

Imaginative
Stories from Many Lands

STORY HOUR SERIES

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Imaginative Stories from Many Lands

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France

Cinderella; or the Little Glass Slipper [1]

Once there was a gentleman who married, as his second wife, a most proud and selfish woman, who had two daughters as overbearing as herself.

He, too, had a daughter — a charming girl, whose disposition was like that of her own mother, who had been loved by all for her gentleness and kindly ways.

When the daughter was christened a fairy had appeared to act as godmother, and as the child grew up it was clear that she had received the best gift of all — a character that could not easily be spoiled.

No sooner were the marriage festivities over than the new wife showed her true character by a violent outburst of temper against her step-daughter. And all because the well-bred manners of the unfortunate girl made her own rude daughters seem hateful.

She determined to put her stepdaughter in her place, so she set her to do the most menial work of the house, to wash dishes, scour pots and pans and scrub the tables. It was she who had to polish the oak floors of the rooms where Madam and her two fine daughters slept.

A bare garret at the top of the house and a hard straw mattress were her portion, while their ladyships had soft beds, handsome furniture, and great mirrors in which they could see themselves from head to foot.

The poor girl bore it all very patiently. She dared not complain to her father; he would only have scolded her, being completely under his wife's thumb.

When she had finished her work, the poor girl was always so tired that she just sat down in a corner of the wide kitchen fireplace, with her feet near the ashes for warmth. Because of this, all made game of her; the elder sister called her 'Cinder-scraper'; but the younger, who was not quite so rude, dubbed her 'Cinderella.'

None the less Cinderella, in her poor working clothes, was far more handsome than they in their splendid gowns.

Now it happened that the King's son was to give a ball, and all the nobility were invited. The two sisters were also invited, for the family cut quite a grand figure in the neighborhood. As you may suppose, this invitation pleased them mightily, but for Cinderella it meant more hard work, as it was she who ironed the linen her sisters wore, and who goffered their lace frills.

The stepsisters spoke of nothing else but how they would dress for the occasion.

"I," said the elder sister, "will wear my crimson velvet robe newly trimmed with my rare old lace."

"I," said the younger, "shall put on my usual skirt, but I shall wear an over-dress of gold brocade, and my diamond bodice-front, which is not unworthy of notice."

They engaged the services of the most fashionable dressmakers, and they bought their patches from the most noted maker.

They even talked over their attire with Cinderella, for they knew what good taste she had.

She not only gave them excellent advice, but she also offered to dress their hair herself. This offer they accepted gladly, and while she was brushing their tresses they unfeelingly asked her if she, too, would not like to go to the ball.

"Oh! Please do not laugh at me!" she exclaimed. "You know that balls are not for the like of me!"

"You are quite right," said the elder sister. "People would roar with laughter if they saw a cinder-scraper entering the ball-room!"

Cinderella's beautiful eyes filled with tears. Any other girl would have revenged herself by dressing their hair badly, but Cinderella's kind heart was proof against the temptation, and she was so skilled that no hairdresser in the town could excel her.

For two whole days the sisters were too much excited to take their food. They broke a dozen laces trying to draw in their waists to make them look slender; they just spent all their time before their mirrors.

At last the great moment arrived. The unfeeling sisters set off in high spirits, with never a thought for Cinderella, who followed them with her eyes as long as she could see them. When the coach was quite out of sight her brave young heart failed her, and she burst into tears.

At that moment her Godmother appeared before her.

"What is the matter, dear child?" she asked.

"I wish... I wish..." Cinderella's sobs choked her voice, and she could get no farther.

"You wish that you also could go to the ball — do you not?" said her Godmother kindly.

"I do... I do..." sobbed Cinderella.

"Well, you are a good girl and I shall see to that," said the Godmother.

She led Cinderella to the hall and bade her go to the garden and fetch a pumpkin.

Cinderella looked for the biggest she could find, and brought it to her Godmother, secretly wondering how a pumpkin could help her to get to the ball.

The Godmother scooped out the inside, leaving only the rind, then she touched this with her magic wand, and lo! In its place stood a gorgeous gilded coach!

Then she went to the mouse-trap and found six mice all alive. Telling Cinderella to raise the trap-door only a little way to let the mice out one at a time, she touched each with her wand as it passed, and changed it into a beautiful horse. Thus there stood a splendid team of six well-matched dapple-grey horses, which any king might have envied — but there was no coachman!

Cinderella, who had looked on with wonder, now cried: "I will run and see if there is anything in the rat-trap. If there is a rat in it, we might perhaps make a coachman of him!"

"You are right," said the Godmother; "go and see."

Cinderella brought the trap — it had three fine rats in it. Choosing the one that had the longest whiskers, with a touch of her wand the fairy changed him into a stately coachman, with the handsomest moustache you ever saw.

Then she said: "Go to the garden and bring me the six lizards which you will find behind the watering-pot."

Cinderella brought them, and in a trice they were changed into six footmen with gold-laced liveries, who stepped up behind the coach, bearing themselves with as much dignity as if they had been fine lackeys all their lives.

Pointing to the coach with its splendid trappings, the fairy turned to Cinderella: "There is what is needed to take you to the ball — does it please you?"

"Oh, yes, dear Godmother, but how can I myself go in these ugly old clothes?"

Her Godmother touched her lightly with the wand, and lo! she stood dressed in cloth of gold and silver, all set with sparkling jewels, while a pair of fine glass slippers gave an exquisite finish to her magnificence.

Thus attired Cinderella now seated herself in the coach, but before starting she was warned by her Godmother that she must not stay after midnight, that if she remained at the ball one moment later her coach would again become a pumpkin, her horses would be mice, her footmen lizards, and she would find herself once more in her old clothes.

Cinderella promised faithfully to leave before midnight, and set off with a joyful heart.

Her arrival at the palace made a great stir; word was at once brought to the King's son that a great princess whom no one knew had come, and he hastened to go himself to receive her.

He reached the courtyard in time to assist her to alight, and taking her hand he conducted her to the ballroom, where the brilliant company was assembled. As they entered there was a sudden hush — the musicians stopped, the dancers stood still, everyone's gaze was riveted on the dazzling beauty of the unknown princess.

Then there was a low murmur of voices from every side: "How lovely she is!" Even the aged King could not take his eyes off her, and he remarked softly to the Queen that it was many years since he had seen anyone so lovely and so lovable.

The ladies took every opportunity of studying the make of her garments, and the dressing of her hair, in order to have them copied if only they could find materials as rich and people clever enough to do it.

The King's son gave Cinderella the place of honor, and led her out as his partner in the dance. She danced so gracefully that everyone admired her more and more.

Delicious refreshments were served — fruits, ices, jellies, and wines — but the Prince quite forgot to eat, his mind being so full of the beautiful stranger, to whom he offered every dainty.

She had seated herself beside her sisters, and she showed them many polite attentions, giving them a share of the good things which the Prince had brought her.

This gave them a pleasant surprise, as they did not in the least recognize Cinderella in the seeming princess who was so gracious to them. The beautiful stranger was still talking to them when she heard the clock strike a quarter to twelve; she rose at once, and making a low curtsey to the company, she retired as quickly as possible.

On returning home Cinderella found her Godmother awaiting her; after thanking her warmly, she told her how much she wished to go again the next evening, as the King's son had determined to give another ball and had pressed her to come.

She was still telling her Godmother of the happenings at the ball when her two sisters knocked at the door, so she ran to open it for them.

"How late you are!" she exclaimed, rubbing her eyes, yawning and stretching herself as if just newly awakened from sleep, though indeed sleep had not been in her thoughts since their departure.

"If you had been at the ball you would not have felt tired," said one of the sisters.

"There was a beautiful princess there — so beautiful that no one ever saw her equal. She was most polite and attentive to

us, and gave us some of the choice dainties which the Prince had given to herself," said the other sister.

Cinderella could hardly hide her joy. She asked them the name of the princess, but they told her that no one knew it — that the King's son was so much in love with her that he would give all he had in the world to know who she was.

Cinderella smiled as she said, "She must have been beautiful indeed! How fortunate you are! Is it not possible for me also to see her? Oh! Miss Charlotte, could you not lend me the yellow frock which you wear every day?"

"Lend my frock to a mean cinder-scraper like you!" exclaimed Charlotte. "You must take me for a fool indeed!"

Cinderella expected some such answer and was quite pleased, for it would have placed her in a very difficult position if her sister had been willing to lend her the frock.

Next evening the two sisters were again at the ball, and so was Cinderella, even more richly dressed than upon the former occasion.

The King's son was constantly at her side, making pleasant little speeches and paying her compliments.

Far from getting weary, Cinderella enjoyed the ball so much that she completely forgot her Godmother's warning, and the first stroke of twelve rang out when she thought it was only a little after eleven o'clock. She rose in a moment, and fled as lightly as a fawn.

In her haste one of her glass slippers dropped from her foot upon the stair; she could not stop to pick it up, and before she reached the hall the last stroke of twelve had sounded.

The Prince had followed her quickly; not a trace of her could he find but the little glass slipper on the stair. You may be sure that he picked this up with great care.

Cinderella got home quite out of breath, without carriage, horse, or servant, and without a vestige left of all her magnificence, except one slipper like the one she had dropped.

The guards at the palace gate were questioned, but they had seen no princess going out, nor indeed anyone but a young girl who was so poorly dressed that she looked more like a peasant than a fine lady.

When the sisters returned from the ball, Cinderella asked if they had again enjoyed themselves, and if the stranger princess was there.

They said she was, but that, when midnight had struck, she had gone off so hurriedly that she had dropped one of her little glass slippers —the prettiest little thing in the world; that the King's son had picked it up and had done nothing but look at it ever since, thus showing how deeply in love he must be with the beautiful lady to whom it belonged.

They were quite right, for a few days later the King's son had it proclaimed by sound of trumpet that he would wed the lady whose foot the glass slipper would fit exactly.

A gentleman of the court was sent round with the slipper to see it tried on. He took it first to the princesses, next to the duchesses, then to each of the ladies of the court, but all to no purpose. Then he brought it to the two sisters, who did their very best to pull it on, but in vain.

Cinderella, who had been looking on, now said, with a laugh: "Let me try — perhaps I shall be the lucky girl!" at which the sisters burst into scornful laughter.

The gentleman who carried the slipper looked attentively at Cinderella, whose appearance pleased him very much. "It would only be fair," said he; "my orders are to let every girl try it, till the owner is found."

Making Cinderella sit down, he presented the slipper, and her neat little foot went into it quite easily — indeed, the slipper fitted it like wax.

Great was the amazement of the two sisters, but it was greater still when Cinderella drew the other slipper from her pocket and put it on!

At that moment the Godmother appeared, and with a touch of her wand she changed Cinderella's poor clothes into even more magnificent garments than the former ones.

The two sisters now recognized her as the beautiful stranger they had seen at the ball; they threw themselves at her feet, begging her to forgive all their bad treatment of her.

Cinderella raised them, and kissed them affectionately, saying she forgave them with all her heart, and that she hoped henceforth they would love her.

She then gave her hand to the gentleman, who conducted her with great ceremony to the palace. When the Prince beheld her, in all the magnificence of the attire which her Godmother had bestowed upon her, he thought her more lovely than ever, and a few days later they were married.

Cinderella, who was as kind and good as she was beautiful, gave her two sisters apartments in the palace, and in due course got each of them married to a nobleman of the court.

The Sleeping Beauty [2]

A long time ago there lived a King and Queen, who for many years had no family, and, being very fond of children, they were almost heart-broken at their misfortune.

At last, to their great joy, the Queen had a little daughter.

The news of the birth of a Princess spread rapidly over the whole kingdom. Everyone kept holiday for a week. Bonfires blazed on the hilltops, and church bells rang merry peals to celebrate the event.

The King ordered that the christening should be the grandest ever known, and, in order that his daughter might have every charm and accomplishment, he invited all the fairies that could be found in the country, seven in number, to come and be sponsors to the little Princess — for every fairy godmother makes some rare gift to her godchild.

After the baptism, the whole company returned from the church to the palace, where a great banquet had been prepared for them, and, as was usual on state occasions, the covers — that is, the plates— drinking goblets, spoons, knives and forks were all of pure gold.

The seven fairies were given places of honor at the feast, and for each of them the King had got specially made a magnificent case of pure gold set with rubies and diamonds, to hold her knife, fork and spoon, which she was to take as a keepsake to remind her constantly of her royal goddaughter.

As the fairies took their places at table, there entered a very old fairy, who had not been invited because no one

remembered her. As she had not been outside her tower for over fifty years, people thought her either dead or enchanted.

On seeing her the King welcomed her most kindly, and led her to the table, causing a gold cover to be brought for her. But he could not give her a jeweled gold case like the others, as only seven had been made, and the old fairy considered this a slight and vowed vengeance in her heart. As she took her seat, she muttered some angry words between her teeth. The young fairy who sat next her noted this, and greatly feared that the old woman meant some harm to the little Princess.

During the feast this kind-hearted young fairy never thought of the grand dishes she was tasting — her mind was busy planning how to save the royal infant from the wrath of the older and more powerful fairy. She knew that the youngest, being the least important, would be asked to present her gift first, and each would follow in turn, finishing with the eldest, yet she saw that, to do any good, she herself must be the last to speak. Before the feast was ended she had planned what to do.

Fortunately, the young fairy was not very tall, and as the guests rose from the table and crowded into the great hall, she slipped behind the rich tapestry curtains which adorned the walls, no one missing her.

Then the ceremony of the Fairy-gifts began.

The first fairy endowed the Princess with dazzling beauty; the next with the tenderness and sweet temper of an angel; the third with such grace of movement and charm of manner that she would be loved by all who saw her; the fourth with the gift of dancing as lightly as a sunbeam.

The fifth gave her a voice of such beauty that no singing-bird could excel her; and the sixth gave her the art of playing every known instrument to perfection.

It was now the turn of the old fairy, who stepped forward with spiteful eagerness. Leaning on her ebony stick, her old head shaking more from temper than from age, she hissed out: "The child shall not grow up to womanhood — she will prick her finger with a spindle and die of the wound!"

As this announcement was made, the whole company drew back with shuddering horror; many burst into tears.

The King and Queen, who had been radiant with happiness while one good gift after another was showered on their darling, now clasped each other's hands and stood in mute agony, unable to relieve themselves by tears.

Just then, a clear young voice rang out from between the curtains which she was parting with her hands:

"Be comforted, my dear King and Queen! I have yet to speak — the worst shall not happen! True, I have not the power to undo all that my superior in age, rank, and power has decreed, but I can and I will lessen the misfortune.

"It must come to pass that the Princess shall prick her hand with the spindle of a distaff, but she shall not die of the wound; she will fall into a deep sleep, which shall last for a hundred years. At the end of that time the son of a King shall come to awaken her, and to claim her for his bride."

During this speech you could have heard a pin fall, and at its end a great sigh of relief seemed to escape from everyone in the hall; but on looking round not a fairy was to be seen! It was against the custom of Fairyland for one fairy thus to interfere with another, and every fairy dreaded the consequence.

The King and Queen were filled with gratitude to the young fairy whose kindness of heart had given her courage to speak last and save their daughter, though she could not wait to receive their thanks.

Much comforted, the King, who was a man of action, immediately took steps to postpone the calamity as long as possible, that the Queen and himself might enjoy the company of their beautiful child for some years at least. He issued a proclamation forbidding anyone in his dominions to spin with a distaff and spindle, or even to have a spindle in her possession, on pain of death.

Some fifteen or sixteen years later, the King, Queen, and young Princess went with their retinue to one of their country seats, a very old castle, where they could enjoy some fine hunting and other sports.

The young Princess, who had read the history of the castle with great interest, amused herself by examining the old rooms with their beautiful tapestries, and trying to find out the hiding places and secret stairs behind the paneled walls which she had heard so many stories about; and one day she went up the high tower of the old keep. At the top of the winding stair was a small door, which she opened and passed through.

She found herself in a small garret, where, to her great surprise, sat an old woman spinning with her distaff— the old lady had never heard that the King had forbidden such spinning.

"Whatever is it that you are doing, my good woman?" asked the Princess.

"I'm spinning, my pretty girl," replied the old woman, who did not know, in the least, who it was who spoke." Oh, how lovely!" cried the Princess. "Let me try if I can do it, too!" So saying, the bright, impulsive girl caught hold of the spindle, and, not knowing how to use it, she pierced her hand with the sharp point, and fell fainting at the feet of the distressed and alarmed old woman, who called loudly for help.

People came running from all sides, and every means was tried to revive the Princess. Cold water was thrown on her face, the palms of her hands were slapped, her clothes were all unfastened, her temples were rubbed with toilet vinegar, but all was useless — nothing could restore her.

The King and Queen heard the running and the confused noise of voices as they came in from the garden, and went to find out what it meant. The sounds led them to the top of the tower, where the attendants stood aside to let them pass. There, on the floor of the garret, lay their beautiful daughter! They saw with dismay that the fairy-decree had begun to operate, and knew that nothing could be done to shorten the long sleep now begun.

The King had his lovely daughter carried down to her own room, where the Queen herself assisted the maids-of-honor to rearrange her golden hair, and to dress her in the richest clothes in her wardrobe; then the King went to superintend the officers and men-servants while they prepared the most magnificent room in the palace to receive her.

When all was ready the Princess was carried there and laid on a gorgeously gilded bed, hung with curtains of cloth of gold, and with a coverlet closely embroidered with gold and silver.

As she lay there in her perfect beauty, one might have taken her for an angel. Her cheeks had not lost their exquisite rose tint, and her lips remained as red as coral. Her eyes, indeed, were closed, but the gentle heaving of her bosom and the soft sound of her breathing showed that, though unconscious, she was not dead.

The King and Queen gazed long and tenderly on their beloved daughter. They knew, however, that they could not alter her fate, so they made all arrangements to ensure her

being undisturbed during her long, long sleep, and they comforted themselves with the knowledge that she would yet wake up to happy life, though they might not live to see it.

The kind young fairy who had saved the Princess from the sleep of death happened to be a thousand leagues away, in the Kingdom of Mattaquin, at the time; but a little dwarf, whose boots enabled him to spring over seven leagues at a stride, sped off at once to tell her. In her fiery chariot drawn by winged dragons she drove through the air at incredible speed, and reached the castle just as the arrangements were completed.

The King went to receive her, and after thanking her for coming so promptly to comfort them, he told her all that had been already done by the Queen and himself.

The fairy approved of all, but being possessed of great foresight as well as sympathy, she imagined how lonely and shy the Princess was likely to feel on awaking a hundred years later, to find herself alone in the castle, with no one she knew to speak to her, or to do anything for her — only the young Prince, who would also be a stranger.

Quick as thought, she stepped lightly round, touching with her magic wand every living thing in the castle except the King and Queen, whose duties now called them elsewhere — governesses, maids-of-honor, chambermaids, officers, house-stewards, butlers, cooks, scullery-maids, errand-boys, guards, gate-keepers, foot-men — and at the touch each one fell into a deep sleep, only to awake with their mistress at the end of a hundred years!

The fairy did not stop there. Going into the stables, she touched horses and grooms, corn, straw, and bran; in the courtyard she touched the great mastiffs; in the kitchen she touched the spits with the pheasants and partridges already half

cooked, and all stood still in an instant — even the fire came under the spell, so that at the moment of awaking everything might go on as if it had never stopped. Finally, she touched the little lap-dog, Fluff, which had curled itself up beside its mistress on the gorgeous covering of the bed. All this had taken only a few moments — fairies do not loiter over their work!

Bidding the King and Queen farewell, the fairy re-entered her chariot, the dragons spread their wings, and the equipage shot through the air like a meteor, leaving a trail of brilliant light behind it. Then the King and Queen kissed their daughter many times without fear of awaking her and sorrowfully returned to the palace.

Before leaving, the King had given orders that no one whatever should be allowed to go near the castle, lest prying, inquisitive people should disturb its calm repose; but the kind fairy, unknown to him, had seen to that.

A quarter of an hour after their Majesties had left, the great park was surrounded by a perfect forest of great trees of every description, standing up from a thicket of briers, thorns, and great trails of strong ivy, all entwined in a solid mass that neither man nor beast could penetrate. The trees were so high, and the thicket so dense, that no part of the castle was visible but the top of the tower, and that only from a considerable distance.

The King and Queen lived to a good old age, cheering each other by talking of all the pretty ways and clever sayings of their beloved child, who had left nothing but pleasant memories of her young life.

After their death, a King of quite a different family came to the throne. He was succeeded by his son, then by his grandson, who was reigning at the end of the hundred years. This King

had a handsome, spirited young son, who was very fond of hunting, and one day this young Prince found himself in the neighborhood of the castle, the tower of which he had seen from quite a long way off. He asked whose was the castle, and what it was called, but no one could tell him its name or that of its owner; each peasant whom he asked had some mysterious story to tell, but no two stories were the same. One said he had heard that it was haunted by ghosts of the dead; another that all the witches of the country held their weekly revels there; and others, that the castle belonged to an ogre, who carried off all the children he could find, to eat them there in safety, as no one but he could penetrate the thicket. The astonished Prince did not know what to make of these tales, till an old peasant, who had lived in a cottage near the forest during his whole life, came forward, and respectfully asked if he might speak to the Prince, who, liking the old man's appearance, told him to speak on.

"Fifty years ago," said the peasant, "I remember hearing my father tell that, when he was a boy, people used to say that the most beautiful young Princess that eyes ever beheld lay in that castle under a spell which would keep her in a deep sleep for a hundred years, at the end of which time the King's son would come to awake her, and to claim her for his wife, and I make bold to think, sire, that it must now be very near the time of her awaking."

The Prince believed the old man's story. Full of youthful enthusiasm, and fired with the desire to do knightly deeds, he resolved to overcome every obstacle, and not to allow another day to pass before he broke the spell under which the beautiful Princess was lying.

Calling his men to follow him, he rode straight toward the forest, and — wonder of wonders! — both the great trees and the underwood parted before him, disclosing a long avenue, with the walls of the castle visible through the opening at the end. He looked round for his men, but not one of them was to be seen, for the trees and the thicket had closed behind him as he passed. If danger there was, he saw he must face it alone.

Where youth and beauty are concerned, however, danger only inspires a lover with greater courage, so he pushed on, undaunted, till he reached the outer court of the castle.

There, the sight that met his eyes almost froze the blood in his veins.

All around, in awful silence, and in every possible position, lay, sat, or stood men and animals, motionless as stone statues. Close beside him at the gate one of the great mastiffs seemed to strain at its chain; while on the other side lay another, half out of its kennel, its head scarcely raised from its outstretched paws. One of the gate-keepers had a well-filled glass raised halfway to his lips, while another sat on the bench, his fingers still touching the empty glass he had set down.

For one dreadful moment the Prince halted, the next he strode on. As he passed the keepers his keen eye noted that their faces were red and their noses pimpled, and that their countenances seemed full of rough good humor.

His quick wit told him that they were not dead, but that motion must have been arrested in an instant, by the same spell which bound the Princess. This thought dispelled the dread which, for a moment, had gripped his heart.

Crossing the marble pavement of the inner court, among many spell-bound attendants, he ascended the great stairs and went through the guard-room between rows of armed guards,

whose loud snoring was the only sound he had heard, save his own footsteps, since he entered the gates of the castle. Passing through room after room, he knew by the richer dresses of the ladies and the more brilliant uniforms of the officers that he was nearing the object of his search. Quickening his steps, almost before he knew he found himself in a gorgeous apartment, where, on a magnificent bed, draped with gold embroideries, lay the most lovely being he had ever seen or imagined. She looked about sixteen years old, but the charm of her radiant beauty gave her the appearance of belonging to heaven rather than to earth.

For a while he stood transfixed, gazing on the lovely vision with trembling admiration. Then slowly and softly he approached and knelt down beside the bed.

The appointed hour had come.

Under the influence of the loving gaze bent upon her the Princess awoke, and, turning toward the Prince, she held out her hand, saying in tones of affectionate tenderness:

"It is you, my Prince! How long you have kept me waiting!"

Charmed and surprised both with this speech and with the tone and manner in which it was spoken, the Prince kissed the extended hand and pressed it to his bosom, declaring that he loved her more than his life, and that he would never again leave her.

They were so absorbed in each other that the Prince did not even notice that the whole household woke up at the same moment as his Princess, and continued their work as if it had never been interrupted.

The Prince listened more than he talked, as everything was new and strange to him, but the Princess had been prepared by

many beautiful dreams sent by the kind fairy, and talked as if she had known the Prince for years.

Four hours passed, and the attendants, not being in love, began to be very hungry. One of the maids-of-honor could wait no longer, so she interrupted their long conversation by telling the lovers that supper was served.

The Prince assisted the Princess to rise, and gave her his arm to go down to supper — she did not need to change her dress, being already magnificently robed, though, like all her retinue, in the fashion of a bygone age. She was none the less beautiful for that!

They supped in the hall of mirrors, served by the officers of the Princess in their splendid uniforms. During supper the musicians played beautiful old music which had not been heard for many years. During supper, the Prince and Princess consulted the chaplain, who supped with them, as to how soon their wedding could take place.

As the Princess was too young to live alone, and had no relative to be her guardian, the good man proposed that he should marry them that very evening, in the private chapel of the castle, which he did in the presence of the whole household.

The youngest maid-of-honor acted as bridesmaid, and the lords and ladies of highest rank signed the register. The chief officer of the household suggested that they should celebrate the occasion by a ball for the nobility, and another for the servants. This proposal pleased everyone. The grand ball was held in the ballroom of the castle, the Prince and Princess leading the dance, while the rest of the retainers danced to their hearts' content in the great servants'-hall.

There were abundant refreshments for all, and, having already slept so long (though they did not know it), they danced till morning without the least feeling of fatigue.

Before daybreak, riders on swift horses were dispatched by the Prince, with orders not to draw rein till they reached the palace, as he knew that his father must already be full of anxiety on his account. They also carried a letter from him, with some lines added by the Princess, telling the King of their great happiness, and how joyfully they looked forward to being with him before the day was over, when they should have the pleasure of sharing their happiness with him.

The King was no longer young, and since the Queen's death, some years before, he had often felt very lonely, so the news gave him great pleasure.

He ordered such festivities as the short interval permitted to celebrate the homecoming of the newly married pair, and everyone hailed the advent of a Princess with delight.

As the time when they were expected drew near, the King stood in the doorway of the palace, at the top of the wide marble steps, while the attendants stood in a deep circle round the court. When the royal couple rode through the gateway, and the people caught sight of the Princess, "Long live the Queen of Beauty!" echoed from every side.

The King had hastened down to welcome them, and amid the acclamations he assisted the Princess to dismount. He kissed her affectionately on both cheeks, saying: "A daughter needs no formal introduction to her father"; then, placing one of her hands in that of his son, while he held the other, he led the way, and all three ascended the steps together. Having reached the doorway, they turned and stood to acknowledge

the cheers which greeted them. Then the King raised his hand to speak, and everyone was silent.

Turning to the Prince and Princess, he said:

"My people! I am old, and need rest. Today I resign my throne. There, before you, stand your King and Queen! He is as brave as he is handsome; she is as good as she is beautiful!"

Then a great shout rent the air:

"Long live our King and his beautiful Queen!"

Diamonds and Toads [3]

There was once upon a time a widow who had two daughters. The elder was so much like her mother, both in appearance and in nature, that people used to say, "If you see the one you see the other; they are exactly alike." And they were both so proud, and disagreeable, and ill-natured, that no one could bear them; in fact, there was no living with them at all.

The younger daughter, on the other hand, was the very image of her dead father, being courteous and sweet-tempered, and was also one of the most beautiful maidens ever born. Everyone sought her company and enjoyed talking with her. Indeed, whenever she went forth into the fields or into the forest it seemed as if even the birds and the butterflies and the little flowers were glad to see her. They fluttered and nodded, and circled about her head; the butterflies rested on her hands, and the birds sang more sweetly than ever.

She was loved by everything in nature, with the exception of her mother and sister, who well-nigh hated her. They tormented her in every possible way, and made her life so miserable, that at times she would shrink away, weeping bitter tears, and say: "Oh! I wish I were dead!"

She had to do all the heavy work; it was always she who scoured the kitchen, cleaned the hearth, did the cooking, washed the dishes; in fact, she scrubbed and polished all day long. She was never allowed to come into the parlor, nor to taste any of the nice dainties which she had cooked; all she got was potatoes, with now and again a few beans, and the dry bread which the others would not eat. At night she slept on a

mat in the garret, and in winter she was so ill-provided with blankets that she often lay shivering with cold.

Yet the little maid did not complain, and performed willingly all the work that fell to her lot. And whenever she felt specially tired and sad a little white dove would suddenly make its appearance, a little friend of hers from the forest nearby.

"Cooc-cooroo, cooc-cooroo, my dear!" the dove would say, as it perched on the window sill of the kitchen. "Are you feeling doleful again today? Don't lose heart; there will be an end to all this by and by, and in the end you are sure to be happy."

Then the little girl would think of her dead father, who just before dying had taken her hand in his and had said: "Dear child, remain always good and lovable and patient, and think often of me; I shall be at your side." So, as the little white dove always appeared just at the time when she found her lot hardest to bear, she could not but think that it was her father who sent the dove to comfort her.

Perhaps the heaviest work among the poor girl's many tasks was when twice a day she was obliged to go and fetch water in a huge earthenware pitcher. The well was right in the forest, and nearly half an hour's walk from the house. At times she felt so tired that she did not know how she could ever carry the heavy pitcher home; many a time she had to sit down by the way and take breath before she could totter on again. And when at last, quite exhausted, she did reach her home, she was most often scolded by her mother or her sister for having taken so long.

One day, as she was at the well with her pitcher, a poor woman suddenly appeared, hobbling along a footpath, and

begged to be allowed to drink from the pitcher. She said she had walked a long way and was very thirsty.

"Oh, yes, with all my heart, ma'am!" the girl answered, in her usual friendly manner; and after drawing and throwing away two or three pitcherfuls of water, in order to have it as fresh as possible, she offered it to the old dame, holding up the pitcher the while, that she might drink more easily.

When the old woman had drunk and refreshed herself, she said to the little maid:

"You have been so kind, and friendly, and mannerly to me that I cannot help presenting you with a precious gift."

For you must know that this old dame was a fairy, who had taken the form of a poor peasant woman just to see how far the civility and good manners of this pretty girl would go. "I will bestow on you this gift," continued the fairy, "that at every word you speak there shall come out of your mouth either a flower or a jewel."

The maid was much abashed, and said that she wanted no reward, and had done nothing to deserve one, since nothing was more natural than to offer a drink to an aged woman who was thirsty.

But the fairy answered, with a laugh: "Yes, it is just because you find it so natural that I am presenting you with a gift. Out of goodness comes goodness — it is always so."

The next moment the fairy had disappeared in the thick underwood of the forest.

The little maid was much astonished, but she took up her pitcher, filled it anew, and set out for home.

When she got there her mother was standing at the door, waiting for her with a scowling face.

"Well! I thought you would never come home! You seem to make a holiday of these trips to the well. Now I warn you that henceforth you must be back within half an hour, and not idle away all your precious time."

"Oh! Mother, I'm so sorry; but this time it wasn't entirely my fault that I was so long in coming back, for..."

While she spoke these words there fell from her mouth a succession of roses, pearls, and diamonds.

"What is this!" cried her mother in amazement. "I really do believe that these pearls and diamonds are falling from her mouth! How is this, my dear?"

It was the first time in her life that she had called her daughter 'my dear.' Then the little maid told her what had occurred in the forest, by the well, and during her narrative numbers of diamonds continued to drop from her mouth.

"So!" said the mother. "My elder daughter Fanny must also go to the well."

"Fanny, Fanny!" she cried, "come here, quick, and just look what drops out of your sister's mouth at every word that she speaks! Wouldn't it be splendid if you also could obtain this gift? It is quite easily done; you have only to go for water to the well, and when an old woman appears and asks you for a drink out of the pitcher you have only to offer it to her."

"No, thanks! Do you think I would go to the well and carry that heavy pitcher with me? I would not think of it. I want no gifts, and I am not going."

