

Tales from Africa

IMAGINATIVE SERIES

SELECTED AUTHORS

Tales from Africa

Selected Authors

Libraries of Hope

Tales from Africa

Imaginative Series

Copyright © 2022 by Libraries of Hope, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher. International rights and foreign translations available only through permission of the publisher.

Cover Image: Drawing from *Uncle Remus Stories*, by William Backhouse (1960). In public domain from Internet Archive (www.archive.org).

Libraries of Hope, Inc.
Appomattox, Virginia 24522

Website www.librariesofhope.com
Email: librariesofhope@gmail.com

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

West African Folk-Tales 3
How We Got the Name 'Spider Tales' 4
How Wisdom Became Property of Human Race 6
Anansi and Nothing 8
Thunder and Anansi 10
Why the Lizard Moves His Head Up and Down 14
Tit for Tat 17
Why White Ants Always Harm Man's Property 20
The Squirrel and the Spider 23
Why We See Ants Carrying Bundles 25
Why Spiders Are Always Found in Corners 28
Anansi the Blind Fisherman 31
Adzanumee and Her Mother 33
Grinding-Stone that Ground Flour By Itself 35
"Morning Sunrise" 38
Why the Sea-Turtle Beats Its Breast 39
How Beasts and Serpents Came Into the World 40
Honourable Minū 44
Why Moon and Stars Receive Light from Sun 46
Ohia and the Thieving Deer 49
How the Tortoise Got Its Shell 55
The Hunter and the Tortoise 57
The Tail of the Princess Elephant 59
Kwofi and the Gods 63
The Lion and the Wolf 65

Maku Mawu and Maku Fia 67
The Robber and the Old Man 71
The Leopard and the Ram 73
Why Leopard Can Only Catch Prey On Left Side 75
Quarcoo Bah-Boni (The Bad Boy) 76
King Chameleon and the Animals 80
To Lose an Elephant for the Sake of a Wren 82
The Ungrateful Man 84
Why Tigers Never Attack Men Unless Provoked 87
The Omanhene Who Liked Riddles 89
How Mushrooms First Grew 92
Farmer Mybrow and the Fairies 94
Fables and Fairy Tales for Little Folk 97
How the Scorpion Saved the Goat's Life 98
The Spider Deceives Hippopotamus and Elephant 101
How Hyaena Was Blamed for Spider's Wickedness 107
The Crafty Spider Replenishes His Larder 112
The Fairy Baby 119
Hausatu and the Enchanted Spider 123
The Hunter and the Fairy Buffalo 136
How Thieving Spider Was Caught by Half-Man 147
The Billy-Goat Who Said He Was a Magician 159
Why Hawa Prevented the Beasts from Drinking 168
The Boy Who Refused to Walk 173
Why the Hare is Afraid of the Dog 181

Uncle Remus Stories 191
Brer Fox Invites Brer Rabbit to Dinner 192
The Wonderful Tar Baby 195
The Briar Patch 198
The Story of the Flood 200
Brer Fox Tackles Old Man Terrapin 203
Brer Wolf Makes a Failure 206
The Sad Fate of Brer Wolf 209
Brer Rabbit Finds His Match at Last 212
A Story About Little Rabbits 215
A Dollar a Minute 218
Brer Rabbit Spills the Honey 221
Brer Rabbit Frightens His Neighbours 224
Why Brer Bear Has No Tail 228
References 231

Tales from Africa

West African Folk-Tales

Collected and Arranged by
W.H. Barker & Cecilia Sinclair

Anansi, or Spider, Tales

I. How We Got the Name 'Spider Tales'

In the olden days all the stories which men told were stories of Nyankupon, the chief of the gods. Spider, who was very conceited, wanted the stories to be told about him.

Accordingly, one day he went to Nyankupon and asked that, in future, all tales told by men might be Anansi stories, instead of Nyankupon stories. Nyankupon agreed, on one condition. He told Spider (or Anansi) that he must bring him three things: the first was a jar full of live bees, the second was a boa-constrictor, and the third a tiger. Spider gave his promise.

He took an earthen vessel and set out for a place where he knew were numbers of bees. When he came in sight of the bees he began saying to himself, "They will not be able to fill this jar"—"Yes, they will be able"—"No, they will not be able," until the bees came up to him and said, "What are you talking about, Mr. Anansi?" He thereupon explained to them that Nyankupon and he had had a great dispute. Nyankupon had said the bees could not fly into the jar—Anansi had said they could. The bees immediately declared that of course they could fly into the jar—which they at once did. As soon as they were safely inside, Anansi sealed up the jar and sent it off to Nyankupon.

Next day he took a long stick and set out in search of a boa-constrictor. When he arrived at the place where one lived he began speaking to himself again. "He will just be as long as this stick"—"No, he will not be so long as this"—"Yes, he will be as long as this." These words he repeated several

times, till the boa came out and asked him what was the matter. "Oh, we have been having a dispute in Nyankupon's town about you. Nyankupon's people say you are not as long as this stick. I say you are. Please let me measure you by it." The boa innocently laid himself out straight, and Spider lost no time in tying him on to the stick from end to end. He then sent him to Nyankupon.

The third day he took a needle and thread and sewed up his eye. He then set out for a den where he knew a tiger lived. As he approached the place he began to shout and sing so loudly that the tiger came out to see what was the matter. "Can you not see?" said Spider. "My eye is sewn up and now I can see such wonderful things that I must sing about them." "Sew up my eyes," said the tiger, "then I too can see these surprising sights." Spider immediately did so. Having thus made the tiger helpless, he led him straight to Nyankupon's house. Nyankupon was amazed at Spider's cleverness in fulfilling the three conditions. He immediately gave him permission for the future to call all the old tales Anansi tales.

II. How Wisdom Became the Property of the Human Race

There once lived, in Fanti-land, a man named Father Anansi. He possessed all the wisdom in the world. People came to him daily for advice and help.

One day the men of the country were unfortunate enough to offend Father Anansi, who immediately resolved to punish them. After much thought he decided that the severest penalty he could inflict would be to hide all his wisdom from them. He set to work at once to gather again all that he had already given. When he had succeeded, as he thought, in collecting it, he placed all in one great pot. This he carefully sealed, and determined to put it in a spot where no human being could reach it.

Now, Father Anansi had a son, whose name was Kweku Tsin. This boy began to suspect his father of some secret design, so he made up his mind to watch carefully. Next day he saw his father quietly slip out of the house, with his precious pot hung round his neck. Kweku Tsin followed. Father Anansi went through the forest till he had left the village far behind. Then, selecting the highest and most inaccessible-looking tree, he began to climb. The heavy pot, hanging in front of him, made his ascent almost impossible. Again and again he tried to reach the top of the tree, where he intended to hang the pot. There, he thought. Wisdom would indeed be beyond the reach of every one but himself. He was unable, however, to carry out his desire. At each trial the pot swung in his way.

For some time Kweku Tsin watched his father's vain

attempts. At last, unable to contain himself any longer, he cried out: "Father, why do you not hang the pot on your back? Then you could easily climb the tree."

Father Anansi turned and said: "I thought I had all the world's wisdom in this pot. But I find you possess more than I do. All my wisdom was insufficient to show me what to do, yet you have been able to tell me." In his anger he threw the pot down. It struck on a great rock and broke. The wisdom contained in it escaped and spread throughout the world.

III. Anansi and Nothing

Near Anansi's miserable little hut there was a fine palace where lived a very rich man called Nothing. Nothing and Anansi proposed, one day, to go to the neighbouring town to get some wives. Accordingly, they set off together.

Nothing, being a rich man, wore a very fine velvet cloth, while Anansi had a ragged cotton one. While they were on their way Anansi persuaded Nothing to change clothes for a little while, promising to give back the fine velvet before they reached the town. He delayed doing this, however, first on one pretext, then on another—till they arrived at their destination. Anansi, being dressed in such a fine garment, found no difficulty in getting as many wives as he wished. Poor Nothing, with his ragged and miserable cloth, was treated with great contempt. At first he could not get even one wife. At last, however, a woman took pity on him and gave him her daughter. The poor girl was laughed at very heartily by Anansi's wives for choosing such a beggar as Nothing appeared to be. She wisely took no notice of their scorn.

The party set off for home. When they reached the cross-roads leading to their respective houses the women were astonished. The road leading to Anansi's house was only half cleared. The one which led to Nothing's palace was, of course, wide and well made. Not only so, but his servants had strewn it with beautiful skins and carpets, in preparation for his return. Servants were there, awaiting him, with fine clothes for himself and his wife. No one was waiting for Anansi.

Nothing's wife was queen over the whole district and had

everything her heart could desire. Anansi's wives could not even get proper food; they had to live on unripe bananas with peppers. The wife of Nothing heard of her friends' miserable state and invited them to a great feast in her palace. They came, and were so pleased with all they saw that they agreed to stay there. Accordingly, they refused to come back to Anansi's hut.

He was very angry, and tried in many ways to kill Nothing, but without success. Finally, however, he persuaded some rat friends to dig a deep tunnel in front of Nothing's door. When the hole was finished Anansi lined it with knives and broken bottles. He then smeared the steps of the palace with *okro* to make them very slippery, and withdrew to a little distance.

When he thought Nothing's household was safely in bed and asleep, he called to Nothing to come out to the courtyard and see something. Nothing's wife, however, dissuaded him from going. Anansi tried again and again, and each time she bade her husband not to listen. At last Nothing determined to go and see this thing. As he placed his foot on the first step, of course he slipped, and down he fell into the hole. The noise alarmed the household. Lights were fetched and Nothing was found in the ditch, so much wounded by the knives that he soon died. His wife was terribly grieved at his untimely death. She boiled many yams, mashed them, and took a great dishful of them round the district. To every child she met she gave some, so that the child might help her to cry for her husband. This is why, if you find a child crying and ask the cause, you will often be told he is "crying for nothing."

IV. Thunder and Anansi

There had been a long and severe famine in the land where Anansi lived. He had been quite unable to obtain food for his poor wife and family. One day, gazing desperately out to sea, he saw, rising from the midst of the water, a tiny island with a tall palm-tree upon it. He determined to reach this tree—if any means proved possible—and climb it, in the hope of finding a few nuts to reward him. How to get there was the difficulty.

This, however, solved itself when he reached the beach, for there lay the means to his hand, in the shape of an old broken boat. It certainly did not look very strong, but Anansi decided to try it.

His first six attempts were unsuccessful—a great wave dashed him back on the beach each time he tried to put off. He was persevering, however, and at the seventh trial was successful in getting away. He steered the battered old boat as best he could, and at length reached the palm-tree of his desire. Having tied the boat to the trunk of the tree—which grew almost straight out of the water—he climbed toward the nuts. Plucking all he could reach, he dropped them, one by one, down to the boat. To his dismay, every one missed the boat and fell, instead, into the water until only the last one remained. This he aimed even more carefully than the others, but it also fell into the water and disappeared from his hungry eyes. He had not tasted even one and now all were gone.

He could not bear the thought of going home empty-handed, so, in his despair, he threw himself into the water, too. To his complete astonishment, instead of being drowned, he found himself standing on the sea-bottom in front of a

pretty little cottage. From the latter came an old man, who asked Anansi what he wanted so badly that he had come to Thunder's cottage to seek it. Anansi told his tale of woe, and Thunder showed himself most sympathetic.

He went into the cottage and fetched a fine cooking-pot, which he presented to Anansi—telling him that he need never be hungry again. The pot would always supply enough food for himself and his family. Anansi was most grateful, and left Thunder with many thanks.

Being anxious to test the pot at once, Anansi only waited till he was again seated in the old boat to say, "Pot, pot, what you used to do for your master do now for me." Immediately good food of all sorts appeared. Anansi ate a hearty meal, which he very much enjoyed.

On reaching land again, his first thought was to run home and give all his family a good meal from his wonderful pot. A selfish, greedy fear prevented him. "What if I should use up all the magic of the pot on them, and have nothing more left for myself! Better keep the pot a secret—then I can enjoy a meal when I want one." So, his mind full of this thought, he hid the pot.

He reached home, pretending to be utterly worn out with fatigue and hunger. There was not a grain of food to be had anywhere. His wife and poor children were weak with want of it, but selfish Anansi took no notice of that. He congratulated himself at the thought of his magic pot, now safely hidden in his room. There he retired from time to time when he felt hungry, and enjoyed a good meal. His family got thinner and thinner, but he grew plumper and plumper. They began to suspect some secret, and determined to find it out. His eldest son, Kweku Tsin, had the power of changing himself into any shape he chose; so he took the form of a tiny fly, and accompanied his father everywhere. At last, Anansi, feeling hungry, entered his room and closed the door. Next he took the pot, and had a fine meal. Having replaced the pot in its hiding-

place, he went out, on the pretence of looking for food.

As soon as he was safely out of sight, Kweku Tsin fetched out the pot and called all his hungry family to come at once. They had as good a meal as their father had had. When they had finished, Mrs. Anansi—to punish her husband—said she would take the pot down to the village and give everybody a meal. This she did—but alas! in working to prepare so much food at one time, the pot grew too hot and melted away. What was to be done now? Anansi would be so angry! His wife forbade every one to mention the pot.

Anansi returned, ready for his supper, and, as usual, went into his room, carefully shutting the door. He went to the hiding-place—it was empty! He looked around in consternation. No pot was to be seen anywhere. Some one must have discovered it. His family must be the culprits; he would find a means to punish them.

Saying nothing to any one about the matter, he waited till morning. As soon as it was light he started off towards the shore, where the old boat lay. Getting into the boat, it started of its own accord and glided swiftly over the water—straight for the palm-tree. Arrived there, Anansi attached the boat as before and climbed the tree. This time, unlike the last, the nuts almost fell into his hands. When he aimed them at the boat they fell easily into it—not one, as before, dropping into the water. He deliberately took them and threw them overboard, immediately jumping after them. As before, he found himself in front of Thunder's cottage, with Thunder waiting to hear his tale. This he told, the old man showing the same sympathy as he had previously done.

This time, however, he presented Anansi with a fine stick and bade him good-bye. Anansi could scarcely wait till he got into the boat—so anxious was he to try the magic properties of his new gift.

"Stick, stick," he said, "what you used to do for your master do for me also." The stick began to beat him so severely

that, in a few minutes, he was obliged to jump into the water and swim ashore, leaving boat and stick to drift away where they pleased. Then he returned sorrowfully homeward, bemoaning his many bruises and wishing he had acted more wisely from the beginning.

V. Why the Lizard Continually Moves His Head Up and Down

In a town not very far from Anansi's home lived a great king. This king had three beautiful daughters, whose names were kept a secret from everybody except their own family. One day their father made a proclamation that his three daughters would be given as wives to any man who could find out their names. Anansi made up his mind to do so.

He first bought a large jar of honey, and set off for the bathing-place of the king's daughters. Arrived there, he climbed to the top of a tree on which grew some very fine fruit. He picked some of this fruit and poured honey over it. When he saw the princesses approaching he dropped the fruit on the ground and waited. The girls thought the fruit dropped of its own accord, and one of them ran forward to pick it up. When she tasted it, she called out to her sisters by name to exclaim on its sweetness. Anansi dropped another, which the second princess picked up—she, in her turn, calling out the names of the other two. In this fashion Anansi found out all the names.

As soon as the princesses had gone Anansi came down from the tree and hurried into the town. He went to all the great men and summoned them to a meeting at the King's palace on the morrow.

He then visited his friend the Lizard, to get him to act as herald at the Court next day. He told Lizard the three names, and the latter was to sound them through his trumpet when the time came.

Early next morning the King and his Court were assembled

as usual. All the great men of the town appeared, as Anansi had requested. Anansi stated his business, reminding the King of his promise to give his three daughters to the man who had found out their names. The King demanded to hear the latter, whereupon Lizard sounded them on his trumpet.

The King and courtiers were much surprised. His Majesty, however, could not break the promise he had made of giving his daughters to the man who named them. He accordingly gave them to Mr. Lizard. Anansi was very angry, and explained that he had told the names to Lizard, so that he ought to get at least two of the girls, while Lizard could have the third. The King refused. Anansi then begged hard for even one, but that was also refused. He went home in a very bad temper, declaring that he would be revenged on Lizard for stealing his wives away.

He thought over the matter very carefully, but could not find a way of punishing Lizard. At last, however, he had an idea.

He went to the King and explained that he was setting off next morning on a long journey. He wished to start very early, and so begged the King's help. The King had a fine cock, which always crowed at daybreak to waken the King if he wished to get up early. Anansi begged that the King would command the cock to crow next morning, that Anansi might be sure of getting off in time. This the King readily promised.

As soon as night fell Anansi went by a back way to the cock's sleeping-place, seized the bird quickly, and killed it. He then carried it to Lizard's house, where all were in bed. There he quietly cooked the cock, placed the feathers under Lizard's bed, and put some of the flesh on a dish close to Lizard's hand. The wicked Anansi then took some boiling water and poured it into poor Lizard's mouth, thus making him dumb.

When morning came, Anansi went to the King and reproached him for not letting the cock crow. The King was much surprised to hear that it had not obeyed his commands.

He sent one of his servants to find and bring the cock to him, but, of course, the servant returned empty-handed. The King then ordered them to find the thief. No trace of him could be found anywhere. Anansi then cunningly said to the King: "I know Lizard is a rogue, because he stole my three wives from me. Perhaps he is the thief." Accordingly, the men went to search Lizard's house.

There, of course, they found the remnants of the cock, cooked ready to eat, and his feathers under the bed. They questioned Lizard, but the poor animal was unable to reply. He could only move his head up and down helplessly. They thought he was refusing to speak, so dragged him before the King. To the King's questions he could only return the same answer, and his Majesty got very angry. He did not know that Anansi had made the poor animal dumb. Lizard tried very hard to speak, but in vain.

He was accordingly judged guilty of theft, and as a punishment his wives were taken away from him and given to Anansi.

Since then lizards have always had a way of moving their heads helplessly backward and forward, as if saying, "How can any one be so foolish as to trust Anansi?"

VI. Tit for Tat

There had been a great famine in the land for many months. Meat had become so scarce that only the rich chiefs had money enough to buy it. The poor people were starving. Anansi and his family were in a miserable state.

One day, Anansi's eldest son—Kweku Tsin—to his great joy, discovered a place in the forest where there were still many animals. Knowing his father's wicked ways, Kweku told him nothing of the matter. Anansi, however, speedily discovered that Kweku was returning loaded, day after day, to the village. There he was able to sell the meat at a good price to the hungry villagers. Anansi immediately wanted to know the secret—but his son wisely refused to tell him. The old man determined to find out by a trick.

Slipping into his son's room one night, when he was fast asleep, he cut a tiny hole in the comer of the bag which Kweku always carried into the forest. Anansi then put a quantity of ashes into the bag and replaced it where he had found it.

Next morning, as Kweku set out for the forest, he threw the bag, as usual, over his shoulder. Unknown to him, at each step, the ashes were sprinkled on the ground. Consequently, when Anansi set out an hour later he was easily able to follow his son by means of the trail of ashes. He, too, arrived at the animals' home in the forest, and found Kweku there before him. He immediately drove his son away, saying that, by the law of the land, the place belonged to him. Kweku saw how he had been tricked, and determined to have the meat back.

He accordingly went home—made a tiny image and hung little bells round its neck. He then tied a long thread to its

head and returned toward the hunting-place.

When about half-way there, he hung the image to a branch of a tree in the path, and hid himself in the bushes near by—holding the other end of the thread in his hand.

The greedy father, in the meantime, had killed as many animals as he could find, being determined to become rich as speedily as possible. He then skinned them and prepared the flesh—to carry it to the neighbouring villages to sell. Taking the first load, he set off for his own village. Half-way there, he came to the place where the image hung in the way. Thinking this was one of the gods, he stopped. As he approached, the image began to shake its head vigorously at him. He felt that this meant that the gods were angry. To please them, he said to the image, "May I give you a little of this meat?" Again the image shook its head. "May I give you half of this meat?" he then inquired. The head shook once more. "Do you want the whole of this meat?" he shouted fiercely. This time the head nodded, as if the image were well pleased. "I will not give you all my meat," Anansi cried. At this the image shook in every limb as if in a terrible temper. Anansi was so frightened that he threw the whole load on the ground and ran away. As he ran, he called back, "To-morrow I shall go to Ekubon—you will not be able to take my meat from me there, you thief."

But Kweku had heard where his father intended to go next day—and set the image in his path as before. Again Anansi was obliged to leave his whole load—and again he called out the name of the place where he would go the following day.

The same thing occurred, day after day, till all the animals in the wood were killed. By this time, Kweku Tsin had become very rich—but his father Anansi was still very poor. He was obliged to go to Kweku's house every day for food.

When the famine was over, Kweku gave a great feast and invited the entire village. While all were gathered together, Kweku told the story of his father's cunning and how it had

been overcome. This caused great merriment among the villagers. Anansi was so ashamed that he readily promised Kweku to refrain from his evil tricks for the future. This promise, however, he did not long keep.

VII. Why White Ants Always Harm Man's Property

There came once such a terrible famine in the land that a grain of corn was worth far more than its weight in gold. A hungry spider was wandering through the forest looking for food. To his great joy he found a dead antelope.

Knowing that he would not be allowed to reach home in safety with it, he wrapped it up very carefully in a long mat and bound it securely.

Placing it on his head, he started for home. As he went, he wept bitterly, telling every one that this was his dead grandfather's body. Every one he met sympathized heartily with him.

On his way he met the wolf and the leopard. These two wise animals suspected that this was one of Spider's tricks. They knew that he was not to be trusted. Walking on a little way, they discussed what they could do to find out what was in the bundle.

They agreed to take a short cut across the country to a tree which they knew Cousin Spider must pass. When they reached this tree they hid themselves very carefully behind it and waited for him.

As he passed the place they shook the tree and uttered frightful noises. This so frightened Mr. Spider that he dropped his load and ran away.

The two gentlemen opened the bundle and, to their great joy, discovered the flesh of the antelope in it. They carried it off to their own home and began to prepare supper.

When Mr. Spider recovered from his fear he began to

wonder who could have been at the tree to make the noises. He decided that his enemies must be Wolf and Leopard. He made up his mind he would get his meat back from them.

He took a small lizard and filed his teeth to fine, sharp points. He then sent him to spy upon the wolf and leopard—by begging fire from them. He was to get the fire and quench it as soon as he left their cottage. He could then return and ask a second time. If they asked him questions, he must smile and show his teeth.

The lizard did as he was told, and everything turned out just as Spider had expected. Wolf and Leopard eagerly asked the lizard where he had had his teeth filed so beautifully. He replied that "Filing Spider" had done it for him.

Wolf and Leopard discussed the matter and decided to have their teeth filed in the same way. They could then easily break the bones of their food.

Accordingly, they went to the house of the disguised spider and asked him to make their teeth like Lizard's. Spider agreed, but said that, to do it properly, he would first have to hang them on a tree. They made no objection to this.

When he had them safely hung, Spider and his family came and mocked them. Spider then went to their cottage and brought away the body of the antelope. The whole village was invited to the feast, which was held in front of the two poor animals on the tree. During this festival every one made fun of the wolf and leopard.

Next morning White Ant and his children passed the place on their way to some friends. Mr. Leopard begged them to set him and his friend free. White Ant and his family set to work, destroyed the tree and set them at liberty. Leopard and Wolf promised the ants that on their return they would spread a feast for them.

Unfortunately, Spider heard the invitation and made up his mind to benefit by it. On the third day (which was the very time set by the wolf and leopard) Spider dressed up his

children like the ants. They set out, singing the ants' chorus, in order to deceive Leopard.

Wolf and Leopard welcomed them heartily and spread a splendid feast for them, which the spiders thoroughly enjoyed.

Soon after their departure the real ants arrived. The two hosts, thinking these must be Spider and his family, poured boiling water over them and killed them all except the father.

White Ant, on reaching home again, in great anger, vowed that he would never again help any one. He would take every opportunity to harm property. From that day to this white ants have been a perfect pest to man.

VIII. The Squirrel and the Spider

A hard-working squirrel had, after much labour, succeeded in cultivating a very fine farm. Being a skilful climber of trees, he had not troubled to make a roadway into his farm. He used to reach it by the trees.

One day, when his harvests were very nearly ripe, it happened that Spider went out hunting in that neighbourhood. During his travels, he arrived at Squirrel's farm. Greatly pleased at the appearance of the fields, he sought for the roadway to it. Finding none, he returned home and told his family all about the matter. The very next day they all set out for this fine place, and set to work immediately to make a road. When this was completed Spider—who was very cunning—threw pieces of earthenware pot along the pathway. This he did to make believe that his children had dropped them while working to prepare the farm.

Then he and his family began to cut down and carry away such of the corn as was ripe. Squirrel noticed that his fields were being robbed, but could not at first find the thief. He determined to watch. Sure enough Spider soon reappeared to steal more of the harvest. Squirrel demanded to know what right he had on these fields. Spider immediately asked him the same question. "They are my fields," said Squirrel. "Oh, no! They are mine," retorted Spider. "I dug them and sowed them and planted them," said poor Squirrel. "Then where is your roadway to them?" said crafty Spider. "I need no roadway. I come by the trees," was Squirrel's reply. Needless to say. Spider laughed such an answer to scorn, and continued to use the farm as his own.

Squirrel appealed to the law, but the court decided that

no one had ever had a farm without a road leading to it, therefore the fields must be Spider's.

In great glee Spider and his family prepared to cut down all the harvest that remained. When it was cut they tied it in great bundles and set off to the nearest market-place to sell it. When they were about halfway there, a terrible storm came on. They were obliged to put down their burdens by the roadside and run for shelter. When the storm had passed they returned to pick up their loads.

As they approached the spot they found a great, black crow there, with his broad wings outspread to keep the bundles dry. Spider went to him and very politely thanked him for so kindly taking care of their property. "Your property!" replied Father Crow. "Who ever heard of any one leaving bundles of corn by the roadside? Nonsense! These loads are mine." So saying, he picked them up and went off with them, leaving Spider and his children to return home sorrowful and empty-handed. Their thieving ways had brought them little profit.

IX. Why We See Ants Carrying Bundles as Big as Themselves

Kweku Anansi and Kweku Tsin—his son—were both very clever farmers. Generally they succeeded in getting fine harvests from each of their farms. One year, however, they were very unfortunate. They had sown their seeds as usual, but no rain had fallen for more than a month after and it looked as if the seeds would be unable to sprout.

Kweku Tsin was walking sadly through his fields one day looking at the bare, dry ground, and wondering what he and his family would do for food, if they were unable to get any harvest. To his surprise he saw a tiny dwarf seated by the roadside. The little hunchback asked the reason of his sadness, and Kweku Tsin told him. The dwarf promised to help him by bringing rain on the farm. He bade Kweku fetch two small sticks and tap him lightly on the hump, while he sang:

"O water, go up, O water, go up,
And let rain fall, and let rain fall."

To Kweku's great joy rain immediately began to fall, and continued till the ground was thoroughly well soaked. In the days following the seeds germinated, and the crops began to promise well.

Anansi soon heard how well Kweku's crops were growing —whilst his own were still bare and hard. He went straightway to his son and demanded to know the reason. Kweku Tsin, being an honest fellow, at once told him what had happened.

Anansi quickly made up his mind to get his farm watered

in the same way, and accordingly set out toward it. As he went, he cut two big, strong sticks, thinking, "My son made the dwarf work with little sticks. I will make him do twice as much with my big ones." He carefully hid the big sticks, however, when he saw the dwarf coming toward him. As before, the hunchback asked what the trouble was, and Anansi told him. "Take two small sticks, and beat me lightly on the hump," said the dwarf. "I will get rain for you."

But Anansi took his big sticks and beat so hard that the dwarf fell down dead. The greedy fellow was now thoroughly frightened, for he knew that the dwarf was jester to the King of the country, and a very great favourite of his. He wondered how he could fix the blame on some one else. He picked up the dwarf's dead body and carried it to a kola-tree. There he laid it on one of the top branches and sat down under the tree to watch.

By and by Kweku Tsin came along to see if his father had succeeded in getting rain for his crops. "Did you not see the dwarf, father?" he asked, as he saw the old man sitting alone. "Oh, yes!" replied Anansi; "but he has climbed this tree to pick kola. I am now waiting for him." "I will go up and fetch him," said the young man—and immediately began to climb. As soon as his head touched the body, the latter, of course, fell to the ground. "Oh! what have you done, you wicked fellow?" cried his father. "You have killed the King's jester!" "That is all right," quietly replied the son (who saw that this was one of Anansi's tricks). "The King is very angry with him, and has promised a bag of money to any one who would kill him. I will now go and get the reward." "No! No! No!" shouted Anansi. "The reward is mine. I killed him with two big sticks. *I* will take him to the King." "Very well!" was the son's reply. "As you killed him, you may take him."

Off set Anansi, quite pleased with the prospect of getting a reward. He reached the King's court, only to find the King very angry at the death of his favourite. The body of the jester

was shut up in a great box and Anansi was condemned—as a punishment—to carry it on his head for ever. The King enchanted the box so that it could never be set down on the ground. The only way in which Anansi could ever get rid of it was by getting some other man to put it on his head. This, of course, no one was willing to do.

At last, one day, when Anansi was almost worn out with his heavy burden, he met the Ant. "Will you hold this box for me while I go to market and buy some things I need badly?" said Anansi to Mr. Ant. "I know your tricks, Anansi," replied Ant. "You want to be rid of it." "Oh, no, indeed, Mr. Ant," protested Anansi. "Indeed I will come back for it, I promise."

Mr. Ant, who was an honest fellow, and always kept his own promises, believed him. He took the box on his head, and Anansi hurried off. Needless to say, the sly fellow had not the least intention of keeping his word. Mr. Ant waited in vain for his return—and was obliged to wander all the rest of his life with the box on his head. That is the reason we so often see ants carrying great bundles as they hurry along.

X. Why Spiders Are Always Found in the Corners of Ceilings

Egya Anansi was a very skilful farmer. He, with his wife and son, set to work one year to prepare a farm, much larger than any they had previously worked. They planted in it yams, maize, and beans—and were rewarded by a very rich crop. Their harvest was quite ten times greater than any they had ever had before. Egya Anansi was very well pleased when he saw his wealth of corn and beans.

He was, however, an exceedingly selfish and greedy man, who never liked to share anything—even with his own wife and son. When he saw that the crops were quite ripe, he thought of a plan whereby he alone would profit by them. He called his wife and son to him and spoke thus: "We have all three worked exceedingly hard to prepare these fields. They have well repaid us. We will now gather in the harvest and pack it away in our barns. When that is done, we shall be in need of a rest. I propose that you and our son should go back to our home in the village and remain there at your ease for two or three weeks. I have to go to the coast on very urgent business. When I return we will all come to the farm and enjoy our well-earned feast."

Anansi's wife and son thought this a very good, sensible plan, and at once agreed to it. They went straight back to their village, leaving the cunning husband to start on his journey. Needless to say he had not the slightest intention of so doing.

Instead, he built himself a very comfortable hut near the farm—supplied it with all manner of cooking utensils,

gathered in a large store of the corn and vegetables from the barn, and prepared for a solitary feast. This went on for a fortnight. By that time Anansi's son began to think it was time for him to go and weed the farm, lest the weeds should grow too high. He accordingly went there and worked several hours on it. While passing the barn, he happened to look in. Great was his surprise to see that more than half of their magnificent harvest had gone. He was greatly disturbed, thinking robbers had been at work, and wondered how he could prevent further mischief.

Returning to the village, he told the people there what had happened, and they helped to make a rubber-man. When evening came they carried the sticky figure to the farm, and placed it in the midst of the fields, to frighten away the thieves. Some of the young men remained with Anansi's son to watch in one of the barns.

When all was dark, Egya Anansi (quite unaware of what had happened) came, as usual, out of his hiding-place to fetch more food. On his way to the barn he saw in front of him the figure of a man, and at first felt very frightened. Finding that the man did not move, however, he gained confidence and went up to him. "What do you want here?" said he. There was no answer. He repeated his question with the same result. Anansi then became very angry and dealt the figure a blow on the cheek with his right hand. Of course, his hand stuck fast to the rubber. "How dare you hold my hand?" he exclaimed. "Let me go at once or I shall hit you again." He then hit the figure with his left hand, which also stuck. He tried to disengage himself by pushing against it with his knees and body, until, finally, knees, body, hands, and head were all firmly attached to the rubber-man. There Egya Anansi had to stay till daybreak, when his son came out with the other villagers to catch the robber. They were astonished to find that the evil-doer was Anansi himself. He, on the other hand, was so ashamed to be caught in the act of greediness that he

changed into a spider and took refuge in a dark corner of the ceiling lest any one should see him. Since then spiders have always been found in dark, dusty corners, where people are not likely to notice them.

XI. Anansi the Blind Fisherman

Anansi, in his old age, became a fisherman. Very soon after that his sight began to fail. Finally, he grew quite blind. However, still being very strong, he continued his fishing—with the help of two men. The latter were exceedingly kind to him, and aided him in every possible way. They led him, each morning, to the beach and into the canoe. They told him where to spread his net and when to pull it in. When they returned to land they told him just where and when to step out, so that he did not even get wet.

Day after day this went on, but Anansi—instead of being in the least grateful to them—behaved very badly. When they told him where to spread his net, he would reply sharply, "I know. I was just about to put it there." When they were directing him to get out of the boat, he would say, "Oh, I know perfectly well we are at the beach. I was just getting ready to step out."

This went on for a long time, Anansi getting ruder and ruder to his helpers every day, until they could bear his treatment no longer. They determined when opportunity offered to punish him for his ingratitude.

The next day, as usual, he came with them to the beach. When they had got the canoe ready, they bade him step in. "Do you think I am a fool?" said he. "I know the canoe is there." They made no answer, but got in and patiently pulled toward the fishing-place. When they told him where to spread his net, he replied with so much abuse that they determined, there and then, to punish him.

By this time the canoe was full of fish, so they turned to row home. When they had gone a little way they stopped and

said to him, "Here we are at the beach." He promptly told them that they were very foolish—to tell him a thing he knew so well. He added many rude and insulting remarks, which made them thoroughly angry. He then jumped proudly out, expecting to land on the beach. To his great astonishment he found himself sinking in deep water. The two men rowed quickly away, leaving him to struggle.

Like all the men of that country he was a good swimmer, but, of course, being blind, he was unable to see where the land lay. So he swam until he was completely tired out—and was drowned.

XII. Adzanumee and Her Mother

There once lived a woman who had one great desire. She longed to have a daughter—but alas! she was childless. She could never feel happy, because of this unfulfilled wish. Even in the midst of a feast, the thought would be in her mind—"Ah! if only I had a daughter to share this with me."

One day she was gathering yams in the field, and it chanced that she pulled out one which was very straight and well-shaped. "Ah!" she thought to herself, "if only this fine yam were a daughter, how happy I should be." To her astonishment the yam answered, "If I were to become your daughter, would you promise never to reproach me with having been a yam?" She eagerly gave her promise, and at once the yam changed into a beautiful, well-made girl. The woman was overjoyed and was very kind to the girl. She named her Adzanumee. The latter was exceedingly useful to her mother. She would make the bread, gather the yams, and sell them at the market-place.

