During the nineteenth century Germany contributed many items to children’s literature that are still well-known and continue to be much read. Grimms’ fairytales,¹ Heinrich Hoffmann’s Struwwelpeter and the comic stories of Till Eulenspiegel² immediately spring to mind, while from German-speaking Switzerland we have J.D. Wyss’s Swiss Family Robinson and Johanna Spyri’s Heidi. Not all books of German origin that were adapted into English have fared as well. Few people today in Britain are familiar with the name of Christoph von Schmid, yet a considerable number of his religious tales, both long and short, were translated into English and enjoyed an amazing popularity. The best known of his tales in the English-speaking world was The basket of flowers (Das Blumenkörbchen). Because of the enormous sales of this book, amounting by 1854 to more than a million copies, the publishers T. Allman & Son stated in their advertisement to The orphan child (Das hölzerne Kreuz) that they had been led to bring out a uniform series of Schmid’s tales.³ The Halifax firm of Milner and Sowerby also published a ‘Basket of Flowers’ series, which ran to at least fourteen titles.⁴ They were not the only publishers to take advantage of Schmid’s attractiveness to the Sunday school market.

Despite his popularity, which lasted unabated until the end of the century, very little has been written in English about Schmid. He is not mentioned by either Harvey Darton⁵ or Percy Muir.⁶ M.F. Thwaite refers to him briefly in her chapter on ‘Children’s Books

⁴ Ibid.
Abroad’ in *From primer to pleasure.* Rather more is provided by Eric Quayle in *Early children’s books: a collector’s guide,* not wholly accurately, while *The Oxford companion to children’s literature* has a brief entry each for Schmid and *The basket of flowers.* The most detailed account is to be found in Anne Renier’s *The basket of flowers by Christoph von Schmid: a checklist of copies in the Renier Collection,* in which she lists 125 different English-language editions of *The basket of flowers* (there are in fact more than this). J.S. Bratton also has a useful couple of pages in *The impact of Victorian children’s fiction,* partly based on Renier. Schmid’s importance as a children’s writer is historical rather than permanent, but his popularity in Victorian Britain and America tells us a lot about the moral and religious climate of the times.

Johann Christoph von Schmid (1768-1854) spent the last twenty-eight years of his life as a highly respected and affectionately regarded canon (*Domkapitular*) in Augsburg. In 1837 he was created a knight of the Order of Merit of the Bavarian Crown, an honour which entitled him to use ‘von’ with his surname. He had been born Christoph Schmid, the eldest of nine children, in Dinkelsbühl and studied theology at the Episcopal University in Dillingen from 1785 to 1791. After being ordained priest in the Roman Catholic Church he spent twenty years with school-teaching responsibilities as well as parochial duties in the village of Thannhausen an der Mindel, about thirty kilometres west of Augsburg. It was here that he wrote or conceived the ideas for very many of his books for children. Then in 1816 he moved to Oberstadion, near Ulm, where he remained for just over a decade until 1827, when he was inducted into his post as canon in Augsburg.

Schmid published his first book for children, *Das Glück der guten Erziehung,* in 1797 (it was reissued in 1841 in the second volume of the *Gesammelte Schriften* with the new title *Der Diamantring*). His first real success came in 1810 with *Genovefa* (*Genevieve* or *Genevieve of Brabant*), the re-telling of a well-known legend. In 1816 there appeared the story for which he is most celebrated in Germany – *Die Ostereier* (*The Easter eggs*). Then

---

13 German titles are given in modernized spelling.
followed a spate of further children’s stories, with *Das Blumenkörbchen* coming in 1823. Reissues and sets of collected tales accompanied the flow of new tales, and a collected edition in twenty-four volumes appeared between 1841 and 1846, with two supplementary volumes in 1856, two years after his death. A bibliography of his works in German lists some sixty-three separate items published in his lifetime. A few of these are simply pamphlets, but others consist of several volumes, such as the various collected editions. Schmid seems everywhere to have been a greatly loved personality, much concerned with children and a teaching ministry focussed on them. A monument was erected to his memory in Dinkelsbühl in 1859.

