



*The town of Maienfeld in
the upper Rhine Valley
of Switzerland*

*A friendly goat is fed by
two companions of Miss
Davis while she sketches*



*A modern Heidi of
Maienfeld with her
pet kitten*

*Bernhard, the Peter of
today, drives his goats
over a ridge of the
mountain*



PICTURE-MAKING IN THE ALPS

For the new Centennial Edition of "Heidi"

BY EDWARD K. ROBINSON

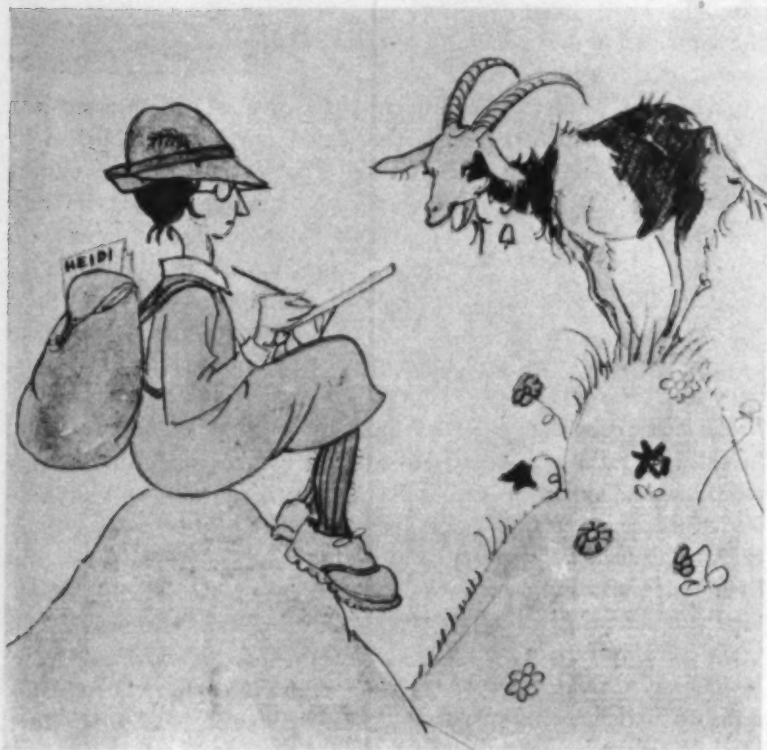
ONE hundred years ago Johanna Spyri was born in a little Swiss village near Zurich. The centennial of her birth makes this a particularly appropriate year for the publication of a new and unusual edition of her greatest story for children, "Heidi."¹

Although there are more than a score of good American editions of "Heidi," the "Centennial Edition," just published by Ginn and Company, is so different that it will be a welcome addition to the already long list. Outstanding among its new features are the illustrations. Strangely enough, they appear to be the first ones ever made for "Heidi" in the town of Maienfeld, Switzerland, the scene of the story. The publishers wisely chose as the illustrator Miss Marguerite Davis, who was graduated from the Museum School of Fine Arts a few years ago, and Miss Davis spent the larger part of a summer in Maienfeld, drawing, talking with the natives in their homes, investigating the places mentioned in "Heidi," and, just so far as possible, living in the same surroundings and atmosphere in which Heidi lived. Seldom, if ever, has there been a more thorough piece of research work in the illustration of any children's classic. Following the researches and sketches in Maienfeld, the actual drawing of the pictures occupied nearly a year.

Miss Davis so enjoyed her days in Heidi's village that she is looking forward to another visit in the future. The inhabitants, usually shy of strangers, took her in at once when they learned her mission. After a day or two news of the errand on which she had come passed through the town, and thereafter every one who met her extended his greeting, usually the picturesque "Grüss" (God greet thee), but sometimes a mere "Tag" from the more brusque of the male inhabitants. They all were pleased to have their beautiful town and mountains and alps (pastures) become the center of attraction for a new edition of "Heidi," with which the reading element was quite familiar.

¹ Spyri: Heidi, Translated by Helen B. Dole. Illustrated in colors and black and white by Marguerite Davis. 410 pages. Ginn and Company. Price, 84 cents.