She had been detained, one day, longer than usual. Her mother became impatient at her non-appearance and angrily said, "Where can Adzanumee be? She does not deserve that beautiful name. She is only a yam."

A bird singing near by heard the mother's words and immediately flew off to the tree under which Adzanumee sat. There he began to sing:

"Adzanumee! Adzanumee!
Your mother is unkind—she says you are only a yam,
You do not deserve your name!
Adzanumee! Adzanumee!"

The girl heard him and returned home weeping. When the woman saw her she said, "My daughter, my daughter! What is the matter?" Adzanumee replied:

"Oh, my mother! my mother!
You have reproached me with being a yam.
You said I did not deserve my name.
Oh, my mother! my mother!"

With these words she made her way toward the yam-field. Her mother, filled with fear, followed her, wailing:

"Nay, Adzanumee! Adzanumee!
Do not believe it—do not believe it.
You are my daughter, my dear daughter Adzanumee!"

But she was too late. Her daughter, still singing her sad little song, quickly changed back into a yam. When the woman arrived at the field there lay the yam on the ground, and nothing she could do or say would give her back the daughter she had desired so earnestly and treated so inconsiderately.

XIII. The Grinding-Stone that Ground Flour By Itself

There had been another great famine throughout the land. The villagers looked thin and pale for lack of food. Only one family appeared healthy and well. This was the household of Anansi's cousin.

Anansi was unable to understand this, and felt sure his cousin was getting food in some way. The greedy fellow determined to find out the secret.

What had happened was this: Spider's cousin, while hunting one morning, had discovered a wonderful stone. The stone lay on the grass in the forest and ground flour of its own accord. Near by ran a stream of honey. Kofi was delighted. He sat down and had a good meal. Not being a greedy man, he took away with him only enough for his family's needs. Each morning he returned to the stone and got sufficient food for that day. In this manner he and his family kept well and plump, while the surrounding villagers were starved and miserable-looking.

Anansi gave him no peace till he promised to show him the stone. This he was most unwilling to do—knowing his cousin's wicked ways. He felt sure that when Anansi saw the stone he would not be content to take only what he needed. However, Anansi troubled him so much with questions that at last he promised. He told Anansi that they would start next morning, as soon as the women set about their work. Anansi was too impatient to wait. In the middle of the night he bade his children get up and make a noise with the pots as if they were the women at work. Spider at once ran and wakened his

cousin, saying, "Quick! It is time to start." His cousin, however, saw he had been tricked, and went back to bed again, saying he would not start till the women were sweeping. No sooner was he asleep again than Spider made his children take brooms and begin to sweep very noisily. He roused Kofi once more, saying, "It is time we had started." Once more his cousin refused to set off—saying it was only another trick of Spider's. He again returned to bed and to sleep. This time Spider slipped into his cousin's room and cut a hole in the bottom of his bag, which he then filled with ashes. After that he went off and left Kofi in peace.

When morning came the cousin awoke. Seeing no sign of Spider he very gladly set off alone to the forest, thinking he had got rid of the tiresome fellow. He was no sooner seated by the stone, however, than Anansi appeared, having followed him by the trail of ashes.

"Aha!" cried he. "Here is plenty of food for all. No more need to starve." "Hush," said his cousin. "You must not shout here. The place is too wonderful. Sit down quietly and eat."

They had a good meal and Kofi prepared to return home with enough for his family. "No, no!" cried Anansi. "I am going to take the stone." In vain did his friend try to overcome his greed. Anansi insisted on putting the stone on his head, and setting out for the village.

"Spider, spider, put me down," said the stone.
"The pig came and drank and went away.
The antelope came and fed and went away:
Spider, spider, put me down."

Spider, however, refused to listen. He carried the stone from village to village selling flour, until his bag was full of money. He then set out for home.

Having reached his hut and feeling very tired he prepared to put the stone down. But the stone refused to be moved from his head. It stuck fast there, and no efforts could displace

it. The weight of it very soon grew too much for Anansi, and ground him down into small pieces, which were completely covered over by the stone. That is why we often find tiny spiders gathered together under large stones.

XIV. "Morning Sunrise"

A man in one of the villages had a very beautiful daughter. She was so lovely that people called her "Morning Sunrise." Every young man who saw her wanted to marry her. Three, in particular, were very anxious to have her for their wife. Her father found it difficult to decide among them. He determined to find out by a trick which of the three was most worthy of her.

He bade her lie down on her bed as if she were dead. He then sent the report of her death to each of the three lovers, asking them to come and help him with her funeral.

The messenger came first to "Wise Man." When he heard the message, he exclaimed, "What can this man mean? The girl is not my wife. I certainly will not pay any money for her funeral."

The messenger came next to the second man. His name was "Wit." The latter at once said, "Oh dear, no! I shall not pay any money for her funeral expenses. Her father did not even let me know she was ill." So he refused to go.

"Thinker," the third young man—when he received the message—at once got ready to start. "Certainly I must go and mourn for Morning Sunrise," said he. "Had she lived, surely she would have been my wife." So he took money with him and set out for her home.

When he reached it her father called out, "Morning Sunrise, Morning Sunrise. Come here. This is your true husband."

That very day the betrothal took place, and soon after the wedding followed. "Thinker" and his beautiful wife lived very happily together.

XV. Why the Sea-Turtle When Caught Beats Its Breast With Its Fore-Legs

Many centuries ago, the people of this earth were much troubled by floods. The sea used at times to overflow its usual boundaries and sweep across the low, sandy stretches of land which bordered it. Time and again this happened, many lives being lost at each flood. Mankind was very troubled to find an escape from this oft-repeated disaster. He could think of no way of avoiding it.

Fortunately for him the wise turtle came to his help. "Take my advice," said she, "and plant rows of palms along the sea-coast. They will bind the sand together and keep it from being washed so easily away." He did so, with great success. The roots of the palms kept the sand firmly in its place. When the time came again for the sea to overflow, it washed just to the line of trees and came no farther.

Thus many lives were saved annually by the kind forethought of the turtle.

In return—one would think—mankind would protect and cherish this poor animal. But no! Each time a turtle comes to the seashore to lay her eggs among the sand, she is caught and killed for the sake of her flesh. It is the thought of the ingratitude of mankind to her, which makes her beat her breast with her fore-legs when she is caught. She seems to be saying, "Ah! this is all the return I get for my kindness to you."

XVI. How Beasts and Serpents First Came Into the World

The famine had lasted nearly three years. Kweku Tsin, being very hungry, looked daily in the forest in the hope of finding food. One day he was fortunate enough to discover three palm-kernels lying on the ground. He picked up two stones with which to crack them. The first nut, however, slipped when he hit it, and fell into a hole behind him. The same thing happened to the second and to the third. Very much annoyed at his loss, Kweku determined to go down the hole to see if he could find his lost nuts.

To his surprise, however, he discovered that this hole was really the entrance to a town, of which he had never before even heard. When he reached it he found absolute silence everywhere. He called out, "Is there nobody in this town?" and presently heard a voice in answer. He went in its direction and found an old woman sitting in one of the houses. She demanded the reason of his appearance—which he readily gave.

The old woman was very kind and sympathetic, and promised to help him. "You must do exactly as I tell you," said she. "Go into the garden and listen attentively. You will hear the yams speak. Pass by any yam that says, 'Dig me out, dig me out!' But take the one that says, 'Do not dig me out!' Then bring it to me."

When he brought it, she directed him to remove the peel from the yam and throw the latter away. He was then to boil the rind, and, while boiling, it would become a yam. It did actually do so, and they sat down to eat some of it. Before

beginning their meal the old woman requested Kweku not to look at her while she ate. Being very polite and obedient, he did exactly as he was told.

In the evening the old woman sent him into the garden to choose one of the drums which stood there. She warned him: "If you come to a drum which says 'Ding-ding' on being touched—take it. But be very careful not to take one which sounds 'Dong-dong.'" He obeyed her direction in every detail. When he showed her the drum, she looked pleased and told him, to his great delight, that he had only to beat it if at any time he were hungry. That would bring him food in plenty. He thanked the old woman very heartily and went home.

As soon as he reached his own hut, he gathered his household together, and then beat the drum. Immediately, food of every description appeared before them, and they all ate as much as they wished.

The following day Kweku Tsin gathered all the people of the village together in the Assembly Place, and then beat the drum once more. In this way every family got sufficient food for their wants, and all thanked Kweku very much for thus providing for them.

Kweku's father, however, was not at all pleased to see his son thus able to feed the whole village. Anansi thought he, too, ought to have a drum. Then the people would be grateful to him instead of to Kweku Tsin. Accordingly, he asked the young man where the wonderful drum had come from. His son was most unwilling to tell him, but Anansi gave him no peace until he had heard the whole story. He then wasted no time, but set off at once toward the entrance hole. He had taken the precaution to carry with him an old nut which he pretended to crack. Then throwing it into the hole, he jumped in after it and hurried along to the silent village. Arrived at the first house, he shouted, "Is there no one in this town?" The old woman answered as before, and Anansi entered her house.

He did not trouble to be polite to her, but addressed her most rudely, saying, "Hurry up, old woman, and get me something to eat." The woman quietly directed him to go into the garden and choose the yam which should say, "Do not dig me out." Anansi laughed in her face and said, "You surely take me for a fool. If the yam does not want me to dig it out I will certainly not do so. I will take the one which wants to be gathered." This he did.

When he brought it to the old woman she told him, as she told his son, to throw away the inside and boil the rind. Again he refused to obey. "Who ever heard of such a silly thing as throwing away the yam? I will do nothing of the sort. I will throw away the peel and boil the inside. He did so, and the yam turned into stones. He was then obliged to do as she first suggested, and boil the rind. The latter while boiling turned into yam. Anansi turned angrily to the old woman and said, "You are a witch." She took no notice of his remark, but went on setting the table. She placed his dinner on a small table, lower than her own, saying, "You must not look at me while I eat." He rudely replied, "Indeed, I will look at you if I choose. And I will have my dinner at your table, not at that small one." Again she said nothing—but she left her dinner untouched. Anansi ate his own, then took hers and ate it also.

When he had finished she said, "Now go into the garden and choose a drum. Do not take one which sounds 'Dong-dong'; only take one which says 'Ding-ding.'" Anansi retorted, "Do you think I will take your advice, you witch? No, I will choose the drum which says 'Dong-dong.' You are just trying to play a trick on me."

He did as he wished. Having secured the drum he marched off without so much as a "Thank you" to the old woman.

No sooner had he reached home, than he longed to show off his new power to the villagers. He called all to the Assembly Place, telling them to bring dishes and trays, as he

was going to provide them with food. The people in great delight hurried to the spot. Anansi, proudly taking his position in the midst of them, began to beat his drum. To his horror and dismay, instead of the multitude of food-stuffs which Kweku had summoned, Anansi saw, rushing toward him, beasts and serpents of all kinds. Such creatures had never been seen on the earth before.

The people fled in every direction—all except Anansi, who was too terrified to move. He speedily received fitting punishment for his disobedience. Fortunately, Kweku, with his mother and sisters, had been at the outer edge of the crowd, so easily escaped into shelter. The animals presently scattered in every direction, and ever since they have roamed wild in the great forests.

XVII. Honourable Minū

It happened one day that a poor Akim-man had to travel from his own little village to Accra—one of the big towns on the coast. This man could only speak the language of his own village—which was not understood by the men of the town. As he approached Accra he met a great herd of cows. He was surprised at the number of them, and wondered to whom they could belong. Seeing a man with them he asked him, "To whom do these cows belong?" The man did not know the language of the Akim-man, so he replied, "Minū" (I do not understand). The traveller, however, thought that Minū was the name of the owner of the cows and exclaimed, "Mr. Minū must be very rich."

He then entered the town. Very soon he saw a fine large building, and wondered to whom it might belong. The man he asked could not understand his question so he also answered, "Minū." "Dear me! What a rich fellow Mr. Minū must be!" cried the Akim-man.

Coming to a still finer building with beautiful gardens round it, he again asked the owner's name. Again came the answer, "Minū." "How wealthy Mr. Minū is," said our wondering traveller.

Next he came to the beach. There he saw a magnificent steamer being loaded in the harbour. He was surprised at the great cargo which was being put on board and inquired of a bystander, "To whom does this fine vessel belong?" "Minū," replied the man. "To the Honourable Minū also! He is the richest man I ever heard of!" cried the Akim-man.

Having finished his business, the Akim-man set out for home. As he passed down one of the streets of the town he

met men carrying a coffin, and followed by a long procession, all dressed in black. He asked the name of the dead person, and received the usual reply, "Minū." "Poor Mr. Minū!" cried the Akim-man. "So he has had to leave all his wealth and beautiful houses and die just as a poor person would do! Well, well—in future I will be content with my tiny house and little money." And the Akim-man went home quite pleased to his own hut.

XVIII. Why the Moon and the Stars Receive Their Light from the Sun

Once upon a time there was great scarcity of food in the land. Father Anansi and his son, Kweku Tsin, being very hungry, set out one morning to hunt in the forest. In a short time Kweku Tsin was fortunate enough to kill a fine deer—which he carried to his father at their resting-place. Anansi was very glad to see such a supply of food, and requested his son to remain there on guard, while he went for a large basket in which to carry it home. An hour or so passed without his return, and Kweku Tsin became anxious. Fearing lest his father had lost his way, he called out loudly, "Father, father!" to guide him to the spot. To his joy he heard a voice reply, "Yes, my son," and immediately he shouted again, thinking it was Anansi. Instead of the latter, however, a terrible dragon appeared. This monster breathed fire from his great nostrils, and was altogether a dreadful sight to behold. Kweku Tsin was terrified at his approach and speedily hid himself in a cave near by.

The dragon arrived at the resting-place, and was much annoyed to find only the deer's body. He vented his anger in blows upon the latter and went away. Soon after, Father Anansi made his appearance. He was greatly interested in his son's tale, and wished to see the dragon for himself. He soon had his desire, for the monster, smelling human flesh, hastily returned to the spot and seized them both. They were carried off by him to his castle, where they found many other unfortunate creatures also awaiting their fate. All were left in charge of the dragon's servant—a fine, white cock—which

always crowed to summon his master, if anything unusual happened in the latter's absence. The dragon then went off in search of more prey.

Kweku Tsin now summoned all his fellow-prisoners together, to arrange a way of escape. All feared to run away—because of the wonderful powers of the monster. His eyesight was so keen that he could detect a fly moving miles away. Not only that, but he could move over the ground so swiftly that none could outdistance him. Kweku Tsin, however, being exceedingly clever, soon thought of a plan.

Knowing that the white cock would not crow as long as he had grains of rice to pick up, Kweku scattered on the ground the contents of forty bags of grain—which were stored in the great hall. While the cock was thus busily engaged, Kweku Tsin ordered the spinners to spin fine hempen ropes, to make a strong rope ladder. One end of this he intended to throw up to heaven, trusting that the gods would catch it and hold it fast, while he and his fellow-prisoners mounted.

While the ladder was being made, the men killed and ate all the cattle they needed—reserving all the bones for Kweku Tsin at his express desire. When all was ready the young man gathered the bones into a great sack. He also procured the dragon's fiddle and placed it by his side.

Everything was now ready. Kweku Tsin threw one end of the ladder up to the sky. It was caught and held. The dragon's victims began to mount, one after the other, Kweku remaining at the bottom.

By this time, however, the monster's powerful eyesight showed him that something unusual was happening at his abode. He hastened his return. On seeing his approach, Kweku Tsin also mounted the ladder—with the bag of bones on his back, and the fiddle under his arm. The dragon began to climb after him. Each time the monster came too near, the young man threw him a bone, with which, being very hungry, he was obliged to descend to the ground to eat.

Kweku Tsin repeated this performance till all the bones were gone, by which time the people were safely up in the heavens. Then he mounted himself, as rapidly as possible, stopping every now and then to play a tune on the wonderful fiddle. Each time he did this, the dragon had to return to earth, to dance—as he could not resist the magic music. When Kweku was quite close to the top, the dragon had very nearly reached him again. The brave youth bent down and cut the ladder away below his own feet. The dragon was dashed to the ground—but Kweku was pulled up into safety by the gods.

The latter were so pleased with his wisdom and bravery in giving freedom to his fellow-men, that they made him the sun—the source of all light and heat to the world. His father, Anansi, became the moon, and his friends the stars. Thereafter, it was Kweku Tsin's privilege to supply all these with light, each being dull and powerless without him.

MISCELLANEOUS TALES

XIX. Ohia and the Thieving Deer

There once lived upon the earth a poor man called Ohia, whose wife was named Awirehu. This unfortunate couple had suffered one trouble after another. No matter what they took in hand misfortune seemed to lie in wait for them. Nothing they did met with success. They became so poor that at last they could scarcely obtain a cloth with which to cover themselves.

Finally, Ohia thought of a plan which many of his neighbours had tried and found successful. He went to a wealthy farmer who lived near, and offered to hew down several of his palm-trees. He would then collect their sap to make palm wine. When this should be ready for the market, his wife would carry it there and sell it. The proceeds would then be divided equally between the farmer, Ohia, and Awirehu.

This proposal having been laid before the farmer, he proved quite willing to agree to it. Not only so, but he granted Ohia a supply of earthen pots in which to collect the sap, as the miserable man was far too poor to buy any.

In great delight Ohia and his wife set to work. They cut down the trees and prepared them—setting the pots underneath to catch the sap. Before cock-crow on market-day, Ohia set off, with a lighted torch, to collect the wine and prepare it for his wife to take into the town. She was almost ready to follow.

To his great distress, on arriving at the first tree, instead of finding his earthen pot filled with the sweet sap, he saw it

lying in pieces on the ground—the wine all gone. He went on to the second and third trees—but there, and at all the others, too, the same thing had happened.

His wife, in high spirits and ready for market, joined him at this moment. She saw at once by his face that some misfortune had again befallen them. Sorrowfully, they examined the mischief, and agreed that some wicked person had stolen the wine and then broken the pots to hide the theft. Awirehu returned home in despair, but Ohia set to work once more. He fetched a second supply of pots and placed them all ready to catch the sap.

On his return next morning, he found that the same behaviour had been repeated. All his wine was again stolen and his pots in fragments. He had no resource but to go to the farmer and tell him of these fresh misfortunes. The farmer proved to be very kind and generous and gave orders that Ohia might have as many pots as he should require.

Once more the poor fellow returned to the palm-trees, and set his pots ready. This third attempt, however, met with no better result than the two previous. Ohia went home in despair. His wife was of the opinion that they should give up trying to overcome their evil fortunes. It was quite evident that they could never attain success. The husband, however, determined that, at least, he would find and punish the culprit, if that were possible.

Accordingly, he bravely set his pots in order for the last time. When night came, he remained on guard among the trees. Midnight passed and nothing happened, but toward two o'clock in the morning a dark form glided past him to the nearest palm-tree. A moment after he heard the sound of a breaking pot. He stole up to the form. On approaching it he found that the thief was a bush-deer, carrying on its head a large jar, into which it was pouring the wine from Ohia's pots. As it emptied them it threw them carelessly on the ground, breaking them in pieces.

Ohia ventured a little nearer, intending to seize the culprit. The latter, however, was too quick for him and escaped, dropping his great pot on the ground as he ran. The deer was very fleet, but Ohia had fully determined to catch him—so followed. The chase continued over many miles until midday arrived, at which time they had reached the bottom of a high hill. The deer immediately began to climb, and Ohia—though almost tired out—still followed. Finally, the summit of the hill was reached, and there Ohia found himself in the midst of a great gathering of quadrupeds. The deer, panting, threw himself on the ground before King Tiger. His Majesty commanded that Ohia should be brought before him to be punished for this intrusion into such a serious meeting.

Ohia begged for a hearing before they condemned him. He wished to explain fully his presence there. King Tiger, after consulting with some of the other animals, agreed to listen to his tale. Thereupon Ohia began the story of his unfortunate life. He told how one trial after another had failed, and how, finally, he had thought of the palm wine. He described his feelings on discovering the first theft—after all his labour. He related his second, third, and fourth attempts, with the result of each. He then went on to tell of his chase after the thief, and thus explained his presence at their conference.

The quadrupeds listened very attentively to the recital of Ohia's troubles. At the conclusion they unanimously agreed that the deer was the culprit and the man blameless. The former was accordingly sentenced to punishment, while the latter received an apology in the name of the entire conference. King Tiger, it appeared, had each morning given Deer a large sum of money wherewith to purchase palm wine for the whole assembly. The deer had stolen the wine and kept the money.

To make up to Ohia for his losses, King Tiger offered him, as a gift, the power of understanding the conversation of all

animals. This, said he, would speedily make Ohia a rich man. But he attached one condition to the gift. Ohia must never—on pain of instant death—tell any one about his wonderful power.

The poor man, much delighted, set off for home. When it was reached, he lost no time in setting to work at his palm-trees again. From that day his troubles seemed over. His wine was never interfered with and he and Awirehu became more and more prosperous and happy.

One morning, while he was bathing in a pool quite close to his house, he heard a hen and her chickens talking together in his garden. He listened, and distinctly heard a chicken tell Mother Hen about three jars of gold buried in Ohia's garden. The hen bade the chicken be careful, lest her master should see her scraping near the gold, and so discover it.

Ohia pretended to take no notice of what they were saying, and went away. Presently, when Mother Hen and her brood had gone, he came back and commenced digging in that part of the garden. To his great joy, he soon found three large jars of gold. They contained enough money to keep him in comfort all his life. He was careful, however, not to mention his treasure to any one but his wife. He hid it safely inside his house.

Soon he and Awirehu had become one of the richest couples in the neighbourhood, and owned quite a large amount of property. Ohia thought he could afford now to keep a second wife, so he married again. Unfortunately, the new wife did not at all resemble Awirehu. The latter had always been a good, kind, honest woman. The new wife was of a very jealous and selfish disposition. In addition to this she was lame, and continually imagined that people were making fun of her defect. She took the idea into her head that Ohia and Awirehu—when together—were in the habit of laughing at her. Nothing was further from their thoughts, but she refused to believe so. Whenever she saw them together she

would stand and listen outside the door to hear what they were saying. Of course, she never succeeded in hearing anything about herself.

At last, one evening, Ohia and Awirehu had gone to bed. The latter was fast asleep when Ohia heard a conversation which amused him very much. A couple of mice in one corner of the room were arranging to go to the larder to get some food, as soon as their master—who was watching them—was asleep. Ohia, thinking this was a good joke, laughed outright. His lame wife heard him, and rushed into the room. She thereupon accused him of making fun of her again to Awirehu. The astonished husband, of course, denied this, but to no purpose. The jealous woman insisted that, if he were laughing at an innocent joke, he would at once tell it to her. This Ohia could not do, without breaking his promise to King Tiger. His refusal fully confirmed the lame woman's suspicions and she did not rest till she had laid the whole matter before the chief. He, being an intimate friend of Ohia, tried to persuade him to reveal the joke and set the matter at rest. Ohia naturally was most unwilling to do anything of the sort. The persistent woman gave the chief no peace till he summoned her husband to answer her charge before the assembly.

Finding no way of escape from the difficulty, Ohia prepared for death. He first called all his friends and relatives to a great feast, and bade them farewell. Then he put his affairs in order—bequeathed all his gold to the faithful Awirehu, and his property to his son and servants. When he had finished, he went to the Assembly Place where the people of the neighbourhood were gathered together.

He first took leave of the chief, and then commenced his tale. He related the story of his many misfortunes—of his adventure with the deer, and of his promise to King Tiger. Finally, he explained the cause of his laughter which had annoyed his wife. In so speaking he fell dead, as the Tiger had warned him.

He was buried amid great mourning, for every one had liked and respected him. The jealous woman who had caused her husband's death was seized and burnt as a witch. Her ashes were then scattered to the four winds of heaven, and it is owing to this unfortunate fact that jealousy and selfishness are so widespread through the world, where before they scarcely existed.

XX. How the Tortoise Got Its Shell

A few hundred years ago, the chief Mauri (God) determined to have a splendid yam festival. He therefore sent his messengers to invite all his chiefs and people to the gathering, which was to take place on Fida (Friday).

On the morning of that day he sent some of his servants to the neighbouring towns and villages to buy goats, sheep, and cows for the great feast. Mr. Klo (the tortoise), who was a tall and handsome fellow, was sent to buy palm wine. He was directed to the palm-fields of Koklovi (the chicken).

At that time Klo was a very powerful traveller and speedily reached his destination, although it was many miles distant from Mauri's palace.

When he arrived Koklovi was taking his breakfast. When they had exchanged polite salutations Koklovi asked the reason of Klo's visit. He replied, "I was sent by His Majesty Mauri, the ruler of the world, to buy him palm wine." "Whether he's ruler of the world or not," answered Koklovi, "no one can buy my wine with money. If you want it you must fight for it. If you win you can have it all and the palm-trees too."

This answer delighted Klo as he was a very strong fighter. Koklovi was the same, so that the fighting continued for several hours before Klo was able to overcome Koklovi. He was at last successful, however, and securely bound Koklovi before he left him.

Then, taking his great pot, he filled it with wine. Finding that there was more wine than the pot would hold, Klo foolishly drank all the rest. He then piled the palm-trees on his back and set out for the palace with the pot of wine. The

amount which he had drunk, however, made him feel so sleepy and tired that he could not walk fast with his load. Added to this, a terrible rain began to fall, which made the ground very slippery and still more difficult to travel over.

By the time Klo succeeded in reaching his master's palace the gates were shut and locked. Mauri, finding it so late, had concluded that every one was inside.

There were many people packed into the great hall, and all were singing and dancing. The noise of the concert was so great that no one heard Klo's knocking at the gate, and there he had to stay with his great load of wine and palm-trees.

The rain continued for nearly two months and was so terrible that the people all remained in the palace till it had finished. By that time Klo had died, under the weight of his load—which he had been unable to get off his back. There he lay, before the gate, with the pile of palm-trees on top of him.

When the rain ceased and the gates were opened the people were amazed to see this great mound in front of the gate, where before there had been nothing. They fetched spades and began to shovel it away.

When they came to the bottom of the pile there lay Klo. His earthenware pot and the dust had caked together and formed quite a hard cover on his back.

He was taken into the palace—and by the use of many wonderful medicines he was restored to life. But since that date he has never been able to stand upright. He has been a creeping creature, with a great shell on his back.

XXI. The Hunter and the Tortoise

A village hunter had one day gone farther afield than usual. Coming to a part of the forest with which he was unacquainted, he was astonished to hear a voice singing. He listened; this was the song:

"It is man who forces himself on things,
Not things which force themselves on him."

The singing was accompanied by sweet music—which entirely charmed the hunter's heart.

When the little song was finished, the hunter peeped through the branches to see who the singer could be. Imagine his amazement when he found it was none other than a tortoise, with a tiny harp slung in front of her. Never had he seen such a marvellous thing.

Time after time he returned to the same place in order to listen to this wonderful creature. At last he persuaded her to let him carry her back to his hut, that he might enjoy her singing daily in comfort.

This she permitted, only on the understanding that she sang to him alone.

The hunter did not rest long content with this arrangement, however. Soon he began to wish that he could show off this wonderful tortoise to all the world, and thereby thought he would gain great honour. He told the secret, first to one, then to another, until finally it reached the ears of the chief himself. The hunter was commanded to come and tell his tale before the Assembly. When, however, he described the tortoise who sang and played on the harp, the people shouted in scorn. They refused to believe him.

At last he said, "If I do not speak truth, I give you leave to kill me. To-morrow I will bring the tortoise to this place and you may all hear her. If she cannot do as I say, I am willing to die." "Good," replied the people, "and if the tortoise can do as you say, we give you leave to punish us in any way you choose."

The matter being then settled, the hunter returned home, well pleased with the prospect. As soon as the morrow dawned, he carried tortoise and harp down to the Assembly Place—where a table had been placed ready for her. Every one gathered round to listen. But no song came. The people were very patient, and quite willing to give both tortoise and hunter a chance. Hours went by, and, to the hunter's dismay and shame, the tortoise remained mute. He tried every means in his power to coax her to sing, but in vain. The people at first whispered, then spoke outright, in scorn of the boaster and his claims.

Night came on and brought with it the hunter's doom. As the last ray of the setting sun faded, he was beheaded. The instant this had happened the tortoise spoke. The people looked at one another in troubled wonder: "Our brother spoke truth, then, and we have killed him." The tortoise, however, went on to explain. "He brought his punishment on himself. I led a happy life in the forest, singing my little song. He was not content to come and listen to me. He had to tell my secret (which did not at all concern him) to all the world. Had he not tried to make a show of me this would never have happened."

"It is man who forces himself on things,
Not things which force themselves on him."

XXII. The Tail of the Princess Elephant

There once lived a woman who had three sons. These sons were very much attached to their mother and always tried to please her. She at last grew very old and feeble. The three sons began to think what they could do to give her great pleasure. The eldest promised that when she was dead he would cut a fine sepulchre in stone for her. The second said he would make a beautiful coffin. The youngest said, "I will go and get the tail of the princess elephant and put it in the coffin with her." This promise was by far the hardest one to keep.

Soon after this their mother died. The youngest son immediately set out on his search, not knowing in the least where he would be likely to find the tail. He travelled for three weeks, and at the end of that time he came to a little village. There he met an old woman, who seemed very much surprised to see him. She said no human creature had ever been there before. The boy told the tale of his search for the princess elephant. The old woman replied that this village was the home of all the elephants, and the princess slept there every night. But she warned him that if the animals saw him they would kill him. The young man begged her to hide him—which she did, in a great pile of wood.

She also told him that when the elephants were all asleep he must get up and go to the eastern corner. There he would find the princess. He must walk boldly over, cut off the tail and return in the same manner. If he were to walk stealthily, the elephants would waken and seize him.

The animals returned as it was growing dark. They said at once that they smelt a human being. The old woman assured

them that they were mistaken. Their supper was ready, so they ate it and went to bed.

In the middle of the night the young man got up and walked boldly across to where the princess slept. He cut off the tail and returned as he had come. He then started for home, carrying the tail very carefully.

When daylight came the elephants awoke. One said he had dreamed that the princess's tail was stolen. The others beat him for thinking such a thing. A second said he also had had the dream, and he also was beaten. The wisest of the elephants then suggested that they might do well to go and see if the dream were true. This they did. They found the princess fast asleep and quite ignorant of the loss of her tail. They wakened her and all started off in chase of the young man.

They travelled so quickly that in a few hours they came in sight of him. He was afraid when he saw them coming and cried out to his favourite idol (which he always carried in his hair), "O my juju Depor! What shall I do?" The juju advised him to throw the branch of a tree over his shoulder. This he did and it immediately grew up into a huge tree, which blocked the path of the elephants. They stopped and began to eat up the tree—which took them some little time.

Then they continued their way again. Again the young man cried, "O my juju Depor! What shall I do?" "Throw that corn-cob behind you," answered the juju. The lad did so, and the corncob immediately grew into a large field of maize.

The elephants ate their way through the maize, but when they arrived at the other side they found that the boy had reached home. So they had to give up the chase and return to their village. The princess, however, refused to do so, saying, "I will return when I have punished this impudent fellow."

She thereupon changed herself into a very beautiful maiden, and taking a calabash cymbal in her hand approached the

village. All the people came out to admire this lovely girl.

She had it proclaimed through the village that whoever succeeded in shooting an arrow at the cymbal should have her for a bride. The young men all tried and failed. An old man standing by said, "If only Kwesi—the cutter of the princess elephant's tail—were here, he could hit the cymbal." "Then Kwesi is the man I will marry," replied the maiden, "whether he hit the cymbal or not."

Kwesi was quickly fetched from the field where he was ploughing, and told of his good luck. He, however, was not at all delighted to hear of it, as he suspected the maiden of some trick.

However, he came and shot an arrow which struck the centre of the cymbal. The damsel and he were accordingly married. She was all the time preparing to punish him.

The night following their marriage she turned into an elephant, while Kwesi was asleep. She then prepared to kill him, but Kwesi awoke in time. He called, "O my juju Depor! Save me!" The juju turned him into a grass mat lying on the bed and the princess could not find him. She was most annoyed and next morning asked him where he had been all night. "While you were an elephant I was the mat you lay on," replied Kwesi. The damsel took all the mats from the bed and burned them.

Next night the princess again became an elephant and prepared to kill her husband. This time the juju changed him into a needle and his wife could not find him. She again asked him in the morning where he had been. Hearing that the juju had helped him again she determined to get hold of the idol and destroy it.

Next day Kwesi was going again to his farm to plough a field. He told his wife to bring him some food to the resting-place. This time she had fairly made up her mind that he should not escape. When he had had his food she said, "Now lay your head in my lap and sleep." Kwesi quite forgot that his

juju was hidden in his hair and did as she bid. As soon as he was asleep she took the juju out of his hair and threw it into a great fire which she had prepared. Kwesi awoke to find her an elephant once more. In great fear he cried out, "O my juju Depor! What am I to do?" All the answer he got, however, came from the flames. "I am burning, I am burning, I am burning." Kwesi called again for help and the juju replied, "Lift up your arms as if you were flying." He did so and turned into a hawk.

That is the reason why hawks are so often seen flying in the smoke of fires. They are looking for their lost juju.

XXIII. Kwofi and the Gods

Kwofi was the eldest son of a farmer who had two wives. Kwofi's mother had no other children.

When the boy was three years old his mother died. Kwofi was given to his stepmother to mind. After this she had many children. Kwofi, of course, was the eldest of all.

When he was about ten years old his father also died. Kwofi had now no relative but his stepmother, for whom he had to work.

As he grew older, she saw how much more clever and handsome he was than her own children, and grew very jealous of him. He was such a good hunter that day after day he came home laden with meat or with fish.

Every day she treated him in the same way. She cooked the meat, then portioned it out. She gave to each a large helping, but when it came to Kwofi's turn she would say, "Oh, my son Kwofi, there is none left for you! You must go to the field and get some ripe paw-paw." Kwofi never complained. Never once did he taste any of the meat he had hunted. At every meal the others were served, but there was never enough for him.

One evening, when the usual thing had happened, Kwofi was preparing to go to the field to fetch some paw-paw for his supper. All at once one of the gods appeared in the village, carrying a great bag over his shoulder. He summoned all the villagers together with these words: "Oh, my villagers, I come with a bag of death for you!"

Thereupon he began to distribute the contents of his bag among them. When he came to Kwofi he said: "Oh, my son Kwofi, there was never sufficient meat for you, neither is there

any death."

As he said these words every one in the village died except Kwofi. He was left to reign there in peace, which he did very happily.

XXIV. The Lion and the Wolf

A certain old lady had a very fine flock of sheep. She had fed and cared for them so well that they became famous for their fatness. In time a wicked wolf heard of them and determined to eat them.

Night after night he stole up to the old dame's cottage and killed a sheep. The poor woman tried her best to save her animals from harm—but failed.

At last there was only one sheep left of all the flock. Their owner was very sad. She feared that it, too, would be taken away from her, in spite of all she could do. While she was grieving over the thought of this a lion came to her village.

