



***ADELBERT
VON CHAMISSO***

***PETER
SCHLEMIHL***

A stack of books is shown at an angle, with the spines of several books visible. The books have various colored spines, including light blue, yellow, white, and red. The stack is set against a dark background. Two black text boxes with white text are overlaid on the image. The top box contains the name 'ADELBERT VON CHAMISSO' and the bottom box contains the name 'PETER SCHLEMIHL'.

***ADELBERT
VON CHAMISSO***

***PETER
SCHLEMIHL***

Adelbert von Chamisso

Peter Schlemihl

EAN 8596547046776

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



TABLE OF CONTENTS

[INTRODUCTION.](#)

[INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE FROM A. VON CHAMISSO TO JULIUS EDWARD HITZIG.](#)

[Peter Schlemihl , THE SHADOWLESS MAN .](#)

[CHAPTER I.](#)

[CHAPTER II.](#)

[CHAPTER III.](#)

[CHAPTER IV.](#)

[CHAPTER V.](#)

[APPENDIX.](#)

[BRIEF SKETCH OF CHAMISSO'S LIFE.](#)

[FROM THE BARON DE LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ TO JULIUS EDWARD HITZIG.](#)

[THE STORY WITHOUT AN END.](#)

[TO MY DAUGHTER](#)

[CHAPTER I.](#)

[CHAPTER II.](#)

[CHAPTER III.](#)

[CHAPTER IV.](#)

[CHAPTER V.](#)

[CHAPTER VI.](#)

[CHAPTER VII.](#)

[CHAPTER VIII.](#)

[CHAPTER IX.](#)

[CHAPTER X.](#)

[CHAPTER XI.](#)

[CHAPTER XII.](#)

CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER XIV.

HYMNS TO NIGHT.

I.

II.

III.

IV.

V.

VI. LONGING FOR DEATH.

INTRODUCTION.

[Table of Contents](#)

“PETER SCHLEMIHL,” one of the pleasantest fancies of the days when Germany delighted in romance, was first published in 1814, and was especially naturalised in England by association with the genius of George Cruikshank, who enriched a translation of it with some of his happiest work as an illustrator. An account of the book and its author is here reprinted at the end of the tale, as originally given by the translator. To this account one or two notes may be added. Louis Charles Adelaide de Chamisso de Boncourt was born on the 27th of January, 1781, at the Château of Boncourt, in Champagne, which he made the subject of one of his most beautiful lyrics. He belonged to a family faithful to Louis XVI., that fled to Würzburg from the fury of the French Revolution. Thus he was taken to Germany a child of nine, and was left there when the family, with other emigrants, returned to France in 1801. At fifteen he had Teutonised his name to Adelbert von Chamisso, and was appointed page to the Queen of Prussia. In the war that came afterwards, for a very short time he bore arms against the French, but being one of a garrison taken in the captured fort of Hamlin, he and his comrades had to pledge their honour that they would not again bear arms against France during that war. After the war he visited France. His parents then were dead, and though he stayed in France some years, he wrote from France to a friend, “I am German heart and soul, and cannot feel at home here.” He wandered irresolutely, then became Professor of Literature in a

gymnasium in La Vendée. Still he was restless. In 1812 he set off for a walk in Switzerland, returned to Germany, and took to the study of anatomy. In 1813, Napoleon's expedition to Russia and the peril to France from legions marching upon Paris caused Chamisso suffering and confusion of mind.

It is often said that his sense of isolation between interests of the land of his forefathers and the land of his adoption makes itself felt through all the wild playfulness of "Peter Schlemihl," which was at this time written, when Chamisso's age was about thirty-two. A letter of his to the Councillor Trinius, in Petersburg, tells how he came to write it. He had lost on a pedestrian tour his hat, his knapsack, his gloves, and his pocket handkerchief—the chief movables about him. His friend Fouqué asked him whether he hadn't also lost his shadow? The friends pleased their fancies in imagining what would have happened to him if he had. Not long afterwards he was reading in La Fontaine of a polite man who drew out of his pocket whatever was asked for. Chamisso thought, He will be bringing out next a coach and horses. Out of these hints came the fancy of "Peter Schlemihl, the Shadowless Man." In all thought that goes with invention of a poet, there are depths as well as shallows, and the reader may get now and then a peep into the depths. He may find, if he will, in a man's shadow that outward expression of himself which shows that he has been touched, like others, by the light of heaven. But essentially the story is a poet's whim. Later writings of Chamisso proved him to be one of the best lyric poets of the romance school of his time, entirely German in his tone of thought.