Then her mother got very angry with her, and stamped her foot and threatened, and ordered her to go that very minute.

Fanny had to go, grumbling and muttering, but she would on no account carry the pitcher, and took instead a silver tankard that usually adorned the parlor.

While she was on her way to the well the little white dove, which was perched on a high branch among the trees, saw her go by, and said: "Cooc-cooroo, cooc-cooroo! Does her mother really believe that precious gifts are to be won in this way? Nay, they must first be earned by good deeds. First be earned, and then... cooc-cooroo, cooc-cooroo, this one will come to no good."

Fanny was no sooner at the well than she saw coming out of the wood a lady most gloriously dressed, who came up to her and asked to be allowed to drink out of her tankard.

This was, you must know, the same fairy who had appeared to her sister, but who had now taken the appearance of a princess, to see how far this girl's rudeness would go.

"Do you really believe," she answered rudely, "that I have come here to give water to all and sundry? No, that was not my purpose in bringing my fine silver tankard. If you are thirsty, and want to drink, you may draw water for yourself."

"You do not appear to be very mannerly or obliging," answered the fairy, but without showing the least anger. "Well now, since you are so disagreeable, I shall bestow on you this gift, that at every word you speak a toad or a snake shall drop from your mouth."

"Nay, she cannot do that," thought Fanny, and without troubling herself further about the fairy she took up her silver tankard and returned home with it.

"Cooc-cooroo, cooc-cooroo," said the white dove, "she does not understand that goodness begets goodness, but that out of badness comes naught but evil."

The mother was standing at the door, impatiently awaiting her daughter's return. She was quite sure that her favorite must have received the same gift as her sister. To tell the truth, she

had always been jealous of her younger daughter, and could not bear the thought that the latter should possess a gift that was not shared by the elder.

"Well, child!" she called out, as soon as Fanny appeared, coming out of the forest; "well, how did it go with you?"

"Why, how should it have gone?" answered Fanny — and at these words three toads and three serpents dropped out of her mouth!

"Oh, heavens! what is this?" cried her mother, terribly alarmed and as pale as death. Then, in a passion of anger, she shouted: "This must be the work of that wretch, her sister; but she shall pay for it!" And picking up a heavy stick she rushed forth to give her a beating.

The poor child fled as fast as she could run, and hid in the thickest part of the forest, among the dark underwood, where no one could see her.

Trembling and quaking, she crouched there for many hours on end. If her mother and Fanny should find her, there was no more hope for her in this world. And yet, she was in no way to blame. How could her mother be so cruel and unjust? And the tears streamed down her cheeks.

While she sat thus in hiding, she suddenly heard the snorting of a horse close at hand, and a moment later, peeping through a small opening in the bushes, she saw a young rider appear on a magnificent white steed. He bore a small wounded hart in his arms, and appeared to be continually whispering fond words to the little animal.

The maid could not but look, her eyes wide open with astonishment. Forgetting everything else, she suddenly stood up, facing the Prince on his horse.

The young man was startled when he so unexpectedly saw the lovely maiden rise before him, with her eyes full of wonder and still wet with tears. Suddenly a great feeling of pity and sympathy came upon him.

"Who are you?" he asked, "and whence have you come? And why are you so sad?" Then he dismounted, gently laid the wounded hart among the cool grass, and taking her hand looked at her fondly with his deep-blue eyes.

To the maid it was as if suddenly the sun was shining on her with all its genial warmth, and she was thrilled with a new and unknown feeling of great happiness.

"I have been driven from home by my mother," she said, with a blush, "and have taken refuge here." While she spoke these words, seven pearls and seven diamonds fell from her mouth.

The Prince saw this with inexpressible surprise, and asked her where the pearls and diamonds came from.

So the maid told him the whole story of her life, from the time when her father had died. She told him all that her father had said to her before departing this life, the sad existence which she had led with her mother and sister, and the heavy work which she had been forced to do; she told him about the white dove that always came to comfort her in her moments of greatest sadness, about her meeting with the fairy at the well, about the gift which had been bestowed on her, about Fanny, at whose every word a toad or a snake would now fall from her mouth, and about her last moments at home, when her mother had made ready to beat her with a stick.

The Prince listened open-eyed to her narrative, and loved her all the more, for this Prince, being himself good and noble-

hearted, understood at once why the fairy had bestowed such a gift on her.

So the Prince took her in his arms and set her on his white horse. Then he lifted the wounded hart, which he had found in the forest by the side of a brook, and which he was taking home in order to tend it, and he placed it in front of her on the saddle. Then he took the horse's bridle, and led it, bearing these two, to his palace, where one and the other would need no better physician than his kind heart.

"Cooc-cooroo, cooc-cooroo" said the little white dove, "in the end you are sure to be happy."

And after the Prince had introduced the maiden to his father the King as his bride-elect, preparations were made right speedily for the wedding.

Of the mother and her daughter, Fanny, nothing more was ever heard. They died unloved and unregretted.

The Prince and his little wife devoted their whole lives to relieving and comforting all who were in distress or affliction within their kingdom, and whenever, toward evening, they took a walk in the forest to the spot where they had first met, they were attended by a lame deer, which must surely have been a great favorite with them both.

Puss In Boots [4]

Once upon a time there was an aged old miller who, when dying, left his property to his three sons, all he had being his mill, his donkey, and his cat.

An equal division of these was, of course, impossible, and to call in lawyers to try to do it would have eaten up the little there was, so the brothers wisely agreed that each should take a share as it stood, and make the best of it. The eldest son, therefore, got the mill, the second got the donkey, and only the cat was left for the youngest.

Very naturally he was grieved that his share was so small, and it puzzled him much to know what to do with it.

"My brothers," said he to himself, "can earn quite a decent living by working together — the one can grind the corn, and the other can carry it away in sacks when ground, but, as for me, even if I were to eat my cat and wear its skin, I might die of hunger afterward."

This speech made Puss, who was near, feel rather creepy, but he acted as if he had not overheard it, for he loved his master, who had always been kind to him, leaving him little bits of fish on the fish-bones he gave him, and letting him lie on his knee by the fire in the winter evenings.

With his tail in the air, he came forward and rubbed himself against his master's legs, purring his loudest to gain his attention; then, as the young man stooped to stroke him. Puss looked up in his face and said cheerily:

"Do not lose heart, sir; just give me a bag with draw-strings and a pair of high boots to tramp through the briers with, and

perhaps you will find that a cat may be worth more to you than both a mill and a donkey!"

His master did not build his hopes too high on hearing this speech, but he had often seen his the cat had got the things he asked for, he proudly drew on his boots, slung the bag round his neck, put a handful of bran and some lettuce leaves in it, took the strings in his forepaws, and went straight to one of the King's rabbit-warrens.

There he lay flat on the ground behind the bag, which he held open in front of him, and never moved till an unsuspecting young rabbit, smelling a good meal, crept into it. In a moment the strings were drawn tight — bunny was caught and killed. Another was enticed in the same way, and met the same fate.

Greatly pleased with his 'bag,' Puss set off for the palace, and asked to be allowed to speak to the King.

He was taken to his Majesty's apartment, where he made a low bow to the King, and said:

"Here, sir, is a pair of rabbits from the warrens of my lord, the Marquis of Carabas [this was the title he gave his master]. He has sent me to offer them to you, with his humble compliments."

"Tell your master from me," said the King, "that I thank him, and am pleased to accept his present."

On another occasion Puss went to hide in a field of wheat, his bag wide open as usual, and two unwary partridges ran into it. These he also went to present to the King, who was again graciously pleased to receive them, and told his purser to give Puss some money for his trouble.

The cat continued to act in this way for several months, every few days carrying game to the King, and you may be sure that he kept his master well supplied also. Hearing from the

servants at the palace one day that the King and his daughter, the most beautiful Princess in the world, were to take their drive along the road by the river, he said to his master:

"If you will take my advice, your fortune is made. You have only to go and bathe in the river, at the spot I shall show you, and leave the rest to me."

The young man did as his cat advised, though indeed he couldn't see what good it would do him.

Just as he was bathing the royal carriage passed, and the cat began to shout wildly: "Help! help!— the lord Marquis of Carabas is drowning!"

Hearing the cry, the King put his head out of the carriage-window, recognized the cat that brought him game so often, and at once ordered his guards to go to the assistance of his lordship the Marquis of Carabas.

Puss, in the meantime, had hidden his master's clothes under a heap of stones, and while the guards were helping our marquis out of the river, his cat, in a state of great excitement, ran toward the royal carriage and told the King that while his master, the marquis, was bathing, thieves had stolen his clothes and run off with them, though he had shouted "Stop thief! stop thief!" at the top of his voice. Wherefore, though his master's life was saved, he had no clothes to put on.

His Majesty was greatly concerned to hear of the plight of the poor marquis, and he ordered two of his equerries to ride back post-haste to the palace, to fetch from the royal wardrobe the finest clothes they could find for his lordship.

A grand suit was soon brought and handed to the cat, who hastened with it to his master, and having helped him to dress in it, Puss conducted him to the royal carriage, to pay his

grateful respects to the King and to thank his Majesty for such timely help.

The miller's son, being healthy and well-built, was a good-looking young fellow at all times, but now, in his magnificent court dress, he looked so stately that few, if any, of the young nobles could compare with him.

The King, who had never seen the marquis till that day, was much struck with his handsome appearance.

He embraced him again and again, then presented him to his daughter, who had been watching the fine-looking young stranger with secret admiration.

His Majesty insisted that our marquis should join the royal party in their drive, and gave him the seat next to himself in the coach.

During the drive, while her father was talking to the marquis, the Princess could not help noticing the frequent glances of respectful admiration which his lordship of Carabas bestowed upon her, and before the drive was ended she had fallen deeply in love with him.

The cat, overjoyed to see his plans succeeding so well, now went on in front of the party, taking short cuts wherever there was a bend in the road to keep ahead of the carriage.

Coming to some peasants who were mowing in a meadow by the roadside, he called to them:

"Listen, my good folk: the King is coming this way, and may ask you whose hay you are mowing. If he does, you must say it all belongs to his lordship the Marquis of Carabas. If you fail to say this, I shall have you all chopped into mince-meat."

As expected, the King stopped the carriage, when it reached the meadow, that he might ask the peasants who was the owner of the hay they were cutting.

"It all belongs to his lordship the Marquis of Carabas," they shouted with one voice, remembering the cat's dreadful threat.

"That is a fine bit of meadow-land," said the King, turning to the marquis. "Yes, sire," he replied, "it yields a very heavy crop every year."

Master Puss, who always kept well ahead, next came to a band of reapers. "My good men," shouted he, "if you do not tell the King, who will pass shortly, that all the corn you are reaping belongs to the Marquis of Carabas, I shall have you all chopped into mince-meat."

The King, who passed shortly after, inquired to whom those splendid fields of wheat belonged.

"They belong to the Marquis of Carabas," they all shouted together, and the King again congratulated the marquis.

The cat, who kept well on in front, gave the same directions to everyone whom he met, and as one and all were too terrified to disobey, the King was astonished at the great possessions of his new friend, the Marquis of Carabas.

Finally the cat came to a grand castle, and, on inquiry, he found that it and all the country through which they had driven belonged to an ogre, whose wealth was uncountable.

From the servants Puss found out all he could about this Ogre, his riches, his power, his ferocity, and the many wonderful things he could do.

Then, saying he did not like to pass the castle without paying his respects to such a great person, he asked to see him.

The Ogre received the cat as politely as an ogre knows how to do, and asked him to rest a little while, and, if he had time, to stay to lunch with some friends whom he was expecting in a quarter of an hour.

The cat asked nothing better than the chance thus offered for carrying out his own plans.

"People tell me very wonderful things about your Highness," said the cat. "They even say that you can change your form when you like, and that you can turn yourself into a lion or an elephant at will. Is it so, really? "

"Certainly!" said the Ogre sharply. "And to satisfy you on that point I shall change myself into a lion." Which he did there and then.

No sooner did he see the lion before him than Puss jumped out of the window in terror, and, fearing pursuit, climbed up the gutter to the roof, not without both danger and difficulty, the boots being sadly in his way. These, though good for tramping over briers, were useless for clinging to slanting tiles.

When the Ogre had resumed his own form. Puss clambered down and re-entered by the window, frankly confessing that he had been dreadfully afraid.

"That was a feat!" said the cat again; "but I have been told you can do a more wonderful one still. Is it true that you, who are so very big, can turn yourself as easily into quite a small animal like a rat or even a mouse? To my mind that would be quite impossible!"

"Impossible!" cried the Ogre scornfully. "You shall see!" A tiny mouse began to play on the floor! In a twinkling it was caught and eaten by the cat.

The royal party, by this time, had reached the castle, and the King made up his mind to call on the owner.

Puss heard the sound of the carriage on the drawbridge, and quickly went down to meet it. As it came through the gates, he made a sweeping bow to the King and said:

"Let me welcome your Majesty to the castle of his lordship the Marquis of Carabas."

"What! my lord Marquis," said the King, "this castle also is yours? Why, nothing could possibly be finer than this spacious courtyard and the noble buildings which surround it! Let us see the interior, if you please."

The marquis gave his hand to the Princess to help her to alight, and they followed the King into the castle.

They entered the stately dining-hall, where they found the feast prepared for the Ogre's friends, who arrived at that moment, but who dared not go in when they heard that the King was there.

The servants, to whom the cat had given the hint, quickly helped the marquis and his royal guests to all the good things on the table — savory dishes, rich cakes, delicious ices, and the finest old wines from the Ogre's cellars.

The King and his daughter were not only charmed with the amiability and good looks of the marquis, but were also delighted to know of his wealth and great estates.

After having refreshed himself with a few glasses of wine, the King turned to his host and said: "My dear Marquis of Carabas, if you do not become my son-in-law, you will have yourself to blame!"

Our marquis rose and bowed low to the King, then turned to the Princess and, laying his hand on his heart, dropped on one knee before her.

With a pretty blush on her cheeks, the Princess got up from her seat, and holding out her hand, made him rise, and led him to her father, the King, who gave orders that their marriage should take place immediately.

Master Puss had been peeping and listening by the slightly open door of the room, hardly able to keep from mewing aloud with delight when he saw the turn things were taking; but now, when his hopes were crowned, he could hold himself no longer, and turned cart-wheels from the top of the grand stair to the bottom in his joy.

The marriage was celebrated with great pomp and festivity, and the Marquis of Carabas and his bride lived happily to a good old age in the magnificent castle which had belonged to the Ogre.

The servants were delighted to have such a kind master and gentle mistress, for they had only served the Ogre from fear of what he might do to them.

The cat was made a great noble, and had part of the castle set apart for his own use.

Needless to say he never again had to catch rats or mice, except for the pleasure of having a day's hunting!

Beauty and the Beast [5]

A very wealthy merchant was left, at his wife's death, with a family of three sons and three daughters. As he was a highly intelligent man, he determined to give his children the best education that money could procure for them, and he spared no expense to engage the very best masters to teach them.

The three daughters were exceedingly handsome both in face and person, but the youngest was especially admired for the sweetness of her countenance. When she was only a very little girl everyone called her the beauty of the family, and as she grew up the name was still used, and all friends addressed her as "My Beauty," to the disgust of her elder sisters, who were jealous of her.

Beauty was not only prettier than her sisters but she had a very much finer character, being good-tempered, gentle-mannered, obliging, and considerate.

The sisters, on the contrary, were haughty and purse-proud. They liked to imagine themselves great ladies, and they despised the daughters of the other merchants, refusing to visit them or to receive their visits. They spent all their time driving in the park or going to balls and theatres, and they amused themselves by making game of their younger sister because she spent her leisure painting, studying her music, or reading the works of the best authors.

As everyone knew of their great wealth, these young ladies had many suitors from among the famines of the other rich merchants, but when these gentlemen asked them in marriage,

the two sisters replied contemptuously that no one less than a duke, or at the very least an earl, need take the trouble to propose to them. When any gentleman proposed marriage to Beauty, she thanked him politely for the honor he did her, but told him she was too young to marry, and wished to stay at home to cheer her father for some years yet.

Quite suddenly the merchant lost the whole of his great fortune, and all he had left was a few acres of land with a small cottage on it, quite far away in the country.

Almost broken-hearted, he called his children together and told them of the calamity, and that they must prepare to leave town and accompany him to the cottage, where, by industry and hard work, they would be able to live plainly, like the peasants, and pay their way honestly.

The two elder daughters laughed scornfully at the idea of living in such a place, and replied that they had lovers enough desirous of marrying them for their beauty, even if they had not a penny. They were woefully disappointed, however, for these very lovers refused to look at them now that they were poor. As they had always been so disdainful in their treatment of their neighbors, no one was sorry for them.

"They do not deserve to be pitied. It is a good thing to know their pride is humbled," was all one heard, but with regard to the youngest sister it was quite different, and on all sides one heard:

"Oh! how sorry we are for poor Beauty — she was always so gentle and kind, and she was so polite when she spoke to us!"

There were even several gentlemen who came, now when she had not a farthing, to ask if she would marry them; but while she thanked them from her heart, she told them that she could not leave her father in his misfortune, but would go with

him to the country, where she would grudge no trouble to try to make him comfortable, and to help him all she could in his work.

Poor Beauty had certainly been grieved by the loss of their wealth — it could not have been otherwise; but when she felt inclined to cry over it, she said to herself:

"Why should I cry? An ocean of tears would not mend matters. I must try and be happy without riches, like the people I see round about me."

When they were settled in their country cottage, the merchant and his three sons set to work to dig and cultivate their land. Beauty rose at four o'clock every morning and busied herself cleaning the house and preparing and cooking food for the family.

At first she found it all very difficult, but it gradually became easier, and at the end of a few months she did not think it a trouble at all. Also, she was very much stronger — air and exercise had given her perfect health, so that she became more beautiful than ever. When she had finished her household tasks she read, played on the harpsichord, or sang to herself while spinning.

Her two sisters, on the contrary, were bored to death with their surroundings. They did not get out of bed till ten o'clock, and spent their time wandering aimlessly about, talking to each other about their former grandeur, and regretting their fine clothes and companions. They twitted their sister with being mean and poor-spirited because she was contented in her poverty. Their father did not think as they did. He knew that Beauty was better fitted than they were to shine in a high position. He greatly admired the character of his youngest daughter, and especially her gentle patience with her sisters,

who not only left all the housework for her to do, but constantly insulted her while she was doing it.

When the family had lived about a year at the cottage, the merchant got a letter informing him that a ship in which he had valuable cargo had just arrived safely in port. The two elder girls nearly lost their heads with joy at the news, thinking that now they would be able to leave the cottage where time had hung so heavy on their hands, and when their father was ready to start upon the journey which he must make to town, they gave him a list of the dresses, mantles, and hats that he was to bring them. Beauty asked for nothing, thinking to herself that the price of the cargo would hardly pay for all the things her sisters had asked.

"Do you not want me to bring you anything?" said her father.

"Oh! thank you!" said Beauty. "I should be so glad to have a rose, if you can get one, for there are none in our little garden."

It was not really that Beauty wanted a rose so much, but she did not want to look superior to her sisters for fear of hurting their feelings, and she knew a rose would not cost much.

The good father set off with hope in his heart, but when he arrived in town someone brought a lawsuit against him, and though he won his case, it took all the money he had received to pay the lawyers, so that after all his trouble he had to return home as poor as when he went away, and very much sadder. But he comforted himself with the thought that he would soon be among his own family again, and urged his horse on as quickly as it could go.

When he was only thirty miles from home it began to snow heavily, so that he could only see a few yards before him. The road lay through a large forest, with many paths branching in

different directions. He took a wrong turning and soon found himself completely lost. The wind had risen to a furious gale, and he was twice blown off his horse. Then darkness came down, and the thought of spending the night in the forest, with the wolves already howling in the distance, filled him with dismay. Also he was stiff with cold and very hungry. Leading his tired horse he almost groped his way, but he felt safer on foot, as the swaying branches were too high to hurt him. All of a sudden he saw a distant light and going in its direction soon found himself in a long avenue, at the end of which were many lights. Thanking God for such a deliverance, he mounted his horse. The intelligent animal also saw the lights and needed no urging to gallop toward them. They came from the windows of a great castle, but though it was illuminated as if for a feast, there was no sign or sound of life anywhere around it.

From the court they could see the open door of a great stable, toward which the horse turned of its own accord, and, finding both corn and hay there, the tired, hungry animal attacked them without hesitation and made a good meal.

The merchant tied him up for the night and turned toward the house, but no one was to be seen. He entered the open door and found himself in a great dining-hall, with a good fire blazing on the hearth, and a fine dinner already on the table, but with only one cover laid. As he was wet to the skin, he stood up before the fire, saying to himself;

"Both master and servants will pardon me, under the circumstances, and no doubt they will soon be here."

He waited long, but no one came, and when the clock struck eleven o'clock he could resist no longer, for he was faint with hunger, so he took some chicken from a dish and ate it greedily, but trembling with fear of the consequences. As no

one came, he filled a glass of wine for himself and drank it off, then another, and another. His courage returned, he went from the dining-hall, through one splendid apartment after another, all magnificently furnished, and soon found himself in a beautiful bedroom, evidently prepared for a guest, and as it was past midnight, and he was greatly fatigued, he made up his mind to lock the door of the room and go to bed.

He did not wake till ten o'clock next morning, and the first thing his eye fell on was a fine new suit of clothes laid where his wet, muddy garments had been the night before.

"Surely," said he to himself, "this palace must belong to some good fairy, who has taken pity on me in my misery."

He rose and looked out of the window. The snow was all gone, and under a bright sun lawns of velvety grass, avenues of shady trees, and arbors of roses, with fountains and flowers, enchanted the eye.

He dressed and went down to the great hall where he had supped the previous night, and there, on a small table, was a cup of delicious chocolate and some crisp toast.

"Thank you, my lady fairy," said he, "for having had the goodness to think of my breakfast."

When he had taken his chocolate, the good man went out to the stable for his horse, and, as he passed under a bower of roses, Beauty's request came to his mind, so he broke off a branch which had several roses on it. As he did so, a sudden fearful sound arose, and, looking round, he saw coming toward him a beast so horrible in appearance that he almost fainted.

"Monster of ingratitude!" said the Beast in a terrible voice. "I saved your life by receiving you into my castle, and, for my thanks, you rob me of my roses, which I love above all else in the world! Your life is the price you must pay for such a deed. I

give you one quarter of an hour to prepare for your death!" The merchant, clasping his hands, threw himself on his knees before the monster and cried:

"Pardon me, my lord, I did not dream of offending you. I was only gathering a rose for one of my daughters who had asked me to take her one."

"I am not called 'my lord,' but 'the Beast,' replied the odious creature. "I hate compliments, and only wish people to say what they really think, so you need not try to make me change my mind by your flatteries.

"You say, however, that you have daughters, so if one of them will come, of her own free will, to die in your stead, I am willing to pardon you — no arguing! — I have told you my will — off with you! And if none of your daughters will die for you, give me your oath that you will return yourself three months from this day."

The good man had no intention of letting any one of his daughters sacrifice herself for him, but he saw the opportunity of seeing his family once more, and of bidding them farewell, so he promised, and the Beast told him he was free to go at any hour that suited him, adding:

"I do not wish you, however, to leave my house empty-handed. Go back to the room you slept in. There you will see a large empty chest. You may fill it with whatever you see around you, and I shall see that it is taken to your cottage." Then the Beast disappeared.

The merchant consoled himself a little by thinking that, if he had to die, he would now be able to provide his children with something to help them to live, so he returned to the bedroom. Looking around him, he discovered quite a heap of gold coins lying on the floor. With these he quickly filled the

chest and locked it; then, taking his horse from the stable, he remounted, and left the palace with a very heavy heart.

The horse, of its own accord, took the shortest way to the cottage, where they arrived in a few hours.

On his arrival the family crowded round him, kissing him and welcoming him home, but instead of returning their caresses he burst into tears.

He held the rose branch in his hand, and when he could speak he turned to his daughter, and gave it to her, saying:

"My Beauty, take the roses — they are going to cost your unfortunate father very dear!"

Then he told his family the dire strait in which he found himself.

On hearing his story, the two elder daughters uttered piercing shrieks, and heaped insults and bad names on poor Beauty, who did not shed a tear.

"Only think what the pride of that small creature has brought about!" said they. "Why could she not ask for useful garments, like us? But no! the young lady wished to distinguish herself. Look, she does not even cry for causing the death of her father!"

"That would be a very useless thing to do," said Beauty. "Why should I weep for my father's death? He shall not die! Since the monster is willing to accept one of his daughters in his place, I shall give myself up to it, and shall be proud if by the sacrifice of my life I can save that of my dear father."

"No! my dear sister," cried the three brothers, with one voice. "We shall go and find this monster, and we shall kill him or perish ourselves."

"Do not indulge in such hopes," said the merchant. "The power of this Beast is so great that I have no hope of anyone

being able to kill him. I am charmed with the kind heart of my Beauty, but I cannot let her risk her life. I am old, and, at best, could only live a few years longer. I have nothing to regret but leaving you alone, my dear children."

"I assure you, dearest Father," said Beauty, "that you shall not go to the Beast's palace without me. You could not possibly hinder me from following you. Although I am young, life has no great attractions for me, and I prefer being devoured by the monster to dying of grief for the loss of my father."

It was useless to try to dissuade her. Beauty was quite determined to go with her father when the time should come for him to return to the palace, and the jealous sisters could hardly hide their pleasure at her decision.

The merchant was so grieved at the thought of perhaps losing his favorite daughter that he quite forgot to speak of the chest of gold coins which the Beast had promised to send, but on going to bed he found it there at his bedside.

He made up his mind not to tell his two elder daughters about it, as he felt sure they would want to go back to their extravagant life in town, and he had determined to spend what of his life might still be before him in the country. He, however, confided the secret to Beauty, who at once remembered to tell him that during his absence two gentlemen who had made their acquaintance had fallen in love with her sisters, and, in the goodness of her heart, she advised her father to use a great part of the money in getting them married and comfortably provided for. The sweet-tempered girl cherished no resentment against them for their daily unkindness to her. She wanted to see them happy.

When the sisters saw Beauty ready to start with her father, at the date fixed, they rubbed their eyelids with an onion to

make them look as if they were weeping; but the brothers, as well as their father, wept in earnest, not knowing what might happen. Beauty alone did not cry, for she did not wish to add to their grief.

They set off on horseback, Beauty riding on a pillion behind her father. The horse took the road to the palace without being guided, and they arrived in the evening, finding the whole place brilliantly lighted as before. They alighted at the entrance. The horse went to the stable, while the father and daughter entered the dining-hall, where they found a magnificently spread table, with covers for two. The merchant was too sad to care to eat, but Beauty made a great effort not to seem afraid, and sitting down, began to help him to the different dishes which he preferred. While they were eating Beauty remarked to herself:

"The Beast must wish to fatten me before eating me, as he has provided such a feast."

Just when they had finished their supper they heard a strange noise, and the merchant, feeling sure it was the Beast, bade his daughter adieu, weeping bitterly.

Beauty could not help shuddering when she saw the horrible face of the frightful creature, but she made a brave effort to overcome her fear, and when the monster asked her if it was really of her own free will that she had come, although she was trembling from head to foot she answered, "Yes."

"You are a good girl, and I am much obliged to you," said the Beast; then he turned to the father and said:

"Good man, leave this palace tomorrow morning, and do not take it into your head to return.

"Good night, my Beauty."

"Good night, Beast," the maiden replied, and the Beast withdrew.

"Oh, my child," said the merchant, embracing his daughter, "I am half dead already with horror. Hear me! Let me stay."

"No, dear Father," said she firmly; "you will go home tomorrow, and you will leave me to the care of kind Providence, who will perhaps take pity on me."

They parted to go to their bedrooms; neither of them expected to sleep that night, but their heads were no sooner on their pillows than they fell into a deep slumber.

During her sleep. Beauty dreamt she saw a lady, who said to her:

"Beauty, I am charmed with your tenderness of heart. Your kind action in giving your life to save your father's will not go unrewarded."

In the morning Beauty told the dream to her father, and it comforted him a little, but it did not keep him from crying aloud in his distress when the moment came for parting with his beloved daughter.

When he was out of sight, Beauty could not help throwing herself on a couch and sobbing as if her heart would break. This relieved her feelings, and, being of a brave nature, she sat up, commended herself to the care of God, and though she quite expected to be eaten by the Beast that evening, she resolved not to waste the few last hours of her life by meeting her trouble halfway.

She therefore took a walk through the lovely grounds, and then began to explore the interior of the castle. She could not help admiring the magnificent decorations and priceless tapestries, as well as the costly furniture. She came to a door on which was written:

Beauty's Boudoir

Extremely surprised, she quickly opened the door, and was dazzled by the brilliance of her surroundings — every comfort and luxury she could desire was there.

One of the first things that caught her eye was an exquisite bookcase, filled with handsome editions of her favorite books, and near it was a harpsichord with an abundance of music.

"The Beast does not want me to weary," said she in a low voice; then she thought to herself, "If I had only one day to live, he would surely not have provided so much for my entertainment." This thought gave her courage. She opened the bookcase, and took out a volume with a very long title in gold letters; it was this:

Desire. Command.

You are Lady and Mistress here.

"Alas!" thought she, with a sigh, "I desire nothing but to see my poor father, and to know what he is doing just now."

She laid down the book without speaking a word. Judge then of her surprise when, in a great mirror on the opposite wall, she saw the cottage where her father was just arriving, broken down with grief. Her sisters came out to meet him, pretending to be sorry, but, in spite of their false grimaces, joy was visible in their eyes to see him returning without her. Then it all disappeared, and, standing there, she could not help thinking how considerate and kind the Beast seemed to have been in trying to make her happy, and in her heart she felt she need not be so much afraid of him.

At noon an excellent dinner was on the table, and while she was eating she listened to a fine band playing lovely music, but no one was visible.

In the evening, as she sat down to supper, she heard the peculiar noise made by the Beast, and she could not help trembling violently when he appeared.

"Beauty," said the monster, "are you willing to let me look at you while you sup?"

"You are master here," said Beauty, in a tremulous voice.

"No!" replied the Beast, "you alone are mistress here. You have only to bid me go away if my presence annoys you and I shall go at once. Tell me frankly — do you not think me extremely ugly?"

"I do indeed," said Beauty, "for I cannot tell an untruth, but I think you are very kind."

"You are right," said the monster, "but besides being ugly, I am very stupid. I know quite well that I am only a fool."

"No one is really stupid who thinks he is not clever. No fool ever considers himself one."

"Enjoy your supper, then, Beauty," said the monster, "and try not to feel weary in your own house, for all you see is yours, and it would grieve me much to see you unhappy."

"You are very kind," said Beauty, "and your goodness of heart gives me great pleasure. Indeed, when I think how good you are, I do not seem to see you so ugly."

"Oh! for that part," said the Beast, "my heart is tender enough, but it does not hinder me from being a monster."

"There are many men far worse monsters than you are," said Beauty, "and I prefer you with the face you have to many men I have met, who, behind a handsome face, hide a false, bad heart."

"If I had wit enough I should pay you a great compliment to thank you for the pleasure your words give me," said the

Beast, "but, being so stupid, all I can say is that I am greatly obliged to you."

Beauty took a hearty supper, and quite forgot her fear of the Beast, but she was again in an agony of terror when he suddenly said to her:

"Beauty, will you be my wife?"

It was some time before she could find words to reply, but at last she answered simply:

"No, Beast."

At this the poor monster heaved a dreadful sigh, which seemed more like a shriek, and the whole palace shook with the sound. Beauty thought her last hour had come. The Beast, however, only said gently: "Good night, then, Beauty," and went slowly to the door, turning his head from time to time to look wistfully at her as he went.

Left alone. Beauty felt a great wave of pity rising within her. "What a pity it is that he is so ugly!" said she. "He is so very good and kind!"