Seeing her sad face, he asked the reason of it. She soon told him all about it. He thereupon offered to do his best to punish the wicked wolf. He himself went to the place where the sheep was generally kept—while the latter was removed to another place.

In the meantime the wolf was on his way to the cottage. As he came he met a fox. The fox was somewhat afraid of him and prepared to run away. The wolf, however, told him where he was going, and invited him to go too. The fox agreed and the two set off together. They arrived at the cottage and went straight to the place where the sheep generally slept. The wolf at once rushed upon the animal, while Fox waited a little behind. Just as Fox was deciding to enter and help Wolf there came a bright flash of lightning. By the light of it the fox could see that the wolf was attacking—not a sheep—but a lion. He hastily ran away, shouting as he went: "Look at his face! Look at his face!"

During the flash Wolf did look at the pretended sheep.

To his dismay he found he had made a great mistake. At once he began to make humble apologies—but all in vain. Lion refused to listen to any of his explanations, and speedily put him to death.

XXV. Maku Mawu and Maku Fia
or 'I will die God's death' and 'I will die the King's death'

Once upon a time there were two men who were such great friends that they were almost always together. If one was seen the other was sure to be near. They had given one another special names, which were to be used only by themselves. One name, Maku Mawu, meant, 'I will die God's death,' and the other, Maku Fia, 'I will die the King's death.'

By and by, however, the other villagers heard these names and gradually every one got into the habit of calling the two friends by the nicknames in preference to the real ones. Finally, the King of the country heard of them and wished to see the men who had chosen such strange titles. He sent for them to Court, and they came together. He was much pleased with the one who had chosen the name of 'Maku Fia,' but he was annoyed at the other man's choice and sought a chance of punishing him.

When he had talked to them a little while, he invited both to a great feast which he was to give in three days' time. As they went away he gave a fine large yam to Maku Mawu and only a small round stone to his own favourite. The latter felt somewhat aggrieved at getting only a stone, while his friend got such a fine yam. Very soon he said, "Oh, dear! I do not think it is any use carrying this stone home. How I wish it were a yam! Then I could cook it for dinner." Maku Mawu—being very generous—immediately replied, "Then change with me, for I am quite tired of carrying my great yam." They exchanged, and each went off to his own home. Maku Fia cut

up his yam and cooked it. Maku Mawu broke his stone in half and found inside some beautiful ornaments which the King had hidden there. He thought that he would play a trick on the King, so told nobody what had been in the stone.

On the third day they dressed to go to the King's feast. Maku Mawu put on all the beautiful ornaments out of the stone. Maku Fia dressed himself just as usual.

When they reached the palace the King was amazed to see the wrong man wearing his ornaments, and determined to punish him more effectually next time. He asked Maku Fia what he had done with the stone, and the man told him he had exchanged it for his friend's yam.

At first the King could not think of any way to punish Maku Mawu, as, of course, the latter had not done anything wrong. He soon had an idea, however. He pretended to be very pleased with the poor man and presented him with a beautiful ring from his own finger. He then made him promise to come back in seven days and show the ring to the King again, to let the latter see that it was not lost. If by any chance he could not produce the ring—he would lose his head. This the King did, meaning to get hold of the ring in some way and so get the young man killed.

Maku Mawu saw what the King's design was, so determined to hide the ring. He made a small hole in the wall of his room, put the ring in it, and carefully plastered over the place again. No one could see that the wall had been touched.

After two days the King sent for the wife of Maku Mawu and asked her to find the ring. He promised her a large sum of money for it—not telling her, of course, what would happen to her husband if the ring were lost. The woman went home and searched diligently but found nothing. Next day she tried again—with no better success. Then she asked her husband what he had done with it. He innocently told her it was in the wall. Next day, when he was absent, she searched so carefully that at last she found it.

Delighted, she ran off to the King's palace and gave the ring to him. She got the promised money and returned home, never dreaming that she had really sold her husband's life.

On the sixth day the King sent a message to Maku Mawu, telling him to prepare for the next day. The poor man bethought himself of the ring and went to look if it were still safe. To his despair the hole was empty. He asked his wife and his neighbours. All denied having seen it. He made up his mind that he must die.

In the meantime the King had laid the ring in one of the dishes in his palace and promptly forgot about it. When the seventh morning had arrived he sent messengers far and wide, to summon the people to come and see a man punished for disobeying the King's orders. Then he commanded his servants to set the palace in order, and to take the dishes out of his room and wash them.

The careless servants—never looking to see if the dishes were empty or not—took them all to a pool near by. Among them was the dish containing the ring. Of course, when the dish was being washed, out fell the ring into the water—without being noticed by the servants.

The palace being all in readiness, the King went to fetch the ring. It was nowhere to be found and he was obliged to go to the Assembly without it.

When every one was ready the poor man, Maku Mawu, was called to come forward and show the ring. He walked boldly up to the king and knelt down before him, saying, "The ring is lost and I am prepared to die. Only grant me a few hours to put my house in order." At first the king was unwilling to grant even that small favour, but finally he said, "Very well, you may have four hours. Then you must return here and be beheaded before the people." The innocent man returned to his home and put everything in order. Then, feeling hungry, he thought, "I may as well have some food before I die. I will go and catch a fish in the pool."

He accordingly took his fish-net and bait, and started off to the very pool where the King's dishes had been washed. Very soon he caught a fine large fish. Cutting it open, to clean it, his delight may be imagined at finding the lost ring inside it.

At once he ran off to the palace crying: "I have found the ring! I have found the ring!" When the people heard him, they all shouted in joy: "He named himself rightly 'Maku Mawu,' for see—the death God has chosen for him, that only will he die." So the King had no excuse to harm him, and he went free.

XXVI. The Robber and the Old Man

In a big town lived a very rich gentleman. The fame of his wealth soon spread. A clever thief heard of it and determined to have some for himself.

He managed to hide himself in a dark corner of the gentleman's room—while the latter was counting his bags of money. As soon as the old gentleman left the room to fetch something, the thief caught up two of the bags and escaped.

The owner was astonished, on his return a few minutes later, to find two bags short. He could find no trace of the thief.

Next morning, however, he chanced to meet the robber just outside the house. The dishonest man looked so confused that the rich man at once suspected he was the thief. He could not, however, prove it, so took the case before the judge.

The thief was much alarmed when he heard this. He sought a man in the village and asked his advice.

The wise man undertook to help him—if he would promise to pay him half the money when he got off. This the robber at once said he would do.

The old man then advised him to go home and dress in rags. He must ruffle his hair and beard and behave as if he were mad. If any one asked a question he must answer "Moo."

The thief did so. To every question asked by the judge he said, "Moo, moo." The judge at last grew angry and dismissed the court. The thief went home in great glee.

Next day, the wise man came to him for his half of the stolen money. But he could get no answer but "Moo" from the thief, and at last, in despair, he had to go home without a

penny. The ungrateful robber kept everything for himself. The wise man regretted very much that he had saved the thief from his just punishment—but it was now too late.

XXVII. The Leopard and the Ram

A ram once decided to make a clearing in the woods and build himself a house. A leopard who lived near also made up his mind to do the very same thing.

Unknown to each other they both chose the same site. Ram came one day and worked at the clearing. Leopard arrived after Ram had gone and was much surprised to find some of his work already done. However, he continued what Ram had begun. Each was daily surprised at the progress made in his absence, but concluded that the fairies had been helping him. He gave them thanks and continued with his task.

Thus the matter went on—the two working alternately at the building and never seeing one another. At last the house was finished to the satisfaction of both.

The two prepared to take up their abode in the new home. To their great astonishment they met. Each told his tale, and after some friendly discussion, they decided to live together.

Both Leopard and Ram had sons. These two young animals played together while their parents hunted. The leopard was very much surprised to find that every evening his friend Ram brought home just as much meat or venison from the hunt as he himself did. He did not dare, however, to ask the other how he obtained it.

One day, before setting out to hunt, Leopard requested his son to find out, if possible, from young Ram, how his father managed to kill the animals. Accordingly while they were at play, little Leopard inquired how Father Ram, having neither claws nor sharp teeth, succeeded in catching and killing the beasts. Ram refused to tell unless young Leopard would promise to show his father's way also. The latter agreed. Accordingly

they took two large pieces of plantain stem and set out into the woods.

Young Leopard then took one piece and placed it in position. Then, going first to the right, then to the left—bowing and standing on his hind legs and peeping at the stem just as his father did—he took aim, sprang toward the stem and tore it.

Young Ram then took the other piece and placed it in position. Wasting no time he went backward a little way, took aim, then ran swiftly forward—pushing his head against the stem and tearing it to pieces. When they had finished they swept the place clean and went home.

In the evening the leopard obtained all the information about the hunt from his son. The latter warned him that he must always be careful when he saw the ram go backward. He kept this in mind, and from that day watched the ram very closely.

Some time afterward it rained, making the floor of the house very slippery. The leopard called the ram, as usual, to dine with him. As he was coming, the ram slipped backward on the wet floor. The leopard, seeing this, thought the other was about to kill him. Calling to his son to follow, he sprang with all his might over the wall of the house and fled to the woods. The ram called him back, but he did not listen. From that time leopards have made their abode in the woods while rams have remained at home.

XXVIII. Why the Leopard Can Only Catch Prey On Its Left Side

At one time leopards did not know how to catch animals for food. Knowing that the cat was very skilful in this way, Leopard one day went to Cat and asked very politely if she would teach him the art. Cat readily consented.

The first thing Leopard had to learn was to hide himself among the bushes by the roadside, so that he would not be seen by any animal passing by. Next, he must learn how to move noiselessly through the woods. He must never allow the animal he chased to know that he was following it. The third great principle was how to use his left paws and side in springing upon his prey.

Having taught him these three things, Cat requested him to go and practise them well. When he had learnt them thoroughly he could return to her and she would give him more lessons in hunting.

Leopard obeyed. At first he was very successful and obtained all the food he wanted. One day, however, he was unable to catch anything at all.

Being very hungry, he bethought himself what he could have for dinner. Suddenly he remembered that the cat had quite a large family. He went straight to her home and found her absent.

Never thinking of her kindness to him—Leopard only remembered that he was hungry—he ate all her kittens. Puss, on discovering this dreadful fact, was so angry that she refused to have anything more to do with the great creature.

Consequently the leopard has never been able to learn how to catch animals that pass him on the right side.

XXIX. Quarcoo Bah-Boni (The Bad Boy)

Once upon a time in a certain village lived a man and his wife who were childless. One day, however, when the husband was away hunting, the woman had a baby son. She was greatly troubled at her husband's absence, because she was unable to let him know of the child's arrival. In that country it is the custom for the father to give the baby its name when it is a week old. As the time approached for the naming, the woman wondered to herself what name she could give the child if her husband did not return in time. To her amazement, the child himself answered, "My name is Quarcoo Bah-boni." As he was only a week old she was astonished to hear him talk. The next day she got a greater surprise. She had been grumbling because her husband was not there to go to the farm for her and fetch food. The baby announced, "I will go to the farm"—which he did.

When he was a few weeks old, she was one day very busy. She laid him down on the bed while she went on with her task. In a few minutes several boys came up to her in great anger. "Your son has been beating us and ill-treating us in the street," said they. "My son!" she cried. "Why, my son is only a tiny baby. He is lying asleep on my bed." To convince them she went indoors to show them the baby. Imagine her surprise when he was nowhere to be seen! She had to apologize to the boys and beg them to forgive the child. Shortly after, he came in and put himself to bed.

He continued these mischievous tricks till his mother could no longer endure them. So she turned him out of the house and forbade him to return. He departed in great glee.

After walking a few miles, he came to a building where a

goat, wolf, tiger, lion, and elephant lived very happily together. These animals were all sitting round their fire when he approached. After many polite speeches, he begged their permission to stay and be their servant, as he was motherless. The animals, after a little discussion, agreed to this, thinking that he would be able to help them in many ways. He was given a seat and some food, which he ate with great relish.

These five animals usually took it in turns to go out to their farm—a few miles away—every morning, to bring home food for the day. It being Goat's turn, he asked Quarcoo to come with him to carry back the load.

The basket was accordingly handed to the little boy and he set off meekly after the goat. When they reached the farm, Quarcoo set down the basket and ran off to play. He paid no heed at all to the goat's calls for assistance, but went on quietly playing. At last the goat was so annoyed that he came up to Quarcoo and boxed his ears. To his great astonishment, the boy gave him such a blow that he fell to the ground. Quarcoo then proceeded to beat him till he cried for mercy. Nor would he stop his blows till the goat had promised to finish the work, carry home the load, and tell no one what had happened. Having promised this, the goat was allowed to go free. By this time the poor animal's face was bruised and swollen.

When the time came to go home the goat had to pack up the load and put it on his head. Then they set out.

As soon as they came in sight of their cottage, Quarcoo took the basket from the goat and he himself carried it into the cottage.

The other animals all exclaimed in wonder when they saw the goat's face, and asked him how it had happened. "I was unfortunate enough to get into a swarm of bees when I was working. They stung me," answered the poor goat.

Next day it was the wolf's turn to go to the farm. He also returned, much bruised and swollen. Goat (guessing what had

happened) listened with a smile to the excuses made by Wolf to the others.

Goat and Wolf afterward talked the matter over and wondered much at the strength of the little boy.

Each day another animal took his turn at the farm, and each day he returned in the same condition as his friends had done. At last all the animals had been, and all now came together to discuss how best they might get rid of Quarcoo Bahboni.

They made up their minds that, early the following morning, they would start off together and leave the boy in possession of the house. They prepared a big basket of food and set it ready.

Unfortunately for them, Quarcoo had heard their discussion and decided that he also would go with them. He quietly got himself a large leaf, rolled it round him (for he was very tiny) and laid himself down in the basket of food.

At dawn the animals got up very quietly. Goat, being the youngest, was given the basket to carry. They started, feeling very thankful to get away from the tiresome boy—never dreaming that they were carrying him along with them.

When they had gone a fair distance Goat, feeling very hot and tired, sat down to rest for a little while. As soon as the others had gone out of sight, he opened the basket, meaning to have some food unknown to his friends. His greed was rewarded, however, by a terrible blow on the face. He then heard the words, "Shut the basket at once, and say nothing to the others." He obeyed and hurried after the others in fear of this terrible boy.

As soon as he reached them he called out, "Wolf, Wolf, it is your turn now to take the basket. I am very tired." Wolf took the load at once.

They had not gone far when Wolf began to think of all the nice things in the basket and he also said he was going to rest a little while in the shade.

Having got rid of the others in this way, he hastily opened the basket. He was greeted by Quarcoo in the same way as Goat had been, and speedily closed the basket and followed the others. In this way each animal got his turn of carrying the basket, and each was punished for his greed.

Finally, Elephant's turn came. When he rejoined the others and asked some one to relieve him of his load they cried out, "If you do not want to carry it any farther, throw it away." He did so, and they all took to their heels. They ran for several miles and only stopped when they came to a huge tree, in whose shade they sat down to rest, being quite breathless.

Quarcoo, however, had got there before them. He had quietly stepped out of the basket, taken a short cut across country and arrived at the tree some time before them. He guessed that they would probably rest there—so he climbed up into the branches. There he remained, hidden among the leaves, while the animals sat on the ground below.

There they discussed Quarcoo and all the trouble he had caused them. They blamed Goat for having been the one to persuade them to take the boy as a servant. Goat being the youngest of the company had the domestic work to do and he had welcomed the idea of help. Goat indignantly denied being the cause of all their troubles, saying: "If I am really to blame for the admission of Quarcoo—let him appear before us." Quarcoo promptly jumped down from the tree and stood in front of them. They were so alarmed at his appearance they scattered in all directions. The wolf ran to the woods—the tiger into the heart of the forest, the elephant to Nigeria, the lion to the desert, and the goat to the abode of human beings. That is the reason why they live now in these various places instead of all together as they did previously.

XXX. King Chameleon and the Animals

In the olden days all the animals of the world lived together in friendship. They had no one to rule over them and judge them. In consequence, many very wicked deeds were constantly being done, as no one needed to fear any punishment.

At last they all met together to discuss this bad state of affairs, and, as a result, they decided to choose a king. The great difficulty was how to choose him.

Lion was the first animal suggested. But all opposed him because, they said, he was too fierce. Wolf was next named—but the sheep and goats refused to have him because he was their foe. They knew they would have bad treatment if he were chosen.

As it was impossible to please every one by choice, they decided in another way. Two miles away was a great stool, placed under a very ancient tree which they believed to be the abode of some of their gods.

They would have a great race. The animal which reached and sat down first on the stool should be chosen king.

The day of the race arrived. All animals, great and small, prepared to take part in it. The signal being given, they started off. The hare—being a very fine runner—speedily outdistanced the others. He reached the stool quite five hundred yards ahead of the next animal. You may judge of his annoyance when, just as he was going to sit down, a voice came from the stool saying, "Take care, Mr. Hare, take care. I was here first." This was the chameleon. He, being able to change his colour to suit his surroundings, had seized Mr. Hare's tail just as the race began. Having made his colour match the

hare's, no one had noticed him. He had held on very tightly, and when the hare turned round to take his seat Chameleon dropped off and landed on the stool.

The hare saw how he had been tricked and was very angry. The other animals, however, arrived before he could harm the chameleon. According to the agreement they had made, they had no choice but to make Chameleon king.

But none of the animals were satisfied with the choice. So as soon as the meeting was over, all scattered in every direction and left Chameleon quite alone.

He was so ashamed that he went and made his home at the top of a very high tree on a mountain. In the dead of night you may hear him calling his attendants to come and stay with him. But he is left quite alone. "A king without subjects is no king."

XXXI. To Lose an Elephant for the Sake of a Wren is a Very Foolish Thing to Do

In the olden times there stood in the King's town a very great tree. This tree was so huge that it began to overshadow the neighbouring fields. The King decided to have it cut down. He caused his servants to proclaim throughout the country that any one who succeeded in cutting down the tree with a wooden axe should have an elephant in payment.

People thought it would be impossible to cut down such a great tree with an axe of wood. Spider, however, decided to try by cunning to gain the elephant. He accordingly presented himself before the King and expressed his readiness to get rid of the tree.

A servant was sent with him to keep watch and to see that he only used the wooden axe given him. Spider, however, had taken care to have another, made of steel, hidden in his bag.

He now began to fell the tree. In a very few minutes, he said to the servant, "See, yonder is a fine antelope. If you are quick, you will be able to hit it with a stone. Run!" The lad did as he was bid, and ran a long way—but could see no sign of the antelope. In his absence, Spider seized the sharp axe and hastened to cut as much of the tree as he could, carefully hiding the axe in his bag before the servant's return.

This trick he repeated several times, till finally the tree was cut down. Spider went to the King to get the elephant, and took the servant to prove that he had used only the wooden axe. He got his promised reward, and started for home in great glee. On the way, however, he began to think over the matter. "Shall I take this animal home?" thought he.

"That would be foolish, for then I would be obliged to share it with my family. No! I will hide it in the forest, and eat it at my leisure. In that way I can have the whole of it for myself. Now what can I take home for the children's dinner?"

Thereupon he looked around, and, a little distance away, saw a tiny wren sitting on a tree. "Exactly what I want," he said to himself. "That will be quite sufficient for them. I will tie my elephant to this tree while I catch the bird."

This he did, but when he tried to seize the latter, it flew off. He chased it for some time, without success. "Well! well!" said he. "My family will just have to go without dinner. I will now go back and get my elephant." He returned to the spot where he had left the animal, but to his dismay the latter had escaped. Spider was obliged to go home empty-handed, and he, as well as his family, went dinnerless that day.

XXXII. The Ungrateful Man

A hunter, who was terribly poor, was one day walking through the forest in search of food. Coming to a deep hole, he found there a leopard, a serpent, a rat, and a man. These had all fallen into the trap and were unable to get out again. Seeing the hunter, they begged him to help them out of the hole.

At first he did not wish to release any but the man. The leopard, he said, had often stolen his cattle and eaten them. The serpent very frequently bit men and caused their death. The rat did no good to any one. He saw no use in setting them free.

However, these animals pleaded so hard for life that at last he helped them out of the pit. Each, in turn, promised to reward him for his kindness—except the man. He, saying he was very poor, was taken home by the kind-hearted hunter and allowed to stay with him.

A short time after, Serpent came to the hunter and gave him a very powerful antidote for snake-poison. "Keep it carefully," said Serpent. "You will find it very useful one day. When you are using it, be sure to ask for the blood of a traitor to mix with it." The hunter, having thanked Serpent very much, took great care of the powder and always carried it about with him.

The leopard also showed his gratitude by killing animals for the hunter and supplying him with food for many weeks.

Then, one day, the rat came to him and gave him a large bundle. "These," said he, "are some native cloths, gold dust, and ivory. They will make you rich." The hunter thanked the rat very heartily and took the bundle into his cottage.

After this the hunter was able to live in great comfort. He built himself a fine new house and supplied it with everything needful. The man whom he had taken out of the pit still lived with him.

This man, however, was of a very envious disposition. He was not at all pleased at his host's good fortune, and only waited an opportunity to do him some harm. He very soon had a chance.

A proclamation was sounded throughout the country to say that some robbers had broken into the King's palace and stolen his jewels and many other valuables. The ungrateful man instantly hurried to the King and asked what the reward would be if he pointed out the thief. The King promised to give him half of the things which had been stolen. The wicked fellow thereupon falsely accused his host of the theft, although he knew quite well that he was innocent.

The honest hunter was immediately thrown into prison. He was then brought into Court and requested to show how he had become so rich. He told them, faithfully, the source of his income, but no one believed him. He was condemned to die the following day at noon.

Next morning, while preparations were being made for his execution, word was brought to the prison that the King's eldest son had been bitten by a serpent and was dying. Any one who could cure him was begged to come and do so.

The hunter immediately thought of the powder which his serpent friend had given him, and asked to be allowed to use it. At first they were unwilling to let him try, but finally he received permission.

The King asked him if there were anything he needed for it and he replied, "A traitor's blood to mix it with." His Majesty immediately pointed out the wicked fellow who had accused the hunter and said: "There stands the worst traitor —for he gave up the kind host who had saved his life." The man was at once beheaded and the powder was mixed as the

serpent had commanded. As soon as it was applied to the prince's wound the young man was cured. In great delight, the King loaded the hunter with honours and sent him happily home.

XXXIII. Why Tigers Never Attack Men Unless They Are Provoked

A man, hunting one day in the forest, met a tiger. At first each was afraid of the other; but after some talking they became quite friendly. They agreed to live together for a little time. First the man would live with the tiger in his forest home for two weeks. Then the tiger would come and live in the man's home.

The tiger behaved so well to the man during his visit that the man felt he had never been so well treated in all his life. Then came the time for the tiger to return home with the man. As they were going the tiger was somewhat afraid. He asked the man if he really thought he would be safe. "What if your friends do not like my face and kill me?" he asked. "You need fear nothing," said his host; "no one will touch you while I am there." The tiger therefore came to the man's house and stayed with him three weeks. He had brought his male cub with him, and the young tiger became very friendly with the man's son.

Some months later the man's father died. When Tiger heard of his friend's great loss, he and his cub set out at once to see and condole with him. They brought a large sum of money to help the man.

As Tiger was going home again two of the man's friends lay in hiding for him and shot him. Fortunately he was not killed, but he was very much grieved lest these men had shot him at his friend's wish. He determined to find out if the man had known anything at all about the shot.

Accordingly he went to the place in the forest where he

had first met his friend. There he lay down as if he were dead, after telling his cub to watch and see what would happen.

By and by the man came along. When he saw the tiger lying, as he thought, dead, he was terribly troubled. He began to cry and mourn for his friend, and sat there all night long with Tiger's cub, to watch that no harm should befall the body.

When morning came and Tiger was quite assured that his friend had had nothing at all to do with the shot, he was very glad. He got up, then, to the man's great astonishment, and explained why he had pretended to be dead.

"Go home," said Tiger, "and remember me always. In future for your sake I will never touch a man unless he first meddles with me."

XXXIV. The Omanhene Who Liked Riddles

The Omanhene is the chief of a village. A certain Omanhene had three sons, who were very anxious to see the world. They went to their father and asked permission to travel. This permission he readily gave.

It was the turn of the eldest to go first. He was provided with a servant and with all he could possibly require for the journey.

After travelling for some time he came to a town where lived an Omanhene who loved riddles. Being a stranger the traveller was, according to custom, brought by the people before the chief.

The latter explained to him that they had certain laws in their village. One law was that every stranger must beat the Omanhene in answering riddles or he would be beheaded. He must be prepared to begin the contest the following morning.

Next day he came to the Assembly Place, and found the Omanhene there with all his attendants. The Omanhene asked many riddles. As the young man was unable to answer any of them, he was judged to have failed and was beheaded.

After some time the second son of the Omanhene started on his travels. By a strange chance he arrived at the same town where his brother had died. He also was asked many riddles, and failed to answer them. Accordingly he too was put to death.

By and by the third brother announced his intention of travelling. His mother did all in her power to persuade him to stay at home. It was quite in vain.

She was sure that if he also reached the town where his

brothers had died, the same thing would happen to him. Rather than allow this, she thought she would prefer him to die on the way.

She prepared for him a food called cankey—which she filled with poison. Having packed it away in his bag, he set off. Very soon he began to feel hungry. Knowing, however, that his mother had not wished him to leave home, and therefore might have put some poison in the food, he thought he would test it before eating it himself. Seeing a vulture near by, he threw it half the cake.

The bird ate the cankey, and immediately fell dead by the roadside. Three panthers came along and began to eat the vulture. They also fell dead.

The young man cut off some of the flesh of the panthers and roasted it. He then packed it carefully away in his bundle.

A little farther on he was attacked by seven highway robbers. They wanted to kill him at once. He told them that he had some good roast meat in his bundle and invited them to eat with him first. They agreed and divided up the food into eight parts.

While they were eating the young man carefully hid his portion. Soon all the seven robbers fell ill and died. The young man then went on his way.

At last he reached the town where his brothers had died. Like them, he was summoned to the Assembly Place to answer the riddles of the Omanhene. For two days the contest proved equal. At the end of that time, the young man said, "I have only one riddle left. If you are able to answer that, you may put me to death." He then gave this riddle to the Omanhene:

Half kills one—
One kills three—
Three kills seven.

The ruler failed to answer it that evening, so it was post-

poned till the next day.

During the night the Omanhene disguised himself and went to the house where the stranger was staying. There he found the young man asleep in the hall.

Imagining that the man before him was the stranger's servant, and never dreaming that it was the stranger himself, he roused the sleeper and promised him a large reward if he would give him the solution to the riddle.

The young man replied that he would tell the answer if the Omanhene would bring him the costume which he always wore at the Assembly.

The ruler was only too pleased to go and fetch it for him. When the young man had the garments quite safely, he explained the riddle fully to the crafty Omanhene. He said that as they were leaving home, the mother of his master made him cankey. In order to find out if the cankey were good, they gave half to a vulture. The latter died. Three panthers which tasted the vulture also died. A little of the panthers' roasted flesh killed seven robbers.

The Omanhene was delighted to have found out the answer. He warned the supposed servant not to tell his master what had happened.

In the morning all the villagers assembled together again. The Omanhene proudly gave the answer to the riddle as if he himself had found it out. But the young man asked him to produce his ceremonial dress, which he ought to be wearing in Assembly. This, of course, he was unable to do, as the young man had hidden it carefully away.

The stranger then told what had happened in the night, and how the ruler had got the answer to the riddle by cheating.

The Assembly declared that the Omanhene had failed to find out the riddle and must die. Accordingly he was beheaded—and the young man was appointed Omanhene in his place.

XXXV. How Mushrooms First Grew

Long, long ago there dwelt in a town two brothers whose bad habits brought them much trouble. Day by day they got more deeply in debt. Their creditors gave them no peace, so at last they ran away into the woods. They became highway robbers.

But they were not happy. Their minds were troubled by their evil deeds. At last they decided to go home, make a big farm, and pay off their debts gradually.

They accordingly set to work and soon had quite a fine farm prepared for corn. As the soil was good, they hoped the harvest would bring them in much money.

Unfortunately, that very day a bushfowl came along. Being hungry, it scratched up all the newly planted seeds and ate them.

The two poor brothers, on arriving at the field next day, were dismayed to find all their work quite wasted. They put down a trap for the thief. That evening the bushfowl was caught in it. The two brothers, when they came and found the bird, told it that now all their debts would be transferred to it because it had robbed them of the means of paying the debts themselves.

The poor bird—in great trouble at having such a burden thrust upon it—made a nest under a silk-cotton tree. There it began to lay eggs, meaning to hatch them and sell the young birds for money to pay off the debt.

A terrible hurricane came, however, and a branch of the tree came down. All the eggs were smashed. As a result, the bushfowl transferred the debts to the tree, as it had broken the eggs.

The silk-cotton tree was in dismay at having such a big sum of money to pay off. It immediately set to work to make as much silk cotton as it possibly could, that it might sell it.

An elephant, not knowing all that had happened, came along. Seeing the silk cotton, he came to the tree and plucked down all its bearings. By this means the debts were transferred to the poor elephant.

The elephant was very sad when he found what he had done. He wandered away into the desert, thinking of a way to make money. He could think of none.

As he stood quietly under a tree, a poor hunter crept up. This man thought he was very lucky to find such a fine elephant standing so still. He at once shot him.

Just before the animal died, he told the hunter that now the debts would have to be paid by him. The hunter was much grieved when he heard this, as he had no money at all.

He walked home wondering what he could do to make enough money to pay the debts. In the darkness he did not see the stump of a tree which the overseers had cut down in the road. He fell and broke his leg. By this means the debts were transferred to the tree-stump.

Not knowing this, a party of white ants came along next morning and began to eat into the tree. When they had broken it nearly to the ground, the tree told them that now the debts were theirs, as they had killed it.

The ants, being very wise, held a council together to find out how best they could make money. They decided each to contribute as much as possible. With the proceeds one of their young men would go to the nearest market and buy pure linen thread. This they would weave and sell and the profits would go to help pay the debts.

This was done. From time to time all the linen in stock was brought and spread out in the sunshine to keep it in good condition. When men see this linen lying out on the ant-hills, they call it 'mushroom,' and gather it for food.

XXXVI. Farmer Mybrow and the Fairies

Farmer Mybrow was one day looking about for a suitable piece of land to convert into a field. He wished to grow corn and yams. He discovered a fine spot, close to a great forest—which latter was the home of some fairies. He set to work at once to prepare the field.

Having sharpened his great knife, he began to cut down the bushes. No sooner had he touched one than he heard a voice say, "Who is there, cutting down the bushes?" Mybrow was too much astonished to answer. The question was repeated. This time the farmer realized that it must be one of the fairies, and so replied, "I am Mybrow, come to prepare a field." Fortunately for him the fairies were in great good humour. He heard one say, "Let us all help Farmer Mybrow to cut down the bushes." The rest agreed. To Mybrow's great delight, the bushes were all rapidly cut down—with very little trouble on his part. He returned home, exceedingly well pleased with his day's work, having resolved to keep the field a secret even from his wife.

Early in January, when it was time to burn the dry bush, he set off to his field, one afternoon, with the means of making a fire. Hoping to have the fairies' assistance once more, he intentionally struck the trunk of a tree as he passed. Immediately came the question, "Who is there, striking the stumps?" He promptly replied, "I am Mybrow, come to burn down the bush." Accordingly, the dried bushes were all burned down, and the field left clear in less time than it takes to tell it.

Next day the same thing happened. Mybrow came to chop up the stumps for firewood and clear the field for

digging. In a very short time his faggots and firewood were piled ready, while the field was bare.

So it went on. The field was divided into two parts—one for maize and one for yams. In all the preparations—digging, sowing, planting—the fairies gave great assistance. Still, the farmer had managed to keep the whereabouts of his field a secret from his wife and neighbours.

The soil having been so carefully prepared, the crops promised exceedingly well. Mybrow visited them from time to time, and congratulated himself on the splendid harvest he would have.

One day, while maize and yams were still in their green and milky state, Mybrow's wife came to him. She wished to know where his field lay, that she might go and fetch some of the firewood from it. At first he refused to tell her. Being very persistent, however, she finally succeeded in obtaining the information—but on one condition. She must not answer any question that should be asked her. This she readily promised, and set off for the field.

When she arrived there she was utterly amazed at the wealth of the corn and yam. She had never seen such magnificent crops. The maize looked most tempting—being still in the milky state—so she plucked an ear. While doing so she heard a voice say, "Who is there, breaking the corn?" "Who dares ask me such a question?" she replied angrily—quite forgetting her husband's command. Going to the field of yams she plucked one of them also. "Who is there, picking the yams?" came the question again. "It is I, Mybrow's wife. This is my husband's field and I have a right to pick." Out came the fairies. "Let us all help Mybrow's wife to pluck her corn and yams," said they. Before the frightened woman could say a word, the fairies had all set to work with a will, and the corn and yams lay useless on the ground. Being all green and unripe, the harvest was now utterly spoiled. The farmer's wife wept bitterly, but to no purpose. She returned slowly home,

not knowing what to say to her husband about such a terrible catastrophe. She decided to keep silence about the matter.

Accordingly, next day the poor man set off gleefully to his field to see how his fine crops were going on. His anger and dismay may be imagined when he saw his field a complete ruin. All his work and foresight had been absolutely ruined through his wife's forgetfulness of her promise.

Fables and Fairy Tales for Little Folk

By Mary & Newman Tremearne

I. How the Scorpion Saved the Goat's Life

Once upon a time there was a man named Momo, and he had a Goat. The Goat was rather tiresome, it was always butting people and getting Momo into trouble. I don't know whether the goat was mischievous, but I rather suspect he was, though he pretended to be sharpening his horns in fun. Any way it was not pleasant, and Momo decided to get rid of him. So he thought he would take him to the nearest town and sell him. You see where Momo lived all the markets are in towns, just as they are in England, and country folk come in on certain days to buy and sell things. Of course Momo hoped to drive a good bargain, so he groomed the Goat well, and led him along very gently and carefully.

On his way he met a Scorpion, and the Scorpion said "Good morning, Momo," for Scorpions, like other horrid people, can be quite polite. "Good morning, Momo, let me escort you to the town."

Now it is safer to travel together than alone, so Momo said, "Very well, but in that case you will have to lead the Goat." So they went on as before, only now the Scorpion led the Goat.

After they had gone on like this for some distance, they met a Hyaena who, being horrid and not polite, said, "I think I will join your party." Now the roads in the African forests are very unsafe and lonely, so people travel in parties when they can, and Momo thought it would be better to have the Hyaena with them, and in any case Hyaenas are very nasty when they're not pleased about anything, so he said, "Oh, very well, if you wish."

They reached the town quite safely, and when they had

looked about and found some lodgings, they had supper; the Goat meanwhile being tied up to a tree. After supper, they felt very sleepy, having come quite a long way, so they all decided to go to rest early.

