

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers*, May 30, 1891 to February 6, 1892)

### The Legend of the Jungfrau

All the land lay softly sleeping  
Sleeping 'neath the midnight moon,  
Save the brook with rippling cadence  
Murmuring its monotone:

And the rushing of the river,  
As it tore on to the sea  
From its source of glaciers icy,  
Proud, triumphant, careless, free.

And it seemed to me beside it,  
With its icy breath about me,  
As if held by some great spirit,  
With its mighty arms around me;

Spirit of the proud, calm Jungfrau  
Standing cold, impassioned, awful  
With her virgin, snowy mantle  
Draped about her massive shoulders.

“Spirit of the mountain might,  
Of the noble, queenly Jungfrau,  
Guardian of her untold fortunes,  
What wouldst then with me, a mortal?”

Then a voice so sweetly gentle,  
Like the murmur of streamlet,  
Whispered softly to one, listening,  
“I would woo thee with a story.”  
“Many years have I been longing,  
Longing much to tell this story,  
But alas! All proved unworthy,  
Till I saw thee coming to me;

Saw thee coming o'er the ocean,  
Bade the waves be quiet for thee,  
Bid the storm King hold his furies  
And the sea nymphs to protect thee.”

“Didst thou not then feel a presence,

Like a guardian angel o'er thee?  
And I answered, trembling strangely,  
"Yes thou speakest truly, Spirit!"

"List then to me and I'll tell thee,  
I the spirit of the mountain,  
Of the proud and haughty Jungfrau,  
Haughty now and chaste as ever,"

"Many cycles 'fore the present  
Dwelt in Rhineland's fertile valley,  
Pure and cold, the stately Hulda,  
Only child of noble Sigmund."  
"She was tall, of noble figure,  
Deep gray eyes and fair long tresses  
Swept the ground behind her walking  
And her smile was sweet as Springtime."

"Hildegarde, fair Hulda's mother,  
You had gone to the hereafter  
And she reigned o'er hall and turret  
O'er the whole of the vast castle."  
"Beloved of all, her father's treasure,  
Dearer far than wide-spread vineyards  
Stretching o'er the fertile valley,  
Long since called Johannesburg;"

"Dearer far than gold and silver  
Hoarded in the castle vault,  
Dearer far than gems and jewels,  
Armor and his other treasures."

"All the peasant women loved her,  
All the children her adored,  
For her sweet and helpful kindness,  
For the love which she outpoured."

"And they called her gracious Jungfrau,  
Courtied though from far and wide,  
By the Knights from the fair Rhineland,  
Ocean strand and mountain side."

"All the knights so true and valiant,  
Called her patron lady, saint,  
Swore by her on trusty sword hilts,

To do and die, but not to faint.”  
Many of the knights that Sigmund gathered,  
One called Siegfried bore the palm,  
For his knightly deeds of valor,  
For the power of his arm:

“Gentle too, as well befits those,  
Who have strength unto their share,  
Kind to children, courtly, knightly  
In his manners with the flair;

First in every game and tourney,  
First to follow war’s alarm,  
First to chase the handy robber,  
First to save the fair from harm.”

“And for many [ ] had dwelt there  
Worshipping, but from afar,  
Deeply loving the fair Hulda,  
Whom he said unto his comrade,  
Pure she is like star in Heaven,  
Leads me from the night’s black darkness  
To the day and its awakening!”

“If the fair maid Hulda loved him  
None could tell by word or token,  
Locked within her virgin bosom  
Lay the secret all unspoken;  
Gracious was she to him truly,  
But with all the same sweet manner,  
That the mistress of the castle  
Showed to all who lived within it;

E’en the maids who waited on her  
Lovingly, to do her service,  
Knew no more than did the others,  
What she thought of his long waiting.”

“After months of weary waiting,  
Came at last the rumors dire  
Of the Huns, those savage robbers,  
Laying waste with sword and fire.”  
“Then the mighty Sigmund rising  
At the head of the long table,  
When the evening feast was over,  
Said and listening all applauded.

“Up, men, up the Huns are coming,  
Quaff deep your Johannesburg,  
Then grasp well trusty sword hilts,  
Deeds of valor lie before you.”

“With a mighty shout the sword blades  
Flashed out from each gleaming scabbard  
And if one voice had spoken  
Came the cry, “Be thou our leader.”  
“Even then the Huns were on them;  
Hard the battle, long it lasted,  
Till the ground was strewn with curses,  
None were left but brave knight Siegfried  
And Attila, the Huns chieftain.”

“Siegfried bleeding, wounded sorely,  
Leaning on a heap of corpses  
Fought on madly, never heeding,  
Fought for love, for life, for Hulda;  
Till at last, with mighty effort,  
Leaping on the northern chieftain  
Both fell down and died together.”

“Then the orphaned maiden Hulda,  
Kneeling down beside the body,  
Pressed a kiss on Siegfried’s forehead,  
Siegfried, who had died to save her.”

“Called to aid her fairy mother  
And in tones of deepest anguish  
Said, “Oh, mother come and help me,  
Help your broken-hearted daughter!”

“And she answered, “Oh, my daughter,  
Jungfrau hast thou been and shall be,  
And thy name go down the ages.  
And the noblest of the mountains  
In the land of Alpine splendors,  
Shall be called from thee the Jungfrau  
And there shall they spirit hover.”

“As a type of what thou art  
Pure and clean and noble ever;  
Peace, my daughter, go, depart,  
And so shall thou be forever!

“This, oh; mortal is my story,”  
And the gentle voice grew fainter  
And I heard again the murmur  
Of the stream and rushing river.

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W.L. Mussey