Three months passed thus in the palace, without any special event. Every evening Beauty received a visit from the Beast, who did his best to entertain her during supper with his simple talk, which never lacked good sense, but which was far from being what is called, in society, brilliant conversation. Every day Beauty noticed some new token of the goodness which lay below the repulsive outward appearance of the monster. She was becoming accustomed to his ugliness, and instead of dreading his visits she often found herself looking at her watch as nine o'clock drew near, for that was the hour when he made his appearance. There was only one thing which really distressed her. It was that the monster, before leaving her,

never failed to ask her if she would become his wife, and never seemed less pained at her refusal.

One evening, Beauty said to him:

"Beast, you grieve me greatly. I only wish I could bring myself to marry you, but I am too sincere to pretend to you that I can ever do so. I shall always be your friend — will you not try to be contented with that?"

"I suppose I must," said the Beast. "I can judge justly, and I know how horribly ugly I am, only I love you greatly. I ought to be very thankful that you are willing to remain here to keep me company. Promise me, I entreat you, that you will never leave me." Beauty blushed deeply at these words. That afternoon she had seen in her mirror that her father was very ill from his grief at losing her, and she wished greatly to visit him, and reassure him.

"I could readily promise," said she, "never to leave you altogether, but I wish so much to see my father again that I shall die of grief if I may not do so."

"I would rather die myself than grieve you," said the monster. "I shall send you home to your father, you will stay there, and your poor Beast will die of grief."

"Oh, no!" said Beauty, weeping. "I love you too much to wish to cause your death. I promise you to return in eight days. You have enabled me to see that my sisters are both married, and that my brothers have joined the army. My father is quite alone. Let me stay with him for a week, I beg of you."

"You shall be there tomorrow morning," said the Beast, "but do remember your promise. When you are ready to return, you have only to lay your ring on the table when you go to bed. Good-bye, Beauty."

The Beast sighed, in his usual fearful way, when he said these words, and Beauty went to bed, much grieved at having hurt him. She awoke next morning in her father's house. She rang a bell which was on the table by the side of her bed, and it was answered by the servant-maid, who gave a great cry of astonishment when she saw her. The father went quickly upstairs to know what had happened, and was beside himself with joy when he saw his dear daughter. He clasped her in his arms and they embraced each other long and tenderly.

When she got up to dress, Beauty remembered that she had no clothes to put on, but the maid told her that she had just found a chest in the next room, and on opening it she saw it was filled with magnificent robes of costly materials, trimmed with gold lace and embroidered with jewels, and Beauty felt most grateful to the kind Beast for his attentions. She chose the plainest of these beautiful dresses; then she asked the maid to lock the chest, as she wished to give the others to her sisters, but she had hardly said the words when the chest disappeared. Her father said it looked as if the Beast only intended the dresses for herself, and at these words the chest was again in its place.

While Beauty was dressing, word of her arrival was sent to her sisters, who appeared soon after with their husbands. Both of them were miserably unhappy. One had married a man who was exceedingly handsome, but who was so vain that he thought of nothing but his own good looks, and took no notice whatever of his wife. The other had married a man who was extraordinarily clever, but the only use he made of his brains was to utter sarcastic remarks to everyone, and particularly to his wife.

These sisters were very envious when they saw Beauty looking prettier than ever and dressed like a princess. In vain she kissed and fondled them; they could not hide their jealousy, which increased as they saw how happy she was. They both went into the garden to vent their spite, and to complain to each other.

"Why," said they, "is that creature so much happier than we? Are we not as deserving of happiness as she is?"

"Sister," said the eldest, "I have an idea; let us persuade her to overstay her time. Her stupid Beast will be enraged with her for not keeping her word, and probably he will devour her."

"What a clever plan!" said the other. "We must pretend to be very fond of her and make a great fuss about her."

With this wicked thought in their minds they went back into the cottage, and were so very loving in their speech and manner that poor Beauty almost wept for joy. At the end of the eight days, they made such a show of grief, tearing their hair and wringing their hands, that Beauty consented to stay another week, not without being very sorry for the disappointment she was causing her poor Beast, whom she had grown so fond of, and whom she was longing to see again. On the tenth night of her visit, she dreamt she was in the palace garden, where she saw the Beast lying prone upon the grass, dying, and reproaching her for her ingratitude. She awoke with a start; then she began to weep.

"How wicked I am!" she said to herself. "How could I grieve the poor Beast who has been so good to me? Is it his fault that he is ugly and not clever? He is good, and that is worth more than cleverness or good looks. Why could I not marry him? I should have been much happier with him than my sisters are with their husbands. It is neither the good looks nor

the cleverness of her husband that can make a woman happy; it is kindness of heart, uprightness, and readiness to oblige, and my poor Beast has all these good qualities. I may not be in love with him, but my heart is full of respect, friendship, and gratitude whenever I think of him. Come! I must not make him unhappy. I should reproach myself all my life if I did."

Beauty got up, put her ring on the table, and went back to bed. She quickly fell asleep, and when she awoke next morning she was pleased to find herself back in the palace of the Beast. She dressed herself magnificently to give him pleasure, and found the day pass all too slowly, waiting for nine o'clock. At last the hour struck, but the Beast did not make his appearance.

Beauty was greatly alarmed, fearing lest she had caused his death. She ran from room to room, calling him loudly, but she got no answer. She was almost in despair when she suddenly remembered her dream. Quick as thought, she turned and ran toward the garden. There, on the very spot she had seen in her sleep, lay her poor Beast, prone on the grass near the brook, quite unconscious and apparently dead. In an agony of grief she threw herself down over his body, without any sense of horror; then, finding that his heart was still beating, she brought water from the stream and bathed his temples. This revived him a little, and at length he opened his eyes.

After a little, the Beast found strength to speak. "You forgot your promise," said he, gazing at Beauty. "My grief at losing you was so great that I determined to starve myself to death, but I shall die happy now that I have had the great pleasure of seeing you again."

"No, my dear Beast, you shall not die," cried Beauty. "You must live to become my husband. From this moment I am

yours. I imagined I had no stronger feeling for you than friendship, but now I know that I cannot live without you."

Just as Beauty finished this speech, the whole palace was brilliantly illuminated, while fireworks and music showed that some great event was being celebrated. Beauty looked up for a moment, but immediately turned again toward her dear Beast, for whose life she trembled. But where was he? What did it all mean? At her feet knelt a young Prince, handsome as Adonis, who was gratefully thanking her for having broken the spell of his enchantment. Although this Prince well deserved her attention, she quickly asked him:

"Where is my Beast?"

"You see him at your feet," was the reply. " A wicked fairy had condemned me to remain in that dreadful form till a beautiful young lady should, of her own free will, consent to marry me, and I was strictly forbidden to show my intelligence. You alone of all those I have met were touched by my kindness of disposition in spite of my forbidding appearance, and in offering you my crown and my heart I do not pretend to be able to repay all I owe to you."

Beauty held out her hand to the Prince, in a dream of delighted surprise. He rose and clasped her hand in his, and they walked together to the palace. On entering the great hall, Beauty was overjoyed to see her dear father and all the family there. The beautiful lady whom she had seen in her dream had transported them there from the cottage.

This lady, who was a great fairy, now came forward.

"Beauty," said she, "come and receive the reward of your wise choice. You preferred high character to mere beauty, or even cleverness; you deserve to find all these united in one

person. You are going to be a great queen. I hope that the throne will not alter your character."

"As for you, ladies," said the fairy to the sisters, "I know the malice which fills your hearts. You shall become statues, but you shall retain your reason inside the stone which imprisons you. You shall be placed one on each side of the door of your sister's palace, where your only punishment will be seeing your sister's happiness. When you recognize your faults and repent of them, you will be restored to your human forms, but I fear you are likely to remain statues. One may correct oneself of pride, bad temper, greed, or sloth, but to change an evil, envious heart is little short of a miracle."

Then, with one touch of her wand, she transported the whole company to the kingdom of the Prince, whose subjects received him with joy. Beauty and he were married with great pomp, the festivities lasting many days. The union was a very happy one, and at the end of a long life their love for each other was still undiminished.

Riquet With the Tuft [6]

Once a Queen had a little boy who came into the world so unpleasing in face and so deformed in body that the poor little fellow looked hardly human.

Naturally this was a great grief to the mother, who loved her son, and wished everyone else to love him.

A fairy who was present at his birth assured her that, in spite of his appearance, the babe would be a most lovable child, and that he would make up for his want of good looks by his great intelligence and his kind disposition, besides which, as her gift, she had just endowed him with the power of making the lady he should love best one of the wittiest and cleverest people in the world.

The fairy's speech cheered and comforted the Queen, for she knew that, though beauty is a valuable gift, it can be easily destroyed, but that intelligence and sweetness of temper are lifelong attractions.

By the time the child began to speak, the fairy's words were proved true, for he astonished all around him with his witty remarks, and with the sweet way he had of saying just the right thing; also, in all his little actions there was such cleverness and grace of manner that everybody was charmed with him.

I forgot to tell you that he was born with a little tuft of hair on the top of his head, so that he was at once named Riquet with the Tuft, for Riquet was the family surname.

Seven or eight years later, the Queen of a neighboring kingdom had twin daughters. The first-born was as beautiful as the dawn, and so great was the mother's joy that the attendants

feared lest she should suffer from over-excitement. The fairy who had presided at the birth of little Riquet with the Tuft was again present, so she told the Queen that the little Princess, though charmingly pretty, would have very little intelligence, and would be as dull and stupid as she was beautiful.

This speech damped the Queen's spirits very much, but an even greater disappointment awaited her, for, when the second daughter was born, she was found to be one of the plainest-looking children ever seen, and the poor mother was terribly grieved about it.

"Do not distress yourself so much, Madam," said the fairy; "your little daughter will have much to make her happy. Her wit and liveliness will be such that no one will notice her want of good looks."

"God grant it may be so!" replied the Queen. "But have you no means of giving a little good sense to my poor pretty one?"

"I can do nothing for her in the matter of intelligence," said the fairy, "but where beauty is concerned I can do much, and, as there is nothing I would not do to please you, I now give her power to endow the person she loves best with beauty as great as her own."

As these twin Princesses grew up, their attractions increased, and the whole talk at Court was about the beauty of the elder, and the intelligent wit of the younger.

True, their defects also became more apparent, the younger becoming every day visibly plainer, while the elder daily grew more dull and stupid. When spoken to, she either made no answer at all or said something foolishly rude. She was so awkward in her movements that she could not arrange four china ornaments on a shelf without letting one fall, nor could

she drink out of a glass without spilling half of its contents over her clothes.

Although beauty adds so much to the charm of youth, in this case it was the plain Princess who, in every company, attracted the most attention. At first people might go to where the beautiful elder Princess sat, that they might see and admire her, but they soon tired of her senseless remarks, and left her to join the circle which gathered round the plain sister, whose agreeable conversation and sparkling wit charmed all listeners. Sometimes people so far forgot their good manners as to leave the poor beauty all alone; stupid though she was, she could not help noticing this, and she would willingly have given all her beauty exchange for one half of her younger sister's intelligence.

Her silliness was so irritating that everyone's patience got worn out, and even the Queen, though a most wise and prudent lady, could not help reproaching her repeatedly for her stupid rudeness, so that the poor Princess was often miserably unhappy.

One day she went alone into the wood near the palace, to weep over her lot without being seen, and she noticed, coming toward her, a small and very ugly young man, magnificently dressed. It was the young Prince Riquet with the Tuft, who had fallen in love with her from seeing her portrait, which hung on the walls of every castle he visited. He had come all the way from his father's kingdom, a very long way off, to have the pleasure of seeing her personally, and, if possible, of entering into conversation with her.

Delighted to find the beautiful Princess alone, he went forward with respectful politeness, and, bowing low, begged to be allowed to introduce himself. After he had talked to her for

some time, he could not help noticing how very melancholy she was and that all the elegant compliments he made her did not seem to affect her in the least.

"I cannot comprehend, madam," said he, "how so charming a lovely lady can be so very sad. Never did I see anyone who could at all compare with you."

"That's all you know," said the princess, and stopped.

"Beauty," continued the prince, sighing, "is so great an advantage, that if one possessed it, one would never trouble oneself about anything else."

"I wish I were as ugly as you and had some sense, rather than be as handsome as I am, and such a fool."

"Madam," said Riquet politely, though her speech was not exactly civil, "nothing shows intellect so much as the modesty of believing one does not possess it."

"I don't know that; but I know I am a great fool, and it vexes me so, that I wish I was dead," cried the princess bitterly.

"If that is all that troubles you, Madam, I can easily put an end to your sorrow!" said Riquet with the Tuft.

"What can you do in the matter?" asked the Princess.

"Madam," replied he, "I can endow the person I love best with as much cleverness as anyone could wish to possess, and, as you are that person, it remains with yourself to choose whether or not you will become the most witty lady in the world. One condition, however, must be observed — you must be willing to marry me."

The Princess was dumbfounded — she answered not a word!

"I see," continued Riquet with the Tuft, "that the bare idea is painful to you, and that does not surprise me, so I will give you a whole year to make up your mind."

The poor stupid Princess thought a year was such a long time that it would hardly ever come to an end, and, having a great desire to be as clever as her sister, she promised to marry Riquet with the Tuft a year from that day.

No sooner had she given her promise than such a marvelous change came over her that she felt like a different creature. She could think clearly and express her ideas with astonishing ease, speaking on every subject with keen intelligence, and using the most refined and polished language.

She began a bantering conversation with the Prince, when her ready wit and brilliant sallies made him ask himself whether he had not made her more clever than himself.

On her return to the palace, the amazing change in the Princess was so evident that the whole Court was surprised and puzzled. No one knew what to make of it, for, whereas they had once never heard her speak without saying something silly or rude, or both, now she spoke with the good sense and quiet dignity of a highly cultivated lady, fit to be the partner of the most particular of kings or princes.

The joy at Court was extreme. From the King and Queen to the humblest attendant, everyone was delighted with the lively wit which now added such a charm to their beautiful Princess. The younger sister alone found it impossible to rejoice.

It was indeed hard on her, for the one advantage which her cleverness had given her over her stupid but beautiful sister was now of no account; everyone crowded round the brilliant beauty, without taking the trouble to notice her poor, plain-looking self, for even in Courts people can be selfishly neglectful of other people's feelings.

The elder sister was now as much sought after for her wisdom as for her beauty. The King took her advice in everything that concerned his government, and he even held his privy council in her room.

The rumor of this great change spread far and wide, and all the princes of the neighboring kingdoms vied with each other as suitors for the hand of the beautiful Princess, who listened courteously to one after another, but as she found none of them sufficiently interesting to please her, she accepted none. If you think it strange that she had forgotten her promise to Riquet with the Tuft you will hear shortly how this came about.

Finally came a young Prince who was so powerful, so rich, so clever, and so very handsome that she could not help feeling attracted by him. Her father noticed this, and told her that he left her quite free to choose the husband she preferred; she had only to tell him when her choice was made.

The more good sense people have, the more difficult they find it to decide in such an important affair as marriage. The Princess thanked her father, and asked to be allowed a little time for reflection before deciding.

As she wished to be alone with her thoughts, she went out for a quiet walk, and entered the wood without remembering that, a year before, in this very wood, she had promised to marry the Prince whose marvelous gift had made her so intelligent. Indeed, the first result of that gift had been that all memory of her former stupid words and actions was quite blotted out.

For a while she walked on, in deep thought, but after a little time she became aware of dull muffled sounds somewhere quite near, so she stood still to listen.

The sounds seemed to come from beneath her feet, as if many people were busily working underground, and she even heard their voices and could distinguish their words.

"Fetch me the pan," said one. "Hand me that kettle," said another. "Put more wood on the fire," said a third.

As the Princess stood bewildered, the ground in front of her opened, and, to her utter amazement, she saw the interior of a great kitchen, with menservants and maids busily engaged in preparing a grand banquet.

At the same time a band of twenty or thirty men who had charge of the roasting came out, and went to take their places round a long table placed in an alley of the wood. Each had his larding-pin in his hand, and they all began to work heartily together, keeping time to a merry song.

The astonished Princess asked for whom they were preparing such a feast.

"We are preparing the wedding-feast of Prince Riquet with the Tuft, Madam," was the reply. "He is to be married tomorrow."

The words recalled in a flash her promise to the Prince, and she stood stunned and ready to fall, as if she had received a blow. Recovering herself, she walked on a few paces, and suddenly found herself face to face with the Prince, magnificently arrayed as became a royal bridegroom.

Riquet with the Tuft advanced joyfully to meet her.

"How delighted I am, dear Princess, to find you as punctual as myself in keeping our appointment! I had hardly dared to hope that you would come yourself to meet me, and to make me the happiest man in the world by giving me your hand."

The Princess drew back coldly and replied:

"I must confess that I had no such intention. I have not yet made up my mind on the subject, nor do I think I shall ever be able to grant your request."

"Your words astonish me, Madam," said the Prince, completely taken aback.

"I quite believe you," said the Princess, "and if I had to deal with a coarse, vulgar fellow, too stupid to take in the situation, I should indeed be in a difficulty, but as I am addressing the most refined and intelligent gentleman in the whole world, I feel quite sure that you yourself will see how impossible it would be for me to keep a promise made when I had not the sense to know what I was doing. If you really wished me to marry you, it would have been wiser not to have made me so difficult to please that I have already rejected the handsomest princes who have asked me in marriage."

"Madam," said Riquet with the Tuft, "you have admitted that a coarse and stupid man might have held you to your word! Is it just or kind to treat me worse than such a fellow, because I am a gentleman? Surely that cannot be approved by one who so greatly desired the gift of wit and wisdom for herself! But, be that as it may, let us come to facts. Permit me to ask, Madam, if, apart from my appearance, there is anything else about me which displeases you? Do you disapprove of my birth, my character, or my manners?"

"Not at all," said the Princess, "in all these I find you perfect."

"If that is so," said Riquet with the Tuft, "I may yet be happy, as you yourself can make me the most lovable of men, even in appearance."

"How can I possibly do that?" asked the Princess.

"By loving me so much that you wish me to be handsome, Madam; for the same fairy who gave me power to make you wise, gave you, at your birth, the power to make the man you love as handsome as you are beautiful."

"If that is so," said the Princess, "I desire with all my heart that you may become the finest looking Prince in the wide world!"

The Princess had no sooner uttered the words than Prince Riquet with the Tuft stood before her transformed!

In face, in person, and in bearing she felt she had never seen his equal.

Some people tell us that it was not the fairy's magic which worked the change. They say that, as "beauty is in the eyes of the beholder," it was the great love that filled the heart of the Princess when she thought of all the Prince's goodness of heart and other great qualities that made her see him in quite a different light. However that may be, the Princess was eager to marry Prince Riquet with the Tuft as soon as she could obtain her father's consent. This the King gave at once, for he had long heard of the Prince's great intelligence and sweetness of disposition, and now that he saw him and heard him speak he was highly pleased to have him for his son-in-law. So the marriage took place the very next day, all the Court sharing in the festivities which had already been prepared by the Prince's retainers.

Prince Riquet with the Tuft and his beautiful and witty Princess lived long and happily together, admired and loved by their loyal subjects in every part of their kingdom.

Prince Cherry [7]

Long ago there lived a monarch who was such a very honest man that his subjects entitled him the Good King. One day, when he was out hunting, a little white rabbit, which had been half killed by his hounds, leaped right into his majesty's arms. Said he, caressing it: "This poor creature has put itself under my protection, and I will allow no one to injure it." So he carried it to his palace, had prepared for it a neat little rabbit hutch, with abundance of the daintiest food such as rabbits love, and there he left it.

The same night, when he was alone in his chamber, there appeared to him a beautiful lady. She was dressed neither in gold, nor silver, nor brocade, but her flowing robes were white as snow, and she wore a garland of white roses on her head. The Good King was greatly astonished at the sight, for his door was locked, and he wondered how so dazzling a lady could possibly enter; but she soon removed his doubts.

"I am the Fairy Candide," said she, with a smiling and gracious air. "Passing through the wood where you were hunting, I took a desire to know if you were as good as men say you are. I therefore changed myself into a white rabbit, and took refuge in your arms. You saved me and now I know that those who are merciful to dumb beasts will be ten times more so to human beings. You merit the name your subjects give you: you are the Good King. I thank you for your protection, and shall be always one of your best friends. You have but to say what you most desire, and I promise you your wish shall be granted."

"Madam," replied the King, "if you are a fairy, you must know without my telling you the wish of my heart. I have one well-beloved son, Prince Cherry. Whatever kindly feeling you have toward me, extend it to him."

"Willingly," said Candide. "I will make him the handsomest, richest, or most powerful prince in the world. Choose whichever you desire for him."

"None of the three," returned the father. "I only wish him to be good— the best prince in the whole world. Of what use would riches, power, or beauty be to him if he were an evil man?"

"You are right," said the fairy; "but I cannot make him good. He must do that himself. I can only change his external fortunes; for his personal character the utmost I can promise is to give him good counsel, reprove him for his faults, and even punish him if he will not punish himself. You mortals can do the same with your children."

"Ah, yes!" said the King, sighing. Still he felt that the kindness of a fairy was something gained for his son, and died not long after, content and at peace.

Prince Cherry mourned deeply, for he dearly loved his father, and would have gladly given all his kingdoms and treasures to keep him in life a little longer. Two days after the Good King was no more, Prince Cherry was sleeping in his chamber when he saw the same dazzling vision of the Fairy Candide.

"I promised your father," said she, "to be your best friend, and in pledge of this take what I now give you"; and she placed a small gold ring upon his finger. "Poor as it looks, it is more precious than diamonds, for whenever you do ill it will prick

your finger. If, after that warning, you still continue in evil, you will lose my friendship and I shall become your direst enemy."

So saying she disappeared, leaving Cherry in such amazement that he would have believed it all a dream save for the ring on his finger.

He was for a long time so good that the ring never pricked him at all, and this made him so cheerful and pleasant in his humor that everybody called him "Happy Prince Cherry." But one unlucky day he was out hunting and found no sport, which vexed him so much that he showed his ill temper by his looks and ways. He fancied his ring felt very tight and uncomfortable, but as it did not prick him he took no heed of this, until, reentering his palace, his little pet dog, Bibi, jumped up upon him, and was sharply told to get away. The creature, accustomed to nothing but caresses, tried to attract his attention by pulling at his garments, when Prince Cherry turned and gave it a severe kick. At this moment he felt in his finger a prick like a pin.

"What nonsense!" said he to himself. "The fairy must be making game of me. Why, what great evil have I done! I, the master of a great empire, cannot I kick my own dog?"

A voice replied, or else Prince Cherry imagined it: "No, sire; the master of a great empire has a right to do good, but not evil. I — a fairy — am as much above you as you are above your dog. I might punish you, kill you, if I chose; but I prefer leaving you to amend your ways. You have been guilty of three faults today — bad temper, passion, cruelty. Do better tomorrow."

The Prince promised, and kept his word awhile; but he had been brought up by a foolish nurse who indulged him in every way, and was always telling him that he would be a king one day, when he might do as he liked in all things. He found out

now that even a king cannot always do that; it vexed him and made him angry. His ring began to prick him so often that his little finger was continually bleeding. He disliked this, as was natural, and soon began to consider whether it would not be easier to throw the ring away altogether than to be constantly annoyed by it. It was such a queer thing for a king to have always a spot of blood on his finger! At last, unable to put up with it any more, he took his ring off and hid it where he would never see it, and believed himself the happiest of men, for he could now do exactly what he liked. He did it, and became every day more and more miserable.

One day he saw a young girl so beautiful that, being always accustomed to have his own way, he immediately determined to espouse her. He never doubted that she would be only too glad to be made a queen, for she was very poor. But Zelia—that was her name — answered, to his great astonishment, that she would rather not marry him.

"Do I displease you?" asked the Prince, into whose mind it had never entered that he could displease anybody.

"Not at all, my Prince," said the honest peasant maiden. "You are very handsome, very charming; but you are not like your father the Good King. I will not be your queen, for you would make me miserable."

At these words the Prince's love seemed all to turn to hatred. He gave orders to his guards to convey Zelia to a prison near the palace, and then took counsel with his foster brother, the one of all his evil companions who most incited him to do wrong.

"Sire," said this man, "if I were in your majesty's place, I would never vex myself about a poor silly girl. Feed her on bread and water till she comes to her senses, and if she still

refuses you, let her die in torment, as a warning to your other subjects should they venture to dispute your will. You will be disgraced should you suffer yourself to be conquered by a simple girl."

"But," said Prince Cherry, "shall I not be disgraced if I harm a creature so perfectly innocent?"

"No one is innocent who disputes your majesty's authority," said the courtier bowing; "and it is better to commit an injustice than allow it to be supposed you can ever be contradicted with impunity."

This touched Cherry on his weak point — his good impulses faded; he resolved once more to ask Zelia if she would marry him, and if she again refused, to sell her as a slave. Arrived at the cell in which she was confined, what was his astonishment to find her gone! He knew not whom to accuse, for he had kept the key in his pocket the whole time. At last the foster brother suggested that the escape of Zelia might have been contrived by an old man, Suliman by name, the Prince's former tutor, who was the only one who now ventured to blame him for anything that he did. Cherry sent immediately and ordered his old friend to be brought to him loaded heavily with irons. Then, full of fury, he went and shut himself up in his own chamber, where he went raging to and fro, till startled by a noise like a clap of thunder. The Fairy Candide stood before him.

"Prince," said she in a severe voice, "I promised your father to give you good counsels, and to punish you if you refused to follow them. My counsels were forgotten, my punishments despised. Under the figure of a man you have been no better than the beasts you chase. Like a lion in fury, a wolf in gluttony,

a serpent in revenge, and a bull in brutality. Take, therefore, in your new form the likeness of all these animals."

Scarcely had Prince Cherry heard these words than to his horror he found himself transformed into what the fairy had named. He was a creature with the head of a lion, the horns of a bull, the feet of a wolf, and the tail of a serpent. At the same time he felt himself transported to a distant forest where, standing on the bank of a stream, he saw reflected in the water his own frightful shape, and heard a voice saying: "Look at thyself, and know that thy soul has become a thousand times uglier even than thy body."

Cherry recognized the voice of Candide, and in his rage would have sprung upon her and devoured her; but he saw nothing, and the same voice said behind him:

"Cease thy feeble fury, and learn to conquer thy pride by being in submission to thine own subjects."

Hearing no more, he soon quitted the stream, hoping at least to get rid of the sight of himself; but he had scarcely gone twenty paces when he tumbled into a pitfall that was laid to catch bears; the bear hunters, descending from some trees hard by, caught him, chained him, and, only too delighted to get hold of such a curious-looking animal, led him along with them to the capital of his own kingdom.

There great rejoicings were taking place, and the bear hunters, asking what it was all about, were told that it was because Prince Cherry, the torment of his subjects, had just been struck dead by a thunderbolt — just punishment of all his crimes. Four courtiers, his wicked companions, had wished to divide his throne between them, but the people had risen up against them and offered the crown to Suliman, the old tutor whom Cherry had ordered to be arrested.

All this the poor monster heard. He even saw Suliman sitting upon his own throne, and trying to calm the populace by representing to them that it was not certain Prince Cherry was dead; that he might return one day to reassume with honor the crown which Suliman only consented to wear as a sort of viceroy.

"I know his heart," said the honest and faithful old man; "it is tainted, but not corrupt. If alive, he may yet reform, and be all his father over again to you, his people, whom he has caused to suffer so much."

These words touched the poor beast so deeply that he ceased to beat himself against the iron bars of the cage in which the hunters carried him about, became gentle as a lamb, and suffered himself to be taken quietly to a menagerie, where were kept all sorts of strange and ferocious animals — a place which he had often visited as a boy, but in which he never thought he should be shut up himself.

However, he owned he had deserved it all, and began to make amends by showing himself very obedient to his keeper. This man was almost as great a brute as the animals he had charge of, and when he was in ill humor he used to beat them without rhyme or reason. One day, while he was sleeping, a tiger broke loose and leaped upon him, eager to devour him. Cherry at first felt a thrill of pleasure at the thought of being revenged; then, seeing how helpless the man was, he wished himself free, that he might defend him. Immediately the doors of his cage opened. The keeper, waking up, saw the strange beast leap out, and imagined, of course, that he was going to be slain at once. Instead, he saw the tiger lying dead, and the strange beast creeping up and laying itself at his feet to be caressed. But as he lifted up his hand to stroke it, a voice was

heard saying, "Good actions never go unrewarded"; and, instead of the frightful monster, there crouched on the ground nothing but a pretty little dog.

Cherry, delighted to find himself thus metamorphosed, caressed the keeper in every possible way, till at last the man took him up in his arms and carried him to the King, to whom he related this wonderful story from beginning to end. The Queen wished to have the charming little dog, and Cherry would have been exceedingly happy could he have forgotten that he was originally a man and a King. He was lodged most elegantly, had the richest of collars to adorn his neck, and heard himself praised continually. But his beauty rather brought him into trouble, for the Queen, afraid lest he might grow too large for a pet, took advice of dog doctors, who ordered that he should be fed entirely upon bread, and that very sparingly, so poor Cherry was sometimes nearly starved.

One day when they gave him his crust for breakfast, a fancy seized him to go and eat it in the palace garden; so he took the bread in his mouth and trotted away toward a stream which he knew, and where he sometimes stopped to drink. But instead of the stream he saw a splendid palace glittering with gold and precious stones. Entering the doors was a crowd of men and women magnificently dressed, and within there was singing and dancing and good cheer of all sorts. Yet, however grandly and gladly the people went in, Cherry noticed that those who came out were pale, thin, ragged, half-naked, covered with wounds and sores. Some of them dropped dead at once; others dragged themselves on a little way and then lay down, dying of hunger, and vainly begged a morsel of bread from others who were entering in — who never took the least notice of them.

Cherry perceived one woman who was trying feebly to gather and eat some green herbs. "Poor thing!" said he to himself; "I know what it is to be hungry, and I want my breakfast badly enough; but still it will not kill me to wait till dinner time, and my crust may save the life of this poor woman."

So the little dog ran up to her and dropped his bread at her feet; she picked it up and ate it with avidity. Soon she looked quite recovered, and Cherry, delighted, was trotting back again to his kennel when he heard loud cries, and saw a young girl dragged by four men to the door of the palace, which they were trying to compel her to enter. Oh, how he wished himself a monster again, as when he slew the tiger! — for the young girl was no other than his beloved Zelia. Alas! what could a poor little dog do to defend her? But he ran forward and barked at the men, and bit their heels, until at last they chased him away with heavy blows. And then he lay down outside the palace door, determined to watch and see what had become of Zelia.

Conscience pricked him now. "What!" thought he, "I am furious against these wicked men, who are carrying her away, and did I not do the same myself? Did I not cast her into prison and intend to sell her as a slave? Who knows how much more wickedness I might not have done to her and others if Heaven's justice had not stopped me in time?"

While he lay thinking and repenting, he heard a window open, and saw Zelia throw out of it a bit of dainty meat. Cherry, who felt hungry enough by this time, was just about to eat it when the woman to whom he had given his crust snatched him up in her arms.

"Poor little beast!" cried she, patting him, "every bit of food in that palace is poisoned. You shall not touch a morsel."

At the same time the voice in the air repeated again, "Good actions never go unrewarded"; and Cherry found himself changed into a beautiful little white pigeon. He remembered with joy that white was the color of the Fairy Candide, and began to hope that she was taking him into favor again.

So he stretched his wings, delighted that he might now have a chance of approaching his fair Zelia. He flew up to the palace windows, and, finding one of them open, entered and sought everywhere, but he could not find Zelia. Then, in despair, he flew out again, resolved to go over the world until he beheld her once more.

He took flight at once, and traversed many countries, swiftly as a bird can, but found no trace of his beloved. At length in a desert, sitting beside an old hermit in his cave and partaking with him his frugal repast, Cherry saw a poor peasant girl, and recognized Zelia. Transported with joy he flew in, perched on her shoulder, and expressed his delight and affection by a thousand caresses.

She, charmed with the pretty little pigeon, caressed it in her turn, and promised it that, if it would stay with her, she would love it always.