The Hyaena said she would lie down near the Goat so as to be a protection to him, but Momo said he would rather not be too near, for the Goat soon went to sleep and as soon as he was asleep he always began to snore. And you see Momo wanted a good night's rest, for he had to be astir early and find a purchaser for his Goat. He wanted to be fresh and brisk, for he was afraid he would have some trouble in getting a good price, and it was very important, because he hoped to give some presents to the people who had been offended by the Goat's playful butting, and make friends of them again.

Now the Scorpion said nothing, but lay down very near to the Goat and the Hyaena. In the middle of the night he got up and went and settled down upon the Goat's neck.

Presently the Hyaena called softly, "Momo, Momo." Receiving no answer, she called again and again, "Momo! Momo! Momo!" But Momo was asleep, and did not hear her, so of course she got no answer. Now what do you think? That wicked old Hyaena got up and came over, very, very softly, to where the Goat was, meaning to kill and eat him!

But just as she was on the point of seizing the goat in her jaws, the Scorpion gave her such a sting on her tongue, that she jumped away with pain. Then seeing that the Scorpion had discovered that there was a thief in the house, she ran back quickly to her bed and lay down again, pretending it was not she! And the Scorpion went back to his bed, too.

Presently the Hyaena said, "Scorpion, Scorpion, are you asleep?"

And the Scorpion answered, "Oh! dear no, what made you think that? I have not been to sleep yet."

Then the crafty Hyaena said, "Oh, Scorpion, I am feeling so ill. I must go home at once. Will you tell Mr. Momo in the

morning that I don't think that the supper he gave us was good."

Now this was very wily of the Hyaena, because she thought Momo would want to kill her when the Scorpion told him how she had tried to kill the Goat. So she thought she would pretend, in that case, that she had a reason for wishing to punish him, and thus make him afraid to come near her; for, as I told you, Hyaenas can be horrid when they are annoyed.

But the Scorpion said, "Oh, Mrs. Hyaena, *I am* sorry. Don't go before the morning, for you know we shall sell the Goat to-morrow, and then, of course, you will get a share of the money. The supper was poor, perhaps, but a good meal to-morrow will set you right."

But the Hyaena was afraid to stay, she was so horribly deceitful herself that, of course, she could not trust anyone else, and she suspected the Scorpion of hatching a plot to kill her, as she had done to kill the Goat. (Some day, perhaps, I shall tell you why the Scorpion hated the Hyaena and wanted to play her a mean trick.) So the Hyaena ran off crying with pain, and no one knows where she went, and I don't believe anyone cares! Do you?

II. The Spider Deceives the Hippopotamus and the Elephant

I wonder if you have ever heard that ages and ages ago the animals held a great council and elected the Spider king? They believed him to be very wise because his house was so much better built than theirs, and because he used to sit so long in one place looking so learned and never doing anything without thinking it out well first. But I fancy that we should call him only cunning, which shows what different ideas people have, and accounts for many things.

The Spider was really a very wicked person, always up to mischief, and I am going to tell you now how he deceived the Hippopotamus; but first you must know that the Elephant and the Hippopotamus were always quarrelling about who was the stronger; and this gave the Spider his chance to play them a nasty trick. So when he met the Elephant one day he said, "Good morning, Mrs. Elephant, how are you? But there, I really need not ask, for you look so strong and well, not tired and stupid like Mrs. Hippopotamus who is always half asleep."

This pleased the silly old Elephant very much, and she puffed out her chest (and what an enormous one she has!) and threw back her trunk and laughed for joy. "Why of course I'm well, Mr. Spider, it is very kind indeed of you to ask, but I never felt better, and only wish I had a chance of showing you how strong I am. Why that silly Mrs. Hippopotamus pretends she could pull me over."

"How ridiculous of her," said the wily Spider, "any one can see that she is no match for you. Would you really like to show the world how very much stronger you are, because of

course it isn't really of any use just saying so?"

The Elephant fell head-over-heels into the trap. "I will do anything you like," she said, "if only you give me the chance, but Mrs. Hippopotamus is very difficult. She is one of those people who prefer words to deeds, and I doubt your being able to persuade her."

"We shall see," said the Spider, winking, "we shall see," and shook his head and said, "Good-bye." He knew he was considered very wise, and he thought it looked very mysterious and clever to shake his head. Between you and me it was a vain, empty, old head, full only of naughtiness and deceit, but the animals never guessed that. No, they thought him wisest of all.

Away went the Spider to the river to call upon the Hippopotamus. "Good morning, my dear," said he in his nasty, oily voice. "Good morning; what a pleasure it is to see a young, strong, fine-looking person like yourself. I travel a good deal, and I am not flattering you. I said to Mrs. Elephant only the other day when I happened to meet her in the forest, 'I am going to call on Mrs. Hippopotamus, for the sight of her always makes me feel strong and well.'"

"Oh! Mr. Spider," said the Hippopotamus, blushing, "you *are* a flatterer."

"Oh no I'm not," he replied, "but what do you think she said? Well, between ourselves, my dear, I don't like Mrs. Elephant; no, she is not a favourite of mine. She looks so grey and dismal always, and fancy the conceit of her! she actually said, 'I should like to have a tug of war with your friend Mrs. Hippopotamus! I've no patience with such people, always boasting of their strength and never doing anything to show it.' Of course I told her that you were much more powerful really, and if you challenged her I do not believe she would accept: I think she is afraid of you."

So far the Hippopotamus had hardly been able to get in a word, and had only signified her pleasure and gratification by

a series of grunts. Now, however, she broke in excitedly, "Really, Mr. Spider, you are most kind, and if only you will help me to settle that horrid Mrs. Elephant, why I shall be your friend for life. Personally, I cannot bear her." And here, overcome by her feelings, she opened her huge mouth, and uttered the most terrifying snorts and grunts.

When she had become a little calmer the Spider said, "Well, you look so fit, how would to-morrow do? It is of no use losing any time, a stitch in time saves nine, eh?" and he burst out laughing at his own wit. "Ha! ha! Mrs. Elephant will have a very bad stitch to-morrow, Ha! Ha!"

"Oh! Mr. Spider, how clever you are," smiled Mrs. Hippopotamus, more pleased than ever. "Do let us have a tug-of-war to-morrow."

"Very well," he replied, "I will go at once and fix it up with Mrs. Elephant, and we shall see, my dear, we shall see."

So the Spider called on the Elephant again, on his way home, and told her that he had happened to meet the Hippopotamus. "She was not looking very well," he said, "but when I told her so she flew into a great rage, and, capering about, she said, 'she knew that I thought you the stronger, but that you could not pull her over in a tug-of-war.'"

"Oh! couldn't I," replied the Elephant, "well, I'm quite ready to teach her a lesson, I could beat her easily."

"Of course you could, my dear," said the Spider, "I told her it was very unwise, to say such things, but if she really would like to try I thought that I could arrange it with you."

The Elephant consented at once, and the Spider having settled where they should meet, left her chortling to herself with glee, tearing up great trees to get into practice, and singing:—

"Hurrah, hurrah, for to-morrow we'll see,
Who is the stronger, the Hippo, or me.
I'll leave her in such a terrible plight

She'll rue all her boasting to-morrow night."

Early next morning the Spider got a very long, stout rope and tied one end to the Elephant, then he took the other end to the water-side, and tied it to the Hippopotamus. Then he went back to the centre of the rope where it lay slack, and gave them the word to pull, and both started pulling as hard as they could.

Now the Spider was a wicked old thing, as I have told you before, and he could make use of magic which made him stronger than everything and everybody else. So he began chanting the magic words and pulling at the rope himself. Presently the Elephant and the Hippopotamus both got tired, and the Spider was able to drag them nearer and nearer, until at last they came in sight of each other and found that they were being pulled towards one another by someone else.

Then the Hippopotamus was very angry, and said, "I believe the Spider has been playing us a trick," and she told the Elephant that he had called on her, and the Elephant told the Hippopotamus how the wicked old Spider had met her and arranged the tug-of-war.

The Hippopotamus screamed and danced with rage. I am glad I wasn't there, because it must have been so very funny! I expect I should have laughed, and then—well, perhaps, it is better not to think of what would have happened if Mrs. Hippopotamus had heard me. I rather think that she and the Elephant would have had indigestion!

They both raved and rampaged about, and vowed that they would be avenged on the Spider. "We will kill him," they said. "We will kill him, and when he is quite dead and there is no Spider to worry us we will be friends."

"Ha, ha," laughed Mr. Spider to himself, "you have got to catch me first, you forget that I owe you a grudge for eating up all my food at the dinner I gave you." And then he went away and hid, giving out to his friends that he had gone for a

rest-cure, and that no letters were to be forwarded, so he had a quiet time to make fresh plans.

Some time afterwards he found an old Hare's skin which had become dried up. "Ho! ho!" he laughed, "just the very thing I wanted," and with that he put the skin over his back, and pulled it tight and sat in the sun until the skin, which was sticky, stuck to him and covered him up like an overcoat. So now he looked like a Hare, and when he met the Elephant she said, "Hullo, Mr. Hare, you do look ill and wrinkled, whatever have you been doing?" Of course, *we* know that it was really the Spider, but the Elephant thought it was the Hare, and could not make out why his skin had become so shrivelled up.

"Ah," said the Spider out of the Hare-skin, "I was very foolish, it was all my fault, I have not long to live," and he pretended to cry.

"Cheer up, man, cheer up," said the Elephant. "Tell me what has happened to you?"

"Oh," said the disguised Spider, "some weeks ago I quarrelled with the Spider, and he gave me such an awful thrashing. You can see for yourself I am nearly dead. Oh, oh," he groaned, "I wonder if I shall live to get home and say goodbye to my dear wife and babies. I have been trying to crawl back all this time."

"But," said the Elephant, "do you really mean to say that it was the Spider who brought you to this state?"

"Oh," replied the wicked old story-teller, "the Spider is stronger and more cunning than all of us. Now that he is king, he even wants to thrash the Lion, and the Lion, who is frightened, is hiding from him."

"Good gracious," said the Elephant thoroughly alarmed, "I am glad I met you." And off she scampered to the Hippopotamus to tell her the news.

"It is not very healthy in the animal's town," said the Hippopotamus, "in future I shall always live in the water." She

was really very much afraid, but she would not own it to her rival.

"I believe you are right," said the Elephant, "but I prefer the forest, and so I shall go and see my parents who live there and have been inviting me for a long time."

So now you see, although there are many Spiders in the garden, you never meet an Elephant or a Hippopotamus there. The Spider spins his web in peace and sings:

"Oh, how I laugh. He! he!
What fools these animals be.
If only they knew that my tale is untrue,
Whatever would happen to me?"

III. How the Hyaena Was Blamed for the Spider's Wickedness

Once upon a time there was a dreadful famine, and all the animals suffered very much from hunger and thirst, so afterwards, when there was plenty once more, they thought that they would store up some grain for the winter.

Now the Spider, who, as you know, was their King, suggested that as they had plenty for the winter it would be a good opportunity to travel and see something of the world—and also to go into other people's lands and eat their food, but he did not say that, oh no! he was much too wise.

So when he had called a meeting of the animals it was decided that they should all go away until the winter came, and then they should return and live on what they had stored up in their barn. The Spider made a great speech and said, "Let us enjoy ourselves now and travel about. The time will not be wasted, for although we have never before had to store up food for the winter, I have heard that animals in other countries always do so. Let us try to find out if this is true." And then he offered a prize to the animal who should bring back the most useful piece of information. So they all got ready—I must say it did not take them very long—the storehouse was closed, the Spider took the key (it was a magic lock), and they all said, "Good-bye," and started off.

But the Spider went only a little way with the party, and then he remembered that his wife had a Cousin-Spider right on the other side of the forest, and he said that this was a good opportunity for them to go and see her before going further afield. Of course the wily old thing wanted to get rid of the

others, and then it struck him that it would be a good thing to have his wife out of the way too, in case she should interfere with his plans, for I expect that you have already guessed that he was up to mischief as usual!

So they went to his wife's cousin's house and rested there for a few days. Then the Spider said to his wife, "You are so slow, I shall never get anywhere at the rate you walk, and it is very important that I should go further than any of my subjects. A King must never be outdone, he must always set a good example."

Then Mrs. Spider was very sad and said: "Supposing you were to be ill, my dear, or supposing…"

"Supposing fiddlesticks," said the Spider, rudely. That is one thing I dislike about Spiders, they are always so nasty to each other. If the husband does not please his wife she eats him up, and if the wife does not please her husband he either kills her or else goes off, like this one did; and I don't think it is very nice, do you?

Well, I must get on with my tale. The Spider really went home, but by a different way so that his wife should not know; and when he was rested—for he always took very good care of himself—he dug a big hole. When he thought it was big enough, he went to the barn and unlocked the door, and every day he stole as much corn as he could carry, and for supper he used to walk back to the store and eat up all the grain that he had spilt, so there was no trace to show who had stolen it.

By the time he had removed all the corn and had eaten as much as he could—for he really was dreadfully greedy—the summer was over, and winter was near. So away he went to fetch his wife—not that he cared what became of her, but because he was always very careful of appearances (you can see this in the care with which he spins his web), and he did not want any remarks made. So he made up a quite a long story about the wonderful countries he had visited and the

marvellous people he had seen. Indeed his story nearly came to a sudden end once, for he was so full of himself and his wonderful doings that he caught one of his feet in a twig and very nearly had to leave one of his legs behind him.

But Mrs. Spider was dead! She had been so much upset at his treatment that she did not mind what became of her, and so one day at dinner she swallowed too large a piece of fly, and a leg stuck in her throat, and she choked.

Mr. Spider cried and pretended to be very grieved, but he soon dried his tears. "Just like her," he said, "to go and die because she was annoyed at being left behind. If she had really loved me as much as I loved her she would have been glad to wait anywhere for me. There is no understanding women."

"Poor Man," said the Cousin-Spider, "we did our very best but we could not save her, and now you will be so lonely."

"Of course, I had brought you a present," said the Spider, "to repay you for your kindness to my dear wife, but now that she is dead I have only your word to show how she died. I do not know that she was kindly treated, and so I shall not give you anything. I expect the fly was stale or too much cooked, if the truth were known." He was as mean as he was deceitful and had never really thought of giving her a present at all, so he was not a bit sorry that his wife was dead, but was rejoicing to think that now he would have all the corn at home to himself.

Meanwhile the animals had returned, but they could not open the store-house, of course, without the King's consent. I should have told you that when the Spider had removed all the corn, he went to the Hyaena's den—knowing that she was away with the other animals—and found some of her false hair, and he put this in the barn. "They will think Mrs. Hyaena has done it, she has been caught stealing before, so they will easily believe anything bad of her, and I shall be safe," said the old rascal to himself.

The animals waited for some time, but after a while they

became impatient—it was not like their King to be late for a feast—and they began to call "Spider! Spider!"

For a long time they received no reply, although he was really quite near. Then a faint, "Yes" came in answer to their repeated calls. "Yes," and then nearer, a breathless, "Yes, Yes, I am coming," as if he were hurrying from a long distance.

When he arrived the animals said, "We have been waiting here since the morning; a King should be punctual."

And the Spider said, "Ah! you will forgive me when I tell you that my dear wife is dead, and I am too heartbroken to mind what anyone thinks. I have been a long, long way off and have only just returned." Then, seeing the Hyaena, he said, "But my dear Mrs. Hyaena what has happened to your hair? You used to have such a lovely fringe."

Then the Hyaena blushed and said, "Oh! I don't know; I must have burnt it." She did not want all the animals to know that her hair was false.

Of course the animals were all very sorry for the Spider, but they said they were hungry and wanted their share of the corn at once.

So the Spider said, "I am so tired and weak, I will appoint a deputy to open the store for me. Here, Mr. Monkey, I appoint you; take the key and give us out our corn."

So the Monkey took the key and climbed up into the barn, and when he had opened it and looked in he said, "Good gracious!"

Then all the animals cried out, "Whatever is the matter?" and the Monkey said, "I cannot tell you, it is too dreadful. Oh! King, command the Hyaena to give us our corn."

Of course the Spider knew what had happened, but he pretended that he did not, and that he was angry, so he said in a very dignified manner, "It is unusual for the King's Deputy to wish to resign his post, but you have our royal permission to do so," and turning to the Hyaena he said, "Ascend Madam, and report to us."

Now the poor Hyaena was very proud and pleased to do so, but when she had looked in and had seen her false hair there, but no corn, she knew that some one had played her a trick, and she became very confused. "Oh dear! Oh dear!" she cried, "I do not know who has done this. It was not I, it was not I."

Then the Spider said in an injured tone, "It seems I must go myself after all. What a weary thing it is to be a King," and thereupon he climbed up slowly and sadly as if he were not used to it, and expected every step to be his last. When he had looked in, he turned round with a very shocked expression, and seemed ready to faint. "Oh! Mr. Monkey," he cried, "I do not really wonder now that you were not anxious to report. Ooh! Ooh! my poor head; this is too much," and he reeled and would have fallen, but the Monkey caught him and propped him up against the roof. When the Spider had recovered, he asked the Monkey to be so kind as to look in again and show the animals what he saw. So the Monkey seized the Hyaena's false fringe and held it up to the assembled company, saying in a loud voice, "The Hyaena is a thief: she has robbed us of all our corn. The Hyaena has cheated us!"

Then the poor Hyaena burst into tears, and sobbed, "It was not I, it was not I," but none of the animals would believe her because she had a very bad name, and they were mad with rage. So they set upon her, and kicked and bit, and beat her, and she would have been killed had she not escaped and run away into the forest, where she is now for all I know to the contrary.

I shall have some more to tell you about the Spider another day, and how he was paid out at last for all his wickedness.

IV. The Crafty Spider Replenishes His Larder

Now when the Spider had eaten all the corn that he had stolen from the animals' storehouse, he was rather at a loss, for his wife being dead, he had no one to help him. The King of the Animals is really only chief in name; they do not work for him, and only seem to consult him on special occasions, or in times of trouble and anxiety. He sat for a long time pondering in the fashion that we know had given rise to his being elected King.

At last a brilliant idea struck him, and, as usual, it began and ended in mischief. He delighted in taking people in and making them work for him. Oh! he really was not a nice person to know, that Spider! and he became greedier and greedier as time went on, which was really very sad, so you must not smile. So, full of his latest plan, he sallied forth, and when no one was about, he set fire to his house! It makes one shudder to remember all the poor people who have no houses, and to think of that wicked old Spider setting fire to his, just because he was too lazy to—Oh! but I must go on with my tale.

When the house was quite burnt down, the Spider ran along very quickly to the Fowl's house. When he arrived, he sank down in a heap and began crying, "Oh-oo-oo, Oh-oo-oo"—you know the way Spiders cry.

So the Fowl, who was very stupid as most fowls are, did not stop to think whether it was a trick or not, she got so excited, and exclaimed, "Oh, King, Oh, Mr. Spider (silly thing to talk like that!), Oh, cluck! cluck! whatever has brought

you to my house?"

But the Spider kept up the game and only wailed more loudly, so the Fowl brought him some water and some corn.

Now when I heard this I thought to myself, well, it would be just like that greedy Spider if he were to choke himself, he is so greedy! But no, he ate as much as he could, and then he pretended to be a little comforted.

"Oh, Mrs. Fowl," he said. "What a treat it is to come across such a dear, kind, sympathetic soul when one is in trouble."

Of course that flattered Mrs. Fowl all the more, and she said, "Dear King, do tell me all your troubles. I believe a Lion once helped a Mouse, so I"—and she puffed all her feathers out—"might be so fortunate as to help you."

"Well, you see, it is just like this," said the Spider. "Oh-oo-oo-oo, I can't speak of it," and he took another drink. "My house has been burnt down, and Oh-oo-oo what *shall* I do? What *shall* I do?"

"Will you stay here a little while?" said the Fowl. Fowls are really quite kind sometimes. I knew one once—but that is another story.

Now this did not suit Mr. Spider at all, so he said, "I could not take advantage of anyone's kindness like that, dear, dear Mrs. Fowl, but I had thought perhaps you would help me to rebuild my house? I have no one to help me now my dear wife is dead."

"Why, of course I will; I will come to-morrow morning," said the Fowl, "but you won't ask the Wild Cat, will you?"

"How could you imagine I would ask anyone of that class?" said the Spider indignantly, and after thanking her again, he left the Fowl's house and went—where do you think? Why, as straight as he could go to the Wild Cat's house.

"Good morning, Mrs. Wild Cat," said he, "I am in great trouble and I want your help."

"Dear! dear! how can I help you, and what may your trouble be?" said the Wild Cat.

"Well," said the Spider, "you have heard of my sad loss," and he sniffed like the hypocrite he was. "My dear wife was such a good wife, and of course now there is no one to look after the house, and oh! I can't tell you how miserable I've been. Last night when I was in bed and asleep, I was suddenly roused by a smell of fire, and a horrible crackling sound; it was as much as I could do to escape. My house is burnt to a cinder. Will you come and help me to rebuild it? I am asking one or two friends to-morrow morning."

So the Wild Cat said, "Of course, I will come—but I hope you won't mind my asking you—have you asked the Dog? Because I am afraid of him and could not come if he is coming."

"My dear Mrs. Wild Cat, how *could* you come if the Dog came? I have *not* asked him. Indeed I want real help, not empty chattering—deeds, not words! The Dog is much too noisy for my taste."

"Oh! well, then of course I shall be happy to come," said the Wild Cat.

Quite cheered up, the Spider frisked off, and I hardly like to tell you where he went, but of course I must, because it's part of the story. He went straight to the Dog's house!

The Dog was in rather a hurry: he was just going off, and he didn't much like the Spider at the best of times. "Hullo!" was his greeting, "and what do you want, Mr. Spider?" The Dog thought as he was so much bigger he need not pay much attention to the Spider. "*King*!" he was overheard to say to Mrs. Dog one night, "a pretty King he is," and she replied as a dutiful wife should, "I can't think how they came to elect him King. After all, I think you look much wiser, and we all know you are, but I suppose it was jealousy really, there is so much favouritism."

The Spider saw there was no use in beating about the

bush, so he said, "I have been very unfortunate, first my wife died, which was very inconsiderate, and now my house is burnt down and that is even more inconvenient. Will you come and help me to rebuild my house tomorrow? I am arranging a working-bee, and several friends have promised to help."

"Oh! well," replied Mr. Dog, "I can't promise anything just now, but any way, if I can't come, my wife shall."

"Oh! that is most kind," said the Spider, making a bow to Mrs. Dog, "we all know how kind and helpful Mrs. Dog is."

"But there is one thing," said the Dog, "say—have you asked the Hyaena to join your party? I do not care to meet her myself, nor do I allow Mrs. Dog to do so."

"Why, what do you think of me? Do you wish to insult me?" cried the Spider. "The Hyaena, indeed! You won't find any of that set anywhere near *my* house," and he pretended to go off in a rage.

Then Mrs. Dog—as the Spider well knew she would—said to her husband, "My dear, one of us must certainly go—it will never do to offend the Spider," and the Dog (of course he was a wild dog, not a dear old tame English dog, you must remember, and was something of a coward) said, "You are right, as usual, my dear. I quite think *you* should go."

By this time you will have guessed that the Spider was well on his way to the Hyaena's house. She was not at home, but little Miss Hyaena (who the Spider rather thought would make a nice second Mrs. Spider) said she would tell her mother, and she felt quite sure she would be only too pleased to help, so the Spider went on.

But he had gone only some few yards when he heard a voice—"Mr. Spider, Mr. Spider," and turning he saw Miss Hyaena.

"Well, well, my child, and what is it now?" he said in what was meant to be a very pleasing, kindly voice.

"Oh! Mr. Spider," she panted, "I thought I would just ask

you if you had invited the Leopard, because if so, I know my Mother would not come. She is afraid of the Leopard, who has behaved rather badly to us since Father died and we have only Mother to look after us all."

"Child, child," said the Spider, "any wish of yours is law to me; don't worry your pretty head. I am not so friendly with the Leopard that I should ask him to meet any real friends of mine."

"Thank you so much," she said, and returned home quite content.

Presently, on his way to the Leopard's house, the Spider met the Lion, and invited him to come to the great working-bee for the restoration of his house. The Lion feared no one, and he was too noble a beast to find fault with any others who were lending a helping hand to a friend in distress, so he made no enquiries as to who was expected, nor did he stipulate that any special animals should be asked or left out.

The Leopard was quite willing to help, but he said to the Spider, "Don't ask the old Lion. He is such a ponderous old bore; we never agree," and you will have no difficulty in picturing the sweet smile with which the Spider assured him that nothing was further from his thoughts! And he went home well pleased with his day's work.

In the morning the Fowl came very early. "What shall I begin upon, Mr. Spider?" she asked.

"Well, I want some grass tied up into thatch," he said. So the Fowl started tying up the grass.

Presently the Wild Cat arrived, and the Fowl became very agitated. "Oh! Spider, Spider," she cried, "and I begged you so particularly not to ask the Wild Cat. I believe you went straight away and told her."

The Spider said, "Well, don't make such a noise or else she will hear you. Just hide in this grass," and he went across and told the Wild Cat, who promptly rushed over and killed the Fowl.

"Let me put it by for you," said the Spider, and just as they were putting it away the Dog arrived.

"Oh! Spider, whatever brings the Dog here to-day?" asked the Wild Cat.

"How should I know?" said the Spider, "perhaps you'd better hide here while I ask him."

Then he went and met the Dog, and told him that the Wild Cat was in hiding behind some grass. Of course the Dog caught her without much trouble, and soon the Spider was offering to put her body away along with that of the poor Fowl she had killed a few minutes before.

When they had just started to work, who should arrive but the Hyaena! "Oh! Spider, don't let her see me," howled the Dog.

"Don't be ridiculous," retorted the Spider, "whoever can see you in all this grass; really, some people have an absurd idea of their own size and importance."

"Good morning, Mr. Spider, and where shall I begin?" said Mrs. Hyaena, pleasantly, for a wonder.

"Over there, I think," said he. "The grass looks as if it would take some tying up," and he pointed directly at the spot where the Dog was hiding.

A fearful yell announced that the Hyaena had discovered why the grass looked so tumbled, and in a few minutes she came out with the Dog hanging limply out of her jaws.

"Well, I never!" quoth the Spider, "you are energetic! Why, you will have enough food there for a week. What luck some people have to be sure! Let me put your prize aside for you." But the Hyaena said she was hungry and would like to eat the Dog there and then. However, just as she was preparing to begin her meal, the Leopard arrived, and the Hyaena fled up into the place where the new roof had been commenced.

"Good morning, sir," said the Leopard. He was rather old-fashioned, and some people said he was affected. They

thought he was very conceited, for he always took care that his spots were in the latest fashion. But then I daresay they had a grudge against him.

"Where do you wish me to help you? I shall be pleased to begin."

"Thank you so much," said the Spider. "What a thing it is to have such a kind friend. I believe *that* is rather a good place to begin; shall we see?" taking the Leopard straight over to where the Hyaena was crouching.

Of course she had no chance, and just as the Spider was helping the Leopard to put his booty away till the work was finished for the day, the Lion appeared.

As the Leopard had said before, they never could agree, and so they flew at each other at once. And while they were fighting, the Spider got a big stick and began beating them with it, and crying out, "Oh! Leopard leave off! Oh! Lion, Lion, do leave off, you are much too great to fight like this."

But he went on beating them all the same, and they went on fighting, till they both dropped down dead! Now at last the Spider had meat enough and to spare, and as he was collecting it all into his house, he sang—

"Ha! Ha! He! He!
Though little I be,
I'm wiser than all these big beasts, you see!"

V. The Fairy Baby

Long, long ago there lived a certain man whose wife was very extravagant and spent a great deal of money. He was very good to her, and all went well for a time, and then things began to go badly with them, and at last he had to go and borrow money.

He was very fond of his wife and he did not want to tell her any of his troubles until he was obliged to do so, and I am sorry to say that he was quite afraid she would be angry with him for not making enough money to provide her with the things she thought necessary, instead of sympathising with him in his misfortunes.

One day God sent her a little baby, and her husband was delighted, for he thought, "Now she will not be so fond of going out and spending money, she will stay at home and play with the baby, and look after him."

But no, that did not suit her at all, and so when the baby was a few weeks old she left him to take care of himself, and we cannot be surprised to hear that the fairies were so sorry for him that they came and took him away to Fairyland, and put a changeling in his place. No one guessed what had happened—though people thought the Baby had suddenly become very good, for the changeling was really an old fairy, you see, who was glad to have a rest from his work.

One day when the Baby (as his parents thought him) was left all alone in the house, the Money-Lender came to ask for his money. He knocked and knocked and knocked but received no answer, for the changeling was just asking the Fairy Queen what he should do.

Just as the Money-Lender had decided to go away he

heard a voice saying, "My father is out, but if you will take *me* to the Court I will claim the money that is due to him from another man, and you shall have it."

"Who is speaking?" the astonished Money-Lender asked, and when the Baby answered him again from his cradle he was too much surprised to argue, and for a joke replied, "Very well, we will go to the people with the mighty mouths that they may judge between us."

So he picked up the Baby and put him on his back—which is the way they carry babies in Hausaland—and off they went towards the market.

Now they came to some wells, and when the Baby saw them he pulled the Money-Lender's hair to attract his attention, and said, "Put me down, if we want the people with mighty mouths here they are, where shall we find any mouths greater than these?"

The Money-Lender was annoyed at being outwitted by a Baby, and said crossly, "Very well, let us go to the people who have studied so much that their eyes are red." And off they went again.

Soon they came to a small pepper tree, with red and green peppercorns on it, and when the Baby saw it he pulled the Money-Lender's hair again. Then the man asked angrily, "What is the matter now?" And the Baby replied, "You said you would take me to the red-eyed people; are there any whose eyes are redder than peppers?"

So the Money-Lender saw that he must try again, "You are a very trying child," he said. "Let us go to those who have large ears that they may hear our cause." And off they went again.

Presently they came to a pond with water-lilies growing in it. Now, perhaps you don't know this, but the leaves are very large, and of course the changeling had been making fun of the Money-Lender, so he said, "Let us stop here."

Then the man said, "Nonsense, why should we stop

here?"

But the Baby replied, "Surely no one in the world has larger ears than the Water-Lily!"

Now the Money-Lender had at first thought to make fun of the Baby, but he soon found it was of no use, so he said, "Oh well, I think we had better go to the King. After all he is the proper person to decide our case."

But when they arrived at the court the King said, "I am sorry, but I have no one to shave me, and I cannot think properly unless I am shaved, so I fear you must go away and return another day."

"Not so, King," the Baby broke in. "Let hot water be brought that I may shave you," and the King laughed and said, "Oh! very well, but you are rather a young barber!"

Now on the way the Baby had picked some branches of ripe red currants, and bringing them out of his pocket he said to the King, "If I shave you, will you strip these currants for me, please? I promised to have them done by the time my mother returned home, and if they are not ready she will beat me."

"Very well," replied the King, "one good turn deserves another," and the Baby began to shave him.

When he had finished, the King (who was lazy and really did not want to be bothered) said. "Now Baby, you must put the hair back on my face again, and then I shall be able to judge properly between you." Of course he thought that was such an impossible thing that it would settle the matter, and silence both the Baby and the Money-Lender.

"I will do that with pleasure, King," replied the Baby quickly, to his surprise, "but first let me see you put back the currants on their stalks."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the King aghast, "there is no arguing with that Baby. *I* cannot judge between them." And then turning to the Money-Lender, he said, "I advise you to take him back to his father's house, and not to press for the

money. He is too clever for all of us, and will do us an injury if we offend him."

So the Money-Lender had to make the best of it, for no one was any match for the changeling, and he took the Baby home again.

The father was very much surprised when the Money-Lender said, "I shall not worry you any more for the money; as long as your son lives you need not repay me."

However, of course he was highly delighted, and said, "What have I done to deserve such a clever son?"

But the mother chimed in: "Don't talk nonsense. Of course the Baby takes after me!"

And she had the last word, for the changeling was far too wise to argue with *her*!

VI. Hausatu and the Enchanted Spider

Once upon a time there was a very beautiful girl. She lived in Kano, but the fame of her beauty spread all over the country, and people came from near and far to see her. All the young men fell in love with her, and wished to marry her, but Hausatu—for that was her name—did not wish to be married, and her parents were so fond of her (for she was a very sweet, good girl) that they did not like the thought of parting with her at all.

So her father said that if they gave her to any man as his wife, he must be the cleverest in all the world, though no mere man could possibly be worthy of their darling Hausatu. And he raised a great mound of earth in front of their house, and whenever anyone came to call upon them, he said, "Are you seeking a wife?"

And if they said that they were, then he would reply in a deep, gruff voice, to try and frighten them away, "If you wish to marry Hausatu, you must prove yourself worthy. Whoever wishes to be her husband must first clear away this mound of earth that blocks up our front path, and further, he must not eat nor drink anything until all is cleared away, neither must he spit."

You will perhaps wonder why he said this, but in the land where Hausatu lived it is very, very hot, and the people are in the habit of chewing and spitting all the time they are working to keep their lips moist. So Hausatu's father wanted to make the task very hard for any man who wished to marry his daughter, so as to test his character, for he thought that even if he remembered not to eat nor drink, he would be sure to forget and spit; and as the suitor would not be allowed to try

more than once, his chance would be gone before he could say a word!

I could not tell you how many young men came and saw Hausatu, and could not make up their minds to try; for they knew how hard a thing it was to do, and feared lest Hausatu's father should impose a further trial of endurance upon them if they were lucky enough to be successful in that one. However, many tried but failed, and Hausatu's father went out every evening to rebuild the mound and replace what the unsuccessful suitors had removed.

Now you know how very crafty the Spider was, and how really clever too, and when he heard of Hausatu's beauty he thought he would like to go and see her with his own eyes. So he changed himself into a handsome young man, and started off on his quest.

"Truly the girl is most beautiful," said he to himself, "and what is more, she is so much beloved by her parents that she must be a good daughter; so she is the wife for me." And nothing daunted by the task to be accomplished before she could be his, the conceited Spider presented himself to her father.

When he had heard all that there was to be done, he asked, "If I attempt this, may I sing?"

"Why certainly," replied the girl's father, "every farmer's lad is allowed to sing. Sing as loudly as you will, and as long; if you fulfil all the other conditions my daughter shall be yours." So the Spider went off and arranged to begin very early the next day.

When he was alone again, he took up his quiver, and removing the arrows, he filled it with the remainder of the gruel left over from his breakfast, and put it aside.

As he was going along very early next morning he plucked several corn-stalks and he stripped the ears off, and put the stalks into the quiver which he had slung over his shoulder before starting out. The quiver then looked as if it were full of arrows, and as the father had said he would provide a spade

for the work, the Spider carried only a bow in his hand.

Hausatu had suggested that her parents should supply the spade as she feared magic; so that is why the Spider did not take his own.

"Good morning, Mr. Arurururuwi," said Hausatu, for that was the name the Spider had given himself for the occasion. "I hope you will not find the task too difficult." For you must remember he was now a handsome young man, and Hausatu rather liked him.

"Good morning, Little One," said the Spider, "don't you trouble your pretty head about that, but just get your preparations made for the wedding! I am sure to satisfy your father, and I have left all prepared at home to receive you on our return after the ceremony. Very, very soon I shall say, 'Here is Mrs. Arurururuwi.'" So Hausatu blushed and ran away into the house to tell her mother, and just then her father came out.

