, who, as soon as he scented the Swabian, barked like a hound. But he should not have done that to Mirror-Swabian, who gave as good (or as vulgar) as he got. And that is what really matters. The innkeeper, as is the custom of Bavarians, began to once to taunt the Swabian about his “langidge.” Then Mirror-Swabian said: “Do you know what? Because you brag about your language so much, let’s make a bet for the double reckoning; he who can name three birds the fastest will win; the slowest one must pay.” The Tyrolean should pronounce the verdict and could drink along for free. The Tyrolean said he would join in, thinking he would win. So they agreed on the wager. And the Swabian began, saying as quickly as he could: “Shrew-mouse, tit-mouse, finch.” Then the Tyrolean said, carefully and slowly: “One a magpie, one a blackbird, one a nightingale.” The innkeeper said, “Tyrolean, you must pay.” To which the Tyrolean: “I first need to hear what you have to say.” The innkeeper began, saying: “A starling, a jackdaw.” But then he could not think of the third bird, and he pondered a long time; finally, he said: “And a sucking-pig.” The two other companions laughed at this; and the Tyrolean said: The innkeeper would have to pay, as he had been the slowest. And the Swabian asked him if Bavarians then counted sucking-pigs as poultry?<sup>39</sup> The innkeeper stood up, incensed, and said in good High-German: “Kiss my arse!” – And so the three caroused together famously, and Mirror-Swabian was not the slowest with his jug. When they had all three drunken their fill, although they could have drunken much more, the innkeeper asked for the reckoning and paid it to Mirror-Swabian, and he pocketed it as if he were the host and

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<sup>39</sup> In old Bavaria, poultry-dealers also dealt in sucking-pigs.

the other the guest. And he said: "Thank you for your custom." After that, when taking his leave, he said to the innkeeper: He would present him with one more riddle, that he might win the double reckoning back from others. That was fine by the innkeeper: and Mirror-Swabian said: "What thing is this: it has no eyes, yet sees; it has no ears, yet hears; it has no nose, yet smells; it has no mouth, yet eats; it has no hands, yet grasps; it has no feet, yet walks. Now guess!" The innkeeper conceded defeat. Mirror-Swabian said: It was a Bavarian. They had no eyes, but peepers; they had no ears, but lugs; they did not have a nose, but a snout; they did not have a mouth, but a gob; they had no hands and feet, but paws and trotters. It was fortunate for Mirror-Swabian that he already had his hand on the latch and could slip out. Otherwise, he would have got a soaking to send him on his way.

## **Here begin the Weilheim Follies.**

### **First Chapter**

By Welheim there is a mountain, and it is called Ass-Mountain. The tale goes that it received its name as follows: A vagabond arrived in Weilheim, and he promised the people there he would give them a means to cheaply come by asses, which were in such short supply in their town. And he offered them ass's eggs for sale (they were in reality large duck's eggs). One of them, he said, should hatch these eggs; but it must be the Mayor himself. So the deal was concluded, and the Mayor sat over the nest, up on the mountain, and brooded. But because he grew bored and anxious on the nest, he shifted his behind, and an egg fell out and rolled down the

mountain into some bushes. Down below a hare was squatting, and it was startled and ran away. When the Mayor of Weilheim saw the animal running away, he thought it was a young ass who had crept out of the egg. And so he shouted at the top of his lungs: “Over here, lad; don’t you see where your father is?” – So goes the tale; but it could be a fiction. However, what is certain is that the people of Weilheim have had no shortage of asses since that time – Thus was Mirror-Swabian told by a bookseller from Kohlgrub, who was peddling the stories of Eulenspiegel, of the Fair Magelone, of the Sons of Aymon,<sup>40</sup> and others, and he told him that he should stop in at the brewer’s; he would be able to tell him much more about Weilheim Follies.

