

And so the Overall Boys sailed by castles and still more castles, which were built high on the banks above the river. Most of them were very old, so old they were falling to pieces.

Lower down on the river banks there were large vineyards, where the finest grapes were growing.

We are in the city of Bern, where the bear cave is.

It was not long before the boys were racing across a great stone bridge leading to the deep hole in the ground where the bears lived. Joe reached the pit first.

"Hurrah! I see three of them," he cried, leaning over the high rail above the pit. "See that baby bear beg for something to eat! Go to the fruit stand, Jack, and buy some carrots to feed him. Father says bears like carrots."

So Jack ran to the fruit stand near by and bought a big bunch of carrots. The boys threw the carrots, one at a time, over the wall into the pit, and how they shouted and laughed to see the bears catch and eat them, just like big, brown boys.

"I'm getting hungry myself," said Jack at last. "Let's buy some gingerbread bears to eat. There is a window full of them over in that store."

Then away the boys ran and bought gingerbread bears of all sizes—father bears and mother bears and little baby bears and dancing bears and stiff soldier bears. Jack and Joe were sure they had never eaten anything in all their lives so good as those gingerbread bears.

The boys each bought, also, a fine alpine stock to help them on their long tramps over the mountains.

At last the boys were so tired they went into a small hotel, high on the mountain, and were soon tucked away in two narrow white beds. For a few moments they lay very still, then Joe whispered, "Jack, do you hear those bells tinkling, out on the mountain side?"

And Jack whispered, "Yes, Joe. They are cow bells. You know five thousand cows are pastured on this mountain in the summer time."

"From the sound, I guess they all wear bells, too," said Joe. "Isn't it lovely! The bells make me so sleepy."

But they did not have to ask, for the old woman who lived in the tiny house saw the boys coming. She knew that they had not had any breakfast, so she filled two tall mugs with warm milk, then she piled a plate with gingerbread cakes, and set before them.

The boys were so hungry they ate two plates full of the gingerbread cakes, and they each drank two tall mugs of the warm milk. They thanked the old woman very kindly, and told her she had given them the best breakfast they had ever eaten.

By this time the sun was quite high in the sky. Large umbrellas were raised over small booths on the mountain top, where men and women were selling picture post cards and all sorts of queer little things—horns and whistles and small carved wooden men and bears.

The boys bought a number of things to take back to America with them, and they bought a dozen or more post cards to send to their friends.

But the boys liked best the carved wood shops. Sometimes they saw boys, not much older than themselves, carving jumping-jacks and bears and queer little dwarf men out of blocks of pear wood.

Many Swiss boys learn wood carving when they are quite young, so they can earn their living in that way when they are grown up.

'If Pilatus wears his hood,
Then the weather's always
good.'

Every morning when it did not
rain, the Overall Boys had their
breakfast of rolls and honey
and hot chocolate on a small,
round table in the rose garden.

Swiss boys nearly always carry
knapsacks or botany cans on
their backs when they are

tramping. They like to gather and study the wild flowers and plants that grow by the way.

These boys think nothing is so good for lunch as rolls and sweet chocolate, and the Overall Boys are sure that they are right. They are also sure that no other sweet chocolate is as good as that made in Switzerland.

A Swiss band played lovely music all the while they were eating, and the schoolmaster told them wonderful stories about his life on the high Alps when he was a little boy.

...he commanded Tell to shoot an apple placed on the head of his favorite son, Walter.

Of course they were all very thirsty, so they sat around a small table under the great trees and drank raspberry lemonade, which was served to them in very tall glasses.

Raspberry lemonade, as it is made in Switzerland, is much nicer than plain lemonade, at least so the Overall Boys thought.

A few minutes later they began their tramp over one of the most beautiful roads in the world. It is called the Axenstrasse, because it is built along the side of the steep mountain called the Axenberg.

So they followed a footpath along the banks of the noisy river. Soon the banks began to grow high and steep. At last they rose straight up on both sides, until the boys could see only a narrow strip of blue sky far above them.

A part of the way the mountain is so steep the road could not be built on the outside of it, so a tunnel has been cut right through the rocky side. Here and there the outer wall of rock has been cut away, making great arches through which people can look out over the beautiful lake to the high mountains beyond.