"What have you done, Zelia?" said the hermit, smiling; and while he spoke the white pigeon vanished, and there stood Prince Cherry in his own natural form. "Your enchantment ended, Prince, when Zelia promised to love you. Indeed, she has loved you always, but your many faults constrained her to hide her love. These are now amended, and you may both live happy if you will, because your union is founded upon mutual esteem."

Cherry and Zelia threw themselves at the feet of the hermit, whose form also began to change. His soiled garments

became of dazzling whiteness, and his long beard and withered face grew into the flowing hair and lovely countenance of the Fairy Candide.

"Rise up, my children," said she; "I must now transport you to your palace, and restore to Prince Cherry his father's crown, of which he is now worthy."

She had scarcely ceased speaking when they found themselves in the chamber of Suliman, who, delighted to find again his beloved pupil and master, willingly resigned the throne, and became the most faithful of his subjects.

King Cherry and Queen Zelia reigned together for many years, and it is said that the former was so blameless and strict in all his duties that though he constantly wore the ring which Candide had restored him, it never once pricked his finger enough to make it bleed.

Germany

The Frog-King; or, Iron Henry [8]

In old times, when wishing was having, there lived a King whose daughters were all beautiful, but the youngest was so beautiful that the sun itself, which has seen so much, was astonished whenever it shone in her face.

Close by the King's castle lay a great dark forest, and under an old lime tree in the forest, was a fountain. When the day was very warm, the King's Child went out into the forest and sat down by the side of the cool fountain, and when she was dull she took a golden ball, and threw it up in the air and caught it. And this ball was her favorite plaything.

Now, it so happened one day, the King's Daughter's golden ball did not fall into the little hand which she was holding up for it, but on to the ground, and rolled straight into the water. The King's Daughter followed it with her eyes; but it vanished, and the well was deep, so deep that the bottom could not be seen. On this she began to cry, and cried louder and louder, and could not be comforted. And as she thus lamented, someone said to her, "What ails you, King's Daughter? You weep so that even a stone would show pity."

She looked round to the side from whence the voice came, and saw a Frog stretching its thick, ugly head from the water. "Ah! old water-splasher, is it you?" said she; "I am weeping for my golden ball, which has fallen into the fountain."

"Be quiet, and do not weep," answered the Frog, "I can help you. But what will you give me if I bring your plaything up again?"

"Whatever you will have, dear Frog," said she — "my clothes, my pearls and jewels, and even the golden crown which I am wearing."

The Frog answered, "I do not care for your clothes, your pearls and jewels, or your golden crown, but if you will love me and let me be your companion and playfellow, and sit by you at your little table, and eat off your little golden plate, and drink out of your little cup, and sleep in your little bed — if you will promise me this, I will go down below, and bring your golden ball up again."

"Oh, yes," said she, "I promise you all you wish, if you will but bring my ball back again." She, however, thought, "How the silly Frog does talk! He lives in the water with the other frogs and croaks, and can be no companion to any human being!"

But the Frog, when he had received this promise, put his head into the water and sank down. In a short time he came swimming up again with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on the grass. The King's Daughter was delighted to see her pretty plaything once more, and picked it up, and ran away with it.

"Wait, wait," said the Frog. "Take me with you. I can't run as you can." But what did it avail him to scream his croak, croak, after her, as loudly as he could? She did not listen to it, but ran home and soon forgot the poor Frog, who was forced to go back into his fountain again.

The next day, when she had seated herself at table with the King and all the courtiers, and was eating from her little golden plate, something came creeping splish splash, splish splash, up the marble staircase. When it got to the top, it knocked at the door, and cried:

"King's Daughter, youngest,
Open the door!"

She ran to see who was outside, but when she opened the door, there sat the Frog in front of it. Then she slammed the door in great haste, sat down to dinner again, and was quite frightened.

The King saw plainly that her heart was beating violently, and said, "My Child, what are you so afraid of? Is there a Giant outside who wants to carry you away?"

"Ah, no," replied she, "it is no Giant, but a disgusting Frog."

"What does the Frog want with you?"

"Ah, dear Father, yesterday when I was in the forest sitting by the fountain, playing, my golden ball fell into the water. And because I cried so, the Frog brought it out again for me. And because he insisted so on it, I promised him he should be my companion; but I never thought he would be able to come out of the water! And now he is here, and wants to come in."

In the meantime, it knocked a second time, and cried;

"King's Daughter, youngest!
Open to me!
Don't you remember yesterday,
And alt that you to me did say,
Beside the cooling fountain's spray?
King's Daughter, youngest!
Open to me!"

Then said the King, "That which you have promised you must perform. Go and let him in."

She went and opened the door, and the Frog hopped in and followed her, step by step, to her chair. There he sat still and cried, "Lift me up beside you."

She delayed, until at last the King commanded her to do it. When the Frog was once on the chair, he wanted to be on the table, and when he was on the table, he said, "Now, push your little golden plate nearer to me that we may eat together."

She did this, but it was easy to see that she did not do it willingly. The Frog enjoyed what he ate, but almost every mouthful she took, choked her.

At length he said, "I have eaten and am satisfied. Now I am tired, carry me into your little room and make your little silken bed ready; and we will both lie down and go to sleep."

The King's Daughter began to cry, for she was afraid of the cold Frog, which she did not like to touch, and which was now to sleep in her pretty, clean little bed.

But the King grew angry and said, "He who helped you when you were in trouble, ought not afterward to be despised."

So she took hold of the Frog with two fingers, carried him upstairs, and put him in a corner. But when she was in bed, he crept to her and said, "I am tired, I want to sleep as well as you; lift me up or I will tell your father."

Then she was terribly angry, and took him up and threw him with all her might against the wall.

"Now, you will be quiet, odious Frog," said she.

But when he fell down, he was no Frog but a King's Son with beautiful kind eyes!

He, by her father's will, was now her dear companion and husband. Then he told her how he had been bewitched by a wicked Witch, and how no one could have delivered him from the fountain but herself, and that tomorrow they would go together into his kingdom.

Then they went to sleep, and next morning when the sun awoke them, a coach came rolling up drawn by eight white

horses, with white ostrich feathers on their heads. They were harnessed with golden chains, and behind stood the young King's servant, Faithful Henry. Faithful Henry had been so unhappy when his master was changed into a Frog, that he had three iron bands laid round his heart, lest it should burst with grief and sadness.

The coach was to conduct the young King into his kingdom. Faithful Henry helped them both in, and placed himself behind again, and was full of joy because of this deliverance.

And when they had driven a part of the way, the King's Son heard a cracking behind him as if something had broken. So he turned round and cried:

"Henry, the coach does break!
"No, no, my lord, you do mistake!
It is the band around my heart,
That felt such great and bitter smart,
When you were in the fountain strange,
When you into a Frog were changed!"

Again and once again, while they were on their way, something cracked; and each time the King's Son thought the carriage was breaking. But it was only the bands which were springing from the heart of Faithful Henry because his master was set free and was happy.

Rapunzel [9]

There was once a man and a woman, who had long in vain wished for a child. At length, the woman hoped that God was about to grant her desire.

These people had a little window at the back of their house from which a splendid garden could be seen. It was full of the most beautiful flowers and herbs. It was, however, surrounded by a high wall, and no one dared to go into it because it belonged to a Witch, who had great power and was dreaded by all the world.

One day, the woman was standing by this window and looking down into the garden, when she saw a bed which was planted with the most beautiful rampion (rapunzel), and it looked so fresh and green that she longed for it, and had the greatest desire to eat some.

This desire increased every day, and as she knew that she could not get any of it, she quite pined away, and looked pale and miserable.

Then her husband was alarmed, and asked, "What ails you, dear Wife?"

"Ah," she replied, "if I can't get some of the rampion to eat, which is in the garden behind our house, I shall die."

The man, who loved her, thought, "Sooner than let your wife die, bring her some of the rampion yourself, let it cost you what it will!" In the twilight of evening, he clambered over the wall into the garden of the Witch, hastily clutched a handful of rampion, and took it to his wife. She at once made herself a salad of it, and ate it with much relish.

She, however, liked it so much — so very much — that the next day she longed for it three times as much as before. If he was to have any rest, her husband must once more descend into the garden. In the gloom of evening, therefore, he let himself down again. But when he had clambered clown the wall he was terribly afraid, for he saw the Witch standing before him.

"How dare you," said she with angry look, "descend into my garden and steal my rampion like a thief? You shall suffer for it!"

"Ah," answered He, "let mercy take the place of justice! I had to do it out of necessity. My wife saw your rampion from the window, and felt such a longing for it that she would have died, if she had not got some to eat."

Then the Witch let her anger be softened, and said to him, "If the case be as you say, I will allow you to take away with you as much rampion as you will, only I make one condition, you must give me the child which your wife will bring into the world. It shall be well treated, and I will care for it like a mother."

The man in his terror consented to everything, and when the woman at last had a little daughter, the Witch appeared at once, gave the child the name of Rapunzel, and took it away with her. Rapunzel grew into the most beautiful child beneath the sun. When she was twelve years old, the Witch shut her into a tower, which lay in a forest, and had neither stairs nor door. But quite at the top was a little window. When the Witch wanted to go in, she placed herself beneath this, and cried:

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down thy hair."

Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, fine as spun gold, and when she heard the voice of the Witch, she unfastened her

braided tresses and wound them round one of the hooks of the window above. And then the hair fell twenty ells down, and the Witch climbed up by it.

After a year or two, it came to pass that the King's Son rode through the forest and went by the tower. Then he heard a song, which was so charming that he stood still and listened. This was Rapunzel, who in her solitude passed her time in letting her sweet voice resound.

The King's Son wanted to climb up to her, and looked for the door of the tower, but none was to be found. He rode home, but the singing had so deeply touched his heart, that every day he went out into the forest and listened to it.

Once when he was thus standing behind a tree, he saw that a Witch came there, and he heard how she cried:

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down thy hair."

Then Rapunzel let down the braids of her hair, and the Witch climbed up to her. "If that is the ladder by which one mounts, I will for once try my fortune," said he.

The next day when it began to grow dark, he went to the tower and cried:

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down thy hair."

Immediately the hair fell down, and the King's Son climbed up.

At first Rapunzel was terribly frightened when a man, such as her eyes had never yet beheld, came to her. But the King's Son began to talk to her quite like a friend, and told her that his heart had been so stirred, that it had let him have no rest, so he had been forced to see her.

Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her if she would take him for her husband, and she saw that he was young and handsome, she thought, "He will love me more than old Dame Gothel does;" and she said yes, and laid her hand in his.

She said also, "I will willingly go away with you, but I do not know how to get down. Bring with you a skein of silk every time that you come, and I will weave a ladder with it. When that is ready I will descend, and you will take me on your horse."

They agreed that until that time, he should come to her every evening, for the old woman came by day. The Witch remarked nothing of this, until once Rapunzel said to her, "Tell me, Dame Gothel, how it happens that you are so much heavier for me to draw up, than the young King's Son — He is with me in a moment."

"Ah! you wicked Child!" cried the Witch. "What do I hear you say! I thought I had separated you from all the world, and yet you have deceived me!"

In her anger she clutched Rapunzel's beautiful tresses, wrapped them twice round her left hand, seized a pair of scissors with the right, and snip, snap, they were cut off, and the lovely braids lay on the ground. And she was so pitiless that she took poor Rapunzel into a desert, where she had to live in great grief and misery.

On the same day, however, that she cast out Rapunzel, the Witch, in the evening, fastened the braids of hair which she had cut off, to the hook of the window; and when the King's Son came and cried:

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down thy hair," she let her hair down.

The King's Son ascended. He did not find his dearest Rapunzel above, but the Witch, who gazed at him with wicked and venomous looks.

"Aha!" she cried mockingly, "you would fetch your dearest! But the beautiful bird sits no longer singing in the nest. The cat has got it, and will scratch out your eyes as well. Rapunzel is lost to you! You will never see her more!"

The King's Son was beside himself with grief and in his despair he leapt down from the tower. He escaped with his life, but the thorns into which he fell, pierced his eyes. Then he wandered quite blind about the forest, ate nothing but roots and berries, and did nothing but lament and weep over the loss of his dearest wife.

Thus he roamed about in misery for some years, and at length came to the desert where Rapunzel lived in wretchedness. He heard a voice, and it seemed so familiar to him that he went toward it. When he approached, Rapunzel knew him, and fell on his neck and wept. Two of her tears wetted his eyes and they grew clear again, and he could see with them as before.

He led her to his Kingdom where he was joyfully received, and they lived for a long time, happy and contented.

The Star-Money [10]

There was once on a time, a little girl whose father and mother were dead. She was so poor that she no longer had any little room to live in, or bed to sleep in. At last, she had nothing else but the clothes she was wearing and a little bit of bread in her hand which some charitable soul had given her. She was, however, good and pious.

And as she was thus forsaken by all the world, she went forth into the open country, trusting in the good God.

Then a poor man met her, who said, "Ah, give me something to eat, I am so hungry!"

She reached him the whole of her piece of bread, and said, "May God bless it to your use," and went onward.

Then came a child who moaned and said, "My head is so cold, give me something to cover it with."

So she took off her hood and gave it to him.

And when she had walked a little farther, she met another child who had no jacket and was frozen with cold. Then she gave it her own.

A little farther on one begged for a frock, and she gave away that also.

At length, she got into a forest and it had already become dark, and there came yet another child, and asked for a little shirt. The good little girl thought to herself, "It is a dark night and no one sees me. I can very well give my little shirt away," and took it off, and gave away that also.

And she so stood, and had not one single thing left. Then suddenly some Stars from heaven fell down, and they were

nothing else but hard smooth pieces of money! And although she had just given her little shirt away, lo! she had a new one which was of the very finest linen.

Then she gathered together the money into this, and was rich all the days of her life.

The Fisherman and His Wife [11]

There was once on a time, a Fisherman who lived with his wife in a miserable hovel close by the sea, and every day he went out fishing. And once, as he was sitting with his rod, looking at the clear water, his line suddenly went down, far down below, and when he drew it up again, he brought out a large Flounder.

Then the Flounder said to him: "Hark, you Fisherman, I pray you, let me live. I am no Flounder really, but an enchanted Prince. What good will it do you to kill me? I should not be good to eat. Put me in the water again, and let me go."

"Come," said the Fisherman, "there is no need for so many words about it — a fish that can talk I should certainly let go, anyhow."

With that he put him back again into the clear water, and the Flounder went to the bottom, leaving a long streak of blood behind him. Then the Fisherman got up and went home to his wife in the hovel.

"Husband," said the woman, "have you caught nothing today?"

"No," said the man, "I did catch a Flounder, who said he was an enchanted Prince, so I let him go again."

"Did you not wish for anything first?" said the woman.

"No," said the man; "what should I wish for?"

"Ah," said the woman, "it is surely hard to have to live always in this dirty hovel. You might have wished for a small cottage for us. Go back and call him. Tell him we want to have a small cottage. He will certainly give us that."

"Ah," said the man, "why should I go there again?"

"Why," said the woman, "you did catch him, and you let him go again. He is sure to do it. Go at once."

The man still did not quite like to go, but did not want to oppose his wife, and went to the sea.

When he got there the sea was all green and yellow, and no longer smooth. So he stood and said:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,
Wills not as I'd have her will."

Then the Flounder came swimming to him and said, "Well, what does she want, then?"

"Ah," said the man, "I did catch you, and my wife says I really ought to have wished for something. She does not like to live in a wretched hovel any longer. She would like to have a cottage."

"Go, then," said the Flounder, "she has it already."

When the man got home, his wife was no longer in the hovel. But instead of it, there stood a small cottage, and she was sitting on a bench before the door. Then she took him by the hand and said to him, "Just come inside, look. Now isn't this a great deal better?"

So they went in, and there was a small porch, and a pretty little parlor and bedroom, and a kitchen and pantry, with the best of furniture, and fitted up with the most beautiful things made of tin and brass, whatsoever was wanted. And behind the cottage, there was a small yard, with hens and ducks, and a little garden with flowers and fruit.

"Look," said the wife, "is not that nice!"

"Yes," said the husband, "and so we must always think it, — now we will live quite contented."

"We will think about that," said the wife.

With that they ate something and went to bed.

Everything went well for a week or a fortnight, and then the woman said, "Hark you, Husband, this cottage is far too small for us, and the garden and yard are little. The Flounder might just as well have given us a larger house. I should like to live in a great stone castle. Go to the Flounder, and tell him to give us a castle."

"Ah, Wife," said the man, "the cottage is quite good enough. Why should we live in a castle?"

"What!" said the woman; "go at once, the Flounder can always do that."

"No, Wife," said the man, "the Flounder has just given us the cottage. I do not like to go back so soon, it might make him angry."

"Go," said the woman, "he can do it quite easily, and will be glad to do it. Just you go to him."

The man's heart grew heavy, and he did not wish to go. He said to himself, "It is not right," and yet he went.

And when he came to the sea, the water was quite purple and dark-blue, and gray and thick, and no longer green and yellow, but it was still quiet. And he stood there and said:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,
Wills not as I'd have her will."

"Well, what does she want, now?" said the Flounder.

"Alas," said the man, half scared, "she wants to live in a great stone castle."

"Go to it, then, she is standing before the door," said the Flounder.

Then the man went home, and when he got there, he found a great stone palace, and his wife was just standing on the steps going in. She took him by the hand and said, "Come in."

So he went with her, and in the castle was a great hall paved with marble, and many servants, who flung wide the doors. The walls were all bright with beautiful hangings, and in the rooms were chairs and tables of pure gold. Crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and all the rooms and bedrooms had carpets. Food and wine of the very best were standing on all the tables, so that they nearly broke down beneath it.

Behind the house, too, there was a great courtyard, with stables for horses and cows, and the very best of carriages. There was a magnificent large garden, too, with the most beautiful flowers and fruit-trees, and a park quite half a mile long, in which were stags, dear, and hares, and everything that could be desired.

"Come," said the woman, "isn't that beautiful?"

"Yes, indeed," said the man, "now let it be; and we will live in this beautiful castle and be content."

"We will consider about that," said the woman, "and sleep upon it;" thereupon they went to bed.

Next morning, the wife awoke first. It was just daybreak, and from her bed she saw the beautiful country lying before her. Her husband was still stretching himself, so she poked him in the side with her elbow, and said, "Get up, Husband, and just peep out of the window. Look you, couldn't we be the King over all that land? Go to the Flounder, we will be the King."

"Ah, Wife," said the man, "why should we be King? I do not want to be King."

"Well," said the wife, "if you won't be King, I will. Go to the Flounder, for I will be King."

"Ah, Wife," said the man, "why do you want to be King? I do not like to say that to him."

"Why not?" said the woman; "go to him at once. I must be King!"

So the man went, and was quite unhappy because his wife wished to be King. "It is not right; it is not right," thought he. He did not wish to go, but yet he went.

And when he came to the sea, it was quite dark-gray, and the water heaved up from below, and smelt putrid. Then he went and stood by it, and said:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,
Wills not as I'd have her will."

"Well, what does she want, now?" said the Flounder.

"Alas," said the man, "she wants to be King."

"Go to her; she is King already." So the man went, and when he came to the palace, the castle had become much larger, and had a great tower and magnificent ornaments. The sentinel was standing before the door, and there were numbers of soldiers with kettledrums and trumpets. And when he went inside the house, everything was of real marble and gold, with velvet covers and great golden tassels. Then the doors of the hall were opened, and there was the Court in all its splendor, and his wife was sitting on a high throne of gold and diamonds, with a great crown of gold on her head, and a scepter of pure gold and jewels in her hand. On both sides of her, stood her maids-in-waiting in a row, each of them always one head shorter than the last.

Then he went and stood before her, and said, "Ah, Wife, and now you are King."

"Yes," said the woman, "now I am King."

So he stood and looked at her, and when he had looked at her thus for some time, he said, "And now that you are King, let all else be, we will wish for nothing more."

"Nay, Husband," said the woman, quite anxiously, "I find time pass very heavily, I can bear it no longer. Go to the Flounder — I am King, but I must be Emperor, too."

"Alas, Wife, why do you wish to be Emperor?"

"Husband," said she, "go to the Flounder. I will be Emperor."

"Alas, Wife," said the man, "He cannot make you Emperor, I may not say that to the fish. There is only one Emperor in the land. An Emperor, the Flounder cannot make you! I assure you he cannot."

"What!" said the woman, "I am the King, and you are nothing but my husband. Will you go this moment? go at once! If he can make a King, he can make an Emperor. I will be Emperor. Go instantly."

So he was forced to go. As the man went, however, he was troubled in mind, and thought to himself, "It will not end well! It will not end well! Emperor is too shameless! The Flounder will at last be tired out."

With that, he reached the sea, and the sea was quite black and thick, and began to boil up from below, so that it threw up bubbles. And such a sharp wind blew over it that it curdled, and the man was afraid. Then he went and stood by it, and said:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,
Wills not as I'd have her will."

"Well, what does she want, now?" said the Flounder.

"Alas, Flounder," said he, "my wife wants to be Emperor."

"Go to her," said the Flounder; "she is Emperor already."

So the man went, and when he got there the whole palace was made of polished marble with alabaster figures and golden ornaments. And soldiers were marching before the door blowing trumpets, and beating cymbals and drums. In the house, barons, and counts, and dukes were going about as servants. Then they opened the doors to him, which were of pure gold. And when he entered, there sat his wife on a throne, which was made of one piece of gold, and was quite two miles high; and she wore a great golden crown that was three yards high, and set with diamonds and carbuncles. In one hand she had the scepter, and in the other the imperial orb. And on both sides of her stood the yeomen of the guard in two rows, each, being smaller than the one before him, from the biggest Giant, who was two miles high, to the very smallest Dwarf, just as big as my little finger. And before it stood a number of princes and dukes.

Then the man went and stood among them, and said, "Wife, are you Emperor now?"

"Yes," said she, "now I am Emperor."

Then he stood and looked at her well, and when he had looked at her thus for some time, he said, "Ah, Wife, be content, now that you are Emperor."

"Husband," said she, "why are you standing there? Now, I am Emperor, but I will be Pope too. Go to the Flounder."

"Alas, Wife," said the man, "what will you not wish for? You cannot be Pope. There is but one in Christendom. He cannot make you Pope."

"Husband," said she, "I will be Pope. Go immediately. I must be Pope this very day."

"No, Wife," said the man, "I do not like to say that to him; that would not do, it is too much. The Flounder can't make you Pope."

"Husband," said she, "what nonsense! if He can make an Emperor he can make a Pope. Go to him directly. I am Emperor, and you are nothing but my husband. Will you go at once?"

Then he was afraid and went. But he was quite faint, and shivered and shook, and his knees and legs trembled. And a high wind blew over the land, and the clouds flew, and toward evening all grew dark, and the leaves fell from the trees, and the water rose and roared as if it were boiling, and splashed upon the shore. In the distance he saw ships which were firing guns in their sore need, pitching and tossing on the waves. And yet in the midst of the sky, there was still a small bit of blue, though on every side it was as red as in a heavy storm. So, full of despair, he went and stood in much fear, and said:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,
Wills not as I'd have her will."

"Well, what does she want now?" said the Flounder.

"Alas," said the man, "she wants to be Pope."

"Go to her then," said the Flounder; "she is Pope already."

So he went, and when he got there, he saw what seemed to be a large church surrounded by palaces. He pushed his way through the crowd. Inside, however, everything was lighted with thousands and thousands of candles, and his wife was clad in gold, and she was sitting on a much higher throne, and had three great golden crowns on, and round about her there was much churchly splendor. And on both sides of her was a row of

candles, the largest of which was as tall as the very tallest tower, down to the very smallest kitchen candle; and all the emperors and kings were on their knees before her, kissing her shoe.

"Wife," said the man, and looked attentively at her, "are you now Pope?"

"Yes," said she, "I am Pope."

So he stood and looked at her, and it was just as if he was looking at the bright sun. When he had stood looking at her thus for a short time, he said, "Ah, Wife, if you are Pope, do let well alone!"

But she looked as stiff as a post, and did not move or show any signs of life. Then said he, "Wife, now that you are Pope, be satisfied, you cannot become anything greater."

"I will consider about that," said the woman.

Thereupon they both went to bed. But she was not satisfied, and greediness let her have no sleep, for she was continually thinking what there was left for her to be.

The man slept well and soundly, for he had run about a great deal during the day. But the woman could not fall asleep at all, and flung herself from one side to the other the whole night through, thinking what more was left for her to be, but unable to call to mind anything else.

At length the sun began to rise, and when the woman saw the red of dawn, she sat up in bed and looked at it. And when, through the window, she saw the sun thus rising, she said, "Cannot I, too, order the sun and moon to rise?"

"Husband," said she, poking him in the ribs with her elbows, "wake up! go to the Flounder, for I wish to be even as God is."

The man was still half asleep, but he was so horrified that he fell out of bed. He thought he must have heard amiss, and rubbed his eyes, and said, "Alas, Wife, what are you saying?"

"Husband," said she, "if I can't order the sun and moon to rise, and have to look on and see the sun and moon rising, I can't bear it. I shall not know what it is to have another happy hour, unless I can make them rise myself." Then she looked at him so terribly that a shudder ran over him, and said, "Go at once. I wish to be like unto God."

"Alas, Wife," said the man, falling on his knees before her, "the Flounder cannot do that. He can make an Emperor and a Pope. I beseech you, go on as you are, and be Pope."

Then she fell into a rage, and her hair flew wildly about her head, and she cried, "I will not endure this, I'll not bear it any longer. Will you go?" Then he put on his trousers and ran away like a madman.

But outside a great storm was raging, and blowing so hard that he could scarcely keep his feet. Houses and trees toppled over, mountains trembled, rocks rolled into the sea, the sky was pitch black, and it thundered and lightened. And the sea came in with black waves as high as church-towers and mountains, and all with crests of white foam at the top. Then he cried, but could not hear his own words:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;
For my wife, Dame llsabil,
Wills not as I'd have her will."

"Well, what does she want, now?" said the Flounder.

"Alas," said he, "she wants to be like unto God."

"Go to her, and you will find her back again in the dirty hovel."

And there they are living at this very time.

The Elves and the Shoemaker [12]

A shoemaker, by no fault of his own, had become so poor that at last he had nothing left but leather for one pair of shoes. So in the evening, he cut out the shoes which he wished to make the next morning. And as he had a good conscience, he lay down quietly in his bed, commended himself to God, and fell asleep.

In the morning, after he had said his prayers, and was just going to sit down to work, lo! both shoes stood all finished on his table. He was astounded, and did not know what to say. He took the shoes in his hands to examine them closer, and they were so neatly made that there was not one bad stitch in them, just as if they were meant for a masterpiece.

Soon after, a buyer came in, and as the shoes pleased him well, he paid more for them than was customary. And, with the money, the shoemaker was able to purchase leather for two pairs of shoes.

He cut them out at night, and next morning was about to set to work with fresh courage; but he had no need to do so, for, when he got up, they were already made. And buyers also were not wanting, who gave him money enough to buy leather for four pairs of shoes.

The following morning, too, he found the four pairs made. And so it went on constantly, what he cut out in the evening was finished by morning, so that he soon had his honest living again, and at last became a wealthy man.

Now it befell that one evening not long before Christmas, when the man had been cutting out, he said to his wife, before

going to bed, "What think you, if we were to stay up tonight to see who it is that lends us this helping hand?"

The woman liked the idea, and lighted a candle, and then they hid themselves in a corner of the room, behind some clothes which were hanging there, and watched.

When it was midnight, two pretty tiny naked Little Men came, sat down by the shoemaker's table, took all the work which was cut out before them and began to stitch, sew, and hammer so skilfully and so quickly with their little fingers, that the shoemaker could not turn away his eyes for astonishment. They did not stop until all was done, and stood finished on the table, and then they ran quickly away.

Next morning, the woman said, "The Little Men have made us rich, and we really must show that we are grateful for it. They run about so much, and have nothing on, and must be cold. I'll tell you what I'll do. I will make them little shirts, coats, vests, and trousers, and knit both of them a pair of stockings. Do you make them two little pairs of shoes."

The man said, "I shall be very glad to do it."

And one night, when everything was ready, they laid their presents, instead of the cut-out work, all together on the table, and then concealed themselves to see how the Little Men would behave.

At midnight they came bounding in, and wanted to get to work at once. But as they did not find any leather cut out, only the pretty little articles of clothing, they were at first astonished, and then they showed intense delight. They dressed themselves with the greatest rapidity, putting the pretty clothes on, and singing:

"Now we are boys so fine to see,
Why should we longer cobblers be?"

Then they danced and skipped and leapt over chairs and benches. At last, they danced out of doors. From that time forth they came no more, but as long as the shoemaker lived all went well with him, and all his undertakings prospered.

Rumpelstiltskin [13]

Once there was a miller who was poor, but who had a beautiful daughter. Now it happened that he had to speak to the King, and in order to make himself appear important he said to him, "I have a daughter who can spin straw into gold."

The King said to the miller, "That is an art which pleases me well. If your daughter is as clever as you say, bring her tomorrow to my palace, and I will try what she can do."

And when the girl was brought to him, he took her into a room which was quite full of straw, gave her a spinning-wheel and a reel, and said, "Now set to work. If by tomorrow morning early, you have not spun this straw into gold, you must die."

Thereupon he himself locked up the room, and left her in it alone. So there sat the poor miller's daughter, and for her life could not tell what to do. She had no idea how straw could be spun into gold; and she grew more and more miserable, until at last she began to weep.

But all at once the door opened, and in came a Little Man, and said, "Good evening. Mistress Miller. Why are you crying so?"

"Alas!" answered the girl, "I have to spin straw into gold, and I do not know how to do it."

"What will you give me," said the Little Man, "if I do this for you?"

"My necklace," said the girl.

The Little Man took the necklace, seated himself in front of the wheel, and whirr, whirr, whirr, three turns, and the reel was full. Then he put another on, and whirr, whirr, whirr, three

times round, and the second was full too. And so it went on till the morning, when all the straw was spun, and all the reels were full of gold.

By daybreak, the King was there, and when he saw the gold, he was astonished and delighted, but his heart became only more greedy. He had the miller's daughter taken into another room full of straw, which was much larger, and commanded her to spin that also in one night if she valued her life.

The girl knew not how to help herself, and was crying, when the door again opened, and the Little Man appeared, and said, "What will you give me if I spin the straw into gold for you? "

"The ring on my finger," answered the girl.

The Little Man took the ring, again began to turn the wheel, and, by morning, had spun all the straw into glittering gold.

The King rejoiced beyond measure at the sight, but still he had not gold enough. He had the miller's daughter taken into a still larger room full of straw, and said, "You must spin this, too, in the course of this night. But if you succeed, you shall be my wife." "Even if she be a miller's daughter," thought he, "I could not find a richer wife in the whole world."

When the girl was alone the Little Man came again for the third time, and said, "What will you give me if I spin the straw for you this time also?"

"I have nothing left that I could give," answered the girl.

"Then promise me, if you should become Queen, your first child."

"Who knows whether that will ever happen?" thought the miller's daughter. And, not knowing how else to help herself in

this difficulty, she promised the Little Man what he wanted. And for that he once more span the straw into gold.

And when the King came in the morning, and found all as he had wished, he took her in marriage. And the pretty miller's daughter became a Queen.

A year after, she had a beautiful child, and she never gave a thought to the Little Man. But suddenly he came into her room, and said, "Now give me what you promised."

The Queen was horror-struck, and offered the Little Man all the riches of the kingdom if he would leave her the child.

But the Little Man said, "No, something that is alive, is dearer to me than all the treasures in the world."

Then the Queen began to weep and cry, so that the Little Man pitied her. "I will give you three days' time," said he; "if by that time you find out my name, then you shall keep your child."

So the Queen thought the whole night of all the names that she had ever heard, and she sent a messenger over the country to inquire, far and wide, for any other names there might be.

When the Little Man came the next day, she began with Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar, and said all the names she knew, one after another. But to everyone the Little Man said, "That is not my name."

On the second day, she had inquiries made in the neighborhood as to the names of the people there. And she repeated to the Little Man the most uncommon and curious, "Perhaps your name is Shortribs, or Sheepshanks, or Laceleg?" but he always answered, "That is not my name."