## **Of the origin of the Weilheim Follies and their diffusion throughout the whole wide world.**

### **Second Chapter**

“Some of it is true,” said the brewer, “but not everything, that is said about Weilheim Follies. According to credible reports, in ancient times there stood on the spot where Weilheim now stands, a town by the name of Lalenburg, whose inhabitants became famous around the world for their stupid and foolish antics. Through a freak disaster, their town was destroyed, and the inhabitants dispersed. That is the very reason why it is no easy feat to find a town that does not have descendants of these people, who do foolish things and do things the wrong way. However, most of them may have settled in Schilda in Saxony, in Hirschau in the Upper Palatinate, and here at Weilheim in Upper Bavaria. But not all the ill that is said of

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<sup>40</sup> Some of the most popular of German chapbooks (Volksbücher) from the sixteenth century onwards.

these towns, as I have observed, is true. A great deal should be laid to the account of other towns in Upper and Lower Bavarian, in Franconia, and also in the two Palatinates; indeed, even Munich, the seat of wisdom, is not free from such tomfoolery and those who do it; and it could with justice be called Great-Weilheim.” – Mirror-Swabian was very pleased with these relations, as we hope the good reader will be; and he wished to hear more of these follies. The brewer gave him the little volume about the Lalenburgers, printed in this year and embellished with many woodcuts;<sup>41</sup> and Mirror-Swabian read it until late into the night, and he would have clean forgotten his food and drink over it, had not his host, who wished to make up his reckoning, brought his attention to them.

### **Of the Weilheim Follies.**

#### **Third and Final Chapter.**

At their parting the next day, the brewer said to Mirror-Swabian: he was happy to have made his acquaintance; for now he saw that Swabians were not as stupid as they were given out to be. Mirror-Swabian said in return: he too was pleased to have made his acquaintance, for now he saw that Bavarians were not as boorish as they were given out to be. And so they parted as the best of friends. – As Mirror-Swabian walked through the town, several follies presented themselves to his sight. One man drove by with a loaded dung-cart; and when someone asked him why he had turned back, he said: he had forgotten the dung-fork and had come to fetch it. – A carpenter sat on a wooden gutter up on a house, sawing some of it off; but

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<sup>41</sup> The “Lalebuch” first appeared in 1597.

he was sitting on the end of the gutter and fell down with it. – At a front door a man was occupied with making two smaller holes beside a larger one where the cat could slip in and out. To the question why he was doing this, he said: “The cat has had two young ones; I’m doing this so they can get out and in too.” – When he came out before the gate, there was an empty haycart there with a hay-pole lying on it crosswise, preventing the cart from passing in through the gate. The farmhand did not hesitate but fetched a saw and sawed the hay-pole in two at the middle. “Lord of Buxheim!” cried Mirror-Swabian; “what a merry life it must be in a town where every day, and every hour, such follies flourish!”

### **How Mirror-Swabian enters Hell and what he experiences there.**

An hour outside of Weilheim, on the way to the holy mountain Andechs, he suddenly remembered having heard that superior beer could be drunk in Polling. So he did not shy from the detour but turned round and went thither. And he liked it very much. The Abbot of the monastery, an affable, accommodating master, heard of this, it being reported to him that a Swabian was sitting in the drinking-room who could booze as deeply as a Bavarian. The Abbot said he should be given plenty of beer without charge. And Mirror-Swabian made the most of this gracious permission, and he drank and observed, time after time: it must be said, and it was true, that life in a monastery is heavenly. And he looked into his wooden beer-jug so often and so long that his Heaven, the Chapter-House, became full of stars and he lay there unconscious, like a sack. The Abbot was informed of this, and he said: As the Swabian had had a taste of Heaven, so he should also

have a taste of Hell. And he therefore had him borne into a deep hole of a cellar that was as dark as pitch. On the following day, when Mirror-Swabian had awoken and rubbed the muzziness from his eyes, two coal-black men were standing before him with torches in their hands, and to Mirror-Swabian's question, "Wherever am I?" they replied, "In Hell." And they presently gave him the welcome that is customary to a house of correction and to Hell. Then they left him alone in dreadful darkness, and there was gnashing of teeth in that place; and now, he had time once again, as under Melac's teeth, to reflect on himself and the misery of man. Around midday the two devils came back, bringing him a loaf of bread that looked very like a cake of resin. Mirror-Swabian said: he felt no hunger, but he did have a thirst. And he thought to himself: "Oh, if only I had a drop of yesterday's John Barleycorn!" But the devils went away once more, without saying a word; and Mirror-Swabian sat there alone again in the darkness of Hell, and it scared the hell out of him. He now began to suck, rather than bite, at the loaf of bread, but it tasted like pure salt, and his thirst grew all the fiercer, so that he crept over to the damp wall and licked off the drops of water that clung to it. While he was groping around in the dark, he bumped against something that felt like a barrel. He broached it immediately – he was a dab hand at broaching – and he drank like a fish, becoming full to the extent that the barrel became empty. And so in the evening, the two men found the old hog again; and they carried him out and away and into a town-ditch, where they left him lying. In the morning, when he awoke and reflected on what had befallen him, he swore by all the saints: he would be careful with Bavarian beer henceforth and drink not a drop more than six