They had not climbed the mountain, and they had not gone around it. They had gone through it. And more wonderful still, the great river Aar has been carrying its waters through the mountain for ages and ages.

Next morning the boys were up with the sun, for there was a long journey ahead of them. It was not to be a journey by train nor by boat. It was to be a journey on foot.

The party was to follow a trail over the high mountain range which shuts in the deep valley of the river Aar on the south. The trail would lead them over the Great Scheidegg Pass and down into the beautiful valleys on the other side.

It was a pretty, brown chalet. The broad, low roof was covered with many large stones to keep it from being blown away during the great winter storms.

But now it was the lovely summer time, and Gretel's mother had set two small tables just outside her front door. She always had something good to serve to hungry trampers To-day there was a big bowl of delicious wild strawberries on each of the tables.

The Overall Boys often stopped for a snowball battle with each other and with Gretel.

And so they talked, as they tramped along together up the mountain trail. Once they met a man with a large milk can on his back. The man greeted the party with a friendly, "Guten Tag! Glückliche Reise!" This was his way of saying, "Good day! A happy journey!" So the boys quickly answered, "Danke schön!" which means, "Thank you kindly!"

On and on, and up and up the little party tramped. At last they began to see snowbanks, in shaded places near the trail. Sometimes, just below a large snowbank, they found a sunny spot covered with a carpet of lovely summer flowers. There were violets and buttercups and daisies and forget-me-nots, and low bushes of small red alpine roses.

Then from some mountain garden, they picked fresh flowers for their hats, and on they tramped.

Their trail led them below a large glacier, which lay between two high mountain peaks not far away. The boys could hear the great ice river twisting and turning in its bed, for the hot summer sun made it very uncomfortable.

Once there came a loud boom, like a cannon. The boom was followed by a crash, and the crash by a long, loud rumbling noise, which gradually died away.

"Oh, Gretel, what was that?" cried Joe. Gretel said, "That was a piece of the glacier breaking off. It must have had a long fall before it found a place where it could stop."

"The glacier melts and moves a little every summer, but a great deal of fresh snow falls on it every winter. I guess it will last as long as the mountains do."

It was late afternoon before the trampers reached the green alp where Gretel's father and brothers were pasturing their COWS.

There was a long loaf of bread,
and a great round cheese with
holes all through it

When the boys had climbed
very high, Sep crept carefully
out on a narrow shelf of rock.
He lay face downward and
reached far over the edge. The
mountain side was very steep
below him.

Then, very carefully, he picked a small, furry, white flower which was growing on the steep, rocky wall. He picked another and another of the flowers, until his hand was full of them.

The Overall Boys were real mountain climbers at last, for only mountain climbers ever find and pick the edelweiss.

"There now!" he cried. "You know my secret. I have shown you where my edelweiss grows. It grows only in the most dangerous places on the high mountains. I pick a few of the flowers every day, when they are in bloom, to sell to travelers who cross our alp, but you are the only people I have ever brought up here to see them growing."

It is the glacier! Look at the great cracks in it. Do you hear that noise, Jack? It sounds like thunder."

"I guess it is only another crack bursting open," said Jack. "This hot sun makes the glacier move faster, and so it cracks open."

And they did explore 'way across the great ice river. In many places they had to walk very carefully, or they would have fallen into one of the deep cracks, but at last they came safely to the other side.

They had to climb over great ridges of rocks, which the glacier had torn away from the higher mountains years and years before. These rocks had been brought slowly down on the ice, and dropped along the sides and end of the glacier.

This passage led into a beautiful, blue ice room. The floor was ice, the walls were ice, and the ceiling was ice. There was no lamp in the room, and yet it was not dark.

They even went almost to the top of the great Jungfrau mountain, over its wonderful railroad. The highest part of this railroad is built through a tunnel, for the surface of the mountain is covered always with snow and ice.

They could see many high peaks covered with snow fields and glaciers, and lower mountains covered with green forests and alpine pastures.

They had glimpses into deep, narrow valleys with muddy rivers rushing through them.

Here and there were big, broad valleys dotted with villages and farms, and beautiful blue lakes, while the busy railroad trains looked like worms creeping over the hills and down the valleys. It was a wonderful view.