"Good morning to you, Mr. Arurururuwi," he said. "I wonder how you will fare to-day!"

"Why," laughed the Spider, "as I have just told your daughter, *I* shall have won a wife before many hours are over, and *you* will have gained a son-in-law."

Now wasn't it just like the Spider to say that? If he had said, "You will have *lost* a daughter," Hausatu's father would have been in a bad temper right away!

"By the way," he added, "I shall keep my quiver on: in these troublous times it is not safe to lay it aside for a moment, even while one is working."

"Certainly," said Hausatu's father, "I see you are a brave man, and a brave man is always prepared."

Then the Spider seized the spade and set to work, singing:

"I am the cleverest man on earth,
I rouse the folk to music and mirth,
I'm always happy, I'm always gay,

And so I shall be on my wedding day.
Hurrah, hurrah, and a hip, hip, hip,
With a tupp, tupp, tupp, and a tip, tip, tip."

Now when he said "tupp, tupp, tupp," and "tip, tip, tip," he was really spitting, only no one guessed. So you can see why he asked if he might sing!

Hausatu and her parents were so excited when they heard the word 'wedding-day,' that of course they all began talking together, and all at once, and so never heard the Spider spitting.

Soon the sun got very hot, and the Spider's throat became very parched and dry, and he began to feel rather sorry for himself, so he said aloud, "This is quite a good opportunity to dry the poison on my arrows." And he shut one eye, and put his head down to the quiver as if he were choosing a particular arrow, but really he was sucking up the gruel through the corn-stalk!

Then he sat down and rested for a few minutes, and when he got up again he was as fresh as ever, and soon cleared the mound right away. Hausatu and her parents could hardly believe it when they opened the door, and saw the ugly mound of earth had disappeared. But of course they knew that now their happy days together had come to an end, so there was nothing to be done but to prepare for the parting. They were all so sad at supper, to which the Spider had been invited, that he was very much annoyed indeed, though he thought he had better conceal his vexation as best he could, in case the parents should make his bad temper an excuse for not letting their daughter go with him even at the last moment.

However, her father stood up and told all the relatives who had been invited to supper to meet the Spider, that as he had accomplished what he and his wife had thought and hoped to be an impossibility, there was nothing for it but to

allow him to marry their daughter.

After supper the Spider produced a sort of banjo that he could play rather well, and he sang and made himself so agreeable that everyone liked him, and said what a lucky girl Hausatu was, for she had been won by a very nice fellow after all!

The Spider had brought ever so many pats of butter and rolls of bread with him, for where he lived the bread-fruit and shea-butter grew upon trees, and so all he had to do was to gather as much as ever he could carry. He gave presents of bread, butter, salt, rice and beans, to his father and mother-in-law, and all sorts of lovely jewellery and fine clothes to his bride, and so they were quite cheered up.

Now when he first took her home the Spider was quite afraid he was going to have trouble with his wife; for though such a sweet-tempered girl, she could be very disagreeable when she chose. And she did not like the look of their new home a bit at first.

"Where is your house?" she asked.

"This is *our* house, my dear," replied her husband, passing his hands over her eyes, and when she looked again somehow the webs seemed to have changed. They did not look quite so flimsy, in fact one big one, which covered the two smaller ones, seemed quite like a strong tent. It did not look too substantial, but the material was beautifully soft and silky.

"How lovely," cried Hausatu, and just then the sun shone brightly on one corner, and the web glistened with all the most glorious colours you can imagine.

"Do you like it?" asked the Spider, "because I can get you as much as ever you wish of that material."

"I don't think I ever saw anything more lovely! Now I come to examine it, of course I can see how very strongly it is woven," said Hausatu, apologetically. "Oh! what an *exquisite* pattern, I should love to have a dress of it! It is too lovely for a tent!"

The Spider was amused as well as pleased at his wife's enthusiasm. He wondered what she would say if she knew that he had not only made it himself, but had provided the material out of his own body! But he did not want to tell her too much at once; he was a wily old thing!

So Hausatu settled down in her new home, and all went as merrily as wedding-bells, and every afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Arururuwi sat in their best parlour to receive their friends' congratulations, and to show them their many lovely presents. The Spider had spun such beautiful new webs, and he had so bewitched Hausatu that she was as proud of them as a proper Mrs. Spider would have been, and they were very happy. Every morning he went out to work, and when he came home Hausatu had dinner ready, and the web all nicely dusted and so comfortable.

Have you ever tried sleeping in a Spider's web? It *is* so soft and cosy!

After a time a little baby-daughter was born to the Spider and his wife, and oh! they were so pleased. She was such a sweet little creature, and as good as gold. Her father used to delight in spinning pretty webs for her, and she had more frocks than any of the other babies in the neighbourhood, and they were far prettier too. The Spider loved to play with her, and she would curl up into a ball, and tuck all her little arms and legs together, and crow and laugh back at him, and suddenly jump up and run off to her newest web!

The mother and father were so devoted to the little one that they took it in turns to work, so that one of them should always be free to play with the baby.

They went on like this and were ever so happy, till one day a nasty old woman from the village happened to be passing just when Hausatu had gone down to the river. The Spider was alone, playing and singing to his little girl, he was off his guard, and was singing:—

"Your father when he went to woo
Was set a difficult task to do,
He had to dig, he had to work—
And that is a thing all Spiders shirk.
With a tupp, tupp, tupp,
And a tip, tip, tip,
He did not go thirsty
With gruel to sip.

"For in his quiver was food and drink,
That was not fair, perhaps you think?
But all is fair in love and war,
Love laughs at locksmith, laughs at door.
With a tupp, tupp, tupp,
And a tip, tip, tip,
He did not go thirsty
With gruel to sip."

The wicked old wretch did not say anything for a day or two, but she kept watch every morning when it was the spider's turn to play nurse, and when she had heard him singing several days running, she thought it was time to speak. Of course she was the kind of person who just loved making trouble.

So off she went to the river where Hausatu used to get the water to fill all the jugs for the day, and when Hausatu appeared she said, "Child, I grieve to say you have been horribly deceived. Your husband lied to your father and you. He did not fast all day, as you thought, when he was clearing the mound away. Oh! no. He had gruel in the quiver which he sucked up when no one was looking, and, moreover, when he sang 'Tupp, tupp, tupp!' he was really spitting."

"How disgusting—besides it was forbidden!" gasped Hausatu. "But there, I know you; you are old Mrs. Busybody, and I don't believe a word of it."

"You can prove it my dear," said the other with a sneer.

"You have only to go back directly, before your husband expects you, and you will probably hear him telling your little daughter all about it. He was actually singing a song to her of what he had done, and laughing as I passed."

"The wretch," exclaimed Hausatu, and she let all the jugs fall, and rushed off home at once, where she arrived just in time to hear her husband singing as he tossed the baby up in his arms:

"Your father when he went to woo,
Was set a difficult task to do.
He had to dig, he had to work—
And that is a thing all Spiders shirk.
With a tupp, tupp, tupp,
And a tip, tip, tip,
He did not go thirsty
With gruel to sip.

"For in his quiver was food and drink.
That was not fair—"

"It wasn't, it wasn't," shrieked Hausatu in a perfect fury. "Horrible wretch; heartless-cruel-cold-blooded-deceitful-wicked-nasty-disgusting-old-creature. You cheat! you cheat!" And she threw herself on the ground, and tore her hair, and sobbed with rage.

I've never seen anyone in such an awful passion before, and I never want to again. Oh! it was dreadful. Before the Spider could say a word she had snatched up the Baby, and drawing her hand over the web had torn it to shreds. "There!" she said, and stamped her foot so hard, right on his toes. "There! there!" as she threw the baby's toys at him. "I'm going home, I *am*; all your cunning shall not stop me. I have done with you for ever." And she began to sob, "I could never have believed it, but oh! I heard it, I heard it myself," and away she ran, crying and sobbing, and never stopped till she got home.

Her parents were naturally very much distressed, when she returned to them in such a state, and could not imagine whatever had happened to upset her so.

"There, there, there, my darling," said her mother softly, crooning over her as if she were once more their little child, "never mind, it will all come right."

And her father took his little grandchild, and went off to get her some nice warm milk, for he was so afraid she might be cold. When Hausatu fled from the Spider, you remember, she just picked up her baby, and never stopped to put on its shawl or outdoor clothes.

Later on, when Hausatu was rested and comforted a little, she told her father and mother how Arururuwi had wickedly deceived them.

Her mother was very indignant, and said she must not think of going back to a man who had treated them all so shamefully, adding that they had never wanted her to be married, and would be only too delighted to have her at home again.

"Softy, softly, my good woman," said her husband, "we must first find out how the misunderstanding and quarrel arose. I feel sure Arururuwi will be able to give us a satisfactory explanation."

"Oh, he'll explain it all, never fear," retorted Hausatu bitterly, "but it will be some time before *I* believe anything he says again, and I won't go back; I won't, I won't;" and she terrified her parents so by screaming and jumping about, that they promised her she should return only of her own free will.

Now the Spider kept very quiet, and never went near them. It is true he had as much as he could do to repair his wrecked house. In fact, after looking sadly at it for some time, he decided it would be easier to build an entirely fresh one. So he set to work at once, for he felt so lonely and miserable without his wife and baby, that he was glad of something to occupy his thoughts. It took him several days to finish it all

off, and he made it even prettier than before, hoping Hausatu would be pleased when she returned. For he felt sure she was so fond of him that she would soon long to come back, and then it would be an easy task to persuade her to do so.

In due course the house was finished, and lovely it looked inside and out. The web was fine and silky, just like gossamer, which you know is the substance that Fairies' wings are made of, and the Spider embroidered it with fresh dew drops. He arranged them all round the porch, and oh! how they glistened when the sun was shining.

He was rather friendly with the Fire-flies, and he arranged with them to come and serenade his wife when he should have persuaded her to return home. They promised that they would all light up, and give her a splendid welcome, and a torchlight procession to finish up with.

"But," said the Chief of the Fire-flies, "surely you will punish old Mrs. Busybody for her interference?"

"Rather," said the Spider laughing, "you need not worry any more over her, for I went last night and spun webs all over her best drawing-room curtains. It was rather exhausting, but I was well repaid when I heard her remarks this morning, and besides, my Cousin-Spider, who dislikes her as much as I do, is staying near. He has promised me that as soon as ever a web is dusted down he will hurry to the spot and spin another."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Fire-flies, "that is a good joke; old Mrs. Busybody won't live long now, for she can never leave a Spider's web alone, and we shall soon hear that the worry of keeping her house free of them has killed her."

"That's something, certainly," said the Spider, "so much for old Mrs. Busybody, but, unfortunately, there are dozens like her, and so there will always be someone ready to take her place!"

Hausatu and her parents wondered what had happened to the Spider, for they quite thought he would have come very soon to take his run-a-way wife home. Hausatu was not

happy, and did not seem to take any interest in anything, not even in her dear little baby.

"I cannot stand this any longer," said her mother to the father. "The child is fretting; you must do something."

"That's all very well, but what can I do?" he retorted. "I've a good mind to go and see that wretched fellow and ask him what it all means."

"Oh! no, don't do *that*," said his wife, "it would be very lowering to your dignity."

"Well, what am I to do, then?" demanded her husband testily. "You say 'do something,' and 'something must be done,' yet directly I suggest anything you cry, 'Oh! no, don't do that.' For heaven's sake propose something yourself."

"When you have calmed down a little," said his wife, in her most dignified tone, "I will certainly tell you what I think would be best. Send a note to Arururuwi and tell him to come here to us immediately. Don't say a word about Hausatu being with us, and don't let him suspect that we know anything. He is very sharp: we must be wary."

So they agreed to do this, and the note was sent.

"Perhaps he won't come, and I shall have to go, after all," said Hausatu's father.

"Oh! rubbish," said his wife. "Give the man time. Do you expect him to *fly* here?"

"No, but I should think he is crawling," replied her husband, which was just what the Spider *was* doing, if they'd only known.

Next day the Spider, who was overjoyed at receiving the letter, set off to Hausatu's home, where he arrived in the early morning. No one was up, so he began singing:—

"I was the happiest man on earth,
Wherever I went there was music and mirth.
I was quite happy, and I was quite gay,
But I was most glad on my nuptial-day.

And now my dear wife has been lost to me,
Because of the tales of Old Busybodie."

Now when Hausatu heard this, she felt sure she must have misjudged him, but hark! there he goes again—

"I loved my wife, and my wife loved me,
And happy we'd be but for Busybodie."

And she couldn't bear it any longer, especially when the Baby-Spider sat up and uncurled itself, and began calling and crooning "Aru-Ari," which was the nearest it could get to its father's name. For Baby-Spiders call their parents by name, as soon as ever they can speak.

So Hausatu snatched her up and rushed down to welcome him. She fell into his arms, and when he began explaining she would not let him say a single word. Instead, she asked him to forgive her for being such a stupid as to allow any Mrs. Busybody to interfere between them, and spoil their happiness.

Now the Spider was really overjoyed, for he loved Hausatu as much as any Spider could love anyone. It might not suit you, and I don't think it would suit me, but that is beside the point; she was quite satisfied, so they sat down and played with the baby until Hausatu heard her parents moving about; and then she said she must go in and prepare the breakfast, as she had done each morning ever since her return.

"Stay," said Mr. Spider. I think we can really call him "*Mr.* Spider" now, for it seems as if he had turned over a fresh leaf, and really meant to be good for the future. "Stay, my dear," and searching in his pockets—such funny pockets they were —"I have brought you some bread and butter from our part of the world. I gathered it fresh out of the garden, and so you will not need to cook any breakfast, for I rather think our parents will prefer this."

The father and mother were delighted when they found that the quarrel had been made up. Hausatu's father told the

Spider privately that he had been on the point of coming to see them when Hausatu arrived; and as her parents had never yet paid them a visit, it was arranged that, after Hausatu and Mr. Spider and the baby were rested, they should all go back together.

Mr. Spider mentioned casually at supper that he had taken advantage of his wife's absence to erect and furnish a brand new house in a spot she had often admired. And Hausatu, remembering how she had wrecked the other one, could only look gratefully at her husband, for words failed her, but her mother said how glad she was to hear it.

"I no longer have any fears for your happiness," she said, "for very few husbands are like Arururuwi."

And I think we can all agree with her!

VII. The Hunter and the Fairy Buffalo

Once upon a time, long, long ago, when men first began to hunt animals for food, there was a clever Buffalo who understood their language (for she had been friendly with them before they became hunters), and she also knew how to change herself into a beautiful girl.

Now the Chief of the town near which the Herd lived, was a very clever man, and he had a son called Mahalbi of whom he was very fond. When the son grew up he took him Buffalo-hunting with him. They were such good hunters that the Buffaloes became very frightened, fearing that they all would soon be killed unless something could be done to put a stop to the hunting parties. So they held a great council to consider what was best to be done.

The clever Buffalo-Girl said that several times when she had been to the town, after changing herself into a woman, she had seen the Chief and his son.

"Oh, why did you not listen and try to find out their plans, since you alone of us understand their language?" demanded the Queen of the Buffaloes.

"Madam I did so," replied the Buffalo-Girl, "but alas! I could not find out anything, for the Chief is so wise, he never talks about his plans. He is, as you know, a cautious man, and his son, who is a good youth, is content to do as his father bids him."

"Alas! alas!" cried the Queen, "I had such hopes when I saw you rise to answer me, and now they are dashed to the ground. My poor children what can I do for you?"

One of the older courtiers who had known the Queen from babyhood said, "Ah, Madam, if only you had been

content to marry the Chief of the other Buffaloes, we might have been strong enough now to withstand our enemies."

"Silence!" snapped her majesty, "since you have no advice to offer us, we will dispense with your remarks." She could be very severe and dignified, couldn't she?

But now the young Buffalo-Girl who spoke men's language said, "May it please Your Majesty I have thought of a plan."

"Unfold it, unfold it," cried the anxious Queen, hastily.

"Madam, as you know, I have a charm, which my dear mother gave me, and by its aid I can transform myself into a woman. Now it is not permitted to a Buffalo-Girl to go and live in a house, and so I could not get many opportunities of overhearing Mahalbi and his father talking together. Would it be possible for Your Majesty to allow me to remain in their house for a few days so that I might try again to find out their plans and"—here she lowered her voice and looked round to see if there were any people in the Queen's tent whom she could not quite trust, for there is a great deal of jealousy everywhere, and Buffaloes are not by any means free from it, "and," she continued mysteriously, "I might be able to upset their plans, or even to kill them as they have killed so many of us."

"My child, you give me hope again," cried the Queen, "of course you shall go. When so much is at stake the laws must be modified. Is it not so, O! People of the Buffaloes?" And a murmur of assent arose from the assembly.

"Very well, then, that is settled. Come here my child." And the young Buffalo-Girl came and knelt before her majesty.

"We would wish you to go well provided," said the Queen, "and since we do not ourselves wear clothes such as these mortals wear, we must needs give you a gift to present to them of the best that we have." And, turning to her Chamberlain, she ordered him to bring out seven of the best Buffalo hides in the royal treasury.

For when Buffaloes die, their relatives save their skins to wear on very special occasions. That is, perhaps, one reason why they grieve so when a member of the Herd is killed, for the hunter naturally takes the hide away, and so it is a double loss to the relatives.

While the Chamberlain was getting the hides—and it took him some time for he had to get the key of the treasury where all the skins were kept, for being those of members of the royal family, they were very valuable indeed—the young Buffalo-Girl craved permission to retire, so that she might make use of the charm in secret, and become a woman.

This being granted she went to her own cave, which was quite near the Court as she was of very good family herself. Having shut herself in so that no one could see or hear anything, she took the charm out of its hiding place and chanted the magic song. No one knows quite what it was, but it was something like this:—

"Change me to a woman fair,
Eyes of blue and golden hair,
Cherry lips and ivory skin,
Not too fat and not too thin.
Let the Chief's son marry me
So I may his magic see."

By the time she had sung this through she had changed into a most lovely girl. She looked so sweet and fair, and had such an amiable expression, I'm sure you would have loved her if you had seen her. She had on the richest garments, and looked for all the world like a fairy Princess, with her golden chains round her neck and wrists, and long earrings in her ears.

The Queen was delighted when she saw her, and threw a couple of the Buffalo-skins over her shoulders with her own royal hands, and that was the finishing touch. She looked quite regal. All the Buffaloes crowded round to say "good-

bye" to her as soon as the Queen had kissed her and bidden her farewell, for it was decided that she should go alone, so as not to arouse anyone's suspicion, lest her secret should be discovered, and all the people guess that she was not a real girl. So they took her as far as the edge of the camp, and it was decided that she should rest there for the night, and go to the town very early next morning before it was light, and as a further precaution the Buffaloes went deeper into the forest. Of course being really a Buffalo made a deal of difference, for she was much stronger than an ordinary girl, and could run very much faster.

In the morning when she entered the town, she went at once to the Chief's house, and asked to see him. He was very much surprised to see such a beautiful girl all alone at that hour of the morning, and was curious to know what had brought her to his town, and what she wanted him to do for her.

"My story is a sad one, Mighty Chief," she said. "Long, long ago, I lost my dear father, and my mother died when I was born. I was the child of a Chief as brave and noble as yourself, and now I am alone and friendless, I crave your sympathy and help."

"Poor child," said the Chief, "stay here awhile and rest. Do not attempt to tell us your story since it distresses you so much"—for she had begun to cry. "I can see you are as noble as you are lovely; only king's children are dressed as you are."

"May you be repaid, Generous Chief, for your kindness," she sobbed, pretending to be utterly worn out and wretched, whereas her heart was nearly bursting with rage, and she was longing to turn into a Buffalo, and suddenly gore the Chief to death. She could not help thinking of the many members of her tribe who had met their fate at his hands.

"Some day perhaps, you will tell me all your story," he replied, "and we will see what can be done, for I am afraid you must have suffered from the treachery of someone."

"Indeed, indeed, you speak but the truth, My Lord," she cried. "My father was most treacherously killed, and dear brothers and sisters, and—" Here she choked with rage at the thought of the many relatives who had been hunted down.

"There, there, my dear," said the Chief, thinking that her griefs were the cause of her distress, though *we* know it was mostly rage, "don't try to talk now; go and rest."

And he bade his servants do all they could for her, and he had the best rooms prepared for her as if she were a very honoured guest indeed. She stayed quite a long time, and whenever anyone attempted to find out who she was or where she had come from, she began to cry, and pretended she was too much upset to talk about it.

Now Malhabi, the Chief's son, was very much in love with the maiden, indeed he had thought of asking her to be his wife directly he saw her, for she was really a most beautiful woman. Day by day every one became fonder and fonder of her, for she seemed as sweet as she was lovely. Ah! Had they only known her *real* thoughts!

At last Malhabi went to his father and told him how much he loved the maiden, and his father sympathised with him, and owned that he, too, thought her very charming. But he did not wish his eldest son to marry a maiden of whose people they knew nothing, so he said he must think it over; and Malhabi went away quite sad.

Now the Chief was very fond of his son and could not bear to see him looking so miserable. So he consulted with the Wise-Men of the town, and they all said that they hoped Malhabi would be allowed to marry the maiden.

"For," said one old man, "we are so used to seeing her pretty face now, that we should miss it dreadfully if she went away, but of course we cannot expect to keep her here unless Malhabi marries her, for all maids become wives when they are as good and as pretty as she is, and one can see that she is of royal or princely family; so since there is no one but

Malhabi to wed her here, it follows we shall lose her to a neighbouring Chief one of these days."

This point of view had never struck the Chief, and when someone else got up and said that the town had been very lucky and prosperous since the maiden's arrival, he was quite persuaded to let the marriage take place, and to trust to luck for the future.

"When she is happy and safe in her own home here, she will be the more ready to tell us about the events which proved lucky to us in bringing her here, although they were the misfortunes of a life to her, poor child," he argued with himself.

So he sent for Malhabi and told him that he no longer had any objections to the match, and that he should be happy to receive the maiden as his daughter.

"We will try and make her so happy that she will forget all her troubles," he added, and Malhabi, overjoyed at the prospect, went off at once to find the maiden.

When he told her how much he loved her and hoped she would be his wife, she was secretly overjoyed, for as we know, it was with that very object in view that she had changed herself into a girl and left her people. But she was artful and pretended to be shy.

"Oh Prince," she said to please him, for he was only a Chief's son (I expect she knew that even better than you and I!) you do me honour, indeed, indeed I am grateful," and she began to cry softly, "a poor maiden, friendless and alone—"

"Hush, hush, my love," said he, "you shall never be friendless or alone again as long as I live, and as for the honour—come, dry your tears and let us go and hear what the Chief, my father, has to say. *We* shall be honoured indeed Princess, if you consent to stay with us."

She was always called 'Princess,' for though she had never actually told the people she was a Princess, she had never corrected anyone who had so addressed her; consequently it

came to be an understood thing that she really was one, and that satisfied most people.

The old Chief gave them his blessing, and ordered everything to be prepared immediately for the very grandest wedding that had ever been seen in that part of the land.

There were feasts every day for a week and dances every night, and the whole town was illuminated. In addition to the fairy lights, which one would of course expect all *fairy* Princesses to have at their wedding ceremonies, this bride, who was akin to the animals, had swarms of Fire-flies in attendance, who came out and lined the streets on the night of the State Ball which ended the festivities. The people thought it was because of her sweet nature which had conquered even the insects and made them her slaves, but *we* know better than that!

When they had been married a little while the Princess thought she had better try to find out the secret of Mahalbi's success when Buffalo-hunting, for not being a real woman, life in the town did not suit her, and it was beginning to tell upon her nerves. She longed for the free life in the wilds once more, and she could not bear to see the dead Buffaloes brought in after each hunt. So one night she asked Mahalbi how he accounted for his luck.

He pretended to be very indignant. "Luck, do you call it?" he said. "Why, my father and I are the best hunters for many miles round."

"Oh! I daresay you can hunt well," said the Princess, "but I have always heard that the Buffalo is difficult, very difficult to kill. Are you never afraid, Mahalbi? Their horns look so cruel to me," she shivered, "I should simply dread being gored to death."

Mahalbi laughed. "Oh! that comes of being a woman, you see: men are not like that, and besides, of course, we have charms!"

There, the secret was out!

"Charms—what are they?" asked the Princess. "How odd. Do tell me all about them—I love anything strange, and especially when it has to do with your safety, dear husband."

Now if Mahalbi had been wise he would have said he was tired and wanted to go to sleep! But the Princess had such a way with her, there was no keeping a secret once she had suspected it and wanted to know it.

"There are various charms," he said, trying to change the subject. "I always use one to keep dry when I go fishing for instance. If you are so interested, dearest, won't you come with me some time and I will show you how to work it, too?"

"Why, of course I will, how lovely to be sure," cried the Princess, "but I like hunting better than fishing," hastening to add as she saw Mahalbi's look of surprise, "that is, I mean, I am more interested in hunting. Of course I know nothing of either sport really."

"I see," said he rather doubtfully.

"Well, what do you do when you go hunting? Do tell me," she pleaded, "it can't make any difference now that I am your wife."

"Well I suppose it cannot really," said Mahalbi rather reluctantly, "but we don't tell our women things of that kind in this town, it is not the custom. However, you are different, aren't you?"

"Yes, yes of course I am," cried the Princess eagerly, with more truth than he knew.

"When we go hunting Buffalo, we can change into an ant-hill or a stump in the road, or a ri—" and he broke off for he heard his father coming in late from a Council Meeting, and he suddenly wished he had asked him before telling the Princess about the charms. He was a good son, and force of habit made him still consult his father, and the Princess was too sensible or too indifferent to mind as a rule.

A few days after, the Princess proposed that they should have a picnic. Now no one had ever heard of such a thing

before. The younger people all thought it a splendid idea and were most enthusiastic, but the older ones shook their heads and said, "What a difference a sense of security makes to a person, Princess or peasant it is all the same." And they wondered what other outlandish forms of amusement she would introduce now she was Mahalbi's wife and secure in her position.

Some of the girls who had hoped Mahalbi would one day marry one of them, said how sorry they were for him, for nothing is so trying to a man as a wife who upsets his friends and cannot agree with his relations! This was only spitefulness, for the Princess was really as popular as ever.

The preparations for the picnic went on apace, and the Chief, who was as devoted as ever to the Princess, told his son to spare no trouble nor expense to make the first picnic a great success.

When the day came, it was bright and warm, and just sunny enough to be pleasant, and they started off very early in the morning, for where Mahalbi lived it was too hot to go about after the sun was well up. There were several bullock-carts full of provisions, and Mahalbi took a tent for the Princess to rest in. They went some distance into the country, and then they stopped and had refreshments. They played all sorts of games, and the Princess, who was popular before, simply won all hearts that day, for nothing could exceed her gentleness and good temper, and she had a kind word for everyone. The plan was to rest in the heat of the day, returning to the town when it became cool again.

Now while they were resting, the Princess was suddenly seized with a desire to visit her own people and see how they were getting on. She hoped to explain to them why she had stayed so long without helping them—for she was really an honest Buffalo, though a deceitful Woman—and she was afraid the Queen of the Buffaloes would think she was so happy in her new life that she had forgotten all about them.

So she got up and put the charm in the bosom of her dress, and was slipping quietly out of the tent when Mahalbi sprang up and asked why she was going out into the sun.

"It won't hurt me," she said, scornfully. "What is the use of being a King's daughter and the wife of a Chief's son, if one has to stay in because of a little heat, just like the common people?"

"Just as you like," retorted Mahalbi. "Of course if you go, I go too. But I should like to know where you are going, my dear, if you don't mind."

"I am only going for a stroll towards the forest," she answered, and, as a plan formed in her mind, she added quickly, "do come, dear, I shall be glad of your company."

Mahalbi said, "Of course I will," and picking up his quiver, followed her out of the tent.

"What on earth are you taking that for?" she asked.

"One never knows in this part of the land what one may meet: there are Lions and Hyaenas, to say nothing of Buffaloes."

"What's the use of your charm then?" enquired the Princess.

"Well, it would be of no use to you, my dear," said her husband. "However, I don't suppose I shall want them," and he threw them down, and off they strolled.

As they passed a big tree the Princess slipped round the far side of it, and pulling the charm out of her dress she turned into a Buffalo.

Quick as thought Mahalbi, now defenceless, changed himself into an ant-hill. It was not a moment too soon, for the Buffalo charged down upon him, and he had barely time to change into the stump of a tree.

Now the Princess forgot that Mahalbi had been about to tell her of yet a third charm—for you will remember that he got as far as "ri—" and stopped when his father's footsteps disturbed them—or else perhaps she had not noticed it; anyhow

she rushed at the tree-stump to gore it, but Mahalbi sprang aside and transformed himself into a ring.

"Wherever can he be now?" wondered the Buffalo, and she went nosing the grass, while poor Mahalbi was shivering in his sandals—that is if he had kept them on—and I don't suppose there was any too much room in the ring. Suddenly—whirr! whiz! crash! and down went the Buffalo with an arrow in her side. But she scrambled up again, bellowing with rage, and rushed off into the forest, for she had dropped the charm, and could never again become a Princess.

One of the Chief's friends had seen Mahalbi leave his tent with his bride, and not considering the country too safe he had thought it best to follow them at a distance. Unlike the Chief's son, he was on the same side of the tree as the Princess, and had seen her change into a Buffalo and charge Mahalbi. At first he thought it was just a game, and was wondering if he should go back, for since he had seen her magic he said to himself, "The Princess is well able to look after herself and her husband, and if any wild beast comes out I shall be the only person in danger." But when he saw Mahalbi spring up and disappear twice (for he had to take his natural form again each time before changing into the stump or the ring) he thought it time to interfere, and let fly an arrow which struck the Buffalo as we know.

Of course everyone was very much grieved at the loss of their sweet Princess, but after all, as they said, things might have been worse. She had really only done them good, though her intentions were undoubtedly evil, and had she suceeeded in carrying them out, the consequences would have been dreadful.

VIII. How the Thieving Spider Was Caught by the Half-Man

One day the Spider pretended that he was going to be very busy, so he told his wife to make him some ground-nut and palm-fruit sandwiches for his lunch, as he should be away the whole day at the farm which he had bought. So she cooked the nuts and salted them, and put oil on them, and made some very tasty sandwiches for her husband.

"I should like to come down and see you at work," she said, "when I have finished what I have to do here, and we could walk back together in the evening."

But that did not suit the Spider at all, he had no intention of letting his wife know any of his plans.

"How sweet of you to think of it my dear, but I could not let you come all that long way by yourself, it would never do. I should not have a minute's peace, and I should never get any work done, for I should be wondering all the time where you were, and how far you had got on your way. You shall see the farm one day, never fear," he continued, patting her softly on the back, "but it will look much prettier when it is all in order and the corn is sprouting. And now I must be off."

So he stowed away his sandwiches, shouldered his hoe, and started off, singing as usual:—

"Ho, ho! ha, ha! ho, ho! he, he!
A Spider's wife at home must be;
She must not interfere with me,
Lest she and I should not agree."

When he had gone some little way, the Spider turned off

the main road and plunged into the forest. He knew a place where there was a pool, and he began to feel rather thirsty, so he thought he would take a little rest, and have a nice cool drink from the pool. "The sandwiches are very heavy," he thought to himself. "Perhaps I might as well eat one or two now, it is no use carrying them, and I may meet someone who will ask me home to dinner."

The truth was that he was really a very lazy, greedy Spider, so as he turned into the forest he found a nice leafy spot where it would be safe to leave anything, and then he hid his hoe there, for he had never had any idea of really working, and only came away because he thought he could get a better meal. The night before, Mrs. Spider had timidly hinted that there was not very much food left, and it was time her husband set about getting some more.

So the wily Spider thought he would pretend to be working hard on his farm, knowing that his wife would certainly make up something in the way of refreshment for him to take with him.

So he strolled on leisurely, and presently he came to the pool. It was a lovely spot, dark and cool, such as Spiders love, and he sat and ate his sandwiches one by one until he came to the last!

"It is certainly no use carrying one sandwich about with me all day," he said to himself as he looked at it. "I may as well finish it too. My wife can make sandwiches," and then he rolled over on his side and was soon fast asleep.

You will be wondering what had become of Mrs. Spider all this time. Poor little thing, she was rather lonely, for when her husband had gone, she had very little to do to amuse herself. When once the babies were washed and dressed they lay in their little webs and slept again by the hour together. They were specially good children when they were little, and every one loved them. Grandmamma and Grandpapa Spider often came over to see them, for of course they were quite

devoted to them. They were Mrs. Spider's parents, and lived quite near their daughter, and it happened that soon after the Spider had left home, Mrs. Spider heard someone knocking very softly. She ran to the door at once, for the babies were as usual fast asleep, and she did not want them disturbed: she thought they looked so very pretty when asleep. And who should she find at the door but her own dear father!

"Well, this *is* nice," she said, and gave him a hug. "Do come in at once and rest," and she put her arms round him and brought him in, and spread the Spider's best web for him to rest in.

"And how is Mamma? I wish she had come too, for the children are all so well, and she could have seen how they've grown. It is a long, long time since you saw them. When you are rested we will go and look at them." For Mrs. Spider thought her children the most perfect in all the world, and expected everyone else to do so.

"But, what must you think of me," she said, "chattering on like this when you must be longing for some refreshment; I won't be a minute," and off she tripped.

She looked rather sad when she returned, for to tell the truth there was not very much left to bring out for her father. The Spider had never enquired what his wife and family were going to do for their midday meal. If he gave it a thought he probably decided it was wiser not to enquire, in case he might have to leave some of his nice sandwiches behind, which shows how abominably greedy he was, for you know he really had more than he needed.

"I am afraid I have not very much to offer you father dear," said poor little Mrs. Spider, when she returned, "for you see Gizzo (that was the Spider's pet name) went off to work in a great hurry, and I stupidly put all the sandwiches for the family into his bag. He will be vexed when he discovers the mistake, but there, it cannot be helped, and so I have just made you a little omelet with some nuts and some flies' legs,"

and she hoped her father would not guess that the Spider had gone off without ever giving a thought to his wife and babies.

"How quick you've been my dear, indeed it is delicious, nothing could be nicer. What a lucky fellow Gizzo is to be sure. We miss you sadly at home. This is quite a treat," and the grandfather Spider ate up all the omelet, and then he said he would like to see the babies, for he had not much time to spare, and must be getting home again before the sun got too hot.

Just as he was going he said, "Well, well, I am a nice one, I was going away without ever telling you why I came to see you to-day, and what would your mother have said to me then? I had a chance the other day of buying some ground-nuts very cheaply, so I am sending you on a few. I expect they will come this evening, and I hope you will find them good my dear. I thought I would let you know, for of course you must clear a place to store them in."