From Schmid’s voluminous output the following list gives what may be regarded as his most popular tales. They are listed in chronological order of their first appearance in German. After the English title is given the date of the earliest English version according to the holdings of the *British Library Catalogue* (BLC) or the *National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints* (NUC). In default of more extensive bibliographical research the English earliest dates must be regarded as provisional. Schmid’s name is not always printed on the title-page. Often we learn simply that the book is ‘by the author of *The basket of flowers*’. This is also the case with the German editions, where Schmid is most frequently referred to as the author of *Die Ostereier*.


*Die Ostereier*. Landshut: Krüll, 1816. *The Easter eggs*. 1829 (BLC)


*Das hölzerne Kreuz*. Augsburg: J. Rösl, 1826 (cover, 1827). *The orphan child*, 1854 (BLC)

---

By and large the stories are set in an unspecified past. *Genovefa* is medieval in its re-telling of the legend of Genevieve of Brabant, which is actually a Christianized version of the secular tale of the Queen of France and the faithless marshall. *Rosa von Tannenburg* seems to be placed in the late Middle Ages. The events of *Gottfried, der junge Einsiedler*, which in essence is a Christian Robinsonnade, are said to have taken place several hundred years ago. *Heinrich von Eichenfels* and *Das Blumenkörbchen* recount events from the beginning of the eighteenth century, *Der Weihnachtsabend* from the middle. *Ludwig, der kleine Auswanderer* is located in the period of the French Revolution and its aftermath.

Schmid's stories for children enjoyed an immense popularity for most of the nineteenth century, and not only in German-speaking countries. Translations of individual tales appeared in most of the languages of Europe, extending to Icelandic, Welsh, Finnish, Romansch and Maltese. There were also editions published in German and English in the United States and in Portuguese in Brazil. How are we to account for this widespread success?

As one reads a number of Schmid's tales in succession, one quickly becomes aware of recurrent features and patterns in the way the tales are narrated. The typical structure presents an initial idyllic situation followed by an unexpected reversal of fortune and a period of suffering or deprivation, in which the protagonist learns to recognize God's goodness even in times of adversity. At the lowest point of expectation the protagonist is rescued from distress, generally by an unforeseen positive response to a spontaneous, unselfconscious act of goodness or bravery by the protagonist. The story then ends with the re-establishment of happiness, in which justice is tempered with mercy, wickedness is banished and forgiveness is the order of the day. The structure is analogous to that of the traditional fairytale, though with Schmid there is no recourse to magic helpers or to miraculous divine intervention. Where coincidence provides a resolution of the story, it is carefully rationalized and made factually plausible. In contrast to the fairytale, the conclusion of the story does not usually put forward a radical change in the protagonist's original circumstances, nor is
there a transformation of personality. The kitchen-maid doesn't marry a prince. The peasant doesn't marry a princess and acquire a kingdom. The social order remains static. The character is changed morally rather than socially.

Despite the occurrence of misfortune, injustice and wickedness, Schmid's tales are always ultimately reassuring and optimistic. He himself was a child of the Enlightenment, so his Christian teaching is infused with the spirit of rational humanism. His characters do not rail at the body-blows life deals them, but are more likely to discern God's goodness in the lesser things they still enjoy. Acts of kindness are always rewarded, though the reward may come unexpectedly after a long period of suffering or destitution. Though Schmid acknowledges the existence of evil and wickedness, his emphasis is Leibnizian in always perceiving a positive lesson in whatever happens. If Heinrich von Eichenfels had not been abducted by a gipsy woman and spent his infancy incarcerated in a robbers' cave, he would not have experienced the outside world and nature as the breathtaking marvels he sees when he escapes into the light. He would have taken everything for granted. The plot-structure of *Heinrich von Eichenfels* is designed so that Schmid can present the child as an innocent observer of the wonders of the world and the strangeness of human behaviour. Through his experience of nature and the assumption of a controlling intelligence behind, for example, the movement of the sun and the clouds, Heinrich is led by the wise hermit Menrad to an understanding of God as the invisible Creator.