They said that a German artist who illustrated "Heidi" had once made a hasty visit of a few days, but no one had ever come and lived among them as Miss Davis did. Not only did she live with the villagers, but she spent days high up on the mountains with the goats, sketching them in a thousand and one postures, until she knew more about goat anatomy than did the



goats themselves. A caricature which Miss Davis sent in one of her letters from Maienfeld is too good to withhold from publication, and so is reproduced with this article. Perhaps this drawing flatters the goat, but it does the opposite in the case of the artist, for the young lady herself is a very pulchritudinous product of Vassar.

A few quotations from Miss Davis's letters give a vivid picture of some of her experiences:

"A week ago was the Swiss national holiday, and you all would have thrilled, too, as I did, to count twenty-six beacon fires in the valley—on all the high Alps, and even the peaks. There were two on Furniss, one in our pasture that the boys had built all that day—one in the Enderlin Hütte on Falkniss—and, to cap the climax, some energetic Alpine climbers burned red lights, and even sent off rockets from the pinnacle of Falkniss. Down in the village there was music and gymnastic exhibitions. It all started with the ringing of the church bells at eight o'clock—and was over by a little after nine—and by ten, every one was sound asleep! . . .

"The other day we met Johannes Comminoth, admired his pipe, and asked him to let us sketch it. He invited us to his house, where we met his wife, and were ushered into the 'settin' room'—and, chuckling all the while, he sat, pipe a-smoking, while we drew. The clock ticked, flies buzzed, there was a reminiscent New England smell of apple sauce and cookies about the place. Afterwards, they brought food for us and we whiled away several wonderful hours: saw all the family portraits and pewter. . . .

"Then, one day, it cleared beautifully and we hurried to prepare for Guscha. We were driven over nearly to Luziensteig—and then shouldered our packs for the hot and *steep* path, over and around a cliff of Falkniss and up into the village, deserted in the summer, for the hay Alps higher up. On up past the dozen huts that are 'Guscha'—with signs pointing to 'Guscha Alp Hütte, Klub Naturfreunde.'



Drawing by Marguerite Davis for the Centennial Edition of "Heidi"

"Just before noon, we came out into a little clearing where are three or four huts. Andreas Just and family live in one—and the other is a sort of club house for people who tramp up there and care to stay. . . .

"We spent the afternoon climbing further up to those steep patches of hayfield that you may remember seeing from our valley. We came upon seven or eight adorable huts—all clinging by their eyebrows to the hillside—with stones upon their roofs, to hold them down—and a bunch of Maienfeld men raking and storing the hay, spending a week there to do it. . . .

"We slept that night (rather, we 'lay') on hay—in a loft, with a Swiss family of five—father, mother, and three children! When we were just beginning to lose consciousness, a cat jumped in the window—and purred

all night long in our ears. I saw Miss Fyshe take it up once and hurl it into the black night—but it pattered back, purring more loudly than ever, curled up on our necks and stayed till dawn. We had coffee over at the Justs' house—and I spent the morning drawing everything in sight—inside and out—while Frau baked just ten loaves of bread and stewed dried apples and fried doughnuts, cleaned the house, fed the pigs, and hens, and calves, changed her little girl's dress and sent her, with the grandfather, off to the high hayfields, where Andreas and Hans, the goat boy, were, and, by ten, she, too, was off with a basket on her back and hot coffee in a pail—to do a *real* day's work haying. Then I turned to the baby goats and the boys from Ragaz!

"We were a bit groggy that night when we got home, but



Drawing by Marguerite Davis for the Centennial Edition of "Heidi"

the following morning at 3.30 Herr Mooser knocked on Miss Fyshe's shutter—as agreed—and by four we were off for the Senn Hütte on the Maienfeld Alp—up back of Furniss and Falkniss.

"What a day that was!!! We *walked* eight hours! And he *talked* the eight hours! And Miss Fyshe was a wreck—and it was the most endless, eternal path! . . . It was hot; it showered; it rained; it poured; it thundered; the white clouds swished up over the saddle between the two mountains as out of some inferno. We saw cows, like specks, up against the sky—on Vilau; we saw a red roof gleaming up above us; surely that was our destination: the same roof we had seen from Pfäfers. In an hour or more, roof, and aerial cows were below us. On and up—zigzag—on and up—wet through, and cold—over at last into the valley of Scesaplana, right up under Falkniss' two towers, on the other side from Maienfeld—and *nothing* in sight! But finally—a half mile more brought us to two huts—one, the Senn Hütte—and the other, a hut that Herr Mooser insisted should be our abode for the night—that we should not think of returning that afternoon (he was to stay two days there, on a piece of work in a new cheese hut, a half hour down the valley) and that we would be 'ganz allein'!