"Oh, father dear, how good of you," she cried, "Gizzo will be pleased and—"

"Oh! well remember they are for *you*," said her father, for he had been hearing tales lately of the Spider's doings which had not pleased him, and he began to be rather anxious about his daughter. "Gizzo is well able to get them for himself, but you have all the babies to look after and I hope—"

"Oh! he looks after us all," said Mrs. Spider, "and he works so hard. Why now he has this farm I don't suppose we shall see much of him, for he went ever so early this morning to work down there, and I don't expect him back till late."

"There, there," said her father, "I am glad to hear it, I'm glad to hear it." (Have you ever noticed how Spiders repeat themselves, when they're getting old?) "So goodbye my child, and get Gizzo to bring you all over some day soon, the sooner the better, ha! ha! the sooner the better."

Mrs. Spider watched him a little way down the road, and he turned and waved to her several times, then she had to run

in quickly, for one of the babies had got tied up in its own web, and was so frightened that it was making a fearful noise. The other babies were all roused, and of course joined in the chorus, and succeeded in tearing several holes in their webs.

"Dear, dear," said Mrs. Spider, "a nice afternoon's work I can see before me; all the webs to darn, and nowhere to put the babies!" So first of all she cuddled them and comforted them all, and then she spun a big web, and put them all in it. She hung it up where she could see them while she went on with the mending of the torn ones, and while she was working she crooned away:

"Sleep little Spiders
For Mother is here,
Sleep little Spiders,
You need have no fear.
Father and Mother are working away,
So rest Baby-Spiders, and sleep while you may."

And soon they were all fast asleep again!

So we will leave them all awhile, and go and see what the Spider was doing.

He had slept on peacefully all the afternoon, and as evening drew on he woke up, for it was getting quite chilly. "Heigh ho!" said he as he stretched himself, "I am as tired as if I'd done a hard day's work"—which is often the case, isn't it, with you and me? I don't mean to say we are ever intentionally lazy like the Spider, because if *you* were you would not be reading now, and if *I* were I should certainly not have found time to write this story for you. But it is not always the hardest work that is the most tiring!

Now where was I? Oh, yes, I remember! The lazy Spider was just awake.

"It will never do to go home like this," he said to himself, "although I doubt even so if my wife would guess." He did not give her credit for any smartness, you see, perhaps he was

mistaken, who knows? "But," he went on as he turned over and sat up, "I must devise something."

"Ha, ha! I have it," he exclaimed as he shook himself and got up on his hind legs—and what do you think he did then? Why, he scraped up some mud—there was plenty all round the pond—and plastered himself all over with it, you never saw such a sight as he made of himself. I don't think any of his friends would have cared to have walked home with him that evening. He carefully examined his reflection in the pond, and decided that he looked a very hard-working person, so he thought, as it was getting dusk he had better start off for home. When he came to the place where he had hidden his hoe, he took it out, and shouldering it again he went off at a run.

He was really a great strong Spider, well able to work, but when he got within sight of his home he commenced to stagger, and to drag first one foot and then the other, and hang his head as if he were quite worn out. His wife was watching for him (as he knew she would be) and she soon ran out to meet him and would have kissed him, but he cried out. "Oh no, my dear, I must really have a wash first, I am so very muddy, but people cannot work hard, as I have been doing all day long, and not show any signs of it. It is different with you, of course you always look neat and nice, staying at home and having nothing much to do. I should not expect you to receive me in a like untidy state." Little he really cared whether she had much or little to do, he certainly never worried his head about it!

"Oh! my dear, my dear, you should not work so hard," cried little Mrs. Spider, "you really should not, there is no need. I must tell you all about it, but first let me carry your hoe."

The Spider pretended to be very unwilling for her to carry it. "It is nothing really," he said, "after you've carried it and used it as much as I have. It's all very well to say I shouldn't

work so hard, but after all you want food for yourself and the children, and so I must struggle to do what I can!"

Poor Mrs. Spider was trying to keep up with him, for now she had the heavy hoe to carry and he had nothing he could easily out-strip her, and she had hardly any breath left. "I have some news," she panted.

"Oh! indeed," said the Spider. "Nothing very exciting, I imagine. One of the babies has grown another leg, I suppose? What queer things women are."

"The Babies are quite alright," said Mrs. Spider, rather sharply for her. She did not much like being always teased, and sometimes when she was tired it got on her nerves, and then, poor little thing, she used to cry. However, to-day, she was too excited to notice it very much.

"My father came after you had gone," she said, "and he has made us a present of some ground-nuts. Oh! Gizzo, such a lovely lot. You need not go to the farm for a long time, and we can enjoy them and have a little holiday together."

"Not so fast, my dear," said the Spider, "we shall want some corn again, some day, and it won't grow itself; but we shall see. And now get me some water that I may wash and get ready while you prepare the supper."

After supper, the Spider said he thought after all that if his wife would make him some more sandwiches he had better have another long day at the farm. "There is a great deal to be done before one can start sowing," he said, "I don't suppose it ever occurred to you, but so it is, and I shall be some time getting the farm in order. If I don't go to-morrow it will probably mean that to-day's work will be wasted: one must keep it up, and so I think I will go. After all, this is the best time of the year, and when the corn is ripe and ready to cut and store away, you will be glad you let me go."

So away he went next morning and did exactly as he had done the day before. He slept the whole day, and then when night came, returned home, pretending that he had been so

very hard at work all day.

After a week, it struck him that it was rather a pity to carry the hoe backwards and forwards for nothing, so he told his wife that he should not need it again for some little time and would leave it at home. This went on until nearly all the ground-nuts were eaten, and every day as the babies got bigger they wanted more to eat.

One day when Mrs. Spider had been spending the day with her father and mother, she noticed that the corn on the farms she passed on her way was nearly ripe. So that evening when they were sitting in the porch—all Spiders' houses have a porch—she ventured to remark to her husband that it would very soon be time to cut the corn. Whereupon the Spider fell into a great rage and said he would not put up with interference, that if women would only mind their own affairs, and not meddle with what was no concern of theirs, the world would be a far happier place. Of course he was afraid that when Mrs. Spider found him out, as she would be sure to do, she would be very angry and tell her parents, so he pretended to get up and go off in a huff, thinking that when he came back she would say she was sorry, and that she had never meant to interfere.

But Mrs. Spider was not always so silly as she looked, and besides there were the babies to be thought of. So next morning she said, "I think I will go with you to-day and help cut the corn, it must be quite time, and it is too much for one person to attempt."

"That is so kind, and just what I have been expecting of you," said the wicked old Spider, "but, my dear, think of the babies, what would become of them if you were not here to keep watch all day long?"

"Oh! I've arranged all that," said Mrs. Spider. She had not really done so, but from living so long with such a deceitful person as the Spider, I am sorry to say, she was beginning to be almost as bad herself. It was sad, and grieved her friends

very much; still no one liked to tell her of it.

"I asked Mrs. Fly one day, and she said she would be only too pleased to come in. She has admired our best web for a long, long time, and," drawing herself up, "it is a very fine one. I thought if we were very tired on our return," she continued, "we could cook the old thing for supper: it would save a lot of trouble, and I don't suppose we shall either of us be very much inclined to go and shop at that time of night."

Now this was really horrible of Mrs. Spider, wasn't it? But Spiders haven't any consciences, poor things: they don't even know what such a thing is, and in any case have no place to keep it in.

"That's a very fine plan, my dear, and does you infinite credit," said the Spider, "infinite credit, but I am afraid it is out of the question. I really could not allow our children to be left all day with that stupid Mrs. Fly. Why, whatever would people say? It is not to be thought of, but I would certainly ask Mrs. Fly to come in to see the web, by all means. If you keep her late talking, who knows, we may still have a good supper. He! he!" And he laughed in a hideously cold-blooded way. "You must concoct a better plan than that. Meantime, I'm off to my work, and I will try—mind, I do not promise, I only say I will try—to carry home some of the corn to show you to-night. If I cannot—and you must remember I am always very tired after my day's work—well to-morrow you shall go yourself, and I will stay behind to look after the babies."

Now the Spider had made up his mind to steal some grain, so he went about and looked at all the farms to try and decide which was the finest corn, and which looked the easiest to steal.

Presently he came to some very rich land. It belonged to some strange creature such as you and I have never seen. He was a Half-Man, and had only one arm, one leg, half a head, and half a body.

He was very rich, and did not do any work himself. Of

course when you come to think about it, you will see that it was really very difficult for him to walk about at all, he could only hop in fact, and it was quite impossible for him to work. So it was a lucky thing that he was rich and could afford to pay other people to do so for him. Poor Half-Man! we must always be very sorry for any people who have not got all their legs and arms. But the Half-Man's servants, who were very well paid, got lazy and did not look after the land properly. It was a great shame to take advantage of him—but that is the way of the world. So when the Spider looked about, and saw the beautiful ripe corn, and no one guarding it, he seized the opportunity to help himself very liberally.

Of course his wife was very much pleased when he came home with the corn, and she suggested that they should keep Mrs. Fly, and eat her some other day when they ran short of food again. But no, the Spider felt so sure of being able to take as much as he wanted from the Half-Man's farm, that he said, "We'll have a feast to-night, my dear, for there is plenty of corn where that came from, as fine and as good, too. Perhaps it will teach you to be more patient in future, and not so hasty in your judgment; I was really very hurt at what you said last night. But there, there," as Mrs. Spider looked ready to cry, "don't cry my dear woman, for pity's sake, I am tired and want my supper." So they had supper and went off to bed.

In the morning the Spider teased his wife and said, "I suppose you wouldn't like to go this morning, instead of me? The corn is rather heavy you know, and it is too valuable to spill."

"Oh dear, oh dear," replied his wife, "do be kind and forgive me," for he had made her feel so thoroughly in the wrong that she was ready to do anything. "I am sure I never meant to interfere and I never will." So she kissed her husband 'good-bye' and away he went.

Meantime the Half-Man had been out to look at his corn, and he soon saw that a thief had been at work. Of course he had no idea who it was, and so he thought the best plan was

not to say a word to anyone, but just to set a trap; and this he did. I think he had rather more than half-brains in his half-head, don't you?

He got some tar and made a big doll with it, and dressed it and set it up in the field, and then he hid behind some trees to watch what would happen.

Presently the Spider arrived, and just as he was beginning to fill his pockets with corn, he looked up and saw the doll. It was so pretty he was quite taken in, and besides the sun was in his eyes, which always makes it difficult to see. He thought it was a beautiful girl, and he was always very courteous to ladies, although he treated his own wife so badly, so he took off his hat, and holding out his hand to her, he bowed and said, "Good morning, sweet maiden, don't be shy," and as she did not move nor take any notice, "Come, shake hands," and he caught one of her hands in his. Then he wanted to draw his hand back again, but found that it was held fast. He pulled and pulled, and shook and shook, but to no purpose; of course the tar held him tightly. Then he got very angry, for he thought the girl was trying to catch him, and hold him till someone came to help her.

"If you don't let me go," he said, putting a hand on her other bare arm, "I will kick you." Still she never uttered a word, and now both his hands were stuck fast!

"You horrible creature," he cried, "you nasty wicked girl," and fell into a great rage and kicked her, and of course his leg stuck fast and he was helpless. He was bent, and doubled up, and speechless with rage by this time, and as he let his head fall against her, that stuck as well. He was in a plight!

Now the Half-Man had been watching all the time, and when he saw that the Spider was really safely caught, he took his whip and hopped to the spot and beat him. He beat him, and beat him, and beat him, till he was quite breathless, and the Spider's back was all raw, and his skin peeling off. Then he loosed him from the tar trap, and said, "Be off, be off, I can

only half kill you this time, as I'm only a Half-Man, but if I ever catch you here again, I will half kill you again, and that will be the end of you."

The Spider crawled away into the forest and lay like a dead person for days and days. At last when he managed to get home, he told his wife he had been set upon and beaten by some robbers who had stolen all his corn, and had threatened to kill him if he ever dared to show his face there again. Of course she was very sorry for him and believed all he said, and they decided to move right away and live nearer her relatives in the future, and it was not until a long time afterwards that she found out the truth. But that I must tell you some other time.

IX. The Billy-Goat Who Said He Was a Magician

Once upon a time there was a Billy-Goat who was certainly rather smart, but he was always boasting of his cleverness, and making himself very objectionable to the other inhabitants of the forest, so he had but few friends; for animals as well as people, soon become tired of that sort of thing.

The Hyaena, being the scape-goat of all the beasts, disliked the Billy-Goat most of all, and I am going to tell you why! But first you must know of the trick that he played her, and perhaps another day I shall tell you of how she thought to avenge herself, and you will see that there is no hope of their ever being friends again.

Very early one dewy morning, the Billy-Goat set out to go to the market, and his shaggy coat soon became very wet, for it soaked up the moisture. So to dry his coat he capered and frisked about (for he felt very young although quite six years of age) and as he thought no one would see him so early in the morning, he did not trouble to look where he was going. As he danced he sang:—

"A great Magician am I,
Although the weather's so dry;
I could bring down the rain,
Dry it all up again,
If only I were to try."

Suddenly—Bang!—Crash!—Smash!—Bump!—he ran into the Hyaena!

"Why don't you look where you are going?" she snarled,

very much annoyed. "One of these days you'll get into trouble going along in that silly way, with your head as high in the air as if you were some great personage."

"So I am," said the Billy-Goat, "and I'll ask you to remember it for the future."

"Rubbish," snapped the Hyaena. "You're very absurd, Mr. Goat, very absurd indeed, and amuse me greatly. I should really like to know why you give yourself such airs."

"If you must know," replied the Billy-Goat, "I am a Magician."

"What!" shrieked the Hyaena, "Oh dear, Oh dear, that is the best joke I have heard for many a long day. An absurd person like you, a Magician! Well, I never. I have a great mind to test you, Mr. Billy-Goat."

"Pray try," replied the Billy-Goat affably, "I am sure it is always a pleasure to serve you, Mrs. Hyaena."

"A great Magician am I,
Although the weather's so dry,
I could bring down the rain,
Dry it all up again,
If only I were to try."

The Hyaena could not control herself any longer but burst out laughing. "You idiotic old animal," said she, "your mind has given way." And then becoming angry, she continued, "But I have had enough of your boastful, silly chatter: since you say you can bring down the rain, do so: if you do not I will kill you, and drink your blood! It is a long time since breakfast, and I should very much like a drink."

Now the Billy-Goat, although not quite as clever as he thought himself to be, was still very smart, and even if not a real Magician he was a good imitation one, so he bowed gravely and said in his sweet musical voice, "I wish you had asked me something more worthy of my powers, Mrs. Hyaena, but since you asked me for rain, why here you are," and he

shook himself so violently that the dew flew off in every direction and spattered Mrs. Hyaena's face, so that she thought it was real rain.

"Indeed you are a wonderful man," cried the astonished Hyaena, who, as you know, was a very silly animal. "I will never call you stupid any more," and she was so frightened, that she thought the Billy-Goat must be a real Magician, so off she ran as hard as she could.

But when she had got home and had told her mother of it, the mother said, "I do not believe in Mr. Billy-Goat, although he does very strange things. Go back to him and ask him for more rain, then if he can again make it come, he must indeed be a Magician."

So off went the Hyaena again, and met Mr. Billy-Goat who was now coming back from the market where he had been buying sweet cakes.

"Good morning again, great Magician," said the Hyaena, rather nervously, for she did not want to offend him if really a powerful being. "I have been thinking of the wonderful thing you did a couple of hours ago, and would so much like to see it again. It is wonderful indeed to me, but I suppose you think nothing of it, being a Magician."

Now the Billy-Goat saw that the Hyaena was trying to catch him, and as the sun had been up some time his coat was nearly dry, so he was rather afraid that the trick might not come off a second time.

"Come up close then," said he, "and open your eyes very wide." Immediately he shook himself violently as before, and sprinkled a few drops into the Hyaena's eyes. Then, when she could no longer see, he uncorked a flask which he was carrying and emptied it over her back.

"That's enough, that's enough, dear Mr. Billy-Goat," shrieked the Hyaena, terrified, "I shall be drowned with all this water, oh! do dry it up again."

"Very well," said he, and when she had opened her eyes

again, "you see all the ground is dry once more. Had I liked I could have drowned you."

"Oh dear, Mr. Billy-Goat. Oh Great Magician," whimpered the silly beast, "I will never doubt you any more." And once more she scampered off home.

Now the Billy-Goat was very cunning, he knew that the Hyaena could never take a warning, and that as she was stronger than he, she would some day kill him unless he taught her a lesson, and he wondered what he could do. But he could not help laughing to think of how he had frightened her for the present.

Just then he met the Lion. "Good morning, Mr. Billy-Goat, you look very happy to-day, have you had some slice of luck?"

"Indeed I have, Sire," replied the Billy-Goat, "I have found a new confection that suits my taste excellently (the Billy-Goat loved long words when speaking to a superior), and I was wondering if Your Majesty would like to know of it."

"Indeed I would," said the Lion, "have you it with you?"

"Yes, Sire," replied the Billy-Goat, handing him a cake, "this is made of Hyaena's tears, I bought it just now in the market; it is a little stale if anything, the tears are much better when they are fresh, but the Hyaena is so mean that she charges an awful price for them, and says she will make no more at all for anyone, not even for you."

"Oh, indeed, the Hyaena said that, did she?" asked the Lion, munching the cake, "well I shall see whether I can *persuade* her to give me some, they are very good," and off he went, leaving the Billy-Goat roaring with laughter at his wit so the Lion thought, but really because the cakes were not made with Hyaena tears at all, but with honey and flour, the Billy-Goat having made up the story so as to get the Hyaena into trouble.

As soon as the Lion saw the Hyaena he said, "Ha! Mrs. Hyaena, just the very person I wanted to see."

"I am honoured indeed Your Majesty," replied she, "how can a poor Hyaena serve you?"

"I have just tasted some Hyaena tear-cakes," said the Lion, "and find them very agreeable. I desire some to be sent to the Palace daily, in future."

"Some what?" asked the Hyaena. "I have never heard of such things."

"No lies," roared the Lion, getting very angry, "make me some at once. You can make them readily enough to sell, for the Billy-Goat bought some only to-day."

"Indeed, indeed," faltered the Hyaena now thoroughly alarmed, "I do not know what you mean." And she began to cry.

When the Lion saw the tears he said, "Ah! so you have tears after all, have you? I knew you were lying," and he went up and tasted them.

When he found that they were very bitter instead of being sweet he was fearfully angry. "How dare you!" he roared. "Do you dare to make fun of me? Me, the King of the Forest? Unless you make me some sweet ones at once I shall kill you."

"Oh! what shall I do, what shall I do?" wailed the wretched animal, shedding more tears, "I have none but these."

The Lion having found that these also were bitter, was furious, and beat her and thumped her, and kicked her, until he was tired. Then seeing that a lot of her tears had fallen into a calabash, he thought that perhaps these were a special kind, so he went to try them.

Now the opening in the calabash was rather small, and while the Lion was trying to get at the tears, the Hyaena fled, and the Lion was so long in finding out that she had gone, that it was too late to chase her, so he went off home in a very angry frame of mind.

When the Hyaena got home she told her family, and they were very much alarmed, for they thought that the Lion might treat everyone of them in the same way. But seeing that

the Billy-Goat was at the bottom of it, they made up their minds to pay him back, so they all went off to his home.

Now he had been so much pleased with himself at the result of the trick, that he had wasted a lot of time on the homeward journey, through telling the joke to all whom he met on the road, and he only reached his house just as the Hyaenas arrived. He knew he had no time to lock up his doors and windows, and he guessed their errand at once, but once more trusted to his wits to get him out of the scrape.

"Good evening, friends," said he, smiling and wagging his head, "you have come at a lucky moment: I am just off to the market to get some meat; the Chief Butcher owes me a lot of money which he cannot pay, and as he has killed a Bullock only this afternoon, I and some friends are going to seize all his meat. But it is far too much for us, so I invite you one and all to the feast."

Now when the Hyaenas found the Billy-Goat so friendly, they thought that perhaps they might have been mistaken in imagining him to be the cause of all the trouble, and besides, they were rather afraid that he had magical powers, so they thought they would pretend to be friendly too, especially as there was a feast in view. Hyaenas are as greedy as Spiders, and you know how greedy they are!

But one old Uncle-Hyaena, rather more suspicious than the rest, said "Very well, but if you break your word we shall eat you instead," and all the others shrieked, "Yes, yes, we will eat him instead."

"Oh! certainly," said the Billy-Goat, "but I should be a very poor meal for you all: your uncle would take the lot, and you others would get nothing at all, whereas a Bullock will more than satisfy every one of us."

"That is true, that is true," shouted the young Hyaenas, knowing their uncle's little failings, and fearing to lose their feast, "let us be off to the market at once."

Now on their way, they came upon a big wild-beast trap,

and a leg of a Bullock was hanging above it to tempt the unwary. The old Billy-Goat had led them there on purpose. He knew very well what it was, for his mother had warned him of it, Mr. Billy-Goat, Senior, having lost his life in it some years before under very sad circumstances.

"Ah, now you see," said he, turning to the Uncle-Hyaena, "was I right or not?"

"Yes, I see a leg," growled he, "but where is the rest, one leg is not much good." He was afraid that he would not get much for himself when there were so many to divide the booty.

"The Chief Butcher has it in his house of course," replied the Billy-Goat, "you don't suppose he is going to leave it all outside? This is only to tempt you to buy."

Then going to the mouth of the trap he called out, "Chief Butcher, Chief Butcher, pay me your debt."

But there was no reply.

Again he called, "Chief Butcher, if you do not pay me your debt at once, we shall eat up all your meat." And all the Hyaenas chimed in, "Yes we shall eat up every bit," and their tongues hung out at the idea.

Now the old Uncle-Hyaena thought that perhaps after all there might be no more meat, and he determined that he was going to have a feast even if no one else did, so while the Billy-Goat had been calling out he had edged up nearer and nearer to the Bullock's leg hanging over the trap.

"I will go to the Butcher's house," said the Billy-Goat, "but you stay here and see that nobody gets that meat while I am away," and off he went.

They waited, but there was no Billy-Goat, and they shouted, but there was no reply, and at last they guessed that the Billy-Goat had run away.

"Chase him, chase him," they cried, "he has made fun of us."

But the old Uncle-Hyaena could stand it no longer, he

had been gloating over the meat ever since he first saw it.

"You can do what you like," he said, springing on to the Bullock's leg, and immediately the trap caught him.

"Oh, Mr. Chief Butcher," he yelled (for he thought it was he who held him) "let me go please, I did not mean to steal your meat, I was going to save it for you, the wicked old Billy-Goat was going to take it."

But there was no reply.

"Oh, Mr. Chief Butcher," he wailed, "have pity and I will pay your debt for you."

But still there was no reply.

When the other Hyaenas saw their Uncle caught thus they were terrified, and ran off home uttering hideous yells, and crying out, "The Billy-Goat has killed Uncle, the Billy-Goat has killed Uncle."

When the Billy-Goat, who was hiding close by in the bushes, saw what had happened he came out of his hiding place, and remarked, "What an extraordinary way to behave, I really cannot understand any of the Hyaenas, they are so badly brought up," and tossing his head he went off home without even a glance at the poor Uncle Hyaena in the trap.

By and by, the men who had set the trap came, and when they saw the Uncle-Hyaena they were very angry. They had set it for the Lion or the Leopard so as to get his skin, but the Hyaena's skin is quite useless, so they beat him and kicked him, and would have killed him had he not managed to slip out of their hands and escape.

He reached home in a very sorry plight, and when he told the others what had happened to him they said, "This is the end of our acquaintance with the Billy-Goat: he is not respectable, he is a fraud, and we honest Hyaenas cannot know such a person; he is always playing tricks." They were of course afraid of him, but they were not going to admit that.

As for the Billy-Goat, after he had locked up his doors and windows he could be heard singing:

"A mighty Magician am I,
The cowards to kill me did try;
Ah, had they but known
They'd have left me alone."
I think that you all can guess why.

X. Why Hawa Prevented the Beasts from Drinking

Now I am going to tell you a story about a girl who was very fond of her little sister. She was named Hawa, while the little one was called Zainabu. The whole family worked on a farm.

When the father and mother started out in the morning with Hawa, they used to hide little Zainabu in a pot of grease! It was not a very nice place, but Zainabu was a dear little girl and never complained. Perhaps this is why Hawa was so fond of her? I wonder! Of course they had to put the pot of grease away in a safe place, too, in case anything should upset it, and it should be spilt.

All went well for some time, and every evening Zainabu was delighted when her sister came home, and she could come out of her hiding place. What games they had together! You would think she would have been quite tired of hiding, but no! "hide and seek" was one of their favourite games.

Her father and mother were looking forward to the time when Zainabu would be big enough to go to the farm with them. There was no school time for these little girls, as soon as ever they were strong and big enough, they had to do their share of hard work.

But alas! one day they forgot to wake as early as they usually did, and were rather late at starting, and so Hawa, like the dear little helpful soul she was, offered to hide her little sister. But when she had hidden her, she was unable to lift the pot into its accustomed place, and in their hurry to be off, the parents forgot that part of the arrangement for Zainabu's

safety.

As ill-luck would have it, no sooner had they all gone, than wicked Mrs. Hyaena chanced to come sniffing round the house, to see what she could pick up. Now Hyaenas, as everybody knows, are very fond of all kinds of grease, and what do you think? Why this horrible old Hyaena just swallowed the pot of grease at a mouthful, with poor little Zainabu in it! Then she scurried away back to her den as fast as ever her legs could take her.

You can fancy what a terrible state the poor father and mother were in when they reached home that night. The pot of grease had disappeared as if it had never been there—it left no traces behind. "Where is our darling Zainabu? Whatever could have become of her?" they asked each other. But their sorrow was as nothing compared with Hawa's, for she blamed herself so bitterly for not having tried to lift the pot up into a safer place. "I shall never be happy again," she wailed. "Oh! my sister, my sister."

Now Hawa was a clever little girl, and while she was walking up and down and round the house, she saw the marks of foot-prints, and she wondered whose they could be. Of course we know it was wicked Mrs. Hyaena who had been prowling round, but Hawa did not know this, and so she had to examine the marks very carefully. Even then she could not decide, but she thought out a plan, and now you will see what a very clever, persevering little girl she was.

On their way to the farm there was a stream called "Let-me-run," and Hawa had noticed how all the beasts of the forest came there to drink every evening when their day's hunting was over. So she got a big calabash (or bowl) and scooped up all the water into it! There was nothing but mud left. Then she climbed up into the Baobab tree and waited till evening came. In the evening all the beasts came, as was their custom. When Hawa looked, she saw the first was a Lion! But she was not a bit frightened, and began singing softly:—

"Oh! Mr. Lion, where have you been?
Have you my dear little sister seen?"

And the Lion answered, "I am going to 'Let-me-Run,' for my evening drink."

So Hawa said, "You cannot, for I have taken up all the water. If you will give me back my sister, I will give you some water to drink," and then she went on singing:—

"If you my sister will restore to me
I'll give you water which I have, you see."

Then the Lion coughed, "Hakk, hakk," and said, "You can see I have only eaten grass."

Now the Baobab is a magical tree, and when Hawa heard the lion's reply, she said, "Good Mrs. Tree grow up higher," and it was as well, for the Lion began roaring and growling. However, he soon calmed down for he did not want to keep all the other beasts away. So the tree had grown a little taller, and taken Hawa up with it. Presently the Hedgehog came and Hawa sang again:—

"Mr. Hedgehog where have you been?
Have you my dear little sister seen?"

And the Hedgehog said he had not seen Zainabu, and that he wanted a drink, but he could not find the stream 'Let-me-Run.' So Hawa sang on:—

"If you my sister will restore to me,
I'll give you water, which I have, you see."

But of course the Hedgehog did not know any more about it than the Lion.

So Hawa said, "Good Mrs. Tree, grow up higher."

Now when the Giraffe came, Hawa was glad she had gone up a good way, for you know that the Giraffe is so tall he can easily eat even the higher branches of some trees, and so it

was as well to be out of reach, or she herself might have shared little Zainabu's fate and been swallowed with a bunch of leaves!

All the animals came, and one by one Hawa asked them the same question, and they all coughed, "Hakk, Hakk," in turn, and assured her that they had only eaten grass.

But Hawa had no pity. She was determined to find her sister, and now the thought of seeing her again, filled her with such joy that she forgot to be very miserable, for she began to feel sure Zainabu was alive, and would soon be with her again. So she said each time, "Good Mrs. Tree grow up a little higher"—and the kind tree grew up.

Now we know that only the wicked old Hyaena was guilty, so all the other poor animals had to suffer until she came. Soon the forest resounded with their groans. They were nearly dead, with thirst. The day had been a hot, trying one, and their poor throats were parched and dry.

Still Hawa thought only of her sister. Perhaps little Zainabu, too, was suffering agonies of thirst and hunger. Perhaps she was as miserable at being parted from her parents, as they were at losing their dear little girl. And she hardened her heart and would not come down. She was very, very high up by this time, for she had asked all the animals, and as we know, they could none of them give up her sister, and so she had risen higher and higher with the tree.

At last the Hyaena came. She was late, for after swallowing the pot of grease, she had had a nap, and it was long past her usual time. Sang Hawa again:

"Mrs. Hyaena, where have you been?
Have you my dear little sister seen?"

"Not I!" said the wicked beast. "I don't know and I don't care as long as I get my evening drink." (Can you imagine anyone as wicked as the Hyaena?) Then Hawa guessed that it was the Hyaena, and so she sang on quite calmly—

"Mrs. Hyaena, what do you think,
The Animals all are waiting to drink."

The Hyaena growled back, "Well, *I'm* not going to wait," but she found the stream quite dry.

How frightened she must have been, knowing how wicked she was. Hawa's song came softly down—she was up so high now, her voice sounded quite faint and dim—

"Oh! sister Zainabu, never you fear,
I'll not give them drink till you appear."

This was too much for the Hyaena, and in her excitement she coughed, "Hakk, hakk," and up came the pot of grease with little Zainabu in it!

"Oh dear, Mrs. Tree, put me down, put me down," cried Hawa, and the Tree who loved all good children, put her down so quickly that she upset the calabash, and the stream was quite full again, and all the poor animals were able to drink.

However, they could not forgive the wicked Hyaena, and they beat her and drove her off into the forest, where she perished of thirst. And I think you will agree with me that she was well punished.

And to return to Hawa and Zainabu, their joy was too great for me to describe, you must try and imagine it. But I must tell you that like good little girls, they ran home as quickly as ever they could. Hawa had not told anyone of her plan, and the poor parents were nearly frantic with grief when evening came, and neither of their children was to be found. They thought of course that the same fate had befallen Hawa that had robbed them of Zainabu. So their joy knew no bounds. I don't think they ever left Zainabu alone in the house any more.

XI. The Boy Who Refused to Walk

Many years ago there was a woman who lived in the forest with her husband. He was a forester, and used to be out all day and only come home at night. She was such a good wife and made him so comfortable, that he nearly always went to sleep in his big arm-chair.

Now it was very dull for her of course, because although there were many foresters, their huts were some distance away, and all the others had families of their own to look after. The wives had no time to go visiting. She alone had no children, and it was very, very lonely. So she used to wish very much for a little baby of her own. And she prayed and prayed that God would think of her and send her one. She was a very good wife and she worked hard, but foresters' huts are small, and there was not enough to employ all her time. And no one can be happy without plenty to do. They were a long way from any village, and her husband was too busy to take her, and she was afraid to go alone.

One day she was sitting outside the hut, and the sun was so warm: it was all so peaceful and still that she fell fast asleep. While she slept she dreamt that the good God had said He would send her a son. She woke up overjoyed, and was all impatience for her husband's return, for she knew that he would be just as pleased as she was. He had often said how nice it would be to have a son of their own to bring up as a forester, to take his place and look after them when they were old.

Their joy knew no bounds when the baby arrived.

He was a sweet little fellow, and no baby ever had a warmer welcome than this curly-headed little chap. His father and mother made a tremendous fuss of him. He was always so

merry and happy, and he simply loved to lie all day basking in the sun.

This went on for some long time, and he was getting so fat and heavy that the forester said to his wife one night, "Surely it is time the boy walked now. You must let me teach him to do so."

But his mother was very indignant, and said, "Men know nothing about babies. You go on chopping down your trees, and leave me to manage him. He'll walk fast enough when the time comes."

Every time his father said anything, it was always the same. She made excuses and gave him a hundred good reasons why the boy should only crawl, that one day the forester lost his temper and said:

"Oh, well, just as you please; you have to carry him, after all, so I don't mind. Still, if anything should happen to me and you have to leave the hut, you will wish you had a proper son, instead of a crab." And since he really loved his son very much and did not want to see him spoilt, he tried to shame him into walking.

"Come Little Crab," he would say, "It's time you were a man now. Come, try and stand by me."

But no, nothing made any difference, and the pet name given him in fun clung to him always, and he was known all over the forest as "Little Crab."

Now one day, when the forester was chopping down a very big tree, it fell rather suddenly and he was badly crushed. His poor wife came running when she heard the sad news. She was heart-broken and sobbed most bitterly.

"Good-bye," he said to her, "if only 'Little Crab' would wake up and be a man, I should not fret so much at leaving you. But you must really begin to think of yourself more now, and I want you to promise me that when I am gone you will try to make him walk. It is really too bad for you to have to carry him everywhere now."

So she promised, for she was devoted to her husband and would have promised him anything. After he was buried, she tried her hardest to persuade "Little Crab" to walk. She told him that it had been his father's last wish that he should take care of her. "And you know we must try to do whatever we know he would have wished," she finished.

But not a bit of it, "Little Crab" only smiled, and springing on her back, as he was always accustomed to do, he said with a smile, "I'm so tired mother dear, carry me up to bed," and as he absolutely refused to get down, she had to carry him up.

When he was safely tucked up in bed, she sat down and pondered as to the best means of carrying out her husband's wishes. Moreover, she saw now how foolish she had been to spoil him so.

"I must make a last appeal to him in the morning," she thought. "He is really very good-hearted. But whatever shall I do if I fail?" (You will see later on that Little Crab could not help being obstinate. He did not really mean to be unkind).

Suddenly the poor woman remembered a great Magician who had many retainers, and lived quite close in the heart of that same great forest. He was a very clever man, and she had once been able to help him out of a difficulty. He had promised then to help her, if ever she needed his aid. She never had before, so now she thought, "I will go straight to him in the morning."

When it was light she got up, made a fire, and cooked the breakfast. Oh! how sad she was without her dear husband. But Little Crab had no consideration: he never thought of his mother's loneliness. He had been spoilt, and thought of no one but himself.

"Little Mother," he called, "is breakfast ready?"

"Quite, my son," she answered, as cheerfully as she could. "And I am coming to help you to walk down," but he would not stir a step.

"Then I must leave you to get down as best you can," she

said, turning to go, but Little Crab was too quick for her, and sprang upon her back as quick as thought. So she gave in once more, and carried him down.

"I cannot go on like this," she said. "To-day we will go and visit a Magician, and see what he can do for us." And Little Crab was quite willing, which shows he was ready to walk, had he known how and felt able!