Schmid's presentation of Christianity in his stories is remarkable in that it contains little that is specifically Catholic. He is largely unconcerned with dogma or the distinguishing features of Catholicism. The Virgin Mary and the saints play no rôle in his stories. God the benevolent Creator tends to figure more prominently than Jesus, the Saviour who suffered for humanity on the cross. When Schmid's characters go to church the terminology used is non-specific, e.g. the word *Gottesdienst*, 'divine service', is used rather than *Messe*, 'mass'. Probably the most distinctly Catholic elements are to be found in *Die Ostereier*, where the heroine Rosalinde frequently resorts to a chapel for prayer, and in the figure of the hermit that crops up in a number of tales. We have already encountered the hermit Menrad in *Heinrich von Eichenfels*, while the entire story of *Gottfried, der junge Einsiedler* centres on the life of a hermit that the shipwrecked boy Gottfried is forced to lead. Similarly, the life of the Countess Genovefa and her infant son in the wilderness is equivalent to that of a hermit. Schmid invests the hermit figure with a certain idealized attractiveness. The solitary individual in tune with God and nature, free from the temptations of a worldly life, is a very positive figure for him. At the end of *Heinrich von Eichenfels* Menrad cannot be prevailed upon by the
Count to stay at his castle, but returns to his hermitage to devote himself entirely to God.

The Christian content of Schmid’s stories centres chiefly on piety and morals rather than on matters of belief. Parents bring up their children to thank God for all his gifts and to accept suffering and misfortune without rancour. They should turn constantly to God in prayer, the efficacy of which is demonstrated time and time again. At the opening of Der Weihnachtsabend the eight-year-old orphan Anton prays when he is lost in the snowy forest and is swiftly led by the sound of singing voices to the forester’s cottage, where he is treated kindly and eventually adopted by the forester and his wife. When the shipwrecked Gottfried in Gottfried, der junge Einsiedler is plagued with thirst as he stumbles among the rocks in the hot sun, he prays to God for help and shortly comes across a cool spring. In Das Blumenkörbchen, after Marie has been thrown out of her lodging by the unpleasant young peasant wife and goes to sit by her father’s grave, she asks God if he has an angel to show her which way to turn. Immediately she hears the voice of the young Countess Amalia, who has been looking for her and wants to make good the injustice Marie has suffered earlier from the Count and his family. These are typical examples of Schmid’s belief in the power of prayer. The answers are prompt, helpful and always carefully motivated and explained. They may have the quality of a miraculous response to need, but they depend respectively, in the instances given above, on human generosity to a person in distress, the abundance of the natural world or a set of unsuspected causal connections.

The Christian values and patterns of behaviour that Schmid propounds are simple and straightforward. Truthfulness, honesty, kindness, patience, prudence, courage, a forgiving spirit are the mark of goodness. These virtues are most often displayed in peasant families who stretch out a helping hand to those worse off than themselves. In addition to those already mentioned we may note the family of Lorenz Linder in Ludwig, der kleine Auswanderer, who take in the little French boy who has strayed from his mother into the forest and got lost. Such generosity is not confined to the lower classes. In Das Lämmchen Frau von Waldheim helps and becomes good friends with the ill and impoverished Rosalie and her daughter. Help is also extended between two noble families in Das Täubchen (1825, The dove), in which Count Theobald and Countess Ottilia von Falkenburg and their daughter Agnes come to the aid of the widowed Rosalinde von Hohenburg, who is being persecuted by two wicked knights. Goodness is therefore demonstrated as a human characteristic, not as something that distinguished the responses of one class rather than another.

Yet the characters in Schmid’s tales all have a clear sense of the distinctions between the classes. They know what is appropriate and inappropriate conduct for their particular station. Marie’s father, in
Das Blumenkörbchen, is wary and anxious about his daughter's growing attachment to the young Countess Amalia. When the Countess gives Marie a discarded, but still serviceable dress in gratitude for her birthday gift of the basket of flowers, Jakob thinks others may become envious of them and fears that the gift may make Marie vain. Envy has indeed already been shown by Jetten, Amalia's maid, towards Marie. Her subsequent false witness against Marie, motivated by her envy, results in father and daughter being banished from their home and in their possessions being confiscated.

In Rosa von Tannenburg the heroine's tenacious devotion to her father is demonstrated by the fact that she, a nobleman's daughter, willingly goes into service as a maid in the gatekeeper's household at Fichtenburg in order to find a way of tending her father in the dungeon in which he is imprisoned. Her embracing of this degradation is proof of her goodness and nobility of character. The gatekeeper's wife is mortified when the maid whom she had berated turns out to be of noble descent. This allows the lady of Fichtenburg to rebuke her gently by pointing out that the person of least account in the world is also of divine descent. What ultimately matters is not worldly rank, but personal goodness.