On the third day, the messenger came back again, and said, "I have not been able to find a single new name. But as I came to a high mountain at the end of the forest, where the fox and

the hare bid each other good night, there I saw a little house. Before the house a fire was burning, and round about the fire a funny Little Man was jumping. He hopped upon one leg, and shouted:

"Today I brew, tomorrow I bake,
And next, I shall the Queen's child take!
Ah! well it is, none knows the same —
That Rumpelstiltskin is my name!"

You may think how glad the Queen was when she heard the name! And when soon afterward the Little Man came in, and asked, "Now, Mistress Queen, what is my name?" she said:

"Is your name Conrad?"

"No."

"Is your name Harry?"

"No."

"Perhaps your name is Rumpelstiltskin?"

"The devil has told you that! the devil has told you that!" cried the Little Man, and in his anger he stamped his right foot so deep into the earth that his whole leg went in. And then in rage, he pulled at his left leg so hard with both hands, that he tore himself in two.

Mother Holle [14]

There was once a widow who had two daughters, one of whom was beautiful and industrious, whilst the other was ugly and lazy. But she was much fonder of the ugly and lazy one. Every day, the other, poor girl, had to sit by a well in the highway, and spin, spin till her fingers bled.

Now it happened, one day, that the shuttle was stained with her blood. She dipped it in the well to wash the stains off, and it dropped out of her hand and fell to the bottom. She began to weep, and ran to the woman, and told her of the mishap.

She scolded her hard, and was so cruel as to say, "Since you have let the shuttle fall in, you must fetch it out again."

So the girl went back to the well, and did not know what to do. Then in the anguish of her heart, she jumped into the well to get the shuttle. She lost her senses. But when she awoke and came to herself, she was in a lovely meadow, where the sun was shining and thousands of flowers were growing.

Along this meadow she went, and at length came to a baker's oven full of bread. And the bread cried:

"Oh, take me out! Take me out!
Or I shall burn! I am well baked!"

So she went up to it, and, with the bread shovel took out all the loaves one after the other.

After that, she went on till she came to a tree covered with apples, and it called to her:

"Oh, shake me! Shake me!
We apples are all ripe!"

So she shook the tree till the apples fell like rain, and went on shaking till they were all down. And when she had gathered them into a heap, she went on her way.

At last, she came to a little house out of which an Old Woman was peeping. She had such large teeth that the girl was frightened, and was about to run away.

But the Old Woman called out to her, "What are you afraid of, my Child? Stay with me. If you will do the work in my house carefully, you shall be the better for it! Only you must take care to make my bed well, and to shake it thoroughly till the feathers fly — for then it snows on earth. I am Mother Holle."

As the Old Woman spoke so kindly to her, the girl took heart, and willingly entered her service. She did everything to the Old Woman's satisfaction, and always shook her bed so hard that the feathers flew about like snowflakes. So she lived happily with her, never an angry word, and boiled or roasted meat every day.

She stayed some time with Mother Holle, then she grew sad. At first she did not know what was the matter with her, but, by and by, she found that it was homesickness. Although she was many thousand times better off here than at home, still she had a longing to be there.

At last, she said to the Old Woman, "I am longing for home. However well off I am down here, I cannot stay any longer. I must go up again to my own people."

Mother Holle said, "I am pleased that you long for your home again. You have served me so faithfully, that I myself will take you up again."

Thereupon she took her by the hand, and led her to a large door. The door was opened, and just as the girl was standing

beneath the doorway, a heavy shower of Gold-Rain fell, and all the gold stuck to her so that she was covered with it.

"You shall have that because you are so industrious," said Mother Holle. And at the same time, she gave her back the shuttle which she had let fall into the well.

Thereupon the door closed, and the girl found herself again upon the earth, not far from her mother's house.

As she went into the yard, the cock was standing by the well, and cried:

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Your Golden Girl's come back to you!"

So she went into her mother. And as she was thus covered with gold, she was welcomed by both her and the sister.

The girl told all that had happened to her. As soon as the mother heard how she had come by such great riches, she was anxious for the same good fortune to befall her ugly and lazy daughter. She had to seat herself by the well and spin. And in order that her shuttle might be stained with blood, she stuck her hand into a thorn-bush, and pricked her finger. Then she threw her shuttle into the well, and jumped in after it.

She came like the other to the beautiful meadow, and walked along the very same path. When she got to the oven, the bread cried again:

"Oh, take me out! Take me out!
Or I shall burn! I am well baked!"

But the lazy thing answered, "As if I wanted to soil myself!" and on she went.

Soon she came to the apple-tree, which cried:

"Oh, shake me! Shake me!
We apples are all ripe!"

But she answered, "I like that! One of you might fall on my head!" and on she went.

When she came to Mother Holle's house, she was not afraid, for she had already heard about her big teeth. She hired herself out immediately.

The first day, she made herself work diligently, and obeyed Mother Holle, when she told her to do anything, for she was thinking of all the gold that she would give her.

But on the second day, she began to be lazy, and on the third day still more so, for then she would not get up in the morning. Neither did she make Mother Holle's bed carefully, nor shake it so as to make the feathers fly up.

Mother Holle was soon tired of this, and gave her notice to leave. The lazy girl was willing to go, and thought that now the Gold-Rain would come. Mother Holle led her to the great doorway. But while she was standing under it, instead of gold, a big kettleful of pitch was emptied over her.

"That is the reward of your service," said Mother Holle, and shut the door.

So the lazy girl went home. She was covered with pitch, and the cock by the well, as soon as he saw her, cried out:

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Your Pitchy Girl's come back to you!"

But the pitch stuck fast to her, and could not be got off so long as she lived.

The Shoes that were Danced to Pieces [15]

There was once upon a time, a King who had twelve daughters, each one more beautiful than the other. They all slept together in one chamber, in which their beds stood side by side.

Every night, when they were in them, the King locked the door, and bolted it. But in the morning, when he unlocked the door, he saw that their shoes were worn out with dancing, and no one could find out how that had happened.

Then the King caused it to be proclaimed that whosoever could discover where they danced at night, should choose one of them for his wife and be King after his death. But that whosoever came forward and had not discovered it within three days and nights, should forfeit his life.

It was not long before a King's Son presented himself, and offered to undertake the enterprise. He was well received, and in the evening was led into a room adjoining the Princesses' sleeping-chamber. His bed was placed there, and he was to watch where they went and danced. And in order that they might do nothing secretly or go away to some other place, the door of their room was left open.

But the eyelids of the Prince grew heavy as lead, and he fell asleep.

When he awoke in the morning, all twelve had been to the dance, for their shoes were standing there with holes in the soles.

On the second and third nights it fell out just the same, and then his head was struck off without mercy. Many others came

after this and undertook the enterprise, but all forfeited their lives.

Now, it came to pass that a poor soldier, who had a wound, and could serve no longer, found himself on the road to the town where the King lived. There he met an Old Woman, who asked him where he was going.

"I hardly know myself," answered he, and added in jest, "I had half a mind to discover where the Princesses danced their shoes into holes, and thus become King."

"That is not so difficult," said the Old Woman, "you must not drink the wine which will be brought to you at night."

With that she gave him a little cloak, and said, "If you put on that, you will be invisible, and then you can steal after the twelve."

When the soldier had received this good advice, he took heart, went to the King, and announced himself as a suitor. He was as well received as the others, and royal garments were put upon him.

He was conducted that evening, at bedtime, into the outer-chamber, and as he was about to go to bed, the eldest came and brought him a cup of wine.

He lay down, but did not drink the wine.

The Twelve Princesses, in their chamber, laughed, and the eldest said, "He, too, might as well have saved his life."

With that they got up, opened wardrobes, presses, cupboards, and brought out pretty dresses; dressed themselves before the mirrors, sprang about, and rejoiced at the prospect of the dance.

Only the youngest said, "I know not how it is. You are very happy, but I feel strange. Some misfortune is certainly about to befall us."

"You are a goose, who are always frightened," said the eldest. "Have you forgotten how many King's Sons have already come here in vain? I had hardly any need to give the soldier a sleeping-draught. In any case, the clown would not have awakened."

When they were all ready, the eldest then went to her bed and tapped it.

It immediately sank into the earth; and one after the other they descended through the opening, the eldest going first.

The soldier, who had watched everything, tarried no longer, put on his little cloak, and went down last with the youngest. Half-way down the steps, he just trod a little on her dress.

She was terrified at that, and cried out, "What is that? who is pulling at my dress?"

"Don't be so silly!" said the eldest, "you have caught it on a nail."

Then they went all the way down, and when they were at the bottom, they were standing in a wonderfully pretty avenue of trees, all the leaves of which were of silver, and shone and glistened. The soldier thought, "I must carry a token away with me," and broke off a twig from one of them, on which the tree cracked with a loud report.

The youngest cried out again, "Something is wrong. Did you hear the crack?"

But the eldest said, "It is a gun fired for joy, because we have got rid of our Prince so quickly."

After that they came into an avenue where all the leaves were of gold, and lastly into a third where they were of bright diamonds. He broke off a twig from each, which made such a

crack each time that the youngest started back in terror, but the eldest still declared that they were salutes.

They went on and came to a great lake whereon stood twelve little boats, and in every boat sat a handsome Prince, all of whom were waiting for the Twelve Princesses. Each took one of them with him, but the soldier seated himself by the youngest.

Then her Prince said, "I can't tell why the boat is so much heavier today. I shall have to row with all my strength, if I am to get it across."

"What should cause that," said the youngest, "but the warm weather? I feel very warm too." On the opposite side of the lake stood a splendid, brightly-lit castle, from whence resounded the joyous music of trumpets and kettle-drums. They rowed thither, entered, and each Prince danced with the maiden he loved, but the soldier danced with them unseen. And when one of them had a cup of wine in her hand he drank it up, so that the cup was empty when she carried it to her mouth. The youngest was alarmed at this, but the eldest always made her be silent.

They danced there till three o'clock in the morning, when all the shoes were danced into holes, and they were forced to leave off. The Princes rowed them back again over the lake, and this time the soldier seated himself by the eldest. On the shore they took leave of their Princes, and promised to return the following night.

When they reached the stairs, the soldier ran on in front and lay down in his bed, and when the Twelve Princesses had come up slowly and wearily, he was already snoring so loudly that they could all hear him, and they said, "So far as he is concerned, we are safe."

They took off their beautiful dresses, laid them away, put the worn-out shoes under the bed, and lay down. Next morning, the soldier was resolved not to speak, but to watch the wonderful goings on, and that night again went with them. Then everything was done just as it had been done the first time, and they danced until their shoes were worn to pieces. But the third time, he took a cup away with him as a token.

When the hour had arrived for him to give his answer, he took the three twigs and the cup, and went to the King, but the Twelve Princesses stood behind the door, and listened for what he was going to say.

When the King put the question, "Where have my Twelve Daughters danced their shoes to pieces in the night?" he answered, "In an underground castle with Twelve Princes," and related how it had come to pass, and brought out the tokens.

The King then summoned his daughters, and asked them if the soldier had told the truth, and when they saw that they were betrayed, and that falsehood would be of no avail, they were obliged to confess all.

Thereupon the King asked which of them he would have for his wife?

He answered, "I am no longer young, so give me the eldest."

Then the wedding was celebrated on the self-same day, and the kingdom was promised him after the King's death. But the Princes were bewitched for as many days more as they had danced nights with the Twelve.

The Goose-Girl at the Well [16]

The Old Witch

There was once upon a time, a very old woman, who lived with her flock of geese in a waste place among the mountains, and there had a little house. The waste was surrounded by a large forest, and every morning the Old Woman took her crutch and hobbled into it.

There, however, the dame was quite active, more so than anyone would have thought, considering her age, and collected grass for her geese, picked all the wild fruit she could reach, and carried everything home on her back. Anyone would have thought that the heavy load would have weighed her to the ground, but she always brought it safely home.

If anyone met her, she greeted him quite courteously. "Good day, dear Countryman, it is a fine day. Ah! you wonder that I should drag grass about, but everyone must take his burden on his back."

Nevertheless, people did not like to meet her if they could help it, and took by preference a roundabout way. And when a father with his boys passed her, he whispered to them, "Beware of the Old Woman. She has claws beneath her gloves. She is a Witch."

One morning, a handsome young man was going through the forest. The sun shone bright, the birds sang, a cool breeze crept through the leaves, and he was full of joy and gladness. He had as yet met no one, when he suddenly perceived the old Witch kneeling on the ground cutting grass with a sickle. She

had already thrust a whole load into her cloth, and near it stood two baskets, which were filled with wild apples and pears.

"But, good little Mother," said he, "how can you carry all that away?"

"I must carry it, dear Sir," answered she; "rich folk's children have no need to do such things, but with the peasant folk the saying goes, "Don't look behind you, you will only see how crooked your back is!"

"Will you help me?" she said, as he remained standing by her. "You have still a straight back and young legs, it would be a trifle to you. Besides, my house is not so very far from here. It stands there on the heath behind the hill. How soon you would bound up thither!"

The young man took compassion on the Old Woman. "My father is certainly no peasant," replied he, "but a rich Count. Nevertheless, that you may see it is not only peasants who can carry things, I will take your bundle."

"If you will try it," said she, "I shall be very glad. You will certainly have to walk for an hour, but what will that signify to you? Only you must carry the apples and pears as well."

It now seemed to the young man just a little serious, when he heard of an hour's walk, but the Old Woman would not let him off, packed the bundle on his back, and hung the two baskets on his arm. "See, it is quite light," said she.

"No, it is not light," answered the Count, and pulled a rueful face. "Verily, the bundle weighs as heavily as if it were full of cobblestones, and the apples and pears are as heavy as lead! I can scarcely breathe."

He had a mind to put everything down again, but the Old Woman would not allow it. "Just look," said she mockingly, "the young gentleman will not carry what I, an old woman,

have so often dragged along! You are ready with fine words, but when it comes to being in earnest, you want to take to your heels. Why are you standing loitering there?" she continued. "Step out. No one will take the bundle off again."

As long as he walked on level ground, it was still bearable, but when they came to the hill and had to climb, and the stones rolled down under his feet as if they were alive, it was beyond his strength. The drops of perspiration stood on his forehead, and ran, hot and cold, down his back.

"Dame," said he, "I can go no farther. I want to rest a little."

"Not here," answered the Old Woman, "when we have arrived at our journey's end, you can rest. But now you must go forward. Who knows what good it may do you? "

"Old woman, you are shameless!" said the Count, and tried to throw off the bundle, but he labored in vain. It stuck as fast to his back, as if it grew there. He turned and twisted, but he could not get rid of it.

The Old Woman laughed at this, and sprang about quite delighted on her crutch. "Don't get angry, dear Sir," said she, "you are growing as red in the face as a turkey-cock! Carry your bundle patiently. I will give you a good present when we get home."

What could he do? He was obliged to submit to his fate, and crawl along patiently behind the Old Woman. She seemed to grow more and more nimble, and his burden still heavier. All at once, she made a spring, jumped on to the bundle and seated herself on the top of it. And however withered she might be, she was yet heavier than the stoutest country lass.

The youth's knees trembled, but when he did not go on, the Old Woman hit him about the legs with a switch and with stinging-nettles. Groaning continually, he climbed the

mountain, and at length reached the Old Woman's house, when he was just about to drop.

When the geese perceived the Old Woman, they flapped their wings, stretched out their necks, ran to meet her, cackling all the while. Behind the flock walked, stick in hand, an old wench, strong and big, but ugly as night. "Good Mother," said she to the Old Woman, "has anything happened to you, you have stayed away so long? "

"By no means, my dear Daughter," answered she, "I have met with nothing bad, but, on the contrary, with this kind gentleman, who has carried my burden for me. Only think, he even took me on his back when I was tired. The way, too, has not seemed long to us. We have been merry, and have been cracking jokes with each other all the time."

At last the Old Woman slid down, took the bundle off the young man's back, and the baskets from his arm, looked at him quite kindly, and said, "Now seat yourself on the bench before the door, and rest. You have fairly earned your wages, and they shall not be wanting."

Then she said to the goose-girl, "Go into the house, my little Daughter, it is not becoming for you to be alone with a young gentleman. One must not pour oil on to the fire, he might fall in love with you."

The Count knew not whether to laugh or to cry. "Such a sweetheart as that," thought he, "could not touch my heart, even if she were thirty years younger."

In the meantime, the Old Woman stroked and fondled her geese as if they were children, and then went into the house with her daughter. The youth lay down on the bench, under a wild apple-tree. The air was warm and mild. On all sides stretched a green meadow, which was set with cowslips, wild

thyme, and a thousand other flowers. Through the midst of it rippled a clear brook on which the sun sparkled, and the white geese went walking backward and forward, or paddled in the water.

"It is quite delightful here," said he, "but I am so tired that I cannot keep my eyes open. I will sleep a little. If only a gust of wind does not come and blow my legs off my body, for they are as brittle as tinder."

When he had slept a little while, the Old Woman came and shook him till he awoke. "Sit up," said she, "you cannot stay here. I have certainly treated you badly, still it has not cost you your life. Of money and land you have no need, here is something else for you."

Thereupon she thrust a little book into his hand, which was cut out of a single emerald. "Take great care of it," said she, "it will bring you good fortune."

The Count sprang up, and as he felt that he was quite fresh, and had recovered his vigor, he thanked the Old Woman for her present, and set off without even once looking back at the beautiful daughter. When he was already some way off, he still heard in the distance the noisy cry of the geese.

For three days, the Count had to wander in the wilderness before he could find his way out. He then reached a large town. As no one knew him, he was led into the royal palace, where the King and Queen were sitting on their throne. The Count fell on one knee, drew the emerald book out of his pocket, and laid it at the Queen's feet. She bade him rise and hand her the little book.

Hardly, however, had she opened it, and looked therein, than she fell as if dead to the ground. The Count was seized by the King's servants, and was being led to prison, when the

Queen opened her eyes, and ordered them to release him, and everyone was to go out, as she wished to speak with him in private.

When the Queen was alone, she began to weep bitterly, and said, "Of what use to me are the splendors and honors with which I am surrounded! Every morning I awake in pain and sorrow. I had three daughters, the youngest of whom was so beautiful, that the whole world looked on her as a wonder.

She was as white as snow, as rosy as apple-blossoms, and her hair as radiant as sunbeams. When she cried, not tears fell from her eyes, but pearls and jewels only.

"When she was fifteen years old, the King summoned all three sisters to come before his throne. You should have seen how all the people gazed when the youngest entered. It was just as if the sun were rising! Then the King spoke, 'My Daughters, I know not when my last hour may arrive. I will today decide what each shall receive at my death. You all love me, but the one of you who loves me best, shall fare the best.'

"Each of them said she loved him best. 'Can you not express to me,' said the King, 'how much you do love me, and thus I shall see what you mean?'

"The eldest spoke. 'I love my Father as dearly as the sweetest sugar.' The second, 'I love my Father as dearly as my prettiest dress.' But the youngest was silent.

"Then the father said, 'And you, my dearest Child, how much do you love me?' 'I do not know, and can compare my love with nothing.' But her father insisted that she should name something. So she said at last, 'The best food does not please me without salt, therefore I love my Father like salt.'

"When the King heard that, he fell into a passion and said, 'If you love me like salt, your love shall also be repaid with salt.'

"Then he divided the kingdom between the two elder, but caused a sack of salt to be bound on the back of the youngest, and two servants had to lead her forth into the wild forest.

"We all begged and prayed for her," said the Queen, "but the King's anger was not to be appeased. How she cried when she had to leave us! The whole road was strewn with the pearls which flowed from her eyes.

"The King soon afterward repented of his great severity, and had the whole forest searched for the poor child, but no one could find her. When I think that the wild beasts have devoured her, I know not how to contain myself for sorrow. Many a time I console myself with the hope that she is still alive, and may have hidden herself in a cave, or has found shelter with compassionate people.

"But picture to yourself, when I opened your little emerald book, a pearl lay therein, of exactly the same kind as those which used to fall from my daughter's eyes. And then you can also imagine how the sight of it stirred my heart! You must tell me how you came by that pearl."

The Count told her that he had received it from the Old Woman in the forest, who had appeared very strange to him, and must be a Witch. But he had neither seen nor heard anything of the Queen's child. The King and the Queen resolved to seek out the Old Woman. They thought that there where the pearl had been, they would obtain news of their daughter.

The Gray Mask

The Old Woman was sitting in that lonely place at her spinning-wheel, spinning. It was already dusk, and a log which was burning on the hearth gave a scanty light. All at once, there

was a noise outside, the geese were coming home from the pasture, and uttering their hoarse cries. Soon afterward the daughter entered. But the Old Woman scarcely thanked her, and only shook her head a little. The daughter sat down beside her, took her spinning-wheel, and twisted the threads as nimbly as a young girl. Thus they both sat for two hours, and exchanged never a word.

At last, something rustled at the window, and two fiery eyes peered in. It was an old night-owl, which cried, "Uhu!" three times.

The Old Woman looked up just a little, then she said, "Now, my little Daughter, it is time for you to go out and do your work."

She rose and went out, and where did she go? Over the meadows ever onward into the valley. At last, she came to a well, with three old oak-trees standing beside it. Meanwhile the moon had risen large and round over the mountain, and it was so light that one could have found a needle.

She removed a skin which covered her face, then bent down to the well, and began to wash herself. When she had finished, she dipped the skin also in the water, and laid it on the meadow, so that it should bleach in the moonlight, and dry again.

But how the maiden was changed! Such a change as that was never seen before! When the gray mask fell off, her golden hair broke forth like sunbeams, and spread about like a mantle over her whole form. Her eyes shone out as brightly as the stars in heaven, and her cheeks bloomed a soft red like apple-blossoms.

But the fair maiden was sad. She sat down and wept bitterly. One tear after another forced itself out of her eyes, and

rolled through her long hair to the ground. There she sat, and would have remained sitting a long time, if there had not been a rustling and cracking in the boughs of the neighboring tree. She sprang up like a roe which has been overtaken by the shot of the hunter.

Just then the moon was obscured by a dark cloud, and in an instant the maiden had slipped on the old skin and vanished, as does a light blown out by the wind.

She ran back home, trembling like an aspen-leaf. The Old Woman was standing on the threshold, and the maiden was about to relate what had befallen her, but the Old Woman laughed kindly, and said, "I already know it."

She led her into the room and lighted a new log. She did not, however, sit down to her spinning again, but fetched a broom and began to sweep and scour. "All must be clean and sweet," she said to the maiden.

"But, Mother," said the maiden, "why do you begin work at so late an hour? What do you expect? "

"Do you know then what time it is?" asked the Old Woman.

"Not yet midnight," answered the maiden, "but already past eleven o'clock."

"Do you not remember," continued the Old Woman, "that it is three years today since you came to me? Your time is up, we can no longer remain together."

The maiden was terrified, and said, "Alas! dear Mother, will you cast me off? Where shall I go? I have no friends, and no home to which I can go. I have always done as you bade me, and you have always been satisfied with me. Do not send me away."

The Old Woman would not tell the maiden what lay before her. "My stay here is over," she said to her, "but when I depart, house and parlor must be clean: therefore do not hinder me in my work. Have no care for yourself. You shall find a roof to shelter you, and the wages which I will give you shall also content you."

"But tell me what is about to happen," the maiden continued to entreat.

"I tell you again, do not hinder me in my work. Do not say a word more, go to your chamber, take the skin off your face, and put on the silken gown which you had on when you came to me, and then wait in your chamber until I call you."

The Goose-Girl

But I must once more tell of the King and Queen, who had journeyed forth with the Count in order to seek out the Old Woman in the wilderness. The Count had strayed away from them in the wood by night, and had to walk onward alone.

Next day, it seemed to him that he was on the right track. He still went forward, until darkness came on, then he climbed a tree, intending to pass the night there, for he feared that he might lose his way. When the moon illumined the surrounding country he perceived a figure coming down the mountain. She had no stick in her hand, yet he could see that it was the goose-girl, whom he had seen before in the house of the Old Woman.

"Oho," cried he, "there she comes, and if I once get hold of one of the Witches, the other shall not escape me!"

But how astonished he was, when she went to the well, took off the skin and washed herself. Her golden hair fell down all about her, and she was more beautiful than any one whom he had ever seen in the whole world. He hardly dared to

breathe, but stretched his head as far forward through the leaves as he dared, and stared at her. Either he bent over too far, or whatever the cause might be, the bough suddenly cracked, and that very moment the maiden slipped into the skin, sprang away like a roe, and as the moon was suddenly covered, disappeared from his eyes.

Hardly had she disappeared, before the Count descended from the tree, and hastened after her with nimble steps. He had not gone far before he saw, in the twilight, two figures coming over the meadow. It was the King and Queen, who had perceived from a distance the light shining in the Old Woman's little house, and were going to it.

The Count told them what wonderful thing he had seen by the well, and they did not doubt but that she was their lost daughter. They walked onward full of joy, and soon came to the little house. The geese were sitting all round it, and had thrust their heads under their wings and were sleeping, and not one of them moved.

The King and Queen looked in at the window. The Old Woman was sitting there quietly spinning, nodding her head and never looking round. The room was perfectly clean, as if the little Mist Men, who carry no dust on their feet, lived there. Their daughter, however, they did not see. They gazed at all this for a long time. At last they took heart, and knocked softly at the window.

The Old Woman appeared to have been expecting them. She rose, and called out quite kindly, "Come in,— I know you already."

When they had entered the room, the Old Woman said, "You might have spared yourself the long walk, if you had not three years ago unjustly driven away your child, who is so good

and lovable. No harm has come to her. For three years she has had to tend the geese. With them she has learnt no evil, but has preserved her purity of heart. You, however, have been sufficiently punished by the misery in which you have lived."

Then she went to the chamber and called, "Come out, my little Daughter."

Thereupon the door opened, and the Princess stepped out in her silken garments, with her golden hair and her shining eyes, and it was as if an Angel from Heaven had entered.

She went up to her father and mother, fell on their necks and kissed them. There was no help for it, they all had to weep for joy. The young Count stood near them; and when she perceived him, she became as red in the face as a moss-rose, she herself did not know why.

The King said, "My dear Child, I have given away my kingdom, what shall I give thee? "

"She needs nothing," said the Old Woman. "I give her the tears that she has wept on your account. They are precious pearls, finer than those that are found in the sea, and worth more than your whole kingdom, and I give her my little house as payment for her services."

When the Old Woman had said that, she disappeared from their sight. The walls rattled a little, and when the King and Queen looked round, the little house had changed into a splendid palace, a royal table had been spread, and the servants were running hither and thither.

The Wild Swans [17]

Far away in the land to which the swallows fly when it is winter, dwelt a king who had eleven sons, and one daughter named Eliza. The eleven brothers were princes, and each went to school with a star on his breast and a sword by his side. They wrote with diamond pencils on gold slates, and learned their lessons so quickly and read so easily that everyone might know they were princes. Their sister Eliza sat on a little stool of plate glass, and had a book full of pictures which had cost as much as half a kingdom. Oh, these children were indeed happy, but they were not to remain so always. Their father, who was King of the country, married a very wicked Queen who did not love the poor children at all. They knew this from the very first day after the wedding. In the palace there were great festivities, and the children played at receiving company; but instead of having, as usual, all the cakes and apples that were left, she gave them some sand in a teacup and told them to pretend it was cake. The week after she sent little Eliza into the country to a peasant and his wife, and then she told the King so many untrue things about the young princes that he gave himself no more trouble respecting them.

"Go out into the world and get your own living," said the Queen. "Fly like great birds who have no voice." But she could not make them ugly as she wished, for they were turned into eleven beautiful wild swans. Then, with a strange cry, they flew through the windows of the palace, over the park, to the forest beyond. It was yet early morning when they passed the peasant's cottage, where their sister Eliza lay asleep in her

room. They hovered over the roof, twisted their long necks, and flapped their wings; but no one heard them or saw them, so they were at last obliged to fly away, high up in the clouds; and over the wide world they flew till they came to a thick, dark wood, which stretched far away to the seashore. Poor little Eliza was alone in her room playing with a green leaf, for she had no other playthings, and she pierced a hole through the leaf and looked through it at the sun, and it was as if she saw her brothers' clear eyes, and when the warm sun shone on her cheeks she thought of all the kisses they had given her. One day passed just like another; sometimes the winds rustled through the leaves of the rosebush, and would whisper to the roses, "Who can be more beautiful than you?" But the roses would shake their heads and say, "Eliza is." And when the old woman sat at the cottage door on Sunday and read her hymn book, the wind would flutter the leaves and say to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" and then the hymn book would answer, "Eliza." And the roses and the hymn book told the real truth. At fifteen she returned home, but when the Queen saw how beautiful she was, she became full of spite and hatred toward her. Willingly would she have turned her into a swan, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do so yet, because the King wished to see his daughter. Early one morning the Queen went into the bathroom; it was built of marble, and had soft cushions trimmed with the most beautiful tapestry. She took three toads with her and kissed them, and said to one: "When Eliza comes to the bath, seat yourself upon her head, that she may become as stupid as you are." Then she said to another: "Place yourself on her forehead, that she may become as ugly as you are, and that her father may not know her." "Rest on her heart," she whispered to the third, "then she will have evil inclinations, and

suffer in consequence." So she put the toads into clear water, and they turned green immediately. She next called Eliza and helped her to undress and get into the bath. As Eliza dipped her head under the water one of the toads sat on her hair, a second on her forehead, and a third on her breast, but she did not seem to notice them, and when she rose out of the water there were three red poppies floating upon it. Had not the creatures been venomous or been kissed by the witch they would have been changed into red roses. At all events they became flowers, because they had rested on Eliza's head, and on her heart. She was too good and too innocent for witchcraft to have any power over her. When the wicked Queen saw this, she rubbed her face with walnut juice, so that she was quite brown; then she tangled her beautiful hair and smeared it with disgusting ointment, till it was quite impossible to recognize the beautiful Eliza.

When her father saw her, he was much shocked and declared she was not his daughter. No one but the watchdog and the swallows knew her, and they were only dumb animals and could say nothing. Then poor Eliza wept, and thought of her eleven brothers who were all away. Sorrowfully she stole away from the palace, and walked the whole day over fields and moors till she came to the great forest. She knew not in what direction to go; but she was so unhappy and longed so for her brothers who had been, like herself, driven out into the world, that she was determined to seek them. She had been but a short time in the wood when night came on, and she quite lost the path; so she laid herself down on the soft moss, offered up her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the stump of a tree. All nature was still, and the soft, mild air fanned her forehead. The light of hundreds of glowworms shone amidst the grass

and the moss, like green fire; and if she touched a twig with her hand ever so lightly, the brilliant fireflies fell down around her like shooting stars.

All night long she dreamed of her brothers. She and they were children again playing together. She saw them writing with their diamond pencils on golden slates, while she looked at the beautiful picture book which had cost half a kingdom. They were not writing lines and letters, as they used to do, but descriptions of the noble deeds they had performed, and of all they had discovered and seen. In the picture book, too, everything was living. The birds sang, and the people came out of the book and spoke to Eliza and her brothers; but, as the leaves turned over they darted back again to their places, that all might be in order.

When she awoke the sun was high in the heavens, yet she could scarcely see him, for the lofty trees spread their branches thickly over her head, and his beams were glancing through the leaves here and there like a golden mist. There was a sweet fragrance from the fresh verdure, and the birds almost perched upon her shoulders. She heard water rippling from a number of springs, all flowing into a lake with golden sands. Bushes grew thickly around the lake, and at one spot an opening had been made by a deer, through which Eliza went down to the water. The lake was so clear that, had not the wind rustled the branches of the trees and the bushes so that they moved, they would have appeared as if painted in the depths of the lake, for every leaf was reflected in the water, whether it stood in the shade or the sunshine. As soon as Eliza saw her own face, she was quite terrified at finding it so brown and ugly; but when she wetted her little hand and rubbed her eyes and forehead the white skin gleamed forth once more; and, after she had

undressed and dipped herself in the fresh water, a more beautiful king's daughter could not be found in the wide world. As soon as she had dressed herself again, and braided her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring and drank some water out of the hollow of her hand. Then she wandered far into the forest, not knowing whither she went. She thought of her brothers, and felt sure that God would not forsake her. It is God who makes the wild apples grow in the wood to satisfy the hungry, and He now led her to one of these trees, which was so loaded with fruit that the boughs bent beneath its weight. Here she held her noonday repast, placed props under the boughs, and then went into the gloomiest depths of the forest. It was so still that she could hear the sound of her own footsteps, as well as the rustling of every withered leaf which she crushed under her feet. Not a bird was to be seen, not a sunbeam could penetrate through the large dark boughs of the trees. The lofty trunks stood so close together that when she looked before her it seemed as if she were enclosed within trelliswork. Such solitude she had never known before. The night was very dark. Not a single glowworm glittered in the moss.

