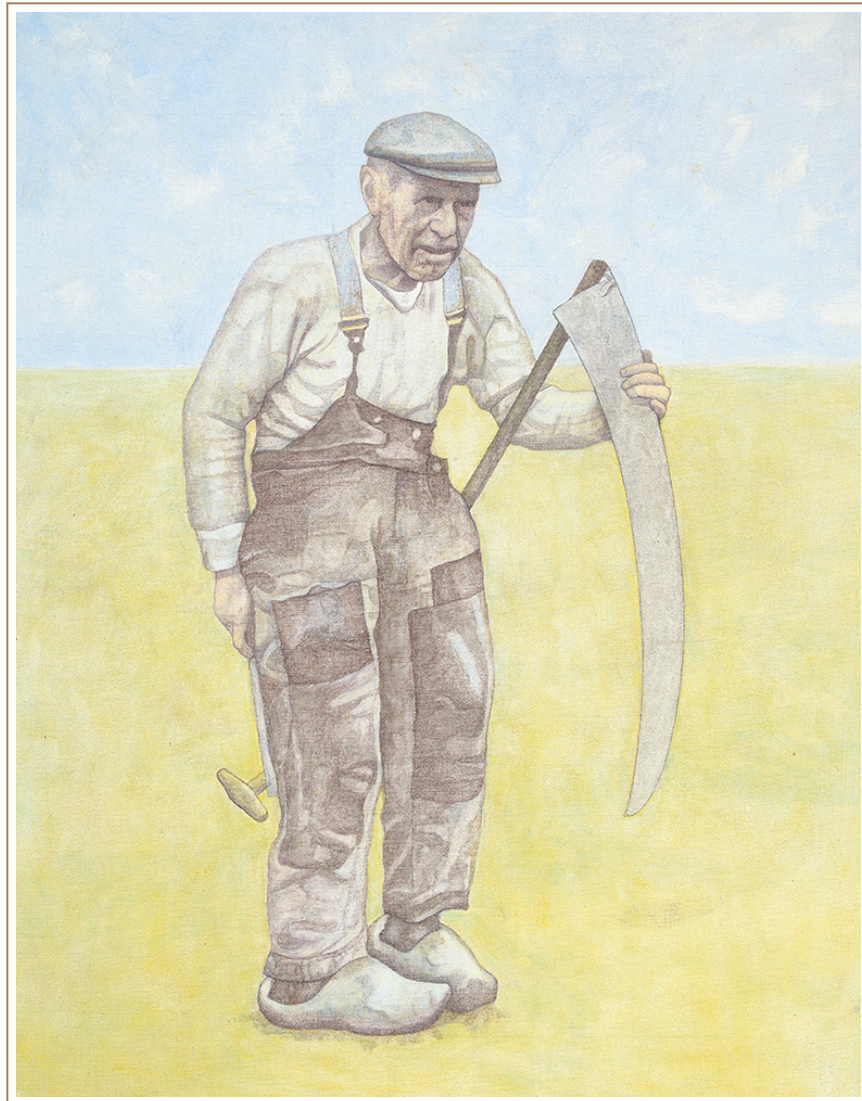


Farmer Zeltner



Drawing by Jopie Huisman

When the anthroposophists laid the foundation stone for the Goetheanum in Dornach, a village near Basel, Switzerland, on 20 September 1913, many anthroposophical Society members naturally began settling near the site. Many were well-off and did not have to work for a living. They had time to listen to Rudolf Steiner's lectures, money to follow him on his lecture tours, and enthusiasm to do some artistic work now and then. When they got too tired, they went for nature walks in the Dornach area. To the ordinary people in Dornach, a farming village, those anthroposophists were just odd, a bunch of rich idlers. They had little faith in the whole "temple" thing and allowed themselves to be influenced by the local clergy. Perhaps not all farmers are naturally suspicious of city people, but that was certainly the case with the father of Mrs von Arx, a midwife from Dornach. She

recalled the following event from her childhood, around 1914. Her father, farmer Zeltner and a barrel-maker in Oberdornach did not like those anthroposophical idlers much and regularly treated them rudely. One day he was mowing his meadow along Melcher Road. A stroller approached him slowly and spoke as he passed by the mowing farmer:

"Tricky work you are doing there."

Zeltner, already bathed in sweat, replied rather harshly:

"What do my lords understand about that when they have nothing to do but walk around?"

The other man replied, "I used to do that too."

"Yes, I can see that," Zeltner mumbled. But the gentleman spoke calmly:

"When I was little, I often mowed down a steep railway embankment for our goats."

He stepped up to Zeltner, took the scythe out of his hands and began mowing precisely according to the rules. Farmer Zeltner paused: "Well, damn, he can do it too!"

Thereupon they started talking about the grass, about which herbs were the best for good milk. The strange gentleman turned out to be as good a connoisseur of all grasses as farmer Zeltner. He inquired whether there was milk in surplus and whether it was sold. When this was confirmed, he had milk collected from the Zeltner family every day from then on.

That gentleman was Rudolf Steiner.

Source: *Memories of Rudolf Steiner* by Hans Kühn (German)



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