Christoph von Schmid does not challenge the social order of his time. The peasant can be as happy in his or her position as the nobility. Indeed, Rosa von Tannenburg says to poor Gertrud, the charcoal-burner's wife, with whom she takes refuge on being driven out of her castle, that a quiet, peaceful life is better than choice food and drink. This is, of course, all of a piece with the eighteenth-century ideal of rural retirement and closeness to nature, detached from the busyness and artificiality of the court and the city. Schmid does not over-idealize this, since he makes plain the grimness of poverty and the harsh side of nature, the cold, rain, bleakness and lack of shelter, in many of his tales. The rôle of the peasantry is to work hard, accept their humble lot, be virtuous and show respect. That of the nobility is to rule wisely and alleviate distress by philanthropy. In this stable social situation misfortune is personal and occasional. It is not a consequence of defects in social consciousness and responsibilities.

Schmid's attention is largely confined to the individual and the family. His child protagonists are frequently only children. Where there are brothers and sisters, they are never of crucial importance to the story. The most important relationship is that of child to parent, characterized by obedience, docility, helpfulness and affection. Although the young Gottfried is described in a very positive way at the outset, the author continues:

But, however great were his good qualities, Godfrey had also his faults. He was very capricious; and he always considered himself to be in the right. He was irritated at the least contradiction; and his parents were more than once obliged to
employ their authority, in order to make him obey them. He wished to domineer
over his brothers and sisters; and he was out of temper if they refused to obey him.
He would dispute with them, and address them only in harsh and haughty
language. The dinners that were given him, from time to time, at the house of his
godfather, rendered almost odious to him the simple food that his mother placed
upon the table. He often complained of it; and such was his discontent, that he
thought it of too little worth to condescend to thank God and his parents for it.

One may wonder at the fact that it took three years of life on a desert
island to bring such a boy to a proper feeling of respect and gratitude
towards God and his parents. However, Schmid was simply following
the model provided by Joachim Heinrich Campe in Robinson der
Jüngere (1779–80, Robinson the Younger), whose hero’s disregard of his
parents led to an even longer period of isolation and separation.

Christoph von Schmid’s world reflects the hills, forests and
fields, the small towns and villages of the borders of Bavaria and
Swabia where he spent his life. In the eighteenth century it was a
country of multitudinous principalities, many very small, in which
the nobility and their subjects were often in easy contact. The place-
names that Schmid gives to the settings of his stories relate to his
feelings for the natural world. We have Eichenfels (Oaken rock) and
Eichburg (Oak castle) as the seats of two worthy noble families. The
two opposing castles in Rosa von Tannenburg are called Tannenburg
(Pine castle) and Fichtenburg (Fir castle), while elsewhere we have
a Lindenburg (Lime castle) and a Frau von Linden. There is an
Aeschtental (Ash vale) and a Grünenthal (Green vale) and a Grüne
Insel (Green island). It seems inevitable when we come across a
Waldenberg and a Frau von Waldheim. The range is extended if we
look at more of Schmid’s tales, but the new names equally draw
from similar aspects of nature.