Sorrowfully she laid herself down to sleep, and after a while it seemed to her as if the branches of the trees parted over her head, and that the mild eyes of angels looked down upon her from heaven. When she awoke in the morning, she knew not whether she had dreamed this or if it had really been so. Then she continued her wandering, but she had not gone many steps forward when she met an old woman with berries in her basket, and begged a few to eat. Then Eliza asked her if she had seen eleven princes riding through the forest.

"No," replied the old woman, "but I saw yesterday eleven swans, with gold crowns on their heads, swimming on the river

close by." Then she led Eliza a little distance farther to a sloping bank, at the foot of which wound a little stream. The trees on its banks stretched their long leafy branches across the water toward each other, and where the growth prevented them from meeting naturally, the roots had torn themselves away from the ground, so that the branches might mingle their foliage as they hung over the stream. Eliza bade the old woman farewell and walked by the flowing river till she reached the shore of the open sea. And there before the young maiden's eyes lay the glorious ocean, but not a sail appeared on its surface; not even a boat could be seen. How was she to go farther? She noticed how the countless pebbles on the seashore had been smoothed and rounded by the action of the water. Glass, iron, stones, everything that lay there mingled together, had taken its shape from the same power, and felt as smooth, or even smoother, than her own delicate hand. "The water rolls on without weariness," she said, "till all that is hard becomes smooth; so will I be unwearied in my task. Thanks for your lessons, bright rolling waves; my heart tells me you will lead me to my dear brothers." On the foam-covered seaweeds lay eleven white swan feathers, which she gathered up and placed together. Drops of water lay upon them; whether they were dewdrops or tears no one could say. Lonely as it was on the seashore she did not observe it, for the ever-moving sea showed more changes in a few hours than the most varying lake could produce during a whole year. If a black heavy cloud arose, it was as if the sea said, "I can look dark and angry too"; and then the wind blew, and the waves turned to white foam as they rolled. When the wind slept and the clouds glowed with the red sunlight, then the sea looked like a rose leaf. But however quietly its white

glassy surface rested, there was still a motion on the shore, as its waves rose and fell like the breast of a sleeping child.

When the sun was about to set, Eliza saw eleven white swans with golden crowns on their heads flying toward the land, one behind the other, like a long white ribbon. Then Eliza went down the slope from the shore and hid herself behind the bushes. The swans alighted quite close to her, and flapped their great white wings. As soon as the sun had disappeared under the water, the feathers of the swans fell off, and eleven beautiful princes, Eliza's brothers, stood near her. She uttered a loud cry, for, although they were very much changed, she knew them immediately. She sprang into their arms and called them each by name. Then, how happy the princes were at meeting their little sister again! for they recognized her, although she had grown so tall and beautiful. They laughed and they wept, and very soon understood how wickedly their mother had acted to them all. "We brothers," said the eldest, "fly about as wild swans so long as the sun is in the sky, but as soon as it sinks behind the hills, we recover our human shape. Therefore must we always be near a resting place for our feet before sunset; for if we should be flying toward the clouds at the time we recovered our natural form as men, we should fall deep into the sea. We do not dwell here, but in a land just as fair, that lies beyond the ocean, which we have to cross for a long distance; there is no island in our passage upon which we could pass the night; nothing but a little rock rising out of the sea, upon which we can scarcely stand with safety, even closely crowded together. If the sea is rough, the foam dashes over us, yet we thank God even for this rock; we have passed whole nights upon it, or we should never have reached our beloved fatherland, for our flight across the sea occupies two of the longest days in the

year. We have permission to visit our home once in every year and to remain eleven days, during which we fly across the forest to look once more at the palace where our father dwells and where we were born, and at the church where our mother lies buried.

Here it seems as if the very trees and bushes were related to us. The wild horses leap over the plains as we have seen them in our childhood. The charcoal burners sing the old songs to which we have danced as children. This is our fatherland to which we are drawn by loving ties; and here we have found you, our dear little sister. Two days longer we can remain here, and then must we fly away to a beautiful land which is not our home; and how can we take you with us? We have neither ship nor boat."

"How can I break this spell?" said their sister. And then she talked about it nearly the whole night, only slumbering for a few hours. Eliza was awakened by the rustling of the swans' wings as they soared above. Her brothers were again changed to swans, and they flew in circles wider and wider till they were far away; but one of them, the youngest swan, remained behind and laid his head in his sister's lap, while she stroked his wings, and they remained together the whole day. Toward evening the rest came back, and as the sun went down they resumed their natural forms. "Tomorrow," said one, "we shall fly away, not to return again till a whole year has passed. But we cannot leave you here. Have you courage to go with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you through the wood; and will not all our wings be strong enough to fly with you over the sea?"

"Yes, take me with you," said Eliza. Then they spent the whole night in weaving a net with the pliant willow and rushes. It was very large and strong. Eliza laid herself down on the net,

and when the sun rose and her brothers again became wild swans, they took up the net with their beaks and flew up to the clouds with their dear sister, who still slept. The sunbeams fell on her face, therefore one of the swans soared over her head, so that his broad wing might shade her. They were far from the land when Eliza woke. She thought she must still be dreaming, it seemed so strange to her to feel herself being carried so high in the air over the sea. By her side lay a branch full of beautiful ripe berries and a bundle of sweet roots; the youngest of her brothers had gathered them for her, and placed them by her side. She smiled her thanks to him; she knew it was the same who had hovered over her to shade her with his wings. They were now so high that a large ship beneath them looked like a white sea gull skimming the waves.

A great cloud floating behind them appeared like a vast mountain, and upon it Eliza saw her own shadow and those of the eleven swans, looking gigantic in size. Altogether it formed a more beautiful picture than she had ever seen; but as the sun rose higher, and the clouds were left behind, the shadowy picture vanished away. Onward the whole day they flew through the air like a winged arrow, yet more slowly than usual, for they had their sister to carry. The weather seemed inclined to be stormy, and Eliza watched the sinking sun with great anxiety, for the little rock in the ocean was not yet in sight. It appeared to her as if the swans were making great efforts with their wings. Alas! she was the cause of their not advancing more quickly. When the sun set they would change to men, fall into the sea, and be drowned. Then she offered a prayer from her inmost heart, but still no appearance of the rock.

Dark clouds came nearer, the gusts of wind told of a coming storm, while from a thick, heavy mass of clouds the

lightning burst forth flash after flash. The sun had reached the edge of the sea, when the swans darted down so swiftly that Eliza's head trembled; she believed they were falling, but they again soared onward. Presently she caught sight of the rock just below them, and by this time the sun was half hidden by the waves. The rock did not appear larger than a seal's head thrust out of the water. They sank so rapidly that at the moment their feet touched the rock the sun shone only like a star, and at last disappeared like the last spark in a piece of burned paper. Then she saw her brothers standing closely around her with their arms linked together. There was but just room enough for them, and not the smallest space to spare.

The sea dashed against the rock and covered them with spray. The heavens were lighted up with continual flashes, and peal after peal of thunder rolled. But the sister and brothers sat holding each other's hands and singing hymns, from which they gained hope and courage. In the early dawn the air became calm and still, and at sunrise the swans flew away from the rock with Eliza. The sea was still rough, and from their high position in the air the white foam on the dark green waves looked like millions of swans swimming on the water. As the sun rose higher Eliza saw before her, floating in the air, a range of mountains with shining masses of ice on their summits. In the center rose a castle apparently a mile long, with rows of columns rising one above another, while around it palm trees waved and flowers bloomed as large as mill wheels.

She asked if this was the land to which they were hastening. The swans shook their heads, for what she beheld were the beautiful ever-changing cloud palaces of the "Fata Morgana," into which no mortal can enter. Eliza was still gazing at the scene when mountains, forests, and castles melted away, and

twenty stately churches rose in their stead, with high towers and pointed Gothic windows. Eliza even fancied she could hear the tones of the organ, but it was the music of the murmuring sea which she heard. As they drew nearer to the churches, these also changed into a fleet of ships, which seemed to be sailing beneath her; but as she looked again, she found it was only a sea mist gliding over the ocean. So there continued to pass before her eyes a constant change of scene, till at last she saw the real land to which they were bound, with its blue mountains, its cedar forests, and its cities and palaces. Long before the sun went down she sat on a rock in front of a large cave, on the floor of which the overgrown yet delicate green creeping plants looked like an embroidered carpet. "Now we shall expect to hear what you dream of tonight," said the youngest brother, as he showed his sister her bedroom.

"Heaven grant that I may dream how to save you!" she replied. And this thought took such hold upon her mind that she prayed earnestly to God for help, and even in her sleep she continued to pray. Then it appeared to her as if she were flying high in the air, toward the cloudy palace of the "Fata Morgana," and a fairy came out to meet her, radiant and beautiful in appearance, and yet very much like the old woman who had given her berries in the wood, and who had told her of the swans with golden crowns on their heads. "Your brothers can be released," said she, "if you have only courage and perseverance. True, water is softer than your own delicate hands, and yet it polishes stones into shapes; it feels no pain as your fingers would feel, it has no soul, and cannot suffer such agony and torment as you will have to endure. Do you see the stinging nettle which I hold in my hand? Quantities of the same sort grow around the cave in which you sleep, but none will be

of any use to you unless they grow upon the graves in a churchyard. These you must gather even while they burn blisters on your hands. Break them to pieces with your hands and feet, and they will become flax, from which you must spin and weave eleven coats with long sleeves; if these are then thrown over the eleven swans the spell will be broken. But remember, that from the moment you commence your task until it is finished, even should it occupy years of your life, you must not speak. The first word you utter will pierce through the hearts of your brothers like a deadly dagger. Their lives hang upon your tongue. Remember all I have told you." And as she finished speaking, she touched her hand lightly with the nettle, and a pain as of burning fire awoke Eliza.

It was broad daylight, and close by where she had been sleeping lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell on her knees and offered her thanks to God. Then she went forth from the cave to begin her work with her delicate hands. She groped in among the ugly nettles, which burned great blisters on her hands and arms, but she determined to bear it gladly if she could only release her dear brothers. So she bruised the nettles with her bare feet and spun the flax. At sunset her brothers returned and were very much frightened when they found her dumb. They believed it to be some new sorcery of their wicked stepmother. But when they saw her hands they understood what she was doing on their behalf, and the youngest brother wept, and where his tears fell the pain ceased and the burning blisters vanished. She kept at her work all night, for she could not rest till she had released her dear brothers. During the whole of the following day, while her brothers were absent, she sat in solitude, but never before had the time flown so quickly. One coat was already finished and

she had begun the second when she heard a huntsman's horn and was struck with fear. The sound came nearer and nearer; she heard the dogs barking, and fled with terror into the cave. She hastily bound together the nettles she had gathered into a bundle and sat upon them. Immediately a great dog came bounding toward her out of the ravine, and then another and another; they barked loudly, ran back, and then came again. In a very few minutes all the huntsmen stood before the cave, and the handsomest of them was the King of the country. He advanced toward her, for he had never seen a more beautiful maiden.

"How did you come here, my sweet child?" he asked. But Eliza shook her head. She dared not speak, at the cost of her brothers' lives. And she hid her hands under her apron, so that the King might not see how she must be suffering. "Come with me," he said; "here you cannot remain. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in silk and velvet, I will place a golden crown on your head, and you shall dwell and rule and make your home in my richest castle." And then he lifted her on his horse. She wept and wrung her hands, but the King said: "I wish only your happiness. A time will come when you will thank me for this." And then he galloped away over the mountains, holding her before him on his horse, and the hunters followed behind them. As the sun went down they approached a fair, royal city, with churches and cupolas. On arriving at the castle the King led her into marble halls where large fountains played, and where the walls and the ceilings were covered with rich paintings. But she had no eyes for all these glorious sights; she could only mourn and weep. Patiently she allowed the women to array her in royal robes, to weave pearls in her hair, and draw soft gloves over her blistered

fingers. As she stood before them in all her rich dress, she looked so dazzlingly beautiful that the court bowed low in her presence. Then the King declared his intention of making her his bride, but the archbishop shook his head, and whispered that the fair young maiden was only a witch who had blinded the King's eyes and enchanted his heart. But the King would not listen to this; he ordered the music to sound, the daintiest dishes to be served, and the loveliest maidens to dance. Afterwards he led her through fragrant gardens and lofty halls, but not a smile appeared on her lips or sparkled in her eyes. She looked the very picture of grief. Then the King opened the door of a little chamber in which she was to sleep; it was adorned with rich green tapestry, and resembled the cave in which he had found her. On the floor lay the bundle of flax which she had spun from the nettles, and under the ceiling hung the coat she had made. These things had been brought away from the cave as curiosities by one of the huntsmen.

"Here you can dream yourself back again in the old home in the cave," said the King; "here is the work with which you employed yourself. It will amuse you now in the midst of all this splendor to think of that time."

When Eliza saw all these things which lay so near her heart, a smile played around her mouth and the crimson blood rushed to her cheeks. She thought of her brothers, and their release made her so joyful that she kissed the King's hand. Then he pressed her to his heart. Very soon the joyous church bells announced the marriage feast, and that the beautiful dumb girl out of the wood was to be made Queen of the country.

Then the archbishop whispered wicked words in the King's ear, but they did not sink into his heart. The marriage

was still to take place, and the archbishop himself had to place the crown on the bride's head; in his wicked spite he pressed the narrow circlet so tightly on her forehead that it caused her pain. But a heavier weight encircled her heart — sorrow for her brothers. She felt not bodily pain. Her mouth was closed; a single word would cost her brothers their lives. But she loved the kind, handsome King, who did everything to make her happy, more and more each day; she loved him with her whole heart, and her eyes beamed with the love she dared not speak. Oh, if she had only been able to confide in him and tell him of her grief! But dumb she must remain till her task was finished. Therefore at night she crept away into her little chamber, which had been decked out to look like the cave, and quickly wove one coat after another. But when she began the seventh she found she had no more flax. She knew that the nettles she wanted to use grew in the churchyard, and that she must pluck them herself. How should she get out there? "Oh, what is the pain in my fingers to the torment which my heart endures?" said she. "I must venture; I shall not be denied help from heaven." Then with a trembling heart, as if she were about to perform a wicked deed, she crept into the garden in the broad moonlight, and passed through the narrow walks and the deserted streets till she reached the churchyard.

Then she saw on one of the broad tombstones a group of ghouls. These hideous creatures took off their rags, as if they intended to bathe, and then, clawing open the grassy graves with their long skinny fingers, pulled out the bones and threw them about! Eliza had to pass close by them, and they fixed their wicked glances upon her, but she prayed silently, gathered the burning nettles, and carried them home with her to the castle. One person only had seen her, and that was the

archbishop — he was awake while everybody was asleep. Now he thought his opinion was evidently correct. All was not right with the Queen. She was a witch, and had enchanted the King and all the people. Secretly he told the King what he had seen and what he feared, and as the hard words came from his tongue, the carved images of the saints shook their heads as if they would say, "It is not so. Eliza is innocent."

But the archbishop interpreted it in another way; he believed that they witnessed against her, and were shaking their heads at her wickedness. Two large tears rolled down the King's cheeks, and he went home with doubt in his heart, and at night pretended to sleep, but there came no real sleep to his eyes, for he saw Eliza get up every night and disappear in her own chamber. From day to day his brow became darker, and Eliza saw it and did not understand the reason, but it alarmed her and made her heart tremble for her brothers.

Her hot tears glittered like pearls on the regal velvet and diamonds, while all who saw her were wishing they could be queens. In the meantime she had almost finished her task; only one coat of mail was wanting, but she had no flax left, and not a single nettle. Once more only, and for the last time, must she venture to the churchyard and pluck a few handfuls. She thought with terror of the solitary walk, and of the horrible ghouls, but her will was firm, as well as her trust in Providence. Eliza went, and the King and the archbishop followed her. They saw her vanish through the wicket gate into the churchyard, and when they came nearer they saw the ghouls sitting on the tombstone as Eliza had seen them, and the King turned away his head, for he thought she was with them — she whose head had rested on his breast that very evening. "The people must condemn her," said he, and she was very quickly

condemned by everyone to suffer death by fire. Away from the gorgeous regal halls was she led to a dark, dreary cell, where the wind whistled through the iron bars. Instead of the velvet and silk dresses, they gave her the coats of mail which she had woven to cover her, and the bundle of nettles for a pillow; but nothing they could give her would have pleased her more. She continued her task with joy, and prayed for help, while the street boys sang jeering songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a kind word. Toward evening she heard at the grating the flutter of a swan's wing; it was her youngest brother — he had found his sister, and she sobbed for joy, although she knew that very likely this would be the last night she would have to live. But still she could hope, for her task was almost finished and her brothers were come. Then the archbishop arrived, to be with her during her last hours, as he had promised the King. But she shook her head, and begged him, by looks and gestures, not to stay, for in this night she knew she must finish her task, otherwise all her pain and tears and sleepless nights would have been suffered in vain. The archbishop withdrew, uttering bitter words against her; but poor Eliza knew that she was innocent, and diligently continued her work.

The little mice ran about the floor; they dragged the nettles' to her feet, to help as well as they could, and the thrush sat outside the grating of the window and sang to her the whole night long, as sweetly as possible, to keep up her spirits.

It was still twilight and at least an hour before sunrise when the eleven brothers stood at the castle gate and demanded to be brought before the King. They were told it could not be, it was yet almost night, and as the King slept they dared not disturb him. They threatened, they entreated. Then the guard

appeared, and even the King himself, inquiring what all the noise meant. At this moment the sun rose. The eleven brothers were seen no more, but eleven wild swans flew away over the castle.

And now all the people came streaming forth from the gates of the city to see the witch burned. An old horse drew the cart on which she sat. They had dressed her in a garment of coarse sackcloth. Her lovely hair hung loose on her shoulders, her cheeks were deadly pale, her lips moved silently, while her fingers still worked at the green flax. Even on the way to death she would not give up her task. The ten coats of mail lay at her feet, she was working hard at the eleventh, while the mob jeered her and said, "See the witch, how she mutters! She has no hymn book in her hand. She sits there with her ugly sorcery. Let us tear it in a thousand pieces."

And then they pressed toward her, and would have destroyed the coats of mail, but at the same moment eleven wild swans flew over her and alighted on the cart. Then they flapped their large wings and the crowd drew on one side in alarm.

"It is a sign from heaven that she is innocent," whispered many of them, but they ventured not to say it aloud.

As the executioner seized her by the hand to lift her out of the cart, she hastily threw the eleven coats of mail over the swans, and they immediately became eleven handsome princes; but the youngest had a swan's wing instead of an arm, for she had not been able to finish the last sleeve of the coat.

"Now I may speak!" she exclaimed. "I am innocent."

Then the people, who saw what happened, bowed to her as before a saint, but she sank lifeless in her brother's arms, overcome with suspense, anguish, and pain.

"Yes, she is innocent," said the eldest brother; and then he related all that had taken place, and while he spoke there rose in the air a fragrance as from millions of flowers. Every piece of fagot in the pile had taken root, and thrown out branches, and appeared a thick hedge, large and high, covered with roses, while above all bloomed a white and shining blossom that glittered like a star. This flower the King plucked and placed in Eliza's bosom, when she awoke from her swoon with peace and happiness in her heart. And all the church bells rang of themselves and the birds came in great troops. And a marriage procession returned to the castle such as no king had ever before seen.

Hans In Luck [18]

Hans had served his master seven years, and now he decided to stay no longer. "Master," said he, "I want to return to my mother; so give me my wages."

"You have served me faithfully," said the master. "As the service has been, so shall be the reward," and he gave Hans a lump of gold as big as his head.

Hans pulled his handkerchief out and tied the gold up in it. Then he hitched the bundle to the end of a stick, took the stick over his shoulder, and set off on his way home.

As he was trudging along, always putting one foot before the other, he met a man riding a spirited horse. "Ah!" cried Hans, "what a capital thing it is to ride! This man sits as much at his ease as if he were in an armchair. He stumbles over no stones, wears out no shoe leather, and gets to his journey's end almost without knowing it."

The horseman heard what Hans said, and he pulled up and called out to him, "Well, my boy, why do you go on foot? "

"Because I must," Hans replied; "though I would not mind it so much if it were not for this bundle."

"What is in your bundle?" asked the man.

"A lump of gold," answered Hans, "my wages for seven years, and it is so heavy it weighs terribly on my shoulder. I am ready to drop with weariness."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said the horseman.

"We'll make an exchange. I will give you my horse, and you shall give me your lump of gold."

"With all my heart," was the lad's response; "but I warn you that you will have a job to carry it."

The horseman dismounted, took the gold, and helping Hans into the saddle gave him the reins.

"When you want to go fast," said he, "you must cluck with your tongue and cry, "Get up!'"

So Hans rode along, feeling very much pleased. After a while he fancied he would like to go quicker, and he clucked with his tongue and cried, "Get up!"

The horse broke into a smart trot, and Hans began to bob up and down. It made his teeth chatter, and he tried to cling to the saddle, but the first he knew he was tumbled off into a ditch of muddy water. The horse would have got away had it not been stopped by a peasant who happened to come along the road driving a cow.

Hans dragged himself out of the ditch and got on his feet, a good deal vexed over the accident. "It's a poor joke, riding," said he to the peasant, "especially on such a horse as mine, which no sooner starts to trot than it throws you off so that you come near breaking your neck. There's far more sense in owning a cow. You can walk along behind her in peace and quietness, and you can have her milk, and butter and cheese every day into the bargain. What would I not give to own that cow of yours!"

"Well," said the man, "since it will be doing you such a favor, I don't mind exchanging my cow for your horse."

Hans gladly consented, and the peasant, swinging himself into the saddle, was soon out of sight. Then Hans plodded along driving the cow before him and thinking all the while of the clever bargain he had made. "What a lucky fellow I am!" said he. "Now that I have this cow I only need to get a bit of

bread, which is easily done, and I then have everything I can possibly want to make a good meal. For I shall always be able to have butter and cheese with the bread, and if I am thirsty I can milk my cow and drink. What more could I desire?"

He went on toward his mother's village. As the day advanced the heat became oppressive, and about noon, while he was crossing a lonely heath, he concluded to have a drink of milk. So he tied his cow to a bush, and taking off his leather cap to serve for a pail, he began to milk, but not a drop could he squeeze out. The cow was dry. Besides, Hans was not used to milking and was clumsy about it. So the cow soon grew impatient and gave him such a kick that he was knocked over and quite dazed. Indeed, for a few minutes he did not know where he was.

Fortunately a butcher came along just then with a young pig in a wheelbarrow. "What is the trouble?" cried he, helping poor Hans onto his feet.

Hans related to him all that had happened, and the butcher passed Hans a flask, saying, "There, drink and refresh yourself. Of course the cow would give no milk. She is old and only fit to be slaughtered."

"Well, to be sure," said Hans, scratching his head, "who would have thought it? If the cow was yours she would be very useful even though she is dry, but I am no butcher, and I don't care much for beef, anyway. I like pork better. Now, if I had that young pig in your wheelbarrow, I could take care of him till he got big and fat, and then what fine meat I would have! and oh, the sausages!"

"Look here!" responded the butcher, "I will exchange and let you have my pig for your cow."

"Heaven reward such kindness!" exclaimed Hans, and at once gave him the cow.

The man untied the pig from the wheelbarrow and handed the rope with which it had been bound, and which was still attached to a hind leg, over to Hans.

So Hans marched on congratulating himself on his good luck. "It does beat all!" said he. "As soon as anything goes wrong, some person or other always happens along to set things right."

After a while he fell in with a youth who was carrying a fine white goose under his arm. They bid each other good-day, and Hans began to tell about his luck, and how he never failed to come off best in the trades he made. When he finished his story he asked the youth what he was going to do with his goose.

"I am carrying it to market," was the reply; "but as you seem fond of exchanges, I wouldn't mind giving it to you for your pig. The goose has been fattening for eight weeks. Just hold it and feel how heavy it is. It will be a rich morsel when it is roasted."

"Yes," agreed Hans as he took the bird and considered its weight, "this is a very fine goose; and yet my pig is not to be despised."

He seemed to hesitate to make the exchange, and his companion, after looking cautiously around, remarked with a shake of the head, "I am afraid there is something wrong about your pig."

"Why, what could be wrong about him?" inquired Hans.

"In the village I have just left," continued the lad, "a pig has lately been stolen from the sheriff's own sty. I fear it is the one you have. They are making a search for the thief, and you would be in a bad fix if the pig was found in your possession. The best

you could expect would be to have them shut you up in jail for a month or two."

Hans turned pale with fright. "Alas!" he cried, "help me out of this scrape. I am a stranger in these parts. Take my pig and give me your goose."

"It will be running some risk," answered the youth, "but I will do it sooner than that you should come to grief." He passed the goose over to Hans, and then taking the cord which was attached to the pig, he went quickly away along a bypath. Lucky Hans, much relieved, continued his journey toward home with the goose under his arm. "The more I think of it," said he, "the better this bargain seems. I shall have roast goose, and there will be plenty of fat left to eat with my bread for a year to come. Then there will be the beautiful white feathers. I can stuff my pillow with them, and how comfortably I shall sleep, and how pleased my mother will be!"

Presently, as he was passing a farmhouse, he saw a scissors-grinder at work in the yard. His wheel went whirring round, and he was singing these words:

"The scissors I grind, and the wheel I turn.
And all good fellows my trade should learn."

Hans stopped to watch him, and at last spoke to him and said, "You must be doing very well at this trade of yours, since you are so merry over your grinding."

"Yes," said the man, "my handiwork is quite profitable. Any grinder who understands his business and is willing to work early and late will never put his hand in his pocket without finding money there. But where did you get that fine goose?"

"I exchanged it for a pig," replied Hans.

"And where did you get the pig? "

"That I exchanged for a cow."

"And where did you get the cow? "

"That I exchanged for a horse."

"And where did you get the horse?"

"For the horse I gave a lump of gold as big as my head."

"And where did you get the gold?"

"Oh, that was my wages for seven years' service."

"I suppose you think you got a bargain every time you made an exchange," said the scissors-grinder.

"Yes," replied Hans, "I am sure of it."

"Now if you could only hear money rattling in your pocket every time you moved, you would be perfectly satisfied, wouldn't you?" the scissors- grinder asked.

"Why, yes, I think so," said Hans; "but how could that be managed?"

"You must become a grinder like me," replied the man. "All you want is a grindstone. The rest comes of itself. The grindstone I am using is a little the worse for wear, and I don't mind letting you have it for your goose. What say you?"

"Take the goose," was the lad's answer. "If I can find money whenever I put my hand in my pocket, there is nothing more left to wish for. I can buy everything I need."

So he parted with the goose and walked off with the old grindstone on his shoulder, perfectly contented. "I must have been born under a lucky star!" cried he, while his eyes sparkled for joy.

After a while he began to weary of his burden, and there was all the more reason for this because he had been on his feet since daybreak. He halted often to rest, and he said to himself, "How nice it would be to have nothing whatever to carry!"

He went on at a snail's pace till at last he came to a well, and he stopped to get a drink of the cool water. He set the

grindstone beside the well and stooped and drank, but in rising he stumbled against the grindstone and it fell splash into the well. He looked to see if he could recover it, but it had gone down out of sight. Then he jumped for joy and thought himself very fortunate to be relieved of that heavy weight which had been such a hindrance to him.

"I really believe I am the luckiest fellow under the sun," declared he.

So on he went with a light and merry heart, free from all care, and in due time reached his mother's home.

The King's Servant [19]

"There was once upon a time a faithful servant whose name was Hans. He served the king his master so long and so well that one day the king said to him:

"Speak, Hans, and tell me what three things do you most desire that I may give them to you as a reward for your faithfulness."

It did not take Hans long to answer the king. "If you please, your majesty," he said, "I should like best in all the world to go to see my mother; to have a horse on which to ride upon my journey; and to taste the food that lies hidden in the silver dish that comes each day to your majesty's table."

And when the king heard this he made haste to send for the silver dish and lifting the lid with his own hand he bade Hans taste of the food inside. What this food was, neither I nor anybody else can tell you, but no sooner had Hans tasted it than he understood what everything in the world was saying, from the birds in the tree-tops to the hens in the king's poultry yard.

"Good-bye, Hans," they called as Hans mounted the horse which the king gave him and rode away through the gate.

"Good-bye," said Hans, and he cantered off in fine style down the king's highway.

Before he had ridden far, however, he heard such a moaning and complaining by the roadside that he stopped his horse to see what the matter was; and do you believe it? it was the ant people whose ant-hill stood in the way, right where Hans was about to ride.

"See, see!" they cried, running to and fro in great alarm. "This giant of a man on his terrible horse will ride over our new house and crush us to death."

"Not I," said Hans. "If so much as one of you gets under my horse's hoofs it will be your fault and not mine;" and getting down from his horse he led him around the ant-hill and into the road on the other side.

"One good turn deserves another," cried the ant people running to and fro in great joy. "You have helped us, and we will help you some day;" and they were still saying this when Hans mounted his horse and rode away.

Now before long Hans came to a great forest and as he rode under the spreading branches of the trees he heard a cry for help in the woods.

"What can this be?" said Hans; but the very next minute he saw two young birds lying beneath a tree, beating their wings upon the ground and crying aloud:

"Alas! Alas! Who will put us into the nest again?"

"I, the king's servant and my mother's son; I will put you into the nest again," said Hans, and he was as good as his word.

"One good turn deserves another," called the birds when they were safe in their nest once more. "You have helped us, and we will help you some day."

Hans laughed to hear them, for though it was easy for him to help them he could not think what they might do for him.

Trot, trot, and gallop, gallop he rode through the forest till he came to a stream of water beside which lay three panting fishes.

"We shall surely die unless we can get into the water," they cried.

Their breath was almost gone and their voices were no louder than the faintest whisper, but Hans understood every word that they said; and he jumped from his horse and threw them into the stream.

"One good turn deserves another," they cried as they swam merrily away. "You have helped us, and we will help you some day."

Now it so happened that Hans came by and by to the land of a very wicked king who broke his promises as easily as if they were made of spun glass and who never thought of anybody but himself. No sooner had Hans come into the land than the king stopped him and would not let him go on.

"No one shall pass through my kingdom," he said, "till he has done one piece of work for me."

Hans was not afraid of work. "Show it to me that I may do it at once," he said; "for I am hastening to see my mother."

Then the king took Hans into a room as large as a meadow where some of all the seeds in the world was stored. There were lettuce-seeds, and radish-seeds, flax- seeds and grains of rice, fine seeds of flowers and small seeds of grass, all mixed and mingled till no two alike lay together.

Hans had never seen so many seeds in all his life before; and when he had looked at them the king bade him sort them, each kind to itself.

"The lettuce-seed must be here, and the radish-seed there; the flax-seed in this corner and the grains of rice in another; the fine seeds of flowers must be in their place, and the small seeds of grass all ready for planting before you can pass through my kingdom and go on your way," he said; and when he had spoken he went out of the room and locked the door behind him.

Poor Hans! He sat down on the floor and cried. The tears rolled down his cheeks I do assure you for he said to himself:

"If I live to be a hundred years old I can never do this thing that the king requires. I shall never see my mother or the good king, my master, again."

How long he sat there, neither I nor anybody else can tell you, but by and by he saw a little black ant creeping in through a crack in the floor. Behind it came another and another, like soldiers marching; one by one they came, till the whole floor was black with hundreds and hundreds of the ant people.