pots, at the most, at one sitting.

**How Mirror-Swabian does some soul-searching and mends his ways,  
from which it may be seen that the story is approaching its end.**

After Mirror-Swabian had looked at the holy relics in the church on the sacred mountain Andechs, which gave rise to many pious reflections on his part – then, when he was about to leave the church, he saw a Father sitting in the Confessional. And he thought to himself: “If he has nothing to do, and I have nothing to do, we won’t be neglecting anything if I take the opportunity to confess.” So he went into the Confessional and confessed his sins. – We would of course not have known anything at all of what he confessed or how he fared, if Mirror-Swabian himself had not recounted it to Thunder-Swabian, his friend, who recounted it to his grandchildren, and whose grandchildren have recounted it to me, as follows: In the beginning, everything went passably well, as he had promised to do what was best in everything, especially regarding the restoration of that which he had swindled people out of – until it came to the Main Point: namely, that he was at variance with his wife and had not lived with her for a year. He did not exactly hate her, he had said, indeed, he would fervently pray that she might partake of everlasting glory; but he could not love her, and he would rather be under with same roof with a dragon than with her. But the pious Father demanded and insisted that he go home to his wife and live with her again; otherwise he could not absolve him. Mirror-Swabian was obstinate and walked out of the Confessional without absolution. But once outside,

his conscience was stirred, and he thought of the grey hairs<sup>42</sup> on his head, and he felt a very strange sensation in his heart. There he stood, now, turning his hat over in his hands, or looking sideways at the Father to see if he might not call him back. But he sat there peacefully and seemed to be quietly praying. Mirror-Swabian thought to himself: “Then I suppose I’ll just have to do the sensible thing.” And he addressed the Father, saying: “I’ll give it a try – for a month, but no longer.” The Father shook his head. “Well,” said Mirror-Swabian, “so you can see I’m a man who can be bargained with: for a quarter of a year.” The Father shook his head. – “For half a year!” Mirror-Swabian haggled on, and holding out his hand, he said: “If you’re fine with that, let’s shake on it!” The Father shook his head. Now Mirror-Swabian lost almost all hope and patience; but he pulled himself together like a real man and said: “If you really won’t have it any other way, then let it be – in God’s name! – for a year!” – The Father, remarking his contrition and not wishing to drive him to despair, beckoned him into the Confessional and spoke to him earnestly and persuasively, and Mirror-Swabian promised to do all that he could. And that was right. – From Andechs, Mirror-Swabian turned his steps first towards Grafrath. There lies the body of St. Rasso who, so he heard, had been a great hero.<sup>43</sup> Mirror-Swabian thought: He must have subdued an ill-tempered wife or some other kind of monster. And so he pledged devotion to him.

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<sup>42</sup> “Freithofblümlein” – literally “graveyard flowers.”

<sup>43</sup> Rasso (Ratho) was a Bavarian Count (Graf) who fought against the invading Magyars in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.