As for personal names, we find a variety of fashionable names
among the female nobility, such as Rosalinde, Amalia, Ottilia, Agnes
and Emma, but the majority of others bear the usual range of
common saints’ names or names of Germanic origin. A few are
given names that specify moral qualities, such as Edelbert (edel =
noble) or Wohlmuth (good spirit). An obnoxious nobleman is called
Herr von Schilf (reed), while two wicked robbers are given the
Italian names of Lupo (wolf) and Orso (bear). The upstart family
in Der Rosenstock is called Pracht (magnificence) and purchases the
right to use the particle ‘von’ with their surname. Their new status
depends on wealth, not genuine nobility. The pattern of
nomenclature is quite carefully worked out. Schmid combines the
ordinary with the symbolic and distinctive in such a way as to
render social and moral distinctions clear, but not crassly obtrusive.
The associations of the names are not, however, always apparent to
readers of the English translations, and indeed some of them have
been changed to make them less difficult for the English-language
reader to pronounce or understand.
Let us now turn to look in more detail at *The basket of flowers*. *Das Blumenkörbchen* is one of the longest of Schmid’s tales, about the same length as *Genovefa* and a little shorter than *Rosa von Tannenburg*. It focusses on a miscarriage of justice, its later discovery and the compensation of the innocent victim. The gardener’s daughter Marie gives the Countess Amalia for her birthday a beautiful basket of flowers that her father has made with Amalia’s name and family coat of arms cleverly worked into it. Marie is rewarded with a dress from the young Countess’s wardrobe. At the time of her visit a diamond ring vanishes from the castle, and Marie is immediately suspected of stealing it. Despite her unflinching denials Marie is convicted on the basis of false evidence given by the Countess’s jealous maid. Marie and her elderly father are evicted from their home and banished from the Count’s lands. Jakob falls ill, and the two are taken in by a peasant couple. On Jakob’s recovery they manage to make themselves useful and earn their keep. But after Jakob dies and the peasant couple hand over their property to their son, the latter’s unpleasant wife makes Marie’s life a misery. Finally, the theft of some linen gives her an excuse to throw Marie out of the house. The girl goes for comfort to her father’s grave, which she has adorned with the basket of flowers that had been thrown back at her when she and her father were banished. Here she prays for help and is discovered by the Countess Amalia, who has actually been searching for her. For in the interim the lost ring has been found: it had been taken by a jackdaw and hidden in a nest in an old pear-tree that has recently had to be felled after being damaged in a storm. Amalia is now with her parents visiting a neglected hunting-lodge and has heard of the piety and touching way in which a local girl has adorned her father’s grave. She recognizes the basket of flowers and is anxious to find Marie in order to beg forgiveness for the injustice done to her. Marie bears the Count and his family no ill-will. She is feted and taken into the household as Amalia’s companion. An additional episode shows the miserable Jettchen poverty-stricken and dying in a garret. She has been punished for her perjury, but of course Marie also forgives her. The story ends with Marie’s marriage to the son of the justice who had earlier pronounced sentence on her.

Marie is a heroine of unblemished virtue, industrious, affectionate, generous-hearted and of a forgiving nature. Her father is deeply Christian and a man of the utmost probity. Despite the harsh treatment that he and his daughter receive at the hands of the law, he desires that Marie should conquer any resentment she may feel and be of a forgiving spirit. His self-reliance and integrity are such that he will accept help from the forester Anton, who meets the two exiles as they are leaving Eichburg, only when he is convinced that the money is Anton’s to give, and not money properly belonging to the Count. Father and daughter suffer greatly, but their
original act of spontaneous generosity – the making and gift of the basket of flowers – is what provides the means for righting the injustice they have suffered. The basket of flowers is all that Marie can place on her father's grave as a memorial – she cannot afford a gravestone – but it is the hallmark of her devotion and the talk of the neighbourhood. Thus, the only act that she can perform at the lowest point of her misery turns out to be the instrument of her rehabilitation.

This motif is one that Christoph von Schmid is fond of. He uses it again in Gottfried, der junge Einsiedler. There the accidental destruction by fire of all Gottfried's carefully tended hut and possessions gives the smoke signal that his brother and sister glimpse from the hill on the Green Island, as a result of which they set out to rescue him. Again, in Das Lämchen, when Christine works Emilia's initials into the collar of the pet lamb that she gives her in gratitude for material assistance, the initials provide a means of recognition for Frau von Waldheim's long lost son. Time and again the cherished possession that is given in gratitude to someone else turns out to be the means whereby fortunes are changed in the course of a harrowing set of events. A further example of synchronicity in Das Blumenkörbchen occurs when the village clergyman tells how old Jakob on his deathbed had received a consolation that his daughter's innocence would be proved. When the date of this incident is checked, it coincides with the night of the storm in which the old pear-tree is damaged. By such occurrences Schmid expresses his profound belief in the interconnectedness of human life. Good deeds simply and honestly performed without any ulterior motive bring their own reward in God's good time. His characters have a lively sense of God's presence in their lives. They give thanks for small blessings as well as for great ones. They accept suffering and hardship as part of God's plan for themselves, so that when they reach the depths of misery they cast themselves on God's mercy as a natural reaction, and their prayers are answered.

