

**ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN;  
OR, THE MAIDEN OF  
THE MIST. VOL. I**

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Anne of Geierstein; or, The maiden of the mist. Vol. I by Sir Walter Scott

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**SIR WALTER SCOTT**

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# "ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN;"

OR,

THE MAIDEN OF THE MIST.

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT!

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What! will the aspiring blood of Lancaster  
Sink in the ground?

SHAKESPEARE.

---

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

1  
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CL. 300



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1829.

# ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN;

OR

## THE MAIDEN OF THE MIST.

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### CHAPTER I.

The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds  
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphurous,  
Like foam from the roused ocean.-----

----- I am giddy.

*Manfred.*

THE course of four centuries has well nigh elapsed since the series of events which are related in the following chapters, took place on the Continent. The records which contained the outlines of the history, and might be referred to as proof of its veracity, were long preserved in the superb library of the Monastery of Saint Gall, but perished, with many of the literary treasures of that establishment, when the convent was plundered by the French revolutionary armies. The events are fixed, by historical date, to the middle of the fifteenth century,—that important period, when chivalry still

shone with a setting ray, soon about to be totally obscured; in some countries, by the establishment of free institutions, in others, by that of arbitrary power, which alike rendered useless the interference of those redressers of wrongs, whose only warrant of authority was the sword.

Amid the general light which had recently shone upon Europe, France, Burgundy, and Italy, but more especially Austria, had been made acquainted with the character of a people, of whose very existence they had before been scarcely conscious. It is true, that the inhabitants of those countries which lie in the vicinity of the Alps, that immense barrier, were not ignorant, that notwithstanding their rugged and desolate appearance, the secluded valleys which winded among those gigantic mountains nourished a race of hunters and shepherds; men, who, living in a state of primeval simplicity, compelled from the soil a subsistence gained by severe labour, followed the chase over the most savage precipices and through the darkest pine forests, or drove their cattle to spots which afforded them a scanty pasturage, even in the vicinage of eternal snows. But the existence of such a people, or rather of a number of small communities who followed nearly the same poor and hardy course of life, had seemed to the rich and powerful princes in the neighbourhood a matter of as little consequence, as it is to the stately herds which repose in a fertile meadow,



that a few half-starved goats find their scanty food among the rocks which overlook their rich domain.

But wonder and attention began to be attracted towards these mountaineers, about the middle of the fourteenth century, when reports were spread abroad of severe contests, in which the German chivalry, endeavouring to suppress insurrections among their Alpine vassals, had sustained repeated and bloody defeats, although having on their side numbers and discipline, and the advantage of the most perfect military equipment. Great was the wonder that cavalry, which made the only efficient part of the feudal armies, should be routed by men on foot; that warriors sheathed in complete steel should be overpowered by men who wore no defensive armour, and were irregularly provided with pikes, halberts, and clubs, for the purpose of attack; above all, it seemed a species of miracle, that knights and nobles should be defeated by peasants and shepherds. But the repeated victories of the Swiss at Laupen, Sempach, and on other less distinguished occasions, plainly intimated that a new principle of civil organization, as well as of military movements, had arisen amid the stormy regions of Helvetia.

Still, although the decisive victories which obtained liberty for the Swiss cantons, as well as the spirit of resolution and wisdom with which the members of the little confederation

had maintained themselves against the utmost exertions of Austria, had spread their fame abroad through all the neighbouring countries; and although they themselves were conscious of the power which repeated victories had acquired, yet down to the middle of the fifteenth century, and at a later date, they retained in a great measure the wisdom, moderation, and simplicity of their ancient manners; so much so, that those who were intrusted with the command of the troops of the Republic in battle, were wont to resume the shepherd's staff when they laid down the truncheon, and, like the Roman dictators, to retire to complete equality with their fellow-citizens, from the eminence to which their talents, and the call of their country, had raised them.

It is, then, in the Forest Cantons of Switzerland, in the autumn of 1474, that our tale opens.

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Two travellers, one considerably past the prime of life, the other probably two or three-and-twenty years old, had passed the night at the little town of Lucerne, the capital of the state of the same name, and beautifully situated on the Lake of the Four Cantons. Their dress and character seemed those of merchants of a higher class, and while they themselves jour-

neyed on foot, the character of the country rendering that by far the most easy mode of pursuing their route, a young peasant lad, from the Italian side of the Alps, followed them with a sumpter-mule, which he sometimes mounted, but more frequently led by the bridle.

The travellers were uncommonly fine-looking men, and seemed connected by some very near relationship,—probably that of father and son; for at the little inn where they lodged on the preceding evening, the great deference and respect paid by the younger to the elder, had not escaped the observation of the natives, who, like other sequestered beings, were curious in proportion to the limited means of information which they possessed. They observed also, that the merchants, under pretence of haste, declined opening their bales, or proposing traffic to the inhabitants of Lucerne, alleging in excuse, that they had no commodities fitted for the market. The females of the town were the more displeased with the reserve of the mercantile travellers, because they were given to understand, that it was occasioned by the wares in which they dealt being too costly to find customers among the Helvetian mountains; for it had transpired, by means of their attendant, that the strangers had visited Venice, and had there made many purchases of rich commodities, which were brought from India and Egypt to that celebrated emporium, as to