"You helped us, and we have come to help you," they said; and they set to work at once to sort the seed as the king required.

By the next day when the king came in to inquire how Hans was getting on, the work was done. The lettuce-seed was here and the radish-seed was there, the flax-seed in one corner, and the grains of rice in another; the fine seeds of flowers were in their place and the small seeds of grass were all ready for planting.

The king was astonished. He could scarcely believe his eyes; but he would not let Hans go.

"Such a fine workman must do one other piece of work before he passes through my kingdom," he said; and he took Hans out in the open country and pointed to an orchard far away.

"Bring me one golden apple that grows in that orchard and you shall go free," he said.

"Ah, what an easy task is this," said Hans, and he set off at once to the orchard.

But, alack, when he had come to the orchard gate it was guarded by a fiery dragon, the like of which he had never seen

in all his life! "Come and be devoured!" it cried, as Hans came into sight.

Poor Hans! He sat down by the roadside and held his head between his hands and cried. The tears rolled down his cheeks I do assure you for he said to himself:

"If I go into the orchard I shall be eaten alive by the dragon, and if I do not go I shall never see my mother or the good king, my master, again."

How long he sat there, neither I nor anybody else can tell you, but by and by he saw two birds flying through the air. Nearer and nearer they came till at last they reached the spot where Hans sat and lighted at his feet and they were the very birds that Hans had helped. Their wings had grown strong enough by this time to carry them wherever they wanted to go and they flapped them joyfully as they cried:

"One good turn deserves another. You helped us, and we have come to help you."

It was no trouble for them to fly into the orchard high above the dragon's head; and almost before Hans knew they were gone they were back again bringing with them the golden apple that the king desired.

He was astonished when Hans took it to him. He could scarcely believe his eyes; but he would not let Hans go.

Instead he took a ring from his finger and threw it to the very bottom of the sea.

"Go and fetch me that ring," he said, "and you shall be free as the birds and the bees; but until it is upon my finger again you shall not pass through my kingdom."

Poor Hans! He sat down on the seashore and cried. The tears rolled down his cheeks I do assure you for he said to himself:

"Who can do a task like this? I must either drown or stay here all the days of my life. I shall never see my mother or the good king, my master, again."

How long he sat there, neither I nor anybody else can tell you, but by and by three little fishes came swimming to the shore.

"One good turn deserves another," they called, for they were the very fish that Hans had thrown into the stream. "You helped us, and we have come to help you."

Then down they went to the very bottom of the sea where the king's ring lay. One of them took it in his mouth and so brought it safely to Hans who ran with it to the king.

And when the king saw the ring he knew that he must let Hans go; he did not dare to keep him any longer. So Hans mounted his horse and rode joyfully to his mother's home where he stayed till the time came when he must return to the good king, his master, which he did by another road.

He worked well and was happy serving his master faithfully, and making friends with birds and beasts, all the days of his life; but never again did he go to the wicked king's country. And I for one think he showed his good sense by that.

Scandinavia

The Fir-Tree [20]

Far away in the forest, where the warm sun and the fresh air made a sweet resting-place, grew a pretty little fir-tree. The situation was all that could be desired; and yet it was not happy, it wished so much to be like its tall companions, the pines and firs which grew around it.

The sun shone, and the soft air fluttered its leaves, and the little peasant children passed by, prattling merrily; but the fir-tree did not heed them.

Sometimes the children would bring a large basket of raspberries or strawberries, wreathed on straws, and seat themselves near the fir-tree, and say, "Is it not a pretty little tree?" which made it feel even more unhappy than before.

And yet all this while the tree grew a notch or joint taller every year; for by the number of joints in the stem of a fir-tree we can discover its age.

Still, as it grew, it complained, "Oh! how I wish I were as tall as the other trees; then I would spread out my branches on every side, and my crown would overlook the wide world around. I should have the birds building their nests on my boughs, and when the wind blew, I should bow with stately dignity, like my tall companions."

So discontented was the tree, that it took no pleasure in the warm sunshine, the birds, or the rosy clouds that floated over it morning and evening.

Sometimes in winter, when the snow lay white and glittering on the ground, there was a little hare that would come

springing along, and jump right over the little tree's head; then how mortified it would feel.

Two winters passed; and when the third arrived, the tree had grown so tall that the hare was obliged to run round it. Yet it remained unsatisfied, and would exclaim, "Oh! to grow, to grow; if I could but keep on growing tall and old! There is nothing else worth caring for in the world."

In the autumn the woodcutters came, as usual, and cut down several of the tallest trees; and the young fir, which was now grown to its full height, shuddered as the noble trees fell to the earth with a crash.

After the branches were lopped off, the trunks looked so slender and bare that they could scarcely be recognized. Then they were placed, one upon another, upon wagons, and drawn by horses out of the forest. "Where could they be going? What would become of them?" The young fir-tree wished very much to know.

So in the spring, when the swallows and the storks came, it asked, "Do you know where those trees were taken? Did you meet them?"

The swallows knew nothing; but the stork, after a little reflection, nodded his head, and said, "Yes, I think I do. As I flew from Egypt, I met several new ships, and they had fine masts that smelt like fir. These must have been the trees; and I assure you they were stately; they sailed right gloriously!"

"Oh, how I wish I were tall enough to go on the sea," said the fir-tree. "Tell me what is this sea, and what does it look like?"

"It would take too much time to explain, a great deal too much," said the stork, flying quickly away.

"Rejoice in thy youth," said the sunbeam; "rejoice in thy fresh growth, and in the young life that is in thee."

And the wind kissed the tree, and the dew watered it with tears; but the fir-tree regarded them not.

Christmas time drew near, and many young trees were cut down, some that were even smaller and younger than the fir-tree, who enjoyed neither rest nor peace with longing to leave its forest home. These young trees, which were chosen for their beauty, kept their branches, and were also laid on wagons, and drawn by horses far away out of the forest.

"Where are they going?" asked the fir-tree. "They are not taller than I am; indeed, one is not so tall. And why do they keep all their branches? Where are they going?"

"We know, we know," sang the sparrows; "We have looked in at the windows of the houses in the town, and we know what is done with them. Oh! you cannot think what honor and glory they receive. They are dressed up in the most splendid manner. We have seen them standing in the middle of a warm room, and adorned with all sorts of beautiful things; — honey cakes, gilded apples, playthings, and many hundreds of wax tapers."

"And then," asked the fir-tree, trembling in all its branches, "and then what happens?"

"We did not see any more," said the sparrows; "but this was enough for us."

"I wonder whether anything so brilliant will ever happen to me," thought the fir-tree. "It would be better even than crossing the sea. I long for it almost with pain. Oh, when will Christmas be here? I am now as tall and well grown as those which were taken away last year. Oh, that I were now laid on the wagon, or standing in the warm room, with all that brightness and splendor around me! Something better and more beautiful is

to come after, or the trees would not be so decked out. Yes, what follows will be grander and more splendid. What can it be? I am weary with longing. I scarcely know what it is that I feel."

"Rejoice in our love," said the air and the sunlight. "Enjoy thine own bright life in the fresh air."

But the tree would not rejoice, though it grew taller every day; and, winter and summer, its dark-green foliage might be seen in the forest, while passers-by would say, "What a beautiful tree!"

A short time before the next Christmas, the discontented fir-tree was the first to fall. As the axe cut sharply through the stem, and divided the pith, the tree fell with a groan to the earth, conscious of pain and faintness, and forgetting all its dreams of happiness, in sorrow at leaving its home in the forest. It knew that it should never again see its dear old companions, the trees, nor the little bushes and many-colored flowers that had grown by its side; perhaps not even the birds. Nor was the journey at all pleasant. The tree first recovered itself while being unpacked in the courtyard of a house, with several other trees; and it heard a man say, "We only want one, and this is the prettiest. This is beautiful!"

Then came two servants in grand livery, and carried the fir-tree into a large and beautiful apartment. Pictures hung on the walls, and near the great stove stood great china vases, with lions on the lids. There were rocking-chairs, silken sofas, large tables covered with pictures, books, and playthings that had cost a hundred times a hundred dollars; at least so said the children.

Then the fir-tree was placed in a large tub, full of sand; but green baize hung all round it, so that no one could know it was

a tub; and it stood on a very handsome carpet. Oh, how the fir-tree trembled! What was going to happen to him now? Some young ladies came, and the servants helped them to adorn the tree.

On one branch they hung little bags cut out of colored paper, and each bag was filled with sweetmeats. From other branches hung gilded apples and walnuts, as if they had grown there; and above, and all around, were hundreds of red, blue, and white tapers, which were fastened upon the branches. Dolls, exactly like real men and women, were placed under the green leaves, — the tree had never seen such things before, — and at the very top was fastened a glittering star, made of gold tinsel. Oh, it was very beautiful. "This evening," they all exclaimed, "how bright it will be!"

"Oh, that the evening were come," thought the tree, "and the tapers lighted! Then I shall know what else is going to happen. Will the trees of the forest come to see me? Will the sparrows peep in at the windows, I wonder, as they fly? Shall I grow faster here, and keep on all these ornaments during summer and winter?" But guessing was of very little use. His back ached with trying; and this pain is as bad for a slender fir-tree as headache is for us.

At last the tapers were lighted, and then what a glistening blaze of splendor the tree presented! It trembled so with joy in all its branches, that one of the candles fell among the green leaves, and burnt some of them. "Help! help!" exclaimed the young ladies; but there was no danger, for they quickly extinguished the fire.

After this the tree tried not to tremble at all, though the fire frightened him, he was so anxious not to hurt any of the beautiful ornaments, even while their brilliancy dazzled him.

And now the folding-doors were thrown open, and a troop of children rushed in as if they intended to upset the tree, and were followed more slowly by their elders. For a moment the little ones stood silent with astonishment, and then they shouted for joy, till the room rang; and they danced merrily round the tree, while one present after another was taken from it.

"What are they doing? What will happen next?" thought the tree. At last the candles burned down to the branches, and were put out. Then the children received permission to plunder the tree.

Oh, how they rushed upon it! There was such a riot that the branches cracked, and, had it not been fastened with the glistening star to the ceiling, it must have been thrown down.

Then the children danced about with their pretty toys, and no one noticed the tree, except the children's maid, who came and peeped among the branches to see if an apple or a fig had been forgotten.

"A story, a story," cried the children, pulling a little fat man towards the tree.

"Now we shall be in the green shade," said the man, as he seated himself under it, "and the tree will have the pleasure of hearing also; but I shall only relate one story. What shall it be? Ivede-Avede, or Humpty Dumpty, who fell downstairs, but soon got up again, and at last married a princess?"

"Ivede-Avede," cried some. "Humpty Dumpty," cried others; and there was a famous uproar. But the fir-tree remained quite still, and thought to himself, "Shall I have anything to do with all this? Ought I to make a noise, too?" but he had already amused them as much as they wished.

Then the old man told them the story of Humpty Dumpty; — how he fell downstairs, and was raised up again, and married a princess. And the children clapped their hands, and cried, "Tell another, tell another," for they wanted to hear the story of Ivede-Avede; but this time they only had Humpty Dumpty. After this the fir-tree became quite silent and thoughtful. Never had the birds in the forest told such tales as Humpty Dumpty, who fell downstairs, and yet married a princess.

"Ah, yes! so it happens in the world," thought the fir-tree. He believed it all, because it was related by such a pleasant man.

"Ah, well!" he thought, "Who knows? Perhaps I may fall down, too, and marry a princess;" and he looked forward joyfully to the next evening, expecting to be again decked out with lights and playthings, gold and fruit. "Tomorrow I will not tremble," thought he; "I will enjoy all my splendor, and I shall hear the story of Humpty Dumpty again, and perhaps Ivede-Avede." And the tree remained quiet and thoughtful all night.

In the morning the servants and the housemaid came in. "Now," thought the fir-tree, "all my splendor is going to begin again." But they dragged him out of the room and upstairs to the garret, and threw him on the floor, in a dark corner where no daylight shone, and there they left him. "What does this mean?" thought the tree. "What am I to do here? I can hear nothing in a place like this;" and he leaned against the wall, and thought and thought.

And he had time enough to think, for days and nights passed, and no one came near him; and when at last somebody did come, it was only to push away some large boxes in a corner. So the tree was completely hidden from sight as if it had never existed.

"It is winter now," thought the tree; "the ground is hard and covered with snow, so that people cannot plant me. I shall be sheltered here, I dare say, until spring comes. How thoughtful and kind everybody is to me! Still I wish this place were not so dark and so dreadfully lonely, with not even a little hare to look at. How pleasant it was out in the forest while the snow lay on the ground, when the hare would run by, yes, and jump over me, too, although I did not like it then. Oh! it is terribly lonely here."

"Squeak, squeak," said a little mouse, creeping cautiously towards the tree; then came another, and they both sniffed at the fir-tree, and crept in and out between the branches.

"Oh, it is very cold," said the little mouse. "If it were not, we should be very comfortable here, shouldn't we, old fir-tree?"

"I am not old," said the fir-tree. "There are many who are older than I am."

"Where do you come from?" asked the mice, who were full of curiosity; "and what do you know? Have you seen the most beautiful places in the world, and can you tell us all about them? And have you been in the storeroom, where cheeses lie on the shelf, and hams hang from the ceiling? One can run about on tallow candles there; one can go in thin and come out fat."

"I know nothing of that," said the fir-tree; "but I know the wood, where the sun shines, and the birds sing." And then the tree told the little mice all about its youth. They had never heard such an account in their lives; and after they had listened to it attentively, they said, "What a number of things you have seen! You must have been very happy."

"Happy!" exclaimed the fir-tree; and then, as he reflected on what he had been telling them, he said, "Ah, yes! after all, those were happy days." But when he went on and related all

about Christmas eve, and how he had been dressed up with cakes and lights, the mice said, "How happy you must have been, you old fir-tree."

"I am not old at all," replied the tree; "I only came from the forest this winter. I am now checked in my growth."

"What splendid stories you can tell," said the little mice. And the next night four other mice came with them to hear what the tree had to tell. The more he talked, the more he remembered, and then he thought to himself, "Yes, those were happy days; but they may come again. Humpty Dumpty fell downstairs, and yet he married the princess. Perhaps I may marry a princess, too." And the fir-tree thought of the pretty little birch-tree that grew in the forest; a real princess, a beautiful princess, she was to him.

"Who is Humpty Dumpty?" asked the little mice. And then the tree related the whole story; he could remember every single word. And the little mice were so delighted with it, that they were ready to jump to the top of the tree. The next night a great many more mice made their appearance, and on Sunday two rats came with them; but they said it was not a pretty story at all, and the little mice were very sorry, for it made them also think less of it.

"Do you know only that one story?" asked the rats.

"Only that one," replied the fir-tree. "I heard it on the happiest evening in my life; but I did not know I was so happy at the time."

"We think it is a very miserable story," said the rats. "Don't you know any story about bacon or tallow in the storeroom?"

"No," replied the tree.

"Many thanks to you, then," replied the rats, and they went their ways.

The little mice also kept away after this, and the tree sighed, and said, "It was very pleasant when the merry little mice sat round me, and listened while I talked. Now that is all past, too. However, I shall consider myself happy when someone comes to take me out of this place."

But would this ever happen? Yes; one morning people came to clear up the garret; the boxes were packed away, and the tree was pulled out of the corner, and thrown roughly on the floor; then the servants dragged it out upon the staircase, where the daylight shone.

"Now life is beginning again," said the tree, rejoicing in the sunshine and fresh air. Then it was carried downstairs and taken into the courtyard so quickly, that it forgot to think of itself, and could only look about, there was so much to be seen.

The court was close to a garden, where everything looked blooming. Fresh and fragrant roses hung over the little palings. The linden-trees were in blossom; while swallows flew here and there, crying, "Twit, twit, twit, my mate is coming;" but it was not the fir-tree they meant.

"Now I shall live," cried the tree joyfully, spreading out its branches; but alas! they were all withered and yellow, and it lay in a corner amongst weeds and nettles. The star of gold paper still stuck in the top of the tree, and glittered in the sunshine.

In the same courtyard two of the merry children were playing who had danced round the tree at Christmas, and had been so happy. The youngest saw the gilded star, and ran and pulled it off the tree. "Look what is sticking to the ugly old fir-tree," said the child, treading on the branches till they crackled under his boots.

And the tree saw all the fresh, bright flowers in the garden, and then looked at itself, and wished it had remained in the

dark corner of the garret. It thought of its fresh youth in the forest, of the merry Christmas evening, and of the little mice who had listened to the story of Humpty Dumpty.

"Past! past!" said the poor tree. "Oh, had I but enjoyed myself while I could have done so! but now it is too late."

Then a lad came and chopped the tree into small pieces, till a large bundle lay in a heap on the ground. The pieces were placed in a fire, and they quickly blazed up brightly, while the tree sighed so deeply that each sigh was like a little pistol-shot. Then the children, who were at play, came and seated themselves in front of the fire, and looked at it, and cried, "Pop, pop." But at each "pop," which was a deep sigh, the tree was thinking of a summer day in the forest, or of some winter night there, when the stars shone brightly, and of Christmas evening, and of Humpty Dumpty, the only story it had ever heard, or knew how to relate, — till at last it was consumed.

The boys still played in the garden, and the youngest wore the golden star on his breast, with which the tree had been adorned during the happiest evening of its existence. Now all was past; the tree's life was past, and the story also, past! for all stories must come to an end some time or other.

The Ugly Duckling [21]

It was so beautiful in the country. It was the summer time. The wheat fields were golden, the oats were green, and the hay stood in great stacks in the green meadows. The stork paraded about among them on his long, red legs, chattering away in Egyptian, the language he had learned from his lady-mother.

All around the meadows and cornfields grew thick woods, and in the midst of the forest was a deep lake. Yes, it was beautiful, it was delightful in the country.

In a sunny spot stood a pleasant old farmhouse, circled all about with deep canals; and, from the walls down to the water's edge, grew great burdocks, so high that under the tallest of them a little child might stand upright. The spot was as wild as if it had been in the very center of the thick wood.

In this snug retreat sat a duck upon her nest, watching for her young brood to hatch; but the pleasure she had felt at first was almost gone; she had begun to think it a wearisome task, for the little ones were so long coming out of their shells, and she seldom had visitors. The other ducks liked much better to swim about in the canals than to climb the slippery banks, and sit under the burdock leaves to have a gossip with her. It was a long time to stay so much by herself.

At length, however, one shell cracked, and soon another; and from each came a living creature, that lifted its head and cried, "Peep, peep."

"Quack, quack!" said the mother; and then they all tried to say it, too, as well as they could, as they looked all about them on every side at the tall, green leaves. Their mother allowed

them to look about as much as they liked, because green is good for the eyes.

"What a great world it is, to be sure," said the little ones, when they found how much more room they had than when they were in the eggshell.

"Is this all the world, do you imagine?" said the mother. "Wait till you have seen the garden. Far beyond that it stretches down to the pastor's field, though I have never ventured to such a distance. Are you all out?" she continued, rising to look. "No, not all; the largest egg lies there yet, I declare. I wonder how long this business is to last. I'm really beginning to be tired of it;" but for all that she sat down again.

"Well, and how are you today?" quacked an old duck who came to pay her a visit.

"There's one egg that takes a deal of hatching. The shell is hard, and will not break," said the fond mother, who sat still upon her nest. "But just look at the others. Have I not a pretty family? Are they not the prettiest little ducklings you ever saw? They are the image of their father, — the good-for-naught; he never comes to see me."

"Let me see the egg that will not break," said the old duck. "I've no doubt it's a Guinea fowl's egg. The same thing happened to me once, and a deal of trouble it gave me, for the young ones are afraid of the water. I quacked and clucked, but all to no purpose. Let me take a look at it. Yes, I am right; it's a Guinea fowl, upon my word; so take my advice, and leave it where it is. Come to the water, and teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit a little while longer," said the mother. "I have sat so long, a day or two more won't matter."

"Very well, please yourself," said the old duck, rising; and she went away.

At last the great egg broke, and the latest bird cried, "Peep, peep," as he crept forth from the shell. How big and ugly he was! The mother duck stared at him, and did not know what to think. "Really," she said, "this is an enormous duckling, and it is not at all like any of the others. I wonder if he will turn out to be a Guinea fowl. Well, we shall see when we get to the water, — for into the water he must go, even if I have to push him in myself."

On the next day the weather was delightful. The sun shone brightly on the green burdock leaves, and the mother duck took her whole family down to the water, and jumped in with a splash. "Quack, quack," cried she, and one after another the little ducklings jumped in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up again in an instant, and swam about quite prettily, with their legs paddling under them as easily as possible; their legs went of their own accord; and the ugly gray-coat was also in the water, swimming with them.

"Oh," said the mother, "that is not a Guinea fowl. See how well he uses his legs, and how erect he holds himself! He is my own child, and he is not so very ugly after all, if you look at him properly. Quack, quack! come with me now. I will take you into grand society, and introduce you to the farmyard, but you must keep close to me, or you may be trodden upon; and, above all, beware of the cat."

When they reached the farmyard, there was a wretched riot going on; two families were fighting for an eel's head, which, after all, was carried off by the cat. "See, children, that is the way of the world," said the mother duck, whetting her beak, for she would have liked the eel's head herself. "Come, now, use your

legs, and let me see how well you can behave. You must bow your heads prettily to that old duck yonder; she is the highest born of them all, and has Spanish blood; therefore she is well off. Don't you see she has a red rag tied to her leg, which is something very grand, and a great honor for a duck; it shows that everyone is anxious not to lose her, and she is to be noticed both by man and beast. Come, now, don't turn in your toes; a well-bred duckling spreads his feet wide apart, just like his father and mother, in this way; now bend your necks, and say, ' Quack.'"

The ducklings did as they were bade; but the other ducks stared, and said, "Look, here comes another brood, as if there were not enough of us already! and bless me, what a queer-looking object one of them is; we don't want him here"; and then one flew out, and bit him in the neck.

"Let him alone," said the mother; "he is not doing any harm."

"Yes, but he is so big and ugly. He's a perfect fright," said the spiteful duck, "and therefore he must be turned out. A little biting will do him good."

"The others are very pretty children," said the old duck with the rag on her leg, "all but that one. I wish his mother could smooth him up a bit; he is really ill-favored."

"That is impossible, your grace," replied the mother. "He is not pretty, but he has a very good disposition, and swims as well or even better than the others. I think he will grow up pretty, and perhaps be smaller. He has remained too long in the egg, and therefore his figure is not properly formed;" and then she stroked his neck, and smoothed the feathers, saying, "It is a drake, and therefore not of so much consequence. I think he will grow up strong, and able to take care of himself."

"The other ducklings are graceful enough," said the old duck. "Now make yourself at home, and if you find an eel's head, you can bring it to me."

And so they made themselves comfortable; but the poor duckling, who had crept out of his shell last of all, and looked so ugly, was bitten and pushed and made fun of, not only by the ducks, but by all the poultry.

"He is too big," they all said; and the turkey cock, who had been born into the world with spurs, and fancied himself really an emperor, puffed himself out like a vessel in full sail, and flew at the duckling. He became quite red in the head with passion, so that the poor little thing did not know where to go, and was quite miserable because he was so ugly as to be laughed at by the whole farmyard.

So it went on from day to day; it got worse and worse. The poor duckling was driven about by everyone; even his brothers and sisters were unkind to him, and would say, "Ah, you ugly creature, I wish the cat would get you"; and his mother had been heard to say she wished he had never been born. The ducks pecked him, the chickens beat him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him with her feet. So at last he ran away, frightening the little birds in the hedge as he flew over the palings.

"They are afraid of me, too, because I am so ugly," he said. So he closed his eyes, and flew still farther, until he came out on a large moor, inhabited by wild ducks. Here he remained the whole night, feeling very tired and sorrowful.

In the morning, when the wild ducks rose in the air, they stared at their new comrade. "What sort of a duck are you?" they all said, coming round him.

He bowed to them, and was as polite as he could be; but he did not reply to their question. "You are exceedingly ugly," said the wild ducks; "but that will not matter if you do not want to marry one of our family."

Poor thing! he had no thoughts of marriage; all he wanted was permission to lie among the rushes, and drink some of the water on the moor. After he had been on the moor two days, there came two wild geese, or rather goslings, for they had not been out of the egg long, which accounts for their impertinence. "Listen, friend," said one of them to the duckling; "you are so ugly that we like you very well. Will you go with us, and become a bird of passage? Not far from here is another moor, in which there are some pretty wild geese, all unmarried. It is a chance for you to get a wife. You may make your fortune, ugly as you are."

"Bang, bang," sounded in the air, and the two wild geese fell dead among the rushes, and the water was tinged with blood. "Bang, bang," echoed far and wide in the distance, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the rushes.

The sound continued from every direction, for the sportsmen surrounded the moor, and some were even seated on branches of trees, overlooking the rushes. The blue smoke from the guns rose like clouds over the dark trees; and, as it floated away across the water, a number of sporting dogs bounded in among the rushes, which bent beneath them wherever they went. How they terrified the poor duckling! He turned away his head to hide it under his wing, and at the same moment a large, terrible dog passed quite near him. His jaws were open, his tongue hung from his mouth, and his eyes glared fearfully. He thrust his nose close to the duckling, showing his

sharp teeth, and then "splash, splash," he went into the water, without touching him.

"Oh," sighed the duckling, "how thankful I am for being so ugly; even a dog will not bite me."

And so he lay quite still, while the shot rattled through the rushes, and gun after gun was fired over him. It was late in the day before all became quiet, but even then the poor young thing did not dare to move. He waited quietly for several hours, and then, after looking carefully around him, hastened away from the moor as fast as he could. He ran over field and meadow till a storm arose, and he could hardly struggle against it. Towards evening, he reached a poor little cottage that seemed ready to fall, and only seemed to remain standing because it could not decide on which side to fall first. The storm continued so violent that the duckling could go no farther. He sat down by the cottage, and then he noticed that the door was not quite closed, in consequence of one of the hinges having given way. There was, therefore, a narrow opening near the bottom large enough for him to slip through, which he did very quietly, and got a shelter for the night. Here, in this cottage, lived a woman, a cat, and a hen. The cat, whom his mistress called, "My little son," was a great favorite; he could raise his back, and purr, and could even throw out sparks from his fur if it were stroked the wrong way. The hen had very short legs; so she was called "Chickie short legs." She laid good eggs, and her mistress loved her as if she had been her own child. In the morning the strange visitor was discovered; the cat began to purr, and the hen to cluck.

"What is that noise about?" said the old woman, looking around the room; but her sight was not very good, therefore, when she saw the duckling, she thought it must be a fat duck

that had strayed from home. "Oh, what a prize!" she exclaimed. "I hope it is not a drake, for then I shall have some duck's eggs. I must wait and see."

So the duckling was allowed to remain on trial for three weeks; but there were no eggs.

Now the cat was the master of the house, and the hen was mistress; and they always said, "We and the world," for they believed themselves to be half the world, and by far the better half, too. The duckling thought that others might hold a different opinion on the subject; but the hen would not listen to such doubts.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked. "No." "Then have the goodness to cease talking." "Can you raise your back, or purr, or throw out sparks?" said the cat. "No." "Then you have no right to express an opinion when sensible people are speaking." So the duckling sat in a corner, feeling very low-spirited; but when the sunshine and the fresh air came into the room through the open door, he began to feel such a great longing for a swim on the water, that he could not help speaking of it.

"What an absurd idea," said the hen. "You have nothing else to do, therefore you have foolish fancies. If you could purr or lay eggs, they would pass away."

"But it is so delightful to swim about on the water," said the duckling, "and so refreshing to feel it close over your head, while you dive down to the bottom."

"Delightful, indeed! it must be a queer sort of pleasure," said the hen. "Why, you must be crazy! Ask the cat, he is the cleverest animal I know, ask him how he would like to swim about on the water, or to dive under it, for I will not speak of my own opinion. Ask our mistress, the old woman; there is no one in the world more clever than she is. Do you think she

would relish swimming, and letting the water close over her head?"

"I see you don't understand me," said the duckling.

"We don't understand you? Who can understand you, I wonder? Do you consider yourself more clever than the cat or the old woman? I will say nothing of myself. Don't imagine such nonsense, child, and thank your good fortune that you have been so well received here. Are you not in a warm room, and in society from which you may learn something? But you are a chatterer, and your company is not very agreeable. Believe me, I speak only for your good. I may tell you unpleasant truths, but that is a proof of my friendship. I advise you, therefore, to lay eggs, and learn to purr as quickly as possible."

"I believe I must go out into the world again," said the duckling.

"Yes, do," said the hen. So the duckling left the cottage, and soon found water on which it could swim and dive; but he was avoided by all other animals, because of his ugly appearance.

Autumn came, and the leaves in the forest turned to orange and gold; then, as winter approached, the wind caught them as they fell, and whirled them in the cold air. The clouds, heavy with hail and snow-flakes, hung low in the sky, and the raven stood on the ferns, crying, "Croak, croak." It made one shiver with cold to look at him. All this was very sad for the poor little duckling.

One evening, just as the sun was setting amid radiant clouds, there came a large flock of beautiful birds out of the bushes. The duckling had never seen any like them before. They were swans; and they curved their graceful necks, while their soft plumage shone with dazzling whiteness. They uttered a singular cry, as they spread their glorious wings and flew away

from those cold regions to warmer countries across the sea. As they mounted higher and higher in the air, the ugly little duckling felt quite a strange sensation as he watched them. He whirled himself in the water like a wheel, stretched out his neck towards them, and uttered a cry so strange that it frightened even himself. Could he ever forget those beautiful, happy birds! And when at last they were out of his sight, he dived under the water, and rose again almost beside himself with excitement. He knew not the names of these birds, nor where they had flown; but he felt towards them as he had never felt for any other bird in the world.

He was not envious of these beautiful creatures; it never occurred to him to wish to be as lovely as they. Poor ugly creature, how gladly he would have lived even with the ducks, had they only given him encouragement. The winter grew colder and colder; he was obliged to swim about on the water to keep it from freezing; but every night the space on which he swam became smaller and smaller. At length it froze so hard that the ice in the water crackled as he moved, and the duckling had to paddle with his legs as well as he could, to keep the space from closing up. He became exhausted at last, and lay still and helpless, frozen fast in the ice.

Early in the morning, a peasant, who was passing by, saw what had happened. He broke the ice in pieces with his wooden shoe, and carried the duckling home to his wife. The warmth revived the poor little creature; but when the children wanted to play with him, the duckling thought they would do him some harm; so he started up in terror, fluttered into the milk-pan, and splashed the milk about the room. Then the woman clapped her hands, which frightened him still more. He flew first into the butter-cask, then into the meal- tub, and out

again. What a condition he was in! The woman screamed, and struck at him with the tongs; the children laughed and screamed, and tumbled over each other, in their efforts to catch him; but luckily he escaped. The door stood open; the poor creature could just manage to slip out among the bushes, and lie down quite exhausted in the newly-fallen snow.

It would be very sad, were I to relate all the misery and privations which the poor little duckling endured during the hard winter; but when it had passed, he found himself lying one morning in a moor, amongst the rushes. He felt the warm sun shining, and heard the lark singing, and saw that all around was beautiful spring.

Then the young bird felt that his wings were strong, as he flapped them against his sides, and rose high into the air. They bore him onwards until he found himself in a large garden, before he well knew how it had happened. The apple trees were in full blossom, and the fragrant elders bent their long green branches down to the stream which wound round a smooth lawn.

Everything looked beautiful in the freshness of early spring. From a thicket close by came three beautiful white swans, rustling their feathers, and swimming lightly over the smooth water. The duckling remembered the lovely birds, and felt more strangely unhappy than ever.

"I will fly to these royal birds," he exclaimed, "and they will kill me because, ugly as I am, I dare to approach them. But it does not matter; better be killed by them than pecked by the ducks, beaten by the hens, pushed about by the maiden who feeds the poultry, or starved with hunger in the winter."

Then he flew to the water, and swam towards the beautiful swans. The moment they espied the stranger, they rushed to meet him with outstretched wings.

"Kill me," said the poor bird; and he bent his head down to the surface of the water, and awaited death.