As soon as they had finished breakfast, and she had cleared it all away, for she was a very tidy woman, and could never bear to leave her hut unless it was quite in order and everything in its place, she set out. Little Crab was on her back as usual. It seemed a very long way to the Magician's house, for Little Crab was no light weight: he was nearly a man by this time, and her heart was heavy too. Of course she had to take a present with her, for Magicians do not cure people for nothing, any more than other quack doctors will nowadays!

When they reached the entrance to his cave, they heard a voice saying, "O, Wife of the Forester, what do you want with me?" He really knew quite well, but this is a way Magicians have. The cleverer they are, the more stupid they try to look, and I can't think why! They certainly would not like anyone to think them so!

"O, Great Magician!" said she, "I fear you do not remember me? You once promised to help me, and I have never claimed your promise, but oh, I do so want you to tell me what to do for my son. He refuses to walk, and now he has become so heavy, that I cannot go on carrying him. Besides, now his father is dead, I have so much more to do," and she began to cry.

"There, there, my dear woman, don't cry," said the Magician, for he hated tears and had not much sympathy. I suppose he was too clever really. "Tears never helped anyone yet, as far as I know. Anyway I have no use for them. Put the boy down and come nearer."

So Little Crab was left outside while his mother went into the cave.

"You must buy a goat, and drag it as far as ever you can into the forest, away from your home, then kill it. When you have done so, say 'Little Crab, get down while I light a fire, that I may cook the goat's flesh. So shall we eat and be comforted.' When he is safely down, take to your heels and run home as fast as ever you can. He will follow, never fear."

So she thanked him very much, and went off at once to follow his instructions.

Directly Little Crab got down, she ran away home as quickly as ever she could, just as the Wise Man had said she must.

Now Little Crab was too much astonished to do anything at first. He simply sat down and gazed after his mother's vanishing figure. When she had quite disappeared, he looked from tree to tree as if expecting her to spring out suddenly, as she had done to amuse him, when he was a baby. He was still sitting quite contentedly where she had left him, and never dreamt of making any effort to follow her, when a voice said, "Good morning, Little Crab." It was a Hyaena. Of course all the beasts knew his name.

"Good morning," she said again, as he still sat gazing stupidly in front of him. "Have you some nice meat for me?" For she had smelt the goat's blood a long way off and tracked it to the spot.

Little Crab said, "Well I have got some, but it is only for the person who will carry me on his back. Can you do that, Mrs. Hyaena?"

"Jump up, jump up," cried the greedy Hyaena, and she began gobbling up the meat at once!

When she had finished it, there was nothing to be seen. She had eaten every bit.

"Get down boy," she said roughly, "I want to go to get some water to drink."

"Softly, softly, Mrs. Hyaena," said Little Crab, "you must give me back my meat."

"Nonsense," retorted the Hyaena, "you know I cannot. Get down!" still more rudely this time.

"Oh, no, if you cannot give me the meat, you must carry me on your back for ever."

Then the Hyaena tried to bite him, but he moved his position so quickly, that she could not reach him, and so she had to go about with him on her back.

They went about like this for some days, and Little Crab would not get down for a single moment, for he was so afraid that if he did, the Hyaena would not let him get up again.

At last, however, the Hyaena got tired of this, so she in turn bethought her of the Magician.

Now the Magician gave her the same advice as he had given Little Crab's mother.

So she went and bought a goat, and when she had dragged it far into the forest she killed it.

"Little Crab, Little Crab," she said, "get down and when I have cooked the Goat, we will feast together, for I'm sure you must be hungry."

Little Crab thought from the Hyaena's honeyed tones, that he was really going to get a meal, so he got down off her back, and immediately, the Hyaena ran up a tree. But she was so hungry herself that she could not bear to leave all the fresh raw meat of which she was so fond, so she made a hook of one of the branches and hauled up a huge piece of the Goat.

Now Little Crab was crying so bitterly that he did not notice her, and so presently she thought it would be quite safe to creep down and seize the remainder.

But Little Crab saw her, and rushed to get on her back again, and the Hyaena was only just in time to run away.

Just then the Spider came out for a walk, and saw the Boy and the remainder of what had been the Goat, so he said, "Good morning, Little Crab, why are you so sad when there

is plenty of meat to be had?" For you see the Spider was so greedy, that he could not imagine anyone being sad as long as he had enough to eat—silly old thing!

"Cheer up! let us eat," he went on.

"Oh! no," returned Little Crab, "you may not eat unless you will take me up on your back and carry me."

Now the Spider was very crafty and had no intention of carrying the boy very far, but he was quite determined to have the meat, so he answered in the sweetest voice.

"Why, with pleasure, Little Crab, you are no weight, jump up, jump up."

However when he had eaten all the meat, he said rather roughly, "Get down, Boy," just as the Hyaena had done!

But Little Crab said, "Oh, no, a bargain's a bargain, you must carry me for ever now, unless you can restore the meat," and try as he would the Spider could not shake him off!

So the Spider carried Little Crab to his house, and when they arrived there, he called to his wife to bring out a stick and beat Little Crab with it. But Little Crab was artful, and moved quickly from side to side to avoid the blows, which then fell heavily upon the Spider instead, and in a few minutes he fell down and died.

This frightened Mrs. Spider so terribly that she ran right away into the forest, and Little Crab was left alone. There was a pond just outside the Spider's house, and it looked so much softer than the earth that Little Crab crawled and rolled down to the edge, and managed to roll right in.

You see he was really a Water-Baby, and not a proper child at all. So you must make allowances and excuses for him, for he really did not know how to walk on land. We are all rather afraid of what we don't understand, aren't we?

He has lived happily in the water ever since, and his mother was very sensible about it. She was very, very lonely at first, but as she said, she loved him so much that she could be quite content as long as she knew he was happy. And she

knew very well he never could have been happy in this world, which after all is made for the ordinary people!

XII. Why the Hare is Afraid of the Dog

Many, many years ago, long before you were born, the Dog and the Hare were great friends. I must tell you how it came about that they took a dislike to each other; for now, you know, a Hare simply runs as fast as ever she can if she catches sight of a Dog; while the Dog never loses an opportunity of chasing the Hare!

One day the Hare said to the Dog: "It must be rather wretched for you all alone, out here in the fields," for the dog had not made friends with man in those days, he was only a wild dog, something like a wolf, not a bit like the beautiful great mastiffs and others we see here at home. "I wish you would come back to our town with me," she continued, "you should live in my house, it is a very nice one, and quite close to the town," and she tossed her head with pride. "A very nice one indeed, so cosy and comfortable. All the passages even are littered down with hay and straw, and there is a lovely mat of moss over the porch, which keeps out all the draught and cold."

The idea rather pleased the Dog, though he was not quite sure whether it would suit him permanently, for he loved the free roving life in the fields. However, it was autumn, and the wet season would soon be coming on, so he said, "That is a very kind suggestion of yours Mrs. Hare, very kind indeed, and I should much like to see your house. I should be very pleased indeed to pay you a visit."

"Hurrah!" cried the Hare, "then that is settled, I am delighted, Mr. Dog, and when can you come?"

So they talked for a little while, and the Dog said he must have a day or two to get some clothes from his tailor, "For I

must be smart when I visit you, dear Mrs. Hare," he said, with a bow, "I should not like you to be ashamed of me."

"Now that is very sweet of you, Mr. Dog," said the Hare, blushing and looking very confused, as well she might, for she had something rather awkward to say to him, and she did not wish to offend him or hurt his feelings in any way, and she hesitated and felt very uncomfortable.

"Of course my love for you is very great, and I admire you very much, but you see—" and she hesitated again, wondering how she should go on—"would you mind—that is would you care to"—and she stopped.

"Well, well, madam," snapped the Dog in a moment seeing she was unable to continue, "what has upset you? Either you wish me to come or you do not, which is it? Which is it?" he barked.

"Oh, dear Mr. Dog, do be patient," cried Mrs. Hare. "The other Hares, who have not had the honour of seeing you and knowing you as I do, would probably be frightened if we were to walk straight into the town. They can never have seen anyone so noble looking, nor so handsome. It would be such a pity, for you would not see them at their best, and I do so want you to be friends," she continued.

"I see," said the Dog, "well, what do you propose?"

"I was thinking it would be so much better for us to drive there, but then my carriage is not large enough for two people, should you mind driving very slowly so that I could run alongside and show the driver where to go? I could not let you arrive there before me! I must be there to welcome you," the Hare went on. "What, do you think of that plan, Mr. Dog? Do tell me!"

"I don't see why that plan should not act quite well; but my poor little friend, surely you will be very tired, won't you?"

"Not at all, not at all," cried the Hare, "so shall we say the day after to-morrow? Will you meet me here Mr. Dog?" So it was agreed that they should meet there in the afternoon.

Now the Hare had no carriage, but she was so frightened of the Dog when he barked, even though they were friends then, that she felt she must say something to pacify him. So she was rather in a fix.

Suddenly she remembered a very large bag that had been in their family many years. She went up to the attic and got it out and examined it carefully.

"Yes, I think I can manage it," she said to herself. "The Dog is not so very wise if it comes to that! Well, we must see," and she went on with her work of preparing the best bedroom for the Dog.

She put fresh straw in all the rooms and swept out the passages. You wouldn't have known the house when she had finished, she had made it look so different.

Then she set to work to brush her own clothes and made herself look so smart. Just as she was ready to start off, she turned back to look at the house, and felt very pleased with her work. "I think next year I must have some new sun-blinds," she mused, blinking.

Have you ever noticed what bright eyes Hares have? Mrs. Hare was well aware of her charms and she blinked, as all Hares do, to attract attention to her pretty eyes, and it became such a habit, that she even did it when she was quite alone.

"I think it all looks very nice," she said as she tucked a violet into her ruff and started off, dragging the huge bag behind her.

The Dog was nowhere to be seen, for the Hare had purposely arrived in good time, and she threw down the bag behind the hedge. Just as she came out on to the road the Dog appeared, and they waved paws to each other till they were close enough to speak.

"Good-day, Mrs. Hare," said the Dog, and "how are you?"

"Oh, very well in health, dear Mr. Dog," replied the Hare, "but a little worried. I daresay you'll think me silly, but there

—I will tell you all about it. Of course you know that although I have a nice house, I am not really well off, for every year my income gets less and less, and no one can be wealthy when that is the case. It is always hard to do with less."

The Dog began to wonder what was coming next.

"I had hoped to have had my carriage done up, but, dear friend, I find I simply cannot afford it, the house has swallowed up all my money. I have had to spend so much on the repairs which I was obliged to do," she continued, "for ours is an old house, my family have lived there for ages and ages and I could not let it go to wrack and ruin."

The Dog nodded a grave assent.

"And so, I am going to ask as a great favour, that you will allow me to bandage your eyes before you enter the carriage, so that you may not notice how shabby it is," and she produced a scarf.

Now the Dog didn't much care about it, but he thought he was so strong, that he could easily overpower the Hare, and so she would surely never be silly enough to try to play him a trick.

"Of course, Mrs. Hare, as your guest, I must do as you wish," he said in his politest manner, "though really I should never mind your carriage being shabby, and I am sorry you should have worried so much about it."

So the Hare bandaged his eyes, and got him into the bag, and he was so heavy, she had all her work cut out to half drag and half carry him. Every now and again she spoke to him, and said how sorry she was to think that he was missing all the lovely scenery they were passing.

On the way to Mrs. Hare's house, they came to the town where all the Hares lived. Mrs. Hare's house was some distance on the other side of the town. It was a large house, as Hares' houses go, and stood by itself, some long distance from the others in that neighbourhood.

But her mother lived in the town, and she was so pleased

to see her daughter again, that she determined to persuade her to remain for a day or so.

"Welcome, welcome, my dear daughter," said the Mother-Hare, "it is good to see you again, and now you are here you must stay the night, I will not allow you to go any further to-day."

Now the Dog was heavy, and Mrs. Hare was very glad to rest, so she readily agreed, and went upstairs and took off her things, telling the Dog that he must stay in the carriage, as there was a disturbance in the Hares' town, and it would be wiser for him not to show himself, as at such times a stranger was apt to be suspected and treated roughly.

"I could not bear you to be subjected to any discourtesy, and so I shall bring you some supper here," said she, pretending that the carriage had been put up in the yard. The Dog was very comfortable, it was so warm and cosy in the bag, and he felt rather tired after his rough journey, so it was an easy matter to persuade him to remain there.

Presently all the Hares crowded round Mrs. Hare. "What have you got in the bag?" they asked, which I think you'll agree was very rude.

"Oh, that is a charm," she replied.

"Take it out and let us see it, we want to see it," they clamoured all at once, making a fearful din!

"If I did that, it would lose all its powers, and then we should none of us benefit," said the Hare. But they were so persistent in their enquiries, that she became alarmed, and saw that she would have to be very careful if she were to keep her secret.

When all was quiet for the night, and every Hare safely tucked up in bed, Mrs. Hare got up again and went out, and gave the Dog some food. As soon as he had eaten it, she said, "Now we must resume our journey, for I am sorry to say that I find the Hares in this town so behind the times and so superstitious, that they say that all strangers must pay a tax if they

sleep here the night. I am quite ashamed to tell you this," she continued, "but you see we have no choice. We must escape while they are asleep, for if the tax is not paid, and you are here in the morning, it will mean punishment for us both."

"Dear, dear," said the Dog, "what benighted people to be sure. How is it you are so different, dear lady?"

"Well, you see, I have travelled a good deal," replied Mrs. Hare, "and that makes such a difference. I should hate to be so prejudiced and narrow-minded." So she closed up the bag and off they went.

Next morning as it was getting light, they came to the Hyaena's farm, which was not very far from Mrs. Hare's home, and as the Hyaena was a busy person, she was up betimes and at work on her land.

The poor Hare was getting very, very tired, and as they got on to the Hyaena's land, she began to find the Dog very heavy, so she had to drag the bag behind her; that was all very well as long as she kept to the path, but she saw a short cut which would take them home much sooner, and away she went over Mrs. Hyaena's sprouting corn, dragging the Dog wearily behind her.

Now when Mrs. Hyaena heard the noise of the bag in the corn, crushing and scrunching it, she called out, "Who is that destroying my corn?" This terrified the Hare, and she nearly fainted with fright, for she did not know whatever to do.

Of course the Dog was dreadfully anxious too, and when he heard the Hare say, "May I present you with a piece of meat out of my bag, for luck, Mrs. Hyaena?" he burst the bag and jumped out with a 'boo-ooup!' And the Hare ran away as quickly as she could, and hid in the grass.

"I shall go and see who it is," said Mrs. Hyaena, and when he heard that, the Dog also took to his heels and ran away as quickly as ever he could.

He ran, and ran, and ran, and soon his tongue was hanging out of his mouth and he was nearly done, when suddenly

he saw the porch of Mrs. Hare's house. She had described it so well, that he recognised it at once, and was only too thankful to go in and rest.

Presently he took out his needle and cotton, and putting on a thimble he began to mend his clothes. He was more vain than tidy, I am afraid, and did not wish Mrs. Hare to see him with a torn coat.

The Hare meantime, waited till the Hyaena had gone, and then she came out of hiding to pick up her bag, for she did not want to lose that! And when she reached home you can guess how much surprised she was to find the Dog sitting in the porch mending his coat.

"It is so nice and cool out here," he said, "I hope you won't mind. Of course I will go in if you do."

"Oh dear no," said Mrs. Hare, relieved to find that the Dog had apparently forgotten her treachery, "I am only so grieved to think that your coat should have been torn, I must mend it for you."

"Don't think of that, pray," returned the Dog, politely, though rather doubtful of her sincerity.

"Oh! but I must insist upon finishing it for you while you take a rest. I am quite a good needlewoman, Mr. Dog, indeed I am," said the Hare bridling and blushing.

So the Dog was persuaded to take a rest, and to give up his seat to the Hare, who took his coat from him, and putting on her eye-glasses, commenced to darn the tear.

"Lie down, dear Mr. Dog, lie down on the moss mat, you will find it very comfortable."

"Thank you, I will," said he, and he stretched himself at her feet and lay there panting, as you know Dogs do.

Now the Hyaena was determined to find out who had spoilt her corn, so she sniffed about in the corn and grass till she had discovered the Hare's foot-prints. "Ha! ha! so that's who it is," and she threw back her head and roared with laughter. "Oh! you silly little thing, I'll soon settle you!" she

shrieked.

But she first went and put all her babies to bed, thinking that they would be safer there, and this little delay gave Mrs. Hare a good start.

When she arrived at the Hare's house, and saw the Hare and the Dog she was so surprised that she never stopped to say, "Good morning," or "How do you do?" or to make any polite remark at all, she simply shouted out, "Which of you two was I chasing?"

Then the cunning Hare said, "Well, who is panting? For the one who is panting is surely the one who has been running last!"

And the Hyaena said, "I suppose it must have been the Dog," and she rushed at the Dog to kill him, but he was too quick for her, and jumping up, made as if he meant to seek shelter in the house. The Hyaena raced through the porch after him, and they both stuck in the door together. There they pushed, and bit, and scratched each other, until suddenly the Hyaena caught sight of the Hare's bag, so she pushed the Dog towards it and managed to get him in, then tying it up securely she went off home, calling back over her shoulder to the Hare, "I'll come and settle up with *you* another day."

Now as you know, the Hyaena is a very powerful beast, and so she had no difficulty in getting her burden home. And when she had arrived she flung the bag down so heavily that the poor Dog lay stunned for awhile.

Presently he revived a little and happened to hear the Hyaena talking to her babies; her last words put him in a terrible fright. "Whatever you do," said she, "don't let the Dog out while I'm away; I shall not be very long. We shall have a splendid feast to-night." Then she went off—I don't know where, but I rather suspect it was to settle her little difference with Mrs. Hare.

No sooner had she gone than the Dog, who was shivering with fright, said very faintly, "Good morning, Baby-

Hyaenas, have you ever seen a Dog?"

All the Baby-Hyaenas growled and grunted together, and I'm sure you could not have distinguished what they were saying—anyway the Dog could not, so very, very gently he said through his chattering teeth, "Wouldn't you like to see my nose? It isn't a bit like yours, you know."

Now the Baby-Hyaenas had never seen a Dog in all their lives, though they had often heard their Mother-Hyaena talk of such animals, so they were really very curious to see him, and after a minute or two the eldest one, rubbing his own nose, said, "What is it like then?"

"Oh, ever so much prettier than yours," replied the Dog, and then he added quickly, fearing they might be annoyed, "Mine has had special treatment. Perhaps if you saw it and liked it, you could copy it, for I know how clever you all are."

This pleased them immensely, and they all cried out at once, "We must wait till mother comes back and then we shall look at it."

Of course this did not suit the Dog at all—he did not want to wait, so very cautiously he said, "You can see quite well if you open the bag a little."

So they were silly, as Baby Animals often are, and opened the bag, but quickly pulled it together again and pushed him further into it.

"I never saw anything," squealed the smallest of the Babies. "I'll tell mother, I'll tell mother; I want to see, I want to see," and to pacify the tiresome little creature the others opened the bag again, for they did not want her to tell their mother. They were rather off their guard, as the Dog had been so quiet, and quick as thought he jumped over the pack of them and scurried off as fast as ever he could.

They were so frightened, for Mrs. Hyaena was a stern mother, that all they could do was to stand staring stupidly after the Dog, who called gaily to them, "Ta-ta, Little Hyaenas, have you ever seen me run? Ha! ha!" And he

disappeared!

Had he not escaped that day we should never have heard any more about him, and who knows, perhaps we should not have had any dogs now!

Uncle Remus Stories

Retold by Jane Shaw
From the Original of Joel Chandler Harris

Brer Fox Invites Brer Rabbit to Dinner

Many years ago, on a plantation in America, an old negro servant called Uncle Remus told these tales to a little boy.

"One day," said Uncle Remus, "after Brer Fox had been doing all that he could to catch Brer Rabbit, and Brer Rabbit had been doing all he could to keep him from it, Brer Fox say to himself that he would have a game with Brer Rabbit, and he ain't more than got the words out of his mouth when Brer Rabbit come a-loping up the big road, looking just as plump, and as fat, and as saucy as a horse in a barley-patch.

'Hold on, there, Brer Rabbit,' says Brer Fox, says he. 'I ain't got time, Brer Fox,' says Brer Rabbit, says he. 'I want to have some confab with you, Brer Rabbit,' says Brer Fox, says he.

'All right, Brer Fox, but you better holler from where you stand. I'm monstrous full of fleas this morning,' says Brer Rabbit, says he.

'I see'd Brer Bear yesterday,' says Brer Fox, says he, 'and he sort of raked me over the coals because you and me can't make friends and live neighbourly, and I told him that I'd see you.'

Then Brer Rabbit scratches one ear with his off hind-foot sort of dubiously, and then he ups and says, says he, 'All right, Brer Fox. Supposing you drop round, to-morrow and take dinner with me. We ain't got no great doings at our house, but I expect the old woman and the chilluns can sort of scramble round and get up something for you.'

'I'm agreeable, Brer Rabbit,' says Brer Fox, says he.

Next day, Mr. Rabbit and Missis Rabbit got up before day and raided a garden like your mammy's out there, and got

some cabbages, and some corn and some sparrow-grass, and they fix up a smashing dinner. By and by one of the little Rabbits, playing out in the back-yard, come running in and hollering, 'Oh, Ma! Oh, Ma! I see'd Mr. Fox a-coming!'

And then Brer Rabbit he took the chilluns by the ears and make them sit down, and then he and Missis Rabbit sort of dally round waiting for Brer Fox. And they keep on waiting, but no Brer Fox ain't come. After a while, Brer Rabbit goes to the door, easy like, and peeps out, and there, sticking out from behind the corner, was the tip end of Brer Fox's tail. Then Brer Rabbit shut the door and sat down, and put his paws behind his ears and began to sing:—

'The place whereabouts you spill the grease,
Right there you're bound to slide,
And where you find a bunch of hair,
You'll surely find the hide!'

Next day, Brer Fox sent word by Mr. Mink and excused himself and said he had been too sick to come to dinner, and he ask Brer Rabbit to come and take dinner with him, and Brer Rabbit say he was agreeable.

By and by, at midday, when the shadows was at their shortest, Brer Rabbit sort of brush up his coat and saunter down to Brer Fox's house, and when he got there, he hear somebody groaning, and he look in the door and there he see Brer Fox sitting up in a rocking-chair, all wrapped up with flannel and looking mighty weak. Brer Rabbit look all round, he did, but he ain't see no dinner. The dish-pan was sitting on the table, and close by was a carving-knife.

'Look like you going to have chicken for dinner, Brer Fox,' says Brer Rabbit, says he.

'Yes, Brer Rabbit, they are nice and fresh and tender,' says Brer Fox, says he.

Then Brer Rabbit sort of pull his whiskers and say, 'You ain't got no calamus root, have you, Brer Fox? I just can't eat

no chicken excepting she's seasoned up with calamus root…' And with that Brer Rabbit leapt out of the door and dodged among the bushes and sat there watching for Brer Fox; and he ain't watched long neither, because Brer Fox flung off the flannel and crept out of the house and got where he could close in on Brer Rabbit and catch him, but Brer Rabbit hollered out, 'Oh, Brer Fox! I'll just put your calamus root out here on this here stump. Better come and get it while it's fresh!' And with that Brer Rabbit gallop off home.

And Brer Fox ain't never catched him yet, and what's more, honey, he ain't a-going to!"

The Wonderful Tar Baby

"Didn't the Fox never catch the rabbit, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy the next evening.

"He came mighty near it, honey, sure as you're born, Brer Fox did," said Uncle Remus. "One day after Brer Rabbit fool him with the calamus root, Brer Fox went to work and got him some tar, and mix it with some turpentine, and fix up a contraption what he call a Tar-Baby. And he took this here Tar-Baby and he sat her in the big main road, and then he lay off in the bushes to see what the news was going to be. And he didn't have to wait long neither, because by and by here come Brer Rabbit pacing down the road—lippity-clippity, clippity-lippity—just as saucy as a jay-bird. Brer Fox, he lay low. Brer Rabbit come prancing along till he spy the Tar-Baby, and then he fetched up on his behind legs like he was astonished. The Tar-Baby, she sat there, she did, and Brer Fox, he lay low.

'Morning!' says Brer Rabbit, says he. 'Nice weather this morning,' says he.

Tar-Baby ain't saying nothing, and Brer Fox, he lay low. 'How are you feeling this morning?' says Brer Rabbit, says he. Brer Fox, he wink his eye slow, and lay low, and the Tar-Baby, she ain't saying nothing.

'How you come on, then? Is you deaf?' says Brer Rabbit, says he. 'Because if you is, I can holler louder,' says he. Tar-Baby stay still, and Brer Fox, he lay low.

'You're stuck up, that's what you is,' says Brer Rabbit, says he, 'and I'm going to cure you, that's what I'm a-going to do,' says he.

Brer Fox, he sort of chuckle in his stomach, he did, but

Tar-Baby ain't saying nothing.

'I'm going to teach you how to talk to respectable folks if it's the last thing I do,' says Brer Rabbit, says he. 'If you don't take off that hat and tell me howdy, I'm going to bust you wide open,' says he.

Tar-Baby stay still, and Brer Fox, he lay low.

Brer Rabbit keep on asking her, and the Tar-Baby, she keep on saying nothing, till presently Brer Rabbit drew back with his fist, he did, and blip! he struck the Tar-Baby on the side of the head. Right there's where he broke his molasses jug, as the saying is! His fist stuck, and he can't pull loose. The tar held him. But Tar-Baby, she stay still, and Brer Fox, he lay low.

'If you don't let me loose, I'll knock you again,' says Brer Rabbit, says he, and with that he fetched her a swipe with the other hand, and *that* stuck. Tar-Baby, she ain't saying nothing, and Brer Fox, he lay low.

'Turn me loose before I kick the natural stuffing out of you,' says Brer Rabbit, says he, but the Tar-Baby, she ain't saying nothing. She just held on—and then Brer Rabbit lose the use of his feet in the same way. Brer Fox, he lay low. Then Brer Rabbit squeal out that if the Tar-Baby don't turn him loose he'll butt her over sideways. And then he butted, and his head got stuck.

Then Brer Fox, he sauntered forth, looking just as innocent as one of your mammy's mocking-birds.

'Howdy, Brer Rabbit,' says Brer Fox, says he, and then he rolled on the ground, and laughed and laughed till he couldn't laugh no more. 'I expect you'll take dinner with me this time, Brer Rabbit! I done laid in some calamus root and I ain't going to take no excuse,' says Brer Fox, says he."

Here Uncle Remus paused, and drew a big sweet potato out of the ashes of his fire.

"Did the Fox eat the Rabbit?" asked the little boy.

"That's all as far as the tale goes," replied the old man.

"He might, and then again he mightn't. Some say Judge Bear come along and loosed Brer Rabbit—some say he didn't. I hear your mammy calling. You better run along!"

The Briar Patch

"Uncle Remus," said the little boy one evening, "did the Fox kill and eat the Rabbit when he caught him with the Tar-Baby?"

"Law, honey, ain't I told you about that?" replied Uncle Remus, chuckling slyly. "I declare to gracious I ought to have told you that, but old man Nod was riding on my eyelids that night till in a little while I'd have dis-remembered my own name.

What did I tell you when I first begin? I told you Brer Rabbit was a monstrous clever beast; leastways, that's what I meant to tell you. Well, then, honey, don't you go and make no other calculations, because in them days Brer Rabbit and his family was at the head of the gang when any racket was on hand, and there they stayed. Before you begins to wipe your eyes about Brer Rabbit, you wait and see whereabouts Brer Rabbit is going to fetch up.

When Brer Fox finds Brer Rabbit mixed up with the Tar-Baby, he feels mighty good, and he rolls on the ground and laughs. By and by, he up and says, says he, 'Well, I expect I've got you this time, Brer Rabbit,' says he. 'Maybe I ain't, but I expect I is. You been running round saucing me for a mighty long time, but I expect you done come to the end of the row. You been cutting capers and bouncing round in this neighbourhood until you come to believe yourself the boss of the whole gang. And then you're always somewheres where you got no business,' says Brer Fox, says he. 'Who asked you to come and strike up an acquaintance with this here Tar-Baby? And who stuck you up there where you is? Nobody in the round world. You just took and jammed yourself on that Tar-

Baby without waiting for any invite,' says Brer Fox, says he, 'and there you is, and there you'll stay till I fixes up a pile of brushwood and burns you up, because I'm going to barbecue you this day, for sure,' says Brer Fox, says he.

Then Brer Rabbit talk mighty humble. 'I don't care what you do with me, Brer Fox,' says he, 'so you don't fling me in that briar-patch,' says he.

'It's so much trouble to kindle a fire,' says Brer Fox, says he, 'that I expect I'll have to hang you,' says he.

'Hang me just as high as you please, Brer Fox,' says Brer Rabbit, says he, 'but don't fling me in that briar-patch,' says he.

'I ain't got no string,' says Brer Fox, says he, 'so now I expect I'll have to drown you,' says he.

'Drown me just as deep as you please, Brer Fox,' says Brer Rabbit, says he, 'but don't, don't fling me in that briar-patch,' says he.

'There ain't no water nigh,' says Brer Fox, says he, 'and now I expect I'll have to skin you,' says he.

'Skin me, Brer Fox,' says Brer Rabbit, says he, 'tear out my ears by the roots, cut off my legs,' says he, 'but please don't, Brer Fox, don't fling me in that briar-patch,' says he.

Of course Brer Fox want to hurt Brer Rabbit as bad as he can, so he catched him by the behind legs and slung him right in the middle of the briar-patch. There was a considerable flutter where Brer Rabbit struck the bushes, and Brer Fox sort of hung around to see what was going to happen. By and by he hear somebody call him, and away up the hill he see Brer Rabbit sitting cross-legged on a chinkapin log, combing the tar out of his hair with a chip of wood. Then Brer Fox know that he been fooled mighty bad. Brer Rabbit was pleased to fling back some of his sauce, and he holler out:

'Bred and born in a briar-patch, Brer Fox—I was bred and born in a briar-patch!' And with that he skipped out just as lively as a cricket in the embers."

The Story of the Flood

"One time," said Uncle Remus, putting on his spectacles to thread a large darning-needle with which he was patching his coat, "one time, away back yonder before you was borned, honey, and before your daddy and your mammy was borned, away back yonder before any of us was borned, the animals and the beastesses agreed among themselves to have a great meeting. In them days," went on the old man, seeing a look of surprise on the little boy's face, "in them days creatures had lots more sense than they got now; let alone that, they had sense same like folks, so they voted that they had to hold this assembly to sort of straighten out matters and hear all the complaints, and when the day came they was on hand. The Lion, he was there, because he was the king, and he had to be there. The Rhynossyhoss, he was there, and the Elephant, he was there, and the Camels, and the Cows, and plumb down to the Crayfishes, they was there. They was all there. And when the Lion shook his mane, and took his seat in the big chair, then the session began to commence."

"What did they do, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy.

"I can scarcely call to mind exactly what they did do, but they spoke speeches, and hollered, and flung their language around and arranged their affairs, and explained their business. By and by, while they was all disputing with one another, the Elephant tramped on one of the Crayfishes. Of course when that creature put his foot down, whatsomever is under there is bound to be squashed and there wasn't enough of that Crayfish left to tell that he'd been there.

This made the other Crayfishes mighty mad, and they sort of swarmed together and drawed up a kind of protest, with

some why's and wherefor's in it, and read it out in the assembly. But, bless gracious! such a racket was a-going on that nobody didn't hear, excepting maybe the Mud Turtle and the Spring Lizard, and their influence was powerful lacking, nobody paid no heed to them.

By and by, while the Unicorn was disputing with the Lion, and while the Hyena was a-laughing to himself, the Elephant squashed another one of the Crayfishes, and besides that, very near ruined the Mud Turtle. Then the Crayfishes, what was left of them, swarmed together and drawed up another protest with some more wherefor's. But they might as well have sung a song to a hurricane. The other creatures was too busy with their fussing to respond to the Crayfishes. So there they was, the Crayfishes, and they didn't know what minute was a-going to be their last. And they kept on getting madder and madder and scareder and scareder, till by and by they gave the wink to the Mud Turtle and the Spring Lizard, and then they bored little holes in the ground and went down out of sight."

"Who did, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy.

"The Crayfishes, honey. They bored into the ground and kept on boring till they unloosed the fountains of the earth. And the waters squirted out, and rose higher and higher till the hills were covered and the creatures was all drownded; and all because they thought themselves bigger and better than the Crayfishes."

"Where was the ark, Uncle Remus?" the little boy asked presently.

"Which ark's that?" asked the old man, pretending to be curious.

"Noah's ark."

"Don't you pester with old man Noah, honey. I'll be bound he took care of that ark, for that's what he was there for. But if there was any ark in this here deluge what the Crayfishes brought on, I ain't heard tell of it, and when there

ain't no arks around, I ain't got no time to make them up and put them in the story. It's getting near your bed-time, honey!"

Brer Fox Tackles Old Man Terrapin

"One day," said Uncle Remus, "one day Brer Fox met up with Brer Terrapin right in the middle of the big road. Brer Terrapin done heard him coming, and he allow to himself that he'd better keep one eye open, but Brer Fox was monstrous polite and he opened up the confab, he did, like as if he ain't seen Brer Terrapin for the last fortnight.

'Heyo, Brer Terrapin, where you been this long-come-short?' says Brer Fox, says he.

'Lounging around, Brer Fox, lounging around,' says Brer Terrapin.

'You don't look as spruce as you did, Brer Terrapin,' says Brer Fox, says he.

'Lounging around and suffering,' says Brer Terrapin, says he.

'What ails you, Brer Terrapin? Your eye looks mighty red,' says Brer Fox, says he.

'Lor', Brer Fox, you don't know what trouble is. You ain't been lounging around and suffering,' says Brer Terrapin, says he.

'Both your eyes are red, and you look like you're mighty weak, Brer Terrapin,' says Brer Fox, says he.

'Lor', Brer Fox, you don't know what trouble is,' says Brer Terrapin, says he.

'What ails you now, Brer Terrapin?' says Brer Fox, says he.

'I took a walk through a field the other day, and a man came along and set the field a-fire. Lor', Brer Fox, you don't know what trouble is,' says Brer Terrapin, says he.

'How did you get out of the fire, Brer Terrapin?' says Brer Fox, says he.

'Sat and took it, Brer Fox,' says Brer Terrapin, says he. 'Sat and took it, and the smoke sifted into my eye, and the fire scorched my back,' says Brer Terrapin, says he.

'Likewise it burn your tail off,' says Brer Fox, says he.

'Oh, no, there's the tail, Brer Fox,' says Brer Terrapin, says he.

With that he uncurls his tail from under his shell, and no sooner did he do that, than Brer Fox grabs it and hollers out, 'Oh, yes, Brer Terrapin! Oh, yes! And so you're the man what lammed me on the head the other day! You're in with Brer Rabbit, are you? Well, I'm going to out you!'

Brer Terrapin beg and beg, but 'twasn't no use. Brer Fox done been fooled so much that he was determined to make an end of Brer Terrapin. Then Brer Terrapin beg Brer Fox not to drown him, but Brer Fox ain't making no promises; and then he beg Brer Fox to burn him because he done got used to fire, but Brer Fox don't say nothing.