"If I could only draw a word picture of the desolation of that scene! A treeless waste of pasture and rock and sky and cloud and rain; a sea of mud and muck around the Senn Hütte and the stable—making walking a perilous affair; a skyline of strange peaks—and the new Scesaplana; four silent men, looking at us, from the Senn Hütte!

"One of them, however, was really very hospitable; we ate our lunch and dried by the fire, and saw all the cheeses, and butter, churn, milk, and utensils; then Herr Mooser left us to our fate—and, I have to confess, a bed of hay in a black loft, in a smelly stable, in a desolate land of muck and silence did *not* appeal!—so we sketched for all we were worth for an hour—and I even braved the gray day and took 'snaps' of the boys, and of Scesaplana—and at 4.30 (we told the men to tell Herr Mooser next morning that we had to get back) started up—and over—and then down! Before we were lost to view, the boys came out and gave us the long, clear mountain call—and we answered; we were both adept at it by then!

"Before we arrived in Jenins, and when we were both awfully 'all in,' Herr Obrecht of Jenins picked us up in his 'leiter waggon' and two horses! In three-quarters of an hour, when we trotted through Jenins, we were very good friends—and he took us in his house—and set wine, bread, and meat before us, and looked at all our pictures—and had a great time recognizing all his Maienfeld friends. We reached home after dark—tired—but happy. . . .

"And so the days sped by! Long, wonderful days of not only 'putting down on paper'—but far more—of really *living* Heidi, Peter and all!!! I could have cried my eyes out the day I left—when that train curved into a new valley and blotted out my pasture from view!



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"Up in Guscha, the morning we arrived, and while we were drinking some milk in Andreas Just's house, little Hans, the goat boy—a native of Pfäfers—came in with Gretl Just—the three-year-old daughter—all flushed and hot from the steep climb up from Guscha village, and I felt almost as if Heidi herself were before me—she was so lovely and her cheeks were so red! And Hans was one of the nicest looking boys I had come across. I wanted to put him in my pocket and take him back home with me. And as for Andreas Just, himself, with his young, fine features, white teeth, and long black beard! I took pictures of him, with the white homespun pointed hood they wear to carry hay on their heads, and he looked like some youthful prophet out of the Bible! . . .

"It is such an anticlimax to have *lived* Heidi and then have to become a 'tourist' again and see only 'sights' and fellow

passengers; I can't bear it. . . . I am really an enthusiast over the Swiss people. This is an example: we asked a man in Guscha, on his way up to Falkniss, *why* he was going up there; 'Fur Edelweiss' and 'Why do you go for Edelweiss?'—and he answered, 'Weil es so schön ist.' Bernhard announced one evening that he and the goat herd from Fläsch were going to take their goats up to the Enderlin Hütte next day and they were to hunt for Edelweiss. I asked him why, and he answered, 'Ich weiss nicht—weil es so schön ist!'

"They love their big things—their mountains, their freedom, their flowers, their herds—so much that there is no room for anything bad. I never once heard a voice raised in anger or retort, or ill will. I never saw children being 'naughty'—or quarrelling. There was always that sense of content, work to fill the day, and—as on Guscha—singing and yodelling on the Justs' steps in the evening, and so much coöperation among the natives in their hay making or vineyard labour. A happy life, and certainly 'Heidi' breathes it from every page."

The translation of "Heidi" used for the Centennial Edition is that of Mrs. Helen B. Dole, published by Ginn and Company in 1899. It was the first American edition for schools, and now reissued with four inserts in full colors and many pictures in black and white, it will for a time be the latest edition, richly deserving to serve its threefold purpose as a book for the school, the library, and the home.

Editor's Note: Surely it is an unusual and far-seeing event in the making of children's books when the publisher of a new edition of "Heidi," intended for school use, will arrange for the illustrator to cross the ocean and live in the scene of the story and make her pictures in the high mountain pastures of Heidi's own land.