**A chapter in which no hint of a jape appears, and can therefore be skipped.<sup>44</sup>**

A man is never more tedious than when he contemplates himself. And so there is nothing to tell of any further japes on the part of Mirror-Swabian as he now goes on his way to Meitingen to his friend, Thunder-Swabian. However, to entertain the dear reader with him, I shall talk of his sayings which he customarily employed, from which it is again evident that he was an ingenious fellow, as indeed are all the Swabians, the stupid ones excepted. – When the talk was of women and marriage, he used to say: “Women and money are as scary to many a man as seven dogs to a hare in a field.” And: “Matrimony is no sweetmeat, but a yoke.” And: “If malice has any virtue, then a wife is worth more than a hundred husbands.” – When mention was made of his wife, he said: “Bad-tempered dogs make good guards, sang a farmer of his bad-tempered wife.” – Of wives in general: Their gowns had many a fold and a flounce, but of brains their head had barely an ounce. – Asked how it fared with him, he replied: “Superbly. I live sumptuously, drink a lot, eat not a little, and owe nothing to anyone but people.” – Apart from this, he also had the saying: “What people have an aversion to, that’s what I’ll do; where people don’t want me to be, that’s where I’ll stay.” Of eating and drinking, he would say: “Drinking is to be done every day; and eating is a must, even were every tree a gallows.” And: “Good wine ruins your purse, bad wine your stomach; but better to ruin your purse than your stomach.” – To a night-owl and fellow-topper he once said: “Isn’t it true, neighbour, a night spent boozing is a night spent on

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<sup>44</sup> It certainly can. [-Translator’s Note.]

guard?” – If someone complained about arduous work, he would say: “If it were so enjoyable and so light, the Mayor would do it himself.” – If someone reproached him that he required too high a payment for his work, he said: “There must be a reason for the brown ale.” – Of a lazy man he said: “He has as much will to work as a dog to lick a hackle,” and: “Work suits him as well as a mourning-cloak does a goat.” – Of a rogue and good-for-nothing man he said: “He counts for nothing where people are dear.” Or: “He is the spare in the baker’s dozen.” Also: “If you wanted to give him away, you’d have to add twopence.” – When he saw a cross person, he said: “You’re as charming as a jug of vinegar; you just need to look at the milk to turn it sour.” Or: “You’d be a true model for a vinegar jug.” Also: “If your face were in the sky, the peasants would ring the storm bell.” – Of a haughty person he would say: “He thinks much of himself, but other people think all the less of him.” Of an envious person: “He looks sideways like a goose seeking an apple.” – Of a rude person: “He is polite in his address only to himself and the priest.” – Of an irascible person: “He swells up as if he’d eaten ten devils and had the eleventh in his gob.” – Of a liar: “He sticks to the truth like the hare to the drum.” Apart from this, he would say about lying: “Lying is a primary language, for the whole country does it.” And: “If lying were as hard as carrying wood, then everyone would tell the truth.”

### **How Mirror-Swabian comes to Thunder-Swabian at Meitingen.**

When he arrived in Meitingen, in the Lechfeld plain, he met his friend, Thunder-Swabian, in an inn, sitting by a pot of pale ale. He was as merry as

a dancing-bear and was just then singing the ditty:

It's how I am:

I don't heed talk that's sweet

And don't heed cloaked untruth,

Ignoring tongues that cheat,

I think of Goldsmith's youth;<sup>45</sup>

It's how I am.

It's how I am:

Until my dying day

I shall not change one bit,

So so so shall I stay,

On my gravestone be writ:

It's how I am.

“By thunder!” said Thunder-Swabian when he caught sight of Mirror-Swabian. “Is it you or isn't it? Yes, indeed, it's you. God be with you, scoundrel! But sit down now, brother, we'll drink a few more pots together, if there's beer enough. Then we'll set out, this very day, for Türkheim and Käthe, and tomorrow is wedding-day.” Mirror-Swabian said: “So you're really serious about Käthe?” – “By thunder!” said Mirror-Swabian, “I'd prefer today to tomorrow. And I'll tell you, and you should believe me: Käthe is a beautiful girl, Käthe is a fine girl, Käthe is a girl whose like you won't find in

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<sup>45</sup> This reference “an Goldschmieds Jungen” is not clear – perhaps to George in *The Vicar of Wakefield*? Aurbacher had a high opinion of English novelists such as Oliver Goldsmith.

the world any more.” Mirror-Swabian said: “There are only two good wives in this world: one of them is lost, and the other can’t be found.” – “May cats scratch you,” Thunder-Swabian said crossly. “Now get boozing and let me alone.”