His best poem, "Salas y Gomez," describes the feeling of a solitary on a sea-girt rock, living on eggs of the numberless sea-birds until old age, when a ship is in sight, and passes him, and his last agony of despair is followed by a triumph in the strength of God.

"Alone and world-forsaken let me die;
Thy Grace is all my wealth, for all my loss:
On my bleached bones out of the southern sky
Thy Love will look down from the starry cross."

The "Story Without an End"—a story of the endless beauty of Creation—is from a writer who has no name on the rolls of fame. The little piece has been made famous among us by the good will of Sarah Austin. The child who enjoyed it, and for whom she made the delicate translation which here follows next after Chamisso's "Peter Schlemihl," was that only daughter who became Lady Duff-Gordon, and with whom we have made acquaintance in this Library as the translator of "The Amber Witch."

To make up the tale of pages in this little book without breaking its uniformity, I have added a translation of the "Hymns to Night" of Novalis. It is a translation made by myself seven-and-forty years ago, and printed in a student's magazine that I then edited. "Novalis" was the name assumed by a poet, Friedrich von Hardenberg, who died on the 25th March, 1801, aged twenty-nine. He was bred among the Moravian brethren, and then sent to the University of Jena. Two years after his marriage to a young wife, Sophie von Kühn, she died. That was in 1797. At the same time he lost a brother who was very dear to him. It

was then—four years before his own death—that he wrote his “Hymns to Night.”

H. M.

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE FROM A. VON CHAMISSO TO JULIUS EDWARD HITZIG.

[Table of Contents](#)

You, who forget nobody, must surely remember one Peter Schlemihl, whom you used to meet occasionally at my house—a long-legged youth, who was considered stupid and lazy, on account of his awkward and careless air. I was sincerely attached to him. You cannot have forgotten him, Edward. He was on one occasion the hero of our rhymes, in the hey-day of our youthful spirits; and I recollect taking him one evening to a poetical tea-party, where he fell asleep while I was writing, without even waiting to hear my effusion: and this reminds me of a witticism of yours respecting him. You had already seen him, I know not where or when, in an old black frock-coat, which, indeed, he constantly wore; and you said, “He would be a lucky fellow if his soul were half as immortal as his coat,” so little opinion had you of him. I loved him, however: and to this very Schlemihl, of whom for many years I had wholly lost sight, I am indebted for the little volume which I communicate to you, Edward, my most intimate friend, my second self, from whom I have no secrets;—to you, and of course our Fouqué, I commit them, who like you is intimately entwined about

my dearest affections,—to him I communicate them only as a friend, but not as a poet; for you can easily imagine how unpleasant it would be if a secret confided to me by an honest man, relying implicitly on my friendship and honour, were to be exposed to the public in a poem.

One word more as to the manner in which I obtained these sheets: yesterday morning early, as soon as I was up, they were brought to me. An extraordinary-looking man, with a long grey beard, and wearing an old black frock-coat with a botanical case hanging at his side, and slippers over his boots, in the damp, rainy weather, had just been inquiring for me, and left me these papers, saying he came from Berlin.

ADELBERT VON CHAMISSO.

PETER SCHLEMIHL, THE SHADOWLESS MAN.

[Table of Contents](#)

CHAPTER I.

[Table of Contents](#)

AFTER a prosperous, but to me very wearisome, voyage, we came at last into port. Immediately on landing I got together my few effects; and, squeezing myself through the crowd, went into the nearest and humblest inn which first met my gaze. On asking for a room the waiter looked at me from head to foot, and conducted me to one. I asked for some cold water, and for the correct address of Mr. Thomas John, which was described as being “by the north gate, the first country-house to the right, a large new house of red

and white marble, with many pillars." This was enough. As the day was not yet far advanced, I untied my bundle, took out my newly-turned black coat, dressed myself in my best clothes, and, with my letter of recommendation, set out for the man who was to assist me in the attainment of my moderate wishes.