Das Blumenkörbchen was translated into English not once, but at least five times. As was the case with the first translation of Goethe's Werther, the first two translations were made from the French and not directly from the German original. The connection with French culture and language has always been much stronger than that with German. The first translator, however, was an American – the Rev. Gregory Townsend Bedell, D.D. (1793–1834), the greater part of whose ministry took place in the Episcopal church of St Andrew, Philadelphia, where he won a considerable following with his preaching, searching pastoral care and concern for children. His biographer declares: 'His publications were all small, because their simple object was usefulness to others, and not eminence for himself. His own literary reputation he made no effort
to sustain."16 The Memoirs do not so much as mention The basket of flowers, probably not considering the book to be ranked among his serious writings.

In Bedell's introduction to The basket of flowers he admits that his translation is 'a very free one; and in many places large omissions are made, and in others considerable additions will be found.' The reasons for this lie in his earlier remark, namely, that 'with some alterations, to make it (i.e. The basket of flowers) convey lessons of clear and decided evangelical truth, it would be a very interesting little work for the libraries of Sunday Schools, and every variety of youthful readers.' This desire to alter and make conform to the tenets of Evangelicalism is a commonplace among British translators of German material. Other translators (for example, the Rev. T.M. Ready, LL.B., on the title-page of The rose bush) indicate that they have 'corrected' Schmid's text.

What do such 'alterations' and 'corrections' amount to? The German text of Schmid's tales on the whole allows the Christian way of life, morals and religious practice to emerge naturally from the narrative. Where overt instruction is given, it is almost always through the mouthpiece of one of the characters personally involved in the action. More rarely, a respected clergyman (the neutral word Pfarrer is most commonly used) may comment or preach a sermon. Schmid hardly ever provides an authorial comment that goes beyond what is implicit in the narrative. By contrast, Bedell's translation frequently engages in such authorial nudges, obtrusive assertions and direct addresses to the reader, a practice that is foreign to Schmid and is damaging to his calculated technique. In describing the father at the outset of the book, Bedell adds:

While he was quite young James Rode had been brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. He had been born again of the Spirit, and these are the reasons why he had been enabled to discharge his duties. . . . No matter how humble the situation any real child of God may occupy, if he is consistent in his walk and conversation, he is witness for the truth of religion which no enemy can be able to gainsay.

In the characterization of the admirable Mary, Bedell declares:

By all the neighbours she was called a beautiful girl, and sometimes they were indiscreet enough to call her so before her face - a very great mistake, as all children are naturally prone to vanity.

This sort of moralizing gloss figures throughout Bedell's translation. He also inserts a small number of passages of verse and gives

---

occasional biblical references that Schmid had not deemed necessary.

Bedell's practice was standard in the nineteenth-century treatment of children's books. It is in fact extended in the next translation by a person whose identity is hidden behind the initials J.H. St. A. and who also worked from a French text. The earliest edition of this translation would appear to be that of 1857. The translator increases the biblical references and inserts a good many more verses, mainly anonymous, but there are a couple of quotations each from Cowper and from Coleridge. After Mary has been given the Countess's dress there follows a very strong homily:

Do you love gaudy dresses and useless ornaments, young reader? Remember that it is an evidence of an uncultivated taste and a vulgar and frivolous mind. If a woman is overloaded with gaudy ornaments and unsuitable dresses, they do not adorn her – she only bears about upon her person the badge of her inward deformity. Learn to understand the real beauty of simplicity. . . . What innumerable evils have been the consequence of a foolish fondness for dress! . . . Mothers, beware of the appearance of such a taste in your children! Foster it not. Strive to check it, as you would strive to check the first symptoms of a fatal disease, the more insidious, because it appears slight and harmless at first.

Such heavily moralizing sentiments and exhortations are more numerous than in Bedell.

James's deathbed advice to his daughter is quite considerably different from Schmid's German text. Jakob does not actually mention the name of Jesus, but puts all his emphasis on a direct relationship with God as Father, the heavenly thus paralleling the earthly. One of Marie's most important guides is her sense of shame. She should never do anything that she would be ashamed for her father to know. By contrast J.H. St A.'s version focusses on Jesus, underlines the need for daily prayer and is much more comprehensive in its religious injunctions. Schmid's position is more general, more genial than his translator's. He has a greater faith in human capacity for good, not the Evangelicals' insistence on human sinfulness apart from God's exercise of grace.