### **How Mirror-Swabian reads Thunder-Swabian a chapter on matrimony.**

On the road, as they were talking about this and that, Mirror-Swabian came back to the matter of matrimony and wives. “The husband is always taken for a ride by the wife,” he said, “and the best one is no good for anything. If she’s pretty, he’ll have to wait on her hand and foot; if she’s ugly, he’ll have to hear much envious railing; if she’s home-loving, she’s bad-tempered with it; if you bar her in, she complains; if you let her out, she’s the talk of the town; if you’re angry with her, she has a face as long as a fiddle; if you say nothing, there’s no getting along with her. If she has the expenditure in her hands, woe betide the money; if you control the expenditure, she’ll sell your household goods. If you stay at home, you’re a hermit; if you come home too late: ‘Where the devil have you been?’ If you give her fine clothes, she’ll want to show herself off; if you dress her badly, she’ll call death down on you. If you love her too very much, she’ll take little note of you; if you seldom concern yourself with her, she won’t care a fig for you. If you don’t want to tell her the answer to her question, she won’t leave off until you’ve told; in a nutshell: the married state is a harried state - -.”

While Mirror-Swabian has been speaking thus, Thunder Swabian had taken a hold of his fiddle, and he began to tune and to twang it, ever more strongly the more the other spoke. “But you’re not listening?”

Mirror-Swabian continued, “well, you may come to feel the truth of my words. However, as a good friend, I’ll make you, as an honorary gift, one more wise saying, which the Bavarian peasants customarily use and which is worth a dollar between brothers. It runs like this:

If you have a cross wife on Monday,  
Treat her kindly on Tuesday,  
If that doesn’t help on Wednesday,  
Give her hearty blows on Thursday,  
If that’s no good on Friday,  
May she go to Hell on Saturday,  
Then you’ll have a good Sunday.”

“May the cuckoo scratch you, you mountebank, you Jack Pudding, you hurry-scurry!” said Thunder Swabian with some heat. “Now be silent!” he said, “clodhopper, and let yourself be fiddled home.” And he played his fiddle and sang along: “It’s how I am!”

All this while, Mirror-Swabian droned out in a voice like the sound of bagpipes:

“Every dopey sap  
Is happy with his cap.  
It may be poor and old  
But still keeps out the cold.”

## **How Mirror-Swabian returns to his wife and what has happened in his home. The final and finest chapter.**

“And now go home to your wife,” said Thunder-Swabian to Mirror-Swabian eight days after the wedding. “I’m going,” he said, “as willingly as a lost soul into Purgatory.” “And see that you stay with her, as you promised the Father,” Thunder-Swabian continued, “and don’t ever be like the Tower-Michael at Augsburg, who shows himself only once a year.<sup>46</sup> And I’ll tell you again,” he said, “she’s a changed woman since the time she escaped from the bear. Even her neighbour has only good to say of her. And you should look forward, as I told you, to your present.” Thus did Thunder-Swabian encourage Mirror-Swabian when the latter took his leave of him. – “Swabia is a lovely land,” the Swabian has a habit of saying, “but I don’t want to go home.” Mirror-Swabian had more than one reason to say this. And yet he went, admittedly with little hope, but full of good intentions, to Memmingen. In the hop-gardens he repeatedly had the feeling that he could hear the well-known rasping voice, “So you’re back at last, you rascal!” And when he came before the gate, it was almost as if the Devil were whispering in his ear that he should turn around. And when he saw his house from a distance, his heart all but failed him, and his feet would carry him no further. Then he plucked up courage like a real man and said, “So be it, in God’s name!” And he walked on and came home. And look! as he approached the door, his beloved other half came towards him carrying a baby in her arms. “God be with you, hubby,” said the wife. “See here, have a gander at your little lad.” Mirror-Swabian looked like a man trying to solve

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<sup>46</sup> A mechanical figure of Archangel Michael appears and spears the Devil in a window on the Perlachturm (Perlach Tower) in Augsburg every September 29, his feast day.

a complex arithmetical puzzle in his head, and he could not work it out. But the baby smiled at him, and then there was nothing for it, he had to take him, and he gave him a peck and he called him his dear little lad. Then they went into the house, and his wife soon made him a warm soup and asked, “Hubby, what would you like next?” And from that time on, there was peace and unity in the house, and the neighbour herself took delight in it, as will everyone, we hope, who reads this.