

**THE GOSAU SMITHY,
AND OTHER STORIES.
IN TWO VOLUMES. - II**

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The Gosau Smithy, and Other Stories. In Two Volumes. - II by Mrs. Parr

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MRS. PARR

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THE GOSAU SMITHY

AND OTHER STORIES.

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THE GOSAU SMITHY

And other Stories.

BY MRS. PARR

AUTHOR OF "DOROTHY FOX," ETC., ETC.,

IN TWO VOLUMES.—II.



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SYLVIA.

I.

IT was a sweet spring day, and the country round and about Piet's Hill was beginning to don its holiday dress of green. The elms were first and foremost in smartness; the ashes had nearly parted with the bunches of black seeds which had rattled vigorously through the March winds; the oaks had put out little hard rosy buds; and chestnuts, birches, limes, and beeches, each strove vigorously to attract some portion of the notice bestowed upon the flowery loveliness of the fruit trees, which were now in full blossom. How fresh and sweet everything looked; how fragrant the air smelt,

scented as it was with the apple-bloom, round which the bees kept up an unceasing murmur. The birds chirped and chattered over their nest-building, flying about, and even lingering to rest their burdens on the sills of the open windows.

Through one of these windows could be seen the figure of a man, apparently in a very restless and uneasy mood. At times he sat perfectly still; then he would frighten the swallows by suddenly jumping up, and walking backwards and forwards in the room; then he would throw himself into his chair again, and sit for a short while.

All this excitement had evident reference to two letters which he held in his hand, and which he still went on reading, although he knew their contents thoroughly. The principal one was written in a large straggling, unsteady hand, and ran as follows:—

“MY DEAR KERRISON,

“In old days you and I were great chums, and now that, through an ugly fall I've had, the doctor here (though, by the way, I don't place any confidence in him) declares that another such (it was the result of a sort of giddy faintness) might end fatally, I begin to recall the past, and wish that I had my time to go over again. Of course, long before this, you have married Lizzie Green. Ah! I can picture you in the old place. I know that you are living there; for, coming across an Essex paper the other day, I saw your name mentioned at the Chelmsford dinner. Well, you deserve all your happiness; for you were the best fellow I ever met. ‘Wish I could return the compliment,’ say you: I wish you could. If I had my life to live over again, I shouldn't be what I am. But don't think of that; ‘I wasn't always a boots,’ as Sam