After proceeding up the north street, I reached the gate, and saw the marble columns glittering through the trees. Having wiped the dust from my shoes with my pocket-handkerchief and readjusted my cravat, I rang the bell—offering up at the same time a silent prayer. The door flew open, and the porter sent in my name. I had soon the honour to be invited into the park, where Mr. John was walking with a few friends. I recognised him at once by his corpulency and self-complacent air. He received me very well—just as a rich man receives a poor devil; and turning to me, took my letter. "Oh, from my brother! it is a long time since I heard from him: is he well?—Yonder," he went on,—turning to the company, and pointing to a distant hill—"Yonder is the site of the new building." He broke the seal without discontinuing the conversation, which turned upon riches. "The man," he said, "who does not possess at least a million is a poor wretch." "Oh, how true!" I exclaimed, in the fulness of my heart. He seemed pleased at this, and replied with a smile, "Stop here, my dear friend; afterwards I shall, perhaps, have time to tell you what I think of this," pointing to the letter, which he then put into his pocket, and turned round to the company, offering his arm to a young lady: his example was followed by the other gentlemen, each politely

escorting a lady; and the whole party proceeded towards a little hill thickly planted with blooming roses.

I followed without troubling any one, for none took the least further notice of me. The party was in high spirits—lounging about and jesting—speaking sometimes of trifling matters very seriously, and of serious matters as triflingly—and exercising their wit in particular to great advantage on their absent friends and their affairs. I was too ignorant of what they were talking about to understand much of it, and too anxious and absorbed in my own reflections to occupy myself with the solution of such enigmas as their conversation presented.

By this time we had reached the thicket of roses. The lovely Fanny, who seemed to be the queen of the day, was obstinately bent on plucking a rose-branch for herself, and in the attempt pricked her finger with a thorn. The crimson stream, as if flowing from the dark-tinted rose, tinged her fair hand with the purple current. This circumstance set the whole company in commotion; and court-plaster was called for. A quiet, elderly man, tall, and meagre-looking, who was one of the company, but whom I had not before observed, immediately put his hand into the tight breast-pocket of his old-fashioned coat of grey sarsnet, pulled out a small letter-case, opened it, and, with a most respectful bow, presented the lady with the wished-for article. She received it without noticing the giver, or thanking him. The wound was bound up, and the party proceeded along the hill towards the back part, from which they enjoyed an extensive view across the green labyrinth of the park to the wide-spreading ocean. The view was truly a magnificent one. A slight speck was

observed on the horizon, between the dark flood and the azure sky. "A telescope!" called out Mr. John; but before any of the servants could answer the summons the grey man, with a modest bow, drew his hand from his pocket, and presented a beautiful Dollond's telescope to Mr. John, who, on looking through it, informed the company that the speck in the distance was the ship which had sailed yesterday, and which was detained within sight of the haven by contrary winds. The telescope passed from hand to hand, but was not returned to the owner, whom I gazed at with astonishment, and could not conceive how so large an instrument could have proceeded from so small a pocket. This, however, seemed to excite surprise in no one; and the grey man appeared to create as little interest as myself.

Refreshments were now brought forward, consisting of the rarest fruits from all parts of the world, served up in the most costly dishes. Mr. John did the honours with unaffected grace, and addressed me for the second time, saying, "You had better eat; you did not get such things at sea." I acknowledged his politeness with a bow, which, however, he did not perceive, having turned round to speak with some one else.

The party would willingly have stopped some time here on the declivity of the hill, to enjoy the extensive prospect before them, had they not been apprehensive of the dampness of the grass. "How delightful it would be," exclaimed some one, "if we had a Turkey carpet to lay down here!" The wish was scarcely expressed when the man in the grey coat put his hand in his pocket, and, with a modest and even humble air, pulled out a rich Turkey carpet,