By and by Brer Fox drag Brer Terrapin a little way off to a pond and soused him under the water.

Then Brer Terrapin begins to holler, 'Turn loose that stump root and catch hold of me! Turn loose that stump root and catch hold of me!'

Brer Fox, he hollers back, 'I ain't got hold of no stump root, I is got hold of you!'

Brer Terrapin, he kept on hollering, 'Catch hold of me—I'm a-drowning—I'm a-drowning—turn loose the stump root and catch hold of me!'

Sure enough, Brer Fox turns loose the tail and Brer Terrapin, he goes down to the bottom—kerblunkity-blink!'"

The little boy liked the peculiar gurgling noise made by the old man very much. "How did he go to the bottom, Uncle Remus?"

"Kerblunkity-blink!"

"Was he drowned, Uncle Remus?"

"Who? Old man Terrapin? Is you drownded when your

mammy tucks you up in your bed at home?"

"Well, no—"

"Then so was old man Terrapin at home I tell you, honey. Kerblinkity-blunk!"

Brer Wolf Makes a Failure

"One day," said Uncle Remus, "while Brer Fox was going along the road, he met old Brer Wolf. When they had done howdying and asking after one another's family, Brer Wolf he sort of mention about Brer Rabbit's carryings-on and how Brer Rabbit was getting to be the talk of the neighbourhood. Then Brer Fox and Brer Wolf they sort of palavered on, they did, till by and by Brer Wolf he up and say that he done got a plan fixed to trap Brer Rabbit. Then Brer Fox say how. Then Brer Wolf up and tell him that the way to get the drop on Brer Rabbit was to get him into Brer Fox's house. Brer Fox done know Brer Rabbit of old and he know that sort of game had been worn to a frazzle and wouldn't catch Brer Rabbit, but Brer Wolf, he was mighty persuading.

'How you going to get him there?' says Brer Fox, says he.

'Fool him there,' says Brer Wolf, says he.

'Who's going to do the fooling?' says Brer Fox, says he.

'I'll do the fooling,' says Brer Wolf, says he, 'if you'll do the rest of the game,' says he.

'How you going to do it?' says Brer Fox, says he.

'You run along home, and get on the bed, and lie like you're dead, and don't you say nothing till Brer Rabbit come and put his hands on to you,' says Brer Wolf, says he, 'and see if we don't get him for supper,' says he.

This look like a mighty nice game, and Brer Fox agreed. So then he amble off home and Brer Wolf, he march off to Brer Rabbit's house. When he got there, it look like there's nobody at home, but Brer Wolf he walk up and knock on the door—blam! blam! Nobody comes. Then he knock again—blim! blim!

'Who's there?' says Brer Rabbit, says he.

'Friend,' says Brer Wolf.

'Too many friends spoils the dinner,' says Brer Rabbit, says he. 'Which one's this?' says he.

'I fetch bad news, Brer Rabbit,' says Brer Wolf, says he.

'Bad news is soon told,' says Brer Rabbit, says he, and done come to the door with his head tied up in a red handkerchief.

'Brer Fox died this morning,' says Brer Wolf, says he.

'Where's your mourning-gown, Brer Wolf?' says Brer Rabbit, says he.

'Going to get it now,' says Brer Wolf, says he. 'I just called by to bring the news. I went down to Brer Fox's house a little bit ago and there I found him, dead and stiff,' says he.

Then Brer Wolf lope off. Brer Rabbit sat down and scratch his head he did, and by and by he say to himself that he believe he'll sort of drop around by Brer Fox's house to see how the land lay. No sooner said than done. Up he jump and out he went. When he got close to Brer Fox's house, all look lonesome. Then he went up nearer. Nobody stirring. Then he look in and there lay Brer Fox stretched out on the bed just as big as life.

Then Brer Rabbit make like he's talking to himself. 'Nobody around to look after Brer Fox—not even Brer Turkey Buzzard ain't come to the funeral,' says he. 'I hope Brer Fox ain't dead, but I expect he is,' says he. 'Everyone done gone and left him, even down to Brer Wolf. It's the busy season with me, but I'll sit up with him. He seem like he's dead, yet he mayn't be,' says Brer Rabbit, says he. 'When a man goes to see dead folks, dead folks always raises up their behind leg and hollers *wahoo*!' says he.

Brer Fox he stay still. Then Brer Rabbit he talk a little louder. 'Mighty funny. Brer Fox look like he's dead, yet he don't act like he's dead. Dead folks hoist their behind leg and hollers *wahoo*! when a man comes to see them,' says Brer Rabbit, says he.

Sure enough, Brer Fox lift up his foot and holler *wahoo*! and Brer Rabbit he tear out the house like as if the dogs was after him.

Brer Wolf is mighty smart, but next time you hear from him, honey, he'll be in trouble. You just hold your breath and wait!"

The Sad Fate of Brer Wolf

"Folks that's always pestering people and bothering about things what ain't theirs," said Uncle Remus, "don't never come to a good end. There was Brer Wolf; instead of minding his own business, he had to go into partnership with Brer Fox, and there was scarcely a minute in the day but what he went after Brer Rabbit, and he kept on and kept on till first news you know he got catched out—and he got catched out monstrous bad.

Brer Rabbit ain't got no peace whatsomever. He couldn't leave home or Brer Wolf would make a raid and tote off some of the family. Brer Rabbit built him a straw house, and it was torn down; then he made a house out of pine-tops, and that went the same way; then he made him a bark house, and that was raided, and every time he lost a house he lost one of his chilluns. At last Brer Rabbit got mad, he did, and he went off, he did, and got some carpenters, and they built him a plank house with rock foundations. After that he could have some peace and quietness. He could go out and pass the time of day with his neighbours, and come back and sit by the fire, and smoke his pipe, and read the newspapers same like any man what's got a family. He made a hole, he did, in the cellar, where the little Rabbits could hide when there was too much of a racket in the neighbourhood. Brer Wolf, he see how the land lay, he did, and he lay low. The little Rabbits was mighty nervous, but cold chills didn't run up Brer Rabbit's back no more when he heard Brer Wolf go galloping by.

By and by, one day, when Brer Rabbit was fixing to call on Missis Coon, he heard a monstrous fuss and clatter up the big road, and almost before he could fix his ears to listen, Brer

Wolf run in the door. The little Rabbits went into their hole in the cellar, they did, like blowing out a candle. Brer Wolf was covered with mud, and mighty near out of wind.

'Oh, do pray save me, Brer Rabbit!' says Brer Wolf, says he. 'Do please, Brer Rabbit! The dogs is after me, and they'll tear me up. Don't you hear them coming? Oh, do please save me, Brer Rabbit! Hide me some place where the dogs won't get me!'

No sooner said than done.

'Jump in that big chest, Brer Wolf,' says Brer Rabbit, says he. 'Jump in there and make yourself at home.'

In jump Brer Wolf, down come the lid, and there Mr. Wolf was. Then Brer Rabbit went to the looking-glass, he did, and winked at himself, and then he drawed the rocking-chair in front of the fire, he did, and smoked his pipe."

"A pipe of real tobacco, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy.

"Rabbit tobacco, honey. You know this here herb called Life Everlasting what your mammy puts among the clothes to smell nice? Well, that's rabbit tobacco. Then Brer Rabbit sat there a long time, he did, turning his mind over and working his thinking machine. By and by he got up and sort of stirred around.

Then Brer Wolf speak up. 'Is the dogs all gone, Brer Rabbit?'

'Seems like I hear one of them smelling round the chimney-corner just now.'

Then Brer Rabbit got the kettle and filled it full of water, and put it on the fire.

'What you doing now, Brer Rabbit?'

'I'm fixing to make you a nice cup of tea, Brer Wolf.'

Then Brer Rabbit went to the cupboard and got the gimlet, and commenced to bore little holes in the chest lid.

'What you doing now, Brer Rabbit?'

'I'm a-boring little holes so you can get breath, Brer Wolf.'

Then Brer Rabbit got some more wood and flung it on the fire.

'What you doing now, Brer Rabbit?'

'I'm a-chunking up the fire so you won't get cold, Brer Wolf.'

Then Brer Rabbit fetched all his chilluns from the cellar.

'What you doing now, Brer Rabbit?'

'I'm a-telling my chilluns what a nice man you is, Brer Wolf.'

And the chilluns, they had to put their hand on their mouths to keep from laughing. Then Brer Rabbit he got the kettle and commenced to pour hot water on the chest-lid.

'What's that I hear, Brer Rabbit?'

'You hear the wind a-blowing, Brer Wolf.'

Then the water began to sift through the holes.

'What's that I feel, Brer Rabbit?'

'You feel the fleas a-biting, Brer Wolf.'

'They are biting mighty hard, Brer Rabbit.'

'Turn over on the other side, Brer Wolf.'

'What's that I feel now, Brer Rabbit?'

'Still you feels the fleas, Brer Wolf.'

'They are eating me up, Brer Rabbit!' And them was the last words of Brer Wolf because he burst out of the chest, he did, and ran, and was never see'd in that neighbourhood no more!"

Brer Rabbit Finds His Match at Last

"It looks to me that I let on the other night that in them days when the beastesses was sauntering around same like folks, none of them was bold enough to catch up with Brer Rabbit," said Uncle Remus thoughtfully.

"Yes," replied the little boy, "that's what you said."

"Well, then," went on the old man, "there's where my remembrance gave out, because Brer Rabbit did get catched up with, and it cooled him off like pouring spring water on one of these here biggity logs in the fire."

"How was that, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy.

"One day when Brer Rabbit was going lippity-clippiting down the road, he meet up with old Brer Terrapin. And after they pass the time of day with one another, they keep on talking they did, till by and by they got to disputing about which was the swiftest. Brer Rabbit, he say he can outrun Brer Terrapin, and Brer Terrapin, he just vow that he can outrun Brer Rabbit. Up and down they argued, till first news you know Brer Terrapin say he got a fifty dollar bill in the chink of the chimney at home, and that bill done told him that he could beat Brer Rabbit in a fair race. Then Brer Rabbit say he got a fifty dollar bill what say that he can leave Brer Terrapin so far behind, that he could sow barley as he went along and it'd be ripe enough to cut by the time Brer Terrapin pass that way.

Anyhow they make the bet and put up the money, and old Brer Turkey Buzzard, he was summoned to be the judge and hold the stakes; and 'twasn't long before all the arrangements was made. The race was to be four miles, and the ground was measured off, and at the end of every mile a post

was stuck up. Brer Rabbit was to run down the big road, and Brer Terrapin, he say he'd gallop through the woods. Folks told him he could get along faster on the road, but old Brer Terrapin, he know what he's doing. Most all the neighbours got wind of the fun, and when the day was settled they determined to be on hand. Brer Rabbit he train himself every day, and he skip over the ground just as gaily as a June cricket. Old Brer Terrapin, he lay low in the swamp. He had a wife and three chilluns, old Brer Terrapin did, and they was all the very image of the old man. Anybody would have to take a spy-glass to know the one from the other, and even then they were likely to get fooled.

That's the way matters stood till the day of the race, and on that day old Brer Terrapin, and his old woman, and his three chilluns, they got up before sun-up, and went to the place. The old woman, she took her stand near the starting post, she did, and the chilluns near the mileposts, up to the last, and there old Brer Terrapin he took his stand. By and by, here come the folks; Judge Buzzard, he come, and all the other creatures, they come, and then here come Brer Rabbit with ribbons tied round his neck and streaming from his ears. The folks all went to the other end of the track to see who would come first.

When the time come, Judge Buzzard strut around and pull out his watch and holler out, 'Gents, is you ready?'

Brer Rabbit, he say *yes*, and old Missis Terrapin holler go from the edge of the woods. Brer Rabbit, he set out on the race, and old Missis Terrapin, she set out for home. Judge Buzzard, he rose into the air and skimmed along to see that the race was run fair.

When Brer Rabbit got to the first milepost one of the Terrapin chillun crawl out of the woods, he did, and make for the post. Brer Rabbit, he holler out, 'Where is you, Brer Terrapin?'

'Here I come a-panting,' says the Terrapin, says he.

Brer Rabbit's so glad he's ahead that he runs harder than ever, and the Terrapin, he make for home. When Brer Rabbit come to the next post, another Terrapin crawl out of the woods.

'Where is you, Brer Terrapin?' says Brer Rabbit, says he.

'Here I come a-boiling,' says the Terrapin, says he.

Brer Rabbit, he raced on and come to the next post, and there was the Terrapin. Then he had one more mile to run and he feel like to burst.

By and by, old Brer Terrapin look away off down the road and he see Judge Buzzard sailing along and he know it's time for him to be up and on his way. So he scramble out of the woods, and roll across the ditch, and shuffle through the crowd of folks and get to the mile-post and crawl behind it. By and by, first news you know, here come Brer Rabbit. He look around and he don't see Brer Terrapin, and he squeal out, 'Gimme the money, Brer Buzzard! Gimme the money!'

Then all the folks they holler and laugh fit to kill themselves, and old Brer Terrapin, he rises up from behind the post and says, says he, 'If you'll gimme time to catch my breath, gents and ladies, one and all, I expect I'll finger that money myself,' says he. And sure enough, Brer Terrapin tie the purse round his neck and skedaddle off home."

"But Uncle Remus," said the little boy dolefully, "that was cheating!"

"Of course, honey. The beastesses begin to cheat and then folks took it up, and it keep on spreading. It's mighty catching, and you mind your eye, honey, that somebody don't cheat you before you is as old as me."

A Story About Little Rabbits

"Good chilluns," said Uncle Remus, "good chilluns always gets took care of. There was Brer Rabbit's chilluns, they minded their daddy and mammy from day's end to day's end. When old man Rabbit say *scoot*, they scooted, and when old Missis Rabbit say *scat* they scatted. They did that. And they kept their clothes clean, and they ain't had no smut on their nose neither."

The hand of the little boy went up to his face, and he scrubbed the end of his nose with his coat-sleeve.

"They was good chilluns," went on the old man, "and if they hadn't been, there was one time when there would have been no little rabbits—never a one. That's what."

"What time was that, Uncle Remus?" the little boy asked.

"The time when Brer Fox dropped in at Brer Rabbit's house, and found nobody there excepting the little Rabbits. Old Brer Rabbit, he was off somewheres raiding a cabbage patch, and old Missis Rabbit, she was at a sewing meeting in the neighbourhood, and while the little Rabbits was playing hide-the-switch, in dropped Brer Fox. The little Rabbits was so fat that they fairly made his mouth water, but he remembered about Brer Wolf and he was scared to gobble them up without some excuse. The little Rabbits, they are mighty frightened, and they huddle themselves up together and watch Brer Fox's motions. Brer Fox he sat there and wondered what sort of an excuse he was going to make up.

By and by he see a great big stalk of sugar-cane standing in the corner, and he clear his throat and talk biggity. 'Here! You young Rabs there, run around here and break me a piece of that sweetening-tree,' says he.

The little Rabbits, they got out the sugar-cane, they did, and they wrestled with it and sweat over it, but 'twasn't no use. They couldn't break it. Brer Fox, he pretends he ain't watching, but he keep on hollering, 'Hurry up, there, Rabs! I'm awaiting on you.'

And the little Rabbits, they hustle round and wrestle with the sugarcane, but they can't break it. By and by they hear a little bird singing on top of the house, and the song what the little bird sing was this here:—

'Take your toothies and gnaw it,
Take your toothies and saw it,
Saw it and yoke it,
And then you can broke it.'

Then the little Rabbits, they were mighty glad, and they gnawed the cane almost before Brer Fox could get his legs uncrossed. And when they carried him the cane, Brer Fox he sat there and studied how he was going to make some other excuse for nabbing them, and by and by he gets up and takes down the sieve what was hanging on the wall and hollers out, 'Come here, Rabs! Take this here sieve and run down to the spring and fetch me some fresh water.'

The little Rabbits, they run down to the spring and try to dip up the water with the sieve, but of course it all run out, and it keep on running out till by and by the little Rabbits sat down and began to cry. Then the little bird, sitting up in the tree, he began to sing, and this here's the song what he sing:—

'A sieve'll hold water same as a tray,
If you fill it with moss and daub it with clay;
The Fox'll get madder the longer you stay—
Fill it with moss and daub it with clay.'

Up they jumped, the little Rabbits did, and they fix the sieve so it won't leak, and then they carry the water to old Brer Fox. Then Brer Fox he gets mighty mad, and points out

a great big log of wood and tells the little Rabbits to put that on the fire.

The little chaps, they got round the log, they did, and they tugged at it so hard they nearly burst themselves, but the log didn't budge. Then they heard the little bird singing, and this here's the song what he sing:—

'Spit in your hands and tug it and toll it,
And get behind it and push it and pole it,
Spit in your hands and rear back and roll it.'

And just about the time they rolled the log on to the fire, their daddy, he came skipping in, and the little bird, he flew away. Brer Fox he see'd his game was up, and 'twasn't long before he make his excuses and start to go.

'You better stay and take a snack with me, Brer Fox,' says Brer Rabbit, says he. 'Since Brer Wolf done quit coming and sitting up with me, I'm getting so I feels right lonesome these long nights,' says he.

But Brer Fox, he button up his coat-collar tight and just set out for home.

And that's what you'd better do, honey, because first news you know, your mammy will be expecting you."

A Dollar a Minute

"H…hmm," said Uncle Remus, pulling thoughtfully at his whiskers, "there was one season when Brer Fox say to himself that he better whirl in and plant a patch of peanuts. The words weren't more than out of his mouth before the ground was broken up and the peanuts was planted. Old Brer Rabbit he sat by and watched, he did, and he sort of winked an eye and sang to his chilluns:—

'Ti-yi! Tungalee!
I eat a pea, I pick a pea.
It grows in the ground, it grows so free;
Ti-yi! The good ground-pea.'

Sure enough when the peanuts began to ripen up, every time Brer Fox go down to his patch, he finds that somebody has been scrambling amongst the vines, and he gets mighty mad. He sort of suspect who the somebody is, but old Brer Rabbit he cover his tracks so cute that Brer Fox didn't know how to catch him.

By and by one day Brer Fox took a walk all round the peanut-patch, and 'twasn't long before he found a crack in the fence where the rail done been rubbed right smooth, and right there he set a trap. He took and bent down a hickory sapling, growing in the corner of the fence; he tied one end of a rope on the top, and in the other end he fixed a loop-knot and fastened it right in the crack with a trigger. Next morning when old Brer Rabbit came slipping along and crept through the crack, the loop-knot catched him behind his forelegs, and the sapling flew up and there he was betwixt the heavens and the earth. There he swung, and he feared he was going to fall,

and he feared he wasn't going to fall. While he was a-fixing up a tale to tell Brer Fox he heard a lumbering down the road, and presently here come old Brer Bear ambling along from where he had been taking honey from the wild bees.

Brer Rabbit, he hailed him, 'Howdy, Brer Bear!'

Brer Bear, he look all round, and by and by he see Brer Rabbit swinging from the sapling and he holler out, 'Heyo, Brer Rabbit! How you feel this morning?'

'Much obliged, I'm only middling, Brer Bear,' says Brer Rabbit, says he.

Then Brer Bear, he ask Brer Rabbit what he's doing up there in the air, and Brer Rabbit, he up and say he's making a dollar a minute. Brer Bear, he say how. Brer Rabbit say he's keeping crows out of Brer Fox's peanut-patch, and then he ask Brer Bear if he don't want to make a dollar a minute, because he's got such a big family of chilluns to take care of, and besides he would make such a nice scarecrow. Brer Bear allow that he would like the job, and then Brer Rabbit show him how to bend down the sapling, and it wasn't long before Brer Bear was swinging up there in Brer Rabbit's place.

Then Brer Rabbit, he raced for Brer Fox's house, and when he got there he sing out, 'Brer Fox! Oh, Brer Fox! Come out here, Brer Fox, and I'll show you the man who's been stealing your peanuts!'

Brer Fox, he grab up his walking-stick, and both of them went running back down to the peanut-patch, and when they got there, sure enough, there was old Brer Bear.

'Oh, yes, you're catched, you is!' says Brer Fox, and before Brer Bear could explain, Brer Rabbit he jumped up and down and hollered out:

'Hit him in the mouth, Brer Fox, hit him in the mouth!' And Brer Fox, he drew back with his walking-stick and blip! he struck him; and every time Brer Bear would try to explain, Brer Fox would shower blows on him.

Whilst all this was going on, Brer Rabbit he slip off and

got in a mudhole and sank himself in the mud until only his eyes were sticking out, because he know'd that Brer Bear would be a-coming after him.

Sure enough, by and by here come Brer Bear down the road, and when he get to the mud-hole he say, 'Howdy, Brer Frog, has you see'd Brer Rabbit go by here?'

'He just gone by,' says Brer Rabbit, and old man Bear took off down the road like a scared mule, and Brer Rabbit, he come out and dry himself in the sun, and go home to his family same as any other man."

"The Bear didn't catch the Rabbit, then?" asked the little boy sleepily.

"Jump up from there, honey, and off to bed!" exclaimed Uncle Remus by way of reply. "I ain't got no time to be sitting here propping your eyelids open!"

Brer Rabbit Spills the Honey

"One time," said Uncle Remus, "Brer Rabbit took a notion that he'd pay Brer Bear a call, and no sooner do the notion strike him than he pick himself up and set out for Brer Bear's house."

"Why, I thought they were mad with each other," the little boy exclaimed.

"Brer Rabbit made his call when Brer Bear and his family wasn't at home," Uncle Remus explained with a chuckle. "He sat down by the road-side, and he see them go by—old Brer Bear and old Missis Bear and their two twin-chilluns, Kubs and Klibs.

Old Brer Bear and Missis Bear, they went along ahead, and Kubs and Klibs they come shuffling and scrambling along behind. When Brer Rabbit see this, he say to himself that he expect he better go see how Brer Bear's getting on; and off he goes. And it wasn't long before he was ransacking the whole house. Whilst he was going round peeping in here and poking in there, he got to fooling among the shelves, and a bucket of honey what Brer Bear had got hid in the cupboard fell down and spilt on top of Brer Rabbit and very nearly drownded him. From head to heels that creature was covered with honey; he wasn't just be-dabbled with it, he was just covered. He had to sit there and let the natural sweetness drip out of his eyeballs before he could see his hand before him and then, after he look around a little, he says to himself, says he, 'Heyo, here! What am I going to do now? If I go out in the sunshine, the bumbly-bees and the flies they'll swarm up and eat me, and if I stay here, Brer Bear'll come back and catch me, and I don't know what in the name of gracious I'm going to do.'

Anyhow, by and by a notion strike Brer Rabbit, and he tip-toe along till he get in the woods, and when he get out there, what do he do but roll in the leaves and trash and try to rub the honey off him that a-way. He roll, he did, and the leaves they stick, and he keep on rolling and the leaves keep on sticking till after a while Brer Rabbit was the most audacious-looking creature what you ever set eyes on.

Brer Rabbit, he jump round, he did, and try to shake the leaves off him, but the leaves, they ain't going to be shook off. Brer Rabbit, he shake and he shiver, but the leaves they stick; and the capers that creature cut out there in the wood by his own-alone-self was scandalous—they was that; they was scandalous.

Brer Rabbit see that this wasn't going to do, and he allow to himself that he better be getting on towards home, and off he go. He pace along, he did, and every motion he make, the leaves they'd go *swishy-swushy, splushy-splishy*, and from the fuss he made and the way he looked you'd have taken him to be the most savagest varmint since old man Noah let down the draw-bars of the ark and turned the creatures loose.

The first man that Brer Rabbit came up with was old Sis Cow, and no sooner does she lay eyes on him than she hoist up her tail in the elements and rush off like a pack of dogs was after her. This make Brer Rabbit laugh, because he know that when an old settled woman like Sis Cow runs distracted in the broad open daytime, that there must be something mighty curious about them leaves and that honey, and he keep on a-marching down the road.

It kept on this way with everybody Brer Rabbit met—they just broke and run. Of course this made Brer Rabbit feel monstrous biggity, and he allow to himself that he'd better drop round and skirmish in the neighbourhood of Brer Fox's house. And while he was standing there, running this round in his mind, here come old Brer Bear and all his family. Brer Rabbit, he sort of sidles towards them. Old Brer Bear, he stop and

look, but Brer Rabbit, he keep on sidling towards them. Old Missis Bear, she stand it as long as she can, and then she fling down her parasol and took to a tree. Brer Bear look like he's going to stand his ground, but Brer Rabbit he jump straight up in the air and give himself a shake and, bless your soul, honey, old Brer Bear make a break, and they tell me he tore down a whole piece of the fence getting away from there! And as for Kubs and Klibs, they took their hats in their hands, and they went skedaddling through the bushes just like a drove of horses."

"And then what?" the little boy asked.

"Brer Rabbit paraded on down the road," continued Uncle Remus, "and by and by here come Brer Fox and Brer Wolf, fixing up a plan to nab Brer Rabbit, and they was so intent on the confab, that they came right on Brer Rabbit before they see'd him; but gentlemens! when they catch a glimpse of him they give him all the room he wants.

Brer Wolf, he tried to show off, he did, because he want to play big in front of Brer Fox, so he stop and ask Brer Rabbit who he is.

Brer Rabbit, he jump up and down in the middle of the road, and holler out, 'I'm the Wull-er-de-Wust, and you're the man I'm after!'

Then Brer Rabbit jump about and pretend he's going after Brer Fox and Brer Wolf, and the way them creatures lit out from there was a caution.

A long time after that, Brer Rabbit come up with Brer Fox and Brer Wolf, and he got behind a tree-stump, Brer Rabbit did, and hollered out, 'I'm the Wull-er-de-Wust, and you're the mens I'm after!'

Brer Fox and Brer Wolf, they broke and ran, but before they got out of sight and out of hearing, Brer Rabbit showed himself, he did, and laughed fit to kill himself."

Brer Rabbit Frightens His Neighbours

One night while Uncle Remus was hunting for a piece of candle on the shelf over the fireplace, he knocked down a tin plate. It fell upon the hearth with a tremendous clatter.

"There now!" exclaimed Uncle Remus, "I lay if the creatures had been here while all that clatterment was going on, they'd have left without telling anybody good-bye. All excepting Brer Rabbit. Bless your soul, he'd have stayed to see the fun, just like he did that other time when he scared them so. I expect I done told you about that."

"When he got the honey on him and rolled in the leaves?"

Uncle Remus thought a moment. "If I make no mistake in my remembrance, that was the time when he called himself the Wull-er-de-Wust."

"Yes, it was," said the little boy.

"Well, then, this here was another time, and he nearly scared them plumb out of the neighbourhood. And it all came about because they wanted to play smarty."

"Who wanted to play smarty, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy.

"Oh, just them other creatures. They was always a-laying traps for Brer Rabbit and getting cotched in them themselves. Well, this time, Brer Rabbit was going to town. He had a fine crop of peanuts that season, and he decided, he did, that if he got anything like the money for them that he expected, he'd go to town and buy the things that they were needing.

He ain't no sooner said that than old Missis Rabbit, she vow, she did, that it would be a scandal and a shame if he didn't whirl in and get seven tin cups for the chilluns to drink out of, and seven tin plates for them to eat out of, and a

coffee-pot for the family. Brer Rabbit say that was just exactly what he was going to do, and that he was going to town the coming Wednesday.

Brer Rabbit wasn't more than out of the gate before Missis Rabbit, she slap on her bonnet, she did, and rush across to Missis Mink's house, and she ain't been there a minute before she up and tell Missis Mink that Brer Rabbit done promise to go to town on Wednesday coming to get the chilluns something. Of course, when Mr. Mink come home, Missis Mink want to know the reason he can't buy something for his chilluns same as Brer Rabbit do for his, and they quarrel and quarrel, just like folks. After that Missis Mink she carry the news to Missis Fox, and then Brer Fox he got a raking over the coals. Missis Fox she tell Missis Wolf, and Missis Wolf she tell Missis Bear, and it wasn't long before everyone in that place know that Brer Rabbit was going to town the coming Wednesday to get his chilluns something; and all the other creatures' chilluns ask their ma why their pa can't get *them* something.

Brer Fox and Brer Wolf and Brer Bear, they make up their minds, they did, that if they were going to catch up with Brer Rabbit, that was the time to do it, and they fix up a plan that they'd lie in wait for Brer Rabbit and nab him when he come back from town. They make all their arrangements and wait for the day.

Sure enough, when Wednesday come, Brer Rabbit ate his breakfast before sun-up, and set out for town. He took and got himself some tobacco and a pocket-handkerchief, and he got the old woman a coffee-pot, and he got the chilluns seven tin cups and seven tin plates; and then towards sundown he start back home. He walk along, he did, feeling mighty biggity, but by and by, when he got sort of tired, he sat down under a tree, and began to fan himself with one of the plates.

While he was doing this, a little bit of a teenchy woodpecker ran up and down the tree and kept on making a mighty

queer fuss. After a while Brer Rabbit shoo-ed at him with the platter. This seemed to make the teenchy little woodpecker mighty mad, and he rushed out on a branch right over Brer Rabbit, and he sang out:—

'Pilly-pee, pilly-wee!
I see what he don't see!
I see, pilly-pee,
I see what he don't see!'

He keep on singing this, he did, till Brer Rabbit began to look round, and he ain't no sooner looked round than he see marks in the sand where someone done been there before him, and he look a little closer, and then he see what the woodpecker was driving at.

He scratch his head, Brer Rabbit did, and he allow to himself, 'Ah-yi! Here's where Brer Fox has been sitting, and there's the print of his nice bushy tail. Here's where Brer Wolf has been sitting, and there's the print of his fine long tail. Here's where Brer Bear has been squatting on his hunkers, and there's the print where he ain't got no tail. They have all been here, and I lay they are hiding out in the big gully down there in the hollow.'

With that, old man Rab put his truck in the bushes, and then he crept around to see what he could see. Sure enough, when he got to the big gully down in the hollow, there they all was. Brer Fox, he was on one side of the road, and Brer Wolf was on the other side; and old Brer Bear, he was coiled up in the gully taking a nap.

Brer Rabbit, he peeped at them, he did, and then he held his hands across his mouth and laughed like some chilluns does when they think they're fooling their ma. Then he lit out to where he done left his truck, and when he got there he danced round and slapped himself on the leg, and made all sorts of curious motions. Then he got to work and turn the coffee-pot upside down and stuck it on his head; then he ran

his braces through the handles of the cups, and slung them across his shoulder; then he divided the platters, some in one hand and some in the other. After he got good and ready, he crept to the top of the hill, he did, and took a running start, and flew down like a hurricane—*rickety, rackety, slambang*!

Bless your soul, them creatures ain't heard no fuss like that, and they ain't see'd no man what looked like Brer Rabbit did, with the coffee-pot on his head, and the cups a-rattling on his braces, and the platters a-waving and a-shining in the air.

Now, old Brer Bear was laying off in the gully taking a nap, and the fuss scared him so bad that he got confused and ran over Brer Fox. He rushed out in the road, he did, and when he see the sight he whirl round and ran over Brer Wolf. With the scrambling and the scuffling, Brer Rabbit got right on them before they could get away.

He holler out, he did, 'Gimme room! Turn me loose! I'm old man Spewter-Splutter with long claws and scales on my back! I'm snaggle-toothed and double-jointed! Gimme room!'

And every time he whooped, he'd rattle the cups and slap the platters together—*rickety, rackety, slambang*! And I tell you, when them creatures got their limbs together they ran so fast they split the wind, they did that!"

Why Brer Bear Has No Tail

"One time," said Uncle Remus, "Brer Rabbit made a call on Brer Terrapin, but when he got to Brer Terrapin's house, he hear from Missis Terrapin that her old man done gone to spend the day with Mr. Mud-Turtle. Brer Rabbit he went after Brer Terrapin, and when he got to Mr. Mud-Turtle's house, they all sat up, they did, and told tales, and then when twelve o'clock come, they had crayfish for dinner and they enjoyed themselves right along. After dinner they went down to Mr. Mud-Turtle's mill-pond, and when they got there, Mr. Mud-Turtle and Brer Terrapin they amused themselves, they did, sliding from the top of a slanting rock down into the water.

Well, then, this here rock was mighty green and mighty slippery, mighty smooth and mighty slanting. Mr. Mud-Turtle, he'd crawl to the top and turn loose, and go a-sailing down into the water—*kersplash*! Old Brer Terrapin, he'd follow after, and slide down into the water—*kersplash*! Old Brer Rabbit he sat on one side, he did, and praised them up.

While they was a-going on this away, a-having their fun, and enjoying themselves, here come old Brer Bear. He hear them laughing and hollering and he call to them. 'Heyo, folks! What's all this? If my eyes, don't deceive me this here's Brer Rabbit and Brer Terrapin and old Uncle Tommy Mud-Turtle,' says Brer Bear, says he.

'The same,' says Brer Rabbit, says he, 'and here we is, enjoying the day that passes just as if there weren't no hard times.'

'Well, well, well,' says old Brer Bear, says he, 'a-slipping and a-sliding and making free! And what's the matter with Brer Rabbit that he ain't joining in?' says he.

Old Brer Rabbit, he wink at Brer Terrapin, and Brer Terrapin, he nudge Mr. Mud-Turtle, and then Brer Rabbit, he up and say, he did, 'My goodness, Brer Bear! You can't expect a man to slip and slide the whole blessed day, can you? I done had my fun, and now I'm a-sitting out here letting my clothes dry. It's turn and turn about with me and these gents when there's any fun going on,' says he.

'Maybe Brer Bear might join in with us?' says Brer Terrapin, says he.

Brer Rabbit he just holler and laugh. 'Shoo!' says he. 'Brer Bear's feet are too big and his tail's too long to slide down that rock,' says he.

This kind of put Brer Bear on his mettle, and he up and respond, he did, 'Maybe they is, and maybe they ain't, yet I ain't a-feard to try!'

With that the others made way for him, and old Brer Bear he got up on the rock, he did, and squatted down on his hunkers, and coiled his tail under him, and started down. First he go sort of slow, and he grin like he feel good; then he go sort of quick, and he grin like he feel bad; then he go more quicker and he grin like he's scared; then he strike the smooth part, and gentlemens! he swallow the grin and fetch a howl that might have been heard a mile off, and he hit the water like a chimney a-falling!

"You can give me a denial," Uncle Remus continued, after a little pause, "but just as sure as you're sitting there, when Brer Bear flew down that rock he break off his tail right smick-smack-smoove, and more than that, when he make his disappearance up the big road, Brer Rabbit holler out, 'Brer Bear! Oh, Brer Bear! I hear tell that flax-seed poultices is mighty good for sore places!'

Yet Brer Bear never looked back!"

References

Barker, W.H. & Sinclair, Cecilia. (1917). *West Africa Folk-Tales*. London: George Harrap & Company.

Tremearne, Mary & Tremearne, Newman. (1910). *Fables and Fairy Tales for Little Folk; or Uncle Remus in Hausaland*. Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons Ltd.

Shaw, Jane (retold by, from the original of Joel Chandler Harris). (1960). *Uncle Remus Stories*. London: Collins. In public domain, from Internet Archive (www.archive.org).