

THE
GOSAU SMITHY

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

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THE GOSAU SMITHY.

I.

AT the foot of the Zwieselalp stands the Gosau smithy, and in much the same place a smithy stood many years ago, when travellers were far less numerous than now. Still people were beginning to arrive during summer, and Franz Friedel's sharp eyes soon saw there was more money to be made by them than at his forge; so he added on a bit here and a bit there to his house, until he could give four or five people a very comfortable night's lodging, and then (having of late got a trifle too heavy for climbing) he hired two or three trustworthy men to go at his price with the visitors to the different excursions. Altogether he contrived to make a good thing of it, and to regard the summer as a promising harvest-time with which no one else had a right to interfere. A hard, prosperous man was Franz Friedel, brooking no contradiction, and with but one distinct object in life—to hoard up money, and to be reckoned the richest man in Gosau. Any one who dared to thwart him in this he at once regarded as his enemy; and of late he had been much troubled by the enterprise of one Hans Cranach, who lived at the Gosau mill, and who had actually put up a notice that *he* supplied travellers with guides and conveyances.