While the translations of Bedell and J.H. St A. were frequently reprinted and dominated the market in the nineteenth century, a much closer translation from the original German appeared in 1848. This was entitled The flower-basket: a moral tale and came from the hand of William E. Drugulin. It was published in Stuttgart by J.B. Müller, with W.S. Orr of London as co-publisher. This edition is not included in the checklist of the Renier Collection, nor does it seem to be in the British Library. It is remarkable in being a faithful translation, with no additional material to make it acceptable.

17 Published by T. Nelson and Sons (Renier, no. 60). See Judith St John, op. cit., ii, 933.
to Evangelical readers, and containing three illustrations by Julius Nisle. However, it appears to have made little impression in England, and no reprints are recorded. One oddity of this translation is the fact that it has the young Countess refer to her father and mother quite incongruously as ‘Pa’ and ‘Ma’ (chapter 3, page 24). The name of the jealous maid varies from translation to translation. In Bedell she is called Margaret, in J.H. St A. she is Juliette, in Drugulin she is Harriet.

In the mid 1860s there appeared a second translation made directly from the German. This was published by Warne in 1866. Like so many translations it is anonymous. Although it is a careful piece of work, this translator, like Bedell and J.H. St A., cannot withstand the impulse to improve on or correct his or her source. When James is explaining the emblematic significance of flowers to his young daughter, he reflects on the lily’s whiteness by declaring: ‘There is a white robe freely offered to all. Blessed are they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’. Such a formulation is not, of course, to be found in Schmid’s original. The anonymous translator also appends, at the beginning and end of each chapter, a very wide range of verses from Cowper, Spenser, Hogg, the German Protestant hymn-writer Paul Gerhardt and many other now largely forgotten poets. By the time of publication of this translation the methods of book illustration have changed. Metal engraving has given way to colour printing, so that the main feature of the new editions’ appeal lies more in their attractive and extensive illustration than in the story by itself.

A further anonymous translation, of which Blackie and Son published an edition c. 1900, with a frontispiece by G. Demain Hammond, provides a second rendering untainted by verse and prose additions and religiously motivated alterations. This may perhaps be the same translation as that published by A. Hislop of Edinburgh, in 1869 (see BLC). Blackie’s edition contains a couple of pages of historical information about Schmid. When the same publisher produced a new edition, with illustrations by A.A. Dixon dated 1912, presumably during the First World War, Schmid’s name was removed from the title-page, the historical introduction was omitted, and the setting was changed from the imaginary German ‘Eichburg’ to ‘a certain little market town in Guelderland’ with a ‘Count of Terborg’. Jingoistic patriotism could not brook the enjoyment of a story known to be German, even from nearly a century ago.

New editions of *The basket of flowers* continued to be produced until as recently as 1964 according to the BLC. *The Oxford
companion to children's literature indicates that it was still in print for use in African missions as late as 1972. It is a little ironic that the currency of the most accurate translation of Schmid's text coincides with his progressive decline from popularity.19

It is obvious that, as a recent German standard reference work states,20 Schmid's writings cannot be reclaimed as reading for young people today. Yet in some ways his positive form of simple Christian belief and morality may strike a chord with people today who stress the need for living in harmony with nature and who refuse to despair in the face of personal distress and deprivation, but believe there is an accessible source of spiritual power in the universe that only needs to be tapped. Schmid's pre-industrial world with its unquestioned social structure has vanished beyond recall. Its passing must have been obvious to the adults who bought his books for their children in urbanized, industrialized Victorian and later Britain. But the old order has a strong appeal. Looking back – especially with blinkered eyes – is often a pleasanter experience than looking coolly at the present.

The English versions of The basket of flowers each have their own religious and moral agenda. That in itself is not surprising. What seems retrospectively regrettable is the fact that the overlay of Evangelical dogmatism has diminished the appeal of Schmid's uncomplicated, but warm and uncompromising piety.

---

19 NUC lists a further American translation, which I have not seen: Flower basket; a tale for youth. From the German of Schmid, trans. Rev. T.J. Sawyer, second edition (New York, 1846).