But what did he see in the clear stream below? His own image; no longer a dark, gray bird, ugly and disagreeable to look at, but a graceful and beautiful swan.

To be born in a duck's nest, in a farmyard, is of no consequence to a bird, if it is hatched from a swan's egg. He now felt glad at having suffered sorrow and trouble, because it enabled him to enjoy so much better all the pleasure and happiness around him; for the great swans swam round the newcomer, and stroked his neck with their beaks, as a welcome.

Into the garden presently came some little children, and threw bread and cake into the water.

"See," cried the youngest, "there is a new one;" and the rest were delighted, and ran to their father and mother, dancing and clapping their hands, and shouting joyously, "There is another swan come; a new one has arrived."

Then they threw more bread and cake into, the water, and said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all; he is so young and pretty." And the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wing; for he did not know what to do, he was so happy; yet he was not at all proud. He had been persecuted and despised for his ugliness, and now he heard them say he was the most beautiful of all the birds. Even the elder-tree bent down its boughs into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and bright. Then he rustled his feathers, curved his slender neck, and cried joyfully, from the depths of his heart, "I never

dreamed of such happiness as this, while I was the despised ugly duckling."

The Steadfast Tin Soldier [22]

There were once five and twenty tin soldiers. They were brothers, for they had all been made out of the same old tin spoon. They all shouldered their bayonets, held themselves upright, and looked straight before them. Their uniforms were very smart-looking, — red and blue — and very splendid. The first thing they heard in the world, when the lid was taken off the box in which they lay, was the words "Tin soldiers!" These words were spoken by a little boy, who clapped his hands for joy. The soldiers had been given him because it was his birthday, and now he was putting them out upon the table. Each was exactly like the rest to a hair, except one who had but one leg. He had been cast last of all, and there had not been quite enough tin to finish him; but he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others upon their two; and it was he whose fortunes became so remarkable.

On the table where the tin soldiers had been set up were several other toys; but the one that attracted most attention was a pretty little paper castle. Through its tiny windows one could see straight into the hall. In front of the castle stood little trees, clustering round a small mirror, which was meant to represent a transparent lake. Waxen swans swam upon its surface, and it reflected back their images.

All this was very pretty, but prettiest of all was a little lady, who stood at the castle's open door. She, too, was cut out of paper; but she wore a frock of the clearest gauze, and a narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders like a scarf; and in the middle of the ribbon was placed a shining tinsel rose. The little lady

stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and then she lifted one leg so high that the Soldier quite lost sight of it. He thought that, like himself, she had but one leg. "That would be just the wife for me," thought he, "if she were not too grand. But she lives in a castle, while I have only a box, and there are five and twenty of us in that. It would be no place for a lady. Still I must try to make her acquaintance." And so he lay down at full length behind a snuff-box that happened to be upon the table, where he could easily watch the dainty little lady, who still remained standing on one leg without losing her balance.

When the evening came all the other tin soldiers were put away in their box, and the people in the house went to bed. Now the playthings began to play in their turn. They visited, fought battles, and gave balls. The tin soldiers rattled in the box, for they wished to join the rest; but they could not lift the lid. The nut-crackers turned somersaults, and the pencil jumped about in a most amusing way. There was such a din that the canary woke and began to speak, and in verse, too. The only ones who did not move from their places were the Tin Soldier and the Lady Dancer. She stood on tip-toe with out-stretched arms, and he was just as persevering on his one leg; he never once turned away his eyes from her.

Twelve o'clock struck — crash! up sprang the lid of the snuff-box. There was no snuff in it, but a little black goblin. You see it was not a real snuff-box, but a Jack-in-the-box.

"Tin Soldier," said the Goblin, "keep thine eyes to thyself. Don't gaze at what does not concern thee!"

But the Tin Soldier pretended not to hear.

"Only wait, then, till tomorrow," remarked the Goblin.

Next morning, when the children got up, the Tin Soldier was placed on the window-ledge, and, whether it was the

Goblin or the wind that did it, all at once the window flew open, and the Tin Soldier fell head foremost from the third story to the street below. It was a tremendous fall. Over and over he turned in the air, till at last he rested, his cap and bayonet sticking fast between the paving-stones, while his one leg stood upright in the air.

The maid-servant and the little boy came down at once to look for him; but, though they nearly trod upon him, they could not manage to find him. If the Soldier had but once called "Here am I," they might easily enough have heard him; but he did not think it becoming to cry out for help, being in uniform.

It now began to rain; faster and faster fell the drops, until there was a heavy shower; and when it was over, two street boys came by.

"Look you," said one, "there lies a tin soldier. He must come out and sail in a boat."

So they made a boat out of an old newspaper, and put the Tin Soldier in the middle of it, and away he sailed down the gutter, while the boys ran along by his side, clapping their hands.

Goodness! how the waves rocked that paper boat, and how fast the stream ran! The Tin Soldier became quite giddy, the boat veered round so quickly; still he moved not a muscle, but looked straight before him, and held his bayonet tightly.

All at once the boat passed into a drain, and it became as dark as his own old home in the box. "Where am I going now?" thought he. "Yes, to be sure, it is all that Goblin's doing. Ah! if the little lady were but sailing with me in the boat, I would not care if it were twice as dark."

Just then a great water-rat, that lived under the drain, darted suddenly out.

"Have you a passport?" asked the rat. "Where is your passport?"

But the Tin Soldier kept silence, and only held his bayonet with a firmer grasp.

The boat sailed on, but the rat followed. Whew! how he gnashed his teeth, and cried to the sticks and straws, "Stop him! stop him! He hasn't paid toll! He hasn't shown his passport!"

But the stream grew stronger and stronger. Already the Tin Soldier could see daylight at the point where the tunnel ended; but at the same time he heard a rushing, roaring noise, at which a bolder man might have trembled. Think! just where the tunnel ended, the drain widened into a great sheet, that fell into the mouth of a sewer. It was as perilous a situation for the Soldier as sailing down a mighty waterfall would be for us.

He was now so near it that he could not stop. The boat dashed on, and the Tin Soldier held himself so well that no one might say of him that he so much as winked an eye. Three or four times the boat whirled round and round; it was full of water to the brim, and must certainly sink.

The Tin Soldier stood up to his neck in water; deeper and deeper sank the boat, softer and softer grew the paper; and now the water closed over the Soldier's head. He thought of the pretty little dancer whom he should never see again; and in his ears rang the words of the song, —

"Wild adventure, mortal danger,
Be thy portion, valiant stranger."

The paper boat parted in the middle, and the Soldier was about to sink, when he was swallowed by a great fish.

Oh, how dark it was! darker even than in the drain, and so narrow; but the Tin Soldier retained his courage; there he lay at full length, shouldering his bayonet as before.

To and fro swam the fish, turning and twisting, and making the strangest movements, till at last he became perfectly still.

Something like a flash of daylight passed through him, and a voice said, "Tin Soldier!" The fish had been caught, taken to market, sold, and bought, and taken to the kitchen, where the cook had cut him with a large knife. She seized the Tin Soldier between her finger and thumb, and took him to the room where the family sat, and where all were eager to see the celebrated man who had travelled in the maw of a fish; but the Tin Soldier remained unmoved; he was not at all proud.

They set him upon the table there. But how could so curious a thing happen? the Soldier was in the very same room in which he had been before. He saw the same children, the same toys stood upon the table, and among them the pretty dancing maiden, who still stood upon one leg.

She, too, was steadfast. That touched the Tin Soldier's heart. He could have wept tin tears, but that would not have been proper. He looked at her and she looked at him, but neither spoke a word.

And now one of the little boys took the Tin Soldier, and threw him into the stove. He gave no reason for doing so, but no doubt the Goblin in the snuff-box had something to do with it.

The Tin Soldier stood now in a blaze of red light. The heat he felt was terrible; but whether it proceeded from the fire, or from the love in his heart, he did not know. He saw that the colors were quite gone from his uniform; but whether that had happened on the journey, or had been caused by grief, no one could say. He looked at the little lady, she looked at him, and he felt himself melting; still he stood firm as ever, with his bayonet on his shoulder. Then suddenly the door flew open,

and the wind caught the Dancer, and she flew straight into the stove to the Tin Soldier, flashed up in a flame, and was gone! The Tin Soldier melted into a lump; and in the ashes the maid found him next day, in the shape of a little tin heart, while of the Dancer nothing remained save the tinsel rose, and that was burned as black as a coal.

The Little Match Girl [23]

It was dreadfully cold; it was snowing fast, and was almost dark, as evening came on — the last evening of the year. In the cold and the darkness, there went along the street a poor little girl, bareheaded and with naked feet. When she left home she had slippers on, it is true; but they were much too large for her feet, — slippers that her mother had used till then, and the poor little girl lost them in running across the street when two carriages were passing terribly fast. When she looked for them, one was not to be found, and a boy seized the other and ran away with it, saying he would use it for a cradle someday, when he had children of his own.

So oh the little girl went with her bare feet, that were red and blue with cold. In an old apron that she wore were bundles of matches, and she carried a bundle also in her hand. No one had bought so much as a bunch all the long day, and no one had given her even a penny.

Poor little girl! Shivering with cold and hunger she crept along, a perfect picture of misery!

The snowflakes fell on her long, flaxen hair, which hung in pretty curls about her throat; but she thought not of her beauty nor of the cold. Lights gleamed in every window, and there came to her the savory smell of roast goose, for it was New Year's Eve. And it was this of which she thought.

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat cowering down. She had drawn under her little feet, but still she grew colder and colder; yet she dared not go home, for she had sold no matches, and could not

bring a penny of money. Her father would certainly beat her; and, besides, it was cold enough at home, for they had only the house-roof above them; and, though the largest holes had been stopped with straw and rags, there were left many through which the cold wind could whistle.

And now her little hands were nearly frozen with cold. Alas! a single match might do her good if she might only draw it from the bundle, rub it against the wall, and warm her fingers by it. So at last she drew one out. Whischt! How it blazed and burned! It gave out a warm, bright flame like a little candle, as she held her hands over it. A wonderful little light it was. It really seemed to the little girl as if she sat before a great iron stove, with polished brass feet and brass shovel and tongs. So blessedly it burned that the little maiden stretched out her feet to warm them also. How comfortable she was! But lo! the flame went out, the stove vanished, and nothing remained but the little burned match in her hand.

She rubbed another match against the wall. It burned brightly, and where the light fell upon the wall it became transparent like a veil, so that she could see through it into the room. A snow-white cloth was spread upon the table, on which was a beautiful china dinner-service, while a roast goose, stuffed with apples and prunes, steamed famously and sent forth a most savory smell. And what was more delightful still, and wonderful, the goose jumped from the dish, with knife and fork still in its breast, and waddled along the floor straight to the little girl.

But the match went out then, and nothing was left to her but the thick, damp wall. She lighted another match. And now she was under a most beautiful Christmas tree, larger and far more prettily trimmed than the one she had seen through the

glass doors at the rich merchant's. Hundreds of wax tapers were burning on the green branches, and lovely figures, such as she had seen in shop windows, looked down upon her. The child stretched out her hands to them; then the match went out.

Still the lights of the Christmas tree rose higher and higher. She saw them now as stars in heaven, and one of them fell, forming a long trail of fire.

"Now someone is dying," murmured the child softly; for her grandmother, the only person who had loved her, and who was now dead, had told her that whenever a star falls a soul mounts up to God.

She struck yet another match against the wall, and again it was light; and in the brightness there appeared before her the dear old grandmother, bright and radiant, yet sweet and mild, and happy as she had never looked on earth.

"Oh, grandmother," cried the child, "take me with you. I know you will go away when the match burns out. You, too, will vanish, like the warm stove, the splendid New Year's feast, the beautiful Christmas tree." And lest her grandmother should disappear, she rubbed the whole bundle of matches against the wall.

And the matches burned with such a brilliant light that it became brighter than noon-day. Her grandmother had never looked so grand and beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms, and both flew together, joyously and gloriously, mounting higher and higher, far above the earth; and for them there was neither hunger, nor cold, nor care; — they were with God.

But in the corner, at the dawn of day, sat the poor girl, leaning against the wall, with red cheeks and smiling mouth, —

frozen to death on the last evening of the old year. Stiff and cold she sat, with the matches, one bundle of which was burned.

"She wanted to warm herself, poor little thing," people said. No one imagined what sweet visions she had had, or how gloriously she had gone with her grandmother to enter upon the joys of a new year.

The Real Princess [24]

There was once a prince who wanted to marry a princess. But she must be a real princess, mind you. So he traveled all round the world, seeking such a one, but everywhere something was in the way. Not that there was any lack of princesses, but he could not seem to make out whether they were real princesses; there was always something not quite satisfactory. Therefore, home he came again, quite out of spirits, for he wished so much to marry a real princess.

One evening a terrible storm came on. It thundered and lightened, and the rain poured down; indeed, it was quite fearful. In the midst of it there came a knock at the town gate, and the old king went out to open it.

It was a princess who stood outside. But O dear, what a state she was in from the rain and bad weather! The water dropped from her hair and clothes, it ran in at the tips of her shoes and out at the heels; yet she insisted she was a real princess.

"Very well," thought the old queen; "that we shall presently see." She said nothing, but went into the bedchamber and took off all the bedding, then laid a pea on the sacking of the bedstead. Having done this, she took twenty mattresses and laid them upon the pea and placed twenty eider-down beds on top of the mattresses.

The princess lay upon this bed all the night. In the morning she was asked how she had slept.

"Oh, most miserably!" she said. "I scarcely closed my eyes the whole night through. I cannot think what there could have

been in the bed. I lay upon something so hard that I am quite black and blue all over. It is dreadful!"

It was now quite evident that she was a real princess, since through twenty mattresses and twenty eider-down beds she had felt the pea. None but a real princess could have such delicate feeling.

So the prince took her for his wife, for he knew that in her he had found a true princess. And the pea was preserved in the cabinet of curiosities, where it is still to be seen unless someone has stolen it.

And this, mind you, is a real story.

The Emperor's New Clothes [25]

Many years ago there was an emperor who was so fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on them. He did not give himself any concern about his army; he cared nothing about the theater or for driving about in the woods, except for the sake of showing himself off in new clothes. He had a costume for every hour in the day, and just as they say of a king or emperor, "He is in his council chamber," they said of him, "The emperor is in his dressing room."

Life was merry and gay in the town where the emperor lived, and numbers of strangers came to it every day. Among them there came one day two rascals, who gave themselves out as weavers and said that they knew how to weave the most exquisite stuff imaginable. Not only were the colors and patterns uncommonly beautiful, but the clothes that were made of the stuff had the peculiar property of becoming invisible to every person who was unfit for the office he held or who was exceptionally stupid.

"Those must be valuable clothes," thought the emperor. "By wearing them I should be able to discover which of the men in my empire are not fit for their posts. I should distinguish wise men from fools. Yes, I must order some of the stuff to be woven for me directly." And he paid the swindlers a handsome sum of money in advance, as they required.

As for them, they put up two looms and pretended to be weaving, though there was nothing whatever on their shuttles. They called for a quantity of the finest silks and of the purest

gold thread, all of which went into their own bags, while they worked at their empty looms till late into the night.

"I should like to know how those weavers are getting on with the stuff," thought the emperor. But he felt a little queer when he reflected that those who were stupid or unfit for their office would not be able to see the material. He believed, indeed, that he had nothing to fear for himself, but still he thought it better to send someone else first, to see how the work was coming on. All the people in the town had heard of the peculiar property of the stuff, and everyone was curious to see how stupid his neighbor might be.

"I will send my faithful old prime minister to the weavers," thought the emperor. "He will be best capable of judging of this stuff, for he is a man of sense and nobody is more fit for his office than he."

So the worthy old minister went into the room where the two swindlers sat working the empty looms. "Heaven save us!" thought the old man, opening his eyes wide. "Why, I can't see anything at all!" But he took care not to say so aloud.

Both the rogues begged him to step a little nearer and asked him if he did not think the patterns very pretty and the coloring fine. They pointed to the empty loom as they did so, and the poor old minister kept staring as hard as he could but without being able to see anything on it, for of course there was nothing there to see.

"Heaven save us!" thought the old man. "Is it possible that I am a fool? I have never thought it, and nobody must know it. Is it true that I am not fit for my office? It will never do for me to say that I cannot see the stuffs."

"Well, sir, do you say nothing about the cloth?" asked the one who was pretending to go on with his work.

"Oh, it is most elegant, most beautiful!" said the dazed old man, as he peered again through his spectacles. "What a fine pattern, and what fine colors! I will certainly tell the emperor how pleased I am with the stuff." "We are glad of that," said both the weavers; and then they named the colors and pointed out the special features of the pattern. To all of this the minister paid great attention, so that he might be able to repeat it to the emperor when he went back to him.

And now the cheats called for more money, more silk, and more gold thread, to be able to proceed with the weaving, but they put it all into their own pockets, and not a thread went into the stuff, though they went on as before, weaving at the empty looms.

After a little time the emperor sent another honest statesman to see how the weaving was progressing, and if the stuff would soon be ready. The same thing happened with him as with the minister. He gazed and gazed, but as there was nothing but empty looms, he could see nothing else.

"Is not this an exquisite piece of stuff?" asked the weavers, pointing to one of the looms and explaining the beautiful pattern and the colors which were not there to be seen.

"I am not stupid, I know I am not!" thought the man, "so it must be that I am not fit for my good office. It is very strange, but I must not let it be noticed." So he praised the cloth he did not see and assured the weavers of his delight in the lovely colors and the exquisite pattern. "It is perfectly charming," he reported to the emperor.

Everybody in the town was talking of the splendid cloth. The emperor thought he should like to see it himself while it was still on the loom. With a company of carefully selected men, among whom were the two worthy officials who had been

there before, he went to visit the crafty impostors, who were working as hard as ever at the empty looms.

"Is it not magnificent?" said both the honest statesmen. "See, your Majesty, what splendid colors, and what a pattern!" And they pointed to the looms, for they believed that others, no doubt, could see what they did not.

"What!" thought the emperor. "I see nothing at all. This is terrible! Am I a fool? Am I not fit to be emperor? Why nothing more dreadful could happen to me!"

"Oh, it is very pretty! it has my highest approval," the emperor said aloud. He nodded with satisfaction as he gazed at the empty looms, for he would not betray that he could see nothing.

His whole suite gazed and gazed, each seeing no more than the others; but, like the emperor, they all exclaimed, "Oh, it is beautiful!" They even suggested to the emperor that he wear the splendid new clothes for the first time on the occasion of a great procession which was soon to take place. "Splendid! Gorgeous! Magnificent!" went from mouth to mouth. All were equally delighted with the weavers' workmanship. The emperor gave each of the impostors an order of knighthood to be worn in their buttonholes, and the title Gentleman Weaver of the Imperial Court.

Before the day on which the procession was to take place, the weavers sat up the whole night, burning sixteen candles, so that people might see how anxious they were to get the emperor's new clothes ready. They pretended to take the stuff from the loom, they cut it out in the air with huge scissors, and they stitched away with needles which had no thread in them. At last they said, "Now the clothes are finished."

The emperor came to them himself with his grandest courtiers, and each of the rogues lifted his arm as if he held something, saying, "See! here are the trousers! here is the coat! here is the cloak," and so on. "It is as light as a spider's web. One would almost feel as if one had nothing on, but that is the beauty of it!"

"Yes," said all the courtiers, but they saw nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"Will your Majesty be graciously pleased to take off your clothes so that we may put on the new clothes here, before the great mirror?"

The emperor took off his clothes, and the rogues pretended to put on first one garment and then another of the new ones they had pretended to make. They pretended to fasten something round his waist and to tie on something. This they said was the train, and the emperor turned round and round before the mirror.

"How well his Majesty looks in the new clothes! How becoming they are!" cried all the courtiers in turn. That is a splendid costume!"

'The canopy that is to be carried over your Majesty in the procession is waiting outside," said the master of ceremonies.

"Well, I am ready," replied the emperor. "Don't the clothes look well?" and he turned round and round again before the mirror, to appear as if he were admiring his new costume.

The chamberlains, who were to carry the train, stooped and put their hands near the floor as if they were lifting it; then they pretended to be holding something in the air. They would not let it be noticed that they could see and feel nothing.

So the emperor went along in the procession, under the splendid canopy, and everyone in the streets said: "How

beautiful the emperor's new clothes are! What a splendid train! And how well they fit!"

No one wanted to let it appear that he could see nothing, for that would prove him not fit for his post. None of the emperor's clothes had been so great a success before.

"But he has nothing on!" said a little child.

"Just listen to the innocent," said its father; and one person whispered to another what the child had said. "He has nothing on; a child says he has nothing on!"

"But he has nothing on," cried all the people. The emperor was startled by this, for he had a suspicion that they were right. But he thought, "I must face this out to the end and go on with the procession." So he held himself more stiffly than ever, and the chamberlains held up the train that was not there at all.

More Lands

The Stone-Cutter [26]
(Japan)

Once upon a time there lived a stone-cutter, who went every day to a great rock in the side of a big mountain and cut out slabs for gravestones or for houses. He understood very well the kinds of stones wanted for the different purposes, and as he was a careful workman he had plenty of customers. For a long time he was quite happy and contented, and asked for nothing better than what he had.

Now in the mountain dwelt a spirit which now and then appeared to men, and helped them in many ways to become rich and prosperous. The stone-cutter, however, had never seen this spirit, and only shook his head, with an unbelieving air, when anyone spoke of it. But a time was coming when he learned to change his opinion.

One day the stone-cutter carried a gravestone to the house of a rich man, and saw there all sorts of beautiful things, of which he had never even dreamed. Suddenly his daily work seemed to grow harder and heavier, and he said to himself: "Oh, if only I were a rich man, and could sleep in a bed with silken curtains and golden tassels, how happy I should be!"

And a voice answered him: "Your wish is heard; a rich man you shall be!"

At the sound of the voice the stone-cutter looked round, but could see nobody. He thought it was all his fancy, and picked up his tools and went home, for he did not feel inclined to do any more work that day. But when he reached the little

house where he lived, he stood still with amazement, for instead of his wooden hut was a stately palace filled with splendid furniture, and most splendid of all was the bed, in every respect like the one he had envied. He was nearly beside himself with joy, and in his new life the old one was soon forgotten.

It was now the beginning of summer, and each day the sun blazed more fiercely. One morning the heat was so great that the stone-cutter could scarcely breathe, and he determined he would stop at home till the evening. He was rather dull, for he had never learned how to amuse himself, and was peeping through the closed blinds to see what was going on in the street, when a little carriage passed by, drawn by servants dressed in blue and silver. In the carriage sat a prince, and over his head a golden umbrella was held, to protect him from the sun's rays.

"Oh, if I were only a prince!" said the stone-cutter to himself, as the carriage vanished round the corner. "Oh, if I were only a prince, and could go in such a carriage and have a golden umbrella held over me, how happy I should be!"

And the voice of the mountain spirit answered: "Your wish is heard; a prince you shall be."

And a prince he was. Before his carriage rode one company of men and another behind it; servants dressed in scarlet and gold bore him along, the coveted umbrella was held over his head, everything his heart could desire was his. But yet it was not enough. He looked round still for something to wish for, and when he saw that in spite of the water he poured on his grass the rays of the sun scorched it, and that in spite of the umbrella held over his head each day his face grew browner and

browner, he cried in his anger: "The sun is mightier than I; oh, if I were only the sun!"

And the mountain spirit answered: "Your wish is heard; the sun you shall be."

And the sun he was, and felt himself proud in his power. He shot his beams above and below, on earth and in heaven; he burnt up the grass in the fields and scorched the faces of princes as well as of poorer folk. But in a short time he began to grow tired of his might, for there seemed nothing left for him to do. Discontent once more filled his soul, and when a cloud covered his face, and hid the earth from him he cried in his anger: "Does the cloud hold captive my rays, and is it mightier than I? Oh, that I were a cloud, and mightier than any!"

And the mountain spirit answered: "Your wish is heard; a cloud you shall be!"

And a cloud he was, and lay between the sun and the earth. He caught the sun's beams and held them, and to his joy the earth grew green again and flowers blossomed. But that was not enough for him, and for days and weeks he poured forth rain till the rivers overflowed their banks and the crops of rice stood in water. Towns and villages were destroyed by the power of the rain, only the great rock on the mountain side remained unmoved. The cloud was amazed at the sight, and cried in wonder: "Is the rock, then, mightier than I? Oh, if I were only the rock!"

And the mountain spirit answered: "Your wish is heard; the rock you shall be!"

And the rock he was, and glorified in his power. Proudly he stood, and neither the heat of the sun nor the force of the rain could move him. "This is better than all!" he said to himself. But one day he heard a strange noise at his feet, and when he

looked down to see what it could be, he saw a stone-cutter driving tools into his surface. Even while he looked a trembling feeling ran all through him, and a great block broke off and fell upon the ground. Then he cried in his wrath: "Is a mere child of earth mightier than a rock? Oh, if I were only a man!"

And the mountain spirit answered: "Your wish is heard. A man once more you shall be!"

And a man he was, and in the sweat of his brow he toiled again at his trade of stone-cutting. His bed was hard and his food scanty, but he had learned to be satisfied with it, and did not long to be something or somebody else. And as he never asked for things he had not got, or desired to be greater and mightier than other people, he was happy at last, and heard the voice of the mountain spirit no longer.

The Fisher Boy [27]
(Japan)

Long, long ago there lived by the sea a young fisherman named Urashi. He was a kindly lad and he was clever about his fishing. He minded neither wind nor weather, and did not know what it was to be afraid. No one else in the village dared venture so far out to sea as he, and the neighbors often shook their heads and said to his parents, "If your son keeps on being so reckless, he will someday try his luck once too often, and the waves will swallow him up."

His parents told him what was said, but the village talk made no difference with him.

One bright, beautiful morning when he had gone out in his boat as usual, he baited his hook, dropped his line into the water, and sat down to wait for a bite. In a little while he caught something — and what do you think it was? It was a great tortoise. Urashi was delighted with his prize, but no sooner had he drawn it into the boat than the turtle began to speak. "I would gladly live a little longer," it said. "Be merciful and set me free, and I shall find a way to prove my gratitude."

"Well," said Urashi to himself, "I can soon catch some fish, and they will be just as good to eat or to sell as this tortoise — in fact, better. Why should I kill the poor thing and keep it from enjoying all the years it may yet have to live? No, no! I will not be so cruel."

Then, addressing the tortoise, he said, "You can have your freedom," and he threw it back into the sea.

Shortly afterward he lay down in his boat and fell asleep, and as he slept there came up from beneath the waves a beautiful girl. She got into the boat and Urashi awoke. "I am the daughter of the Sea-god," she said, "and I live with my father in a splendid palace beyond the waters. It was not a tortoise which you caught just now, and which you were so kind as to throw back into the water instead of killing. It was myself. My father the Sea-god sent me to find out whether you were good or bad. We now know that you do not like to do cruel things, and so I have come to get you to return with me. You shall marry me if you choose, and we will live happily together for a thousand years in the beautiful palace beyond the deep blue sea."

Then Urashi took one oar and the Sea-god's daughter took the other, and they rowed, and they rowed, and they rowed, till, at last, they came to the palace where the Sea-god lived and ruled over all the dragons and the tortoises and the fishes. The palace walls were of coral, and the trees round about had emeralds for leaves and rubies for fruit, and everything was as beautiful as it could be.

Urashi married the lovely princess, and they lived happily in the Sea-god's palace for a year. Then Urashi said to the princess, "I am very happy here, yet I would like to visit my home and see my father and mother and brothers and sisters. Let me go to them, I pray you; I will soon return."

"I don't like to have you go," said she. "I am afraid something dreadful will happen to you. However, if you cannot be contented otherwise, I give my permission."

"It will be only for a very short time," said Urashi.

"Go then," responded the princess; "but here is a magic box you must carry with you. Nothing can harm you as long as

you have it in your possession, unless you open it. If you do that you will never be able to come back."

Urashi promised to take great care of the box and not to open it on any account. Then he got into a boat and rowed away, and at last he came to the shores of his own country.

But what had happened while he had been absent? Where had his father's cottage gone? What had become of the village in which he used to live?

The mountains were there as before, but the trees on them had been cut off. The little brook that ran close by his father's home was still running, but there were no women washing clothes in it any more. Urashi wondered how everything could have changed so much in one short year.

Two men chanced to pass along the beach, and Urashi went to them and said, "Can you tell me where the cottage is that used to stand here? It belonged to a fisherman who had a son Urashi."

"What!" exclaimed the men, "do you speak of Urashi? He was drowned nearly four hundred years ago, while he was out fishing. His parents and his brothers and sisters, and all their children and grandchildren, are dead long ago. Yes, Urashi was drowned. He went out in his boat to fish, and neither he nor his boat were seen afterward. It is an old, old story. How can you be so foolish as to ask after his father's cottage? It fell to pieces a great many years before our time."

Then the thought flashed across Urashi's mind that the Sea-god's palace beyond the waves must be a part of fairyland, and that one day there was probably as long as a year in this world. Therefore he had in reality been away hundreds of years. Of course there was no use of staying where he was any longer, now that all his friends were dead and buried, and even

their homes gone. So Urashi was in a great hurry to get back to his wife beyond the sea. But he could not think in his haste which way he ought to go. "Perhaps there are directions in this box the princess gave me," he said.

He opened it, and no sooner had he done that than a white cloud came out of the box and floated away over the sea. Urashi shouted to the cloud to stop and come back into the box, for he at once recollected how strictly the princess had commanded that the box should not be opened. He knew now he would never be able to go again to the Sea-god's palace, and he rushed about and screamed with sorrow. But soon he could not run or shout any more. His hair had grown as white as snow, his face had become wrinkled, and his back was bent like that of a very old man. Then his breath stopped, and he fell dead on the beach. If he had not forgotten and disobeyed, he might still be living with the princess in the palace beyond the blue sea waves, where the trees have leaves of emeralds and rubies grow on them for fruit.

Prince Kindhearted [28]
(Poland)

Once upon a time there lived a king who had but one son, and he was called the Kindhearted. When the prince was twenty years old, he asked the king, his father, to let him go traveling. His father fitted him out for the journey, gave him a true servant to guard him, and his fatherly blessing. The prince took leave of his father, mounted a brave steed and went to different countries, to see God's world, to learn many things, and to return home a wiser and a better man.

Once when the prince was slowly riding through a silent field, he suddenly perceived an eagle in pursuit of a swan. The white swan was almost caught by the eagle's sharp claws, when the prince, carefully aiming, fired his pistol. The eagle fell dead, and the happy swan came down and said: "Prince Kindhearted, I thank you for your help. It is not a swan that is thanking you, but the enchanted daughter of the Knight Invisible. You have not saved me from an eagle's claws, but from the terrible magician King Koshchey. My father will pay you well for your services. Remember whenever you are in need, to say three times: 'Knight Invisible, come to my help!' The swan flew away as soon as it had finished speaking, and the prince looked after it, then continued his journey.

He crossed many high mountains, traversed deep rivers, passed foreign countries, and at last he came to a great desert, where there was nothing to see but sky and sand. No man lived there, no animal's voice was ever heard, no vegetable ever grew

there; the sun was shining so brightly and burning so terribly that all the rivers were dried up, their beds were lost in the sand, and there was not a drop of water anywhere. The young prince anxious to go everywhere and see everything and not noticing how dry things were, kept going farther and farther, and deeper and deeper, into the desert. But after a while he became terribly thirsty. In order to find some water he sent his servant in one direction and he himself went in another. After a long time he succeeded in finding a well. He called to his servant, "I have found a means of getting some water," and they both were happy. But their happiness did not last, for the well was very deep and they had nothing with which to reach the water.

The prince said to the servant: "Dismount, I will let you down into the well by some long ropes and you shall draw up some water."

"No, my prince," answered the servant, "I am much heavier than you are, and Your Majesty's hands will not be able to hold me. You take hold of the ropes, and I will let you down into the well."

The prince, the ropes tied around him, went down into the well, drank the cold water, and taking some of it for the servant, pulled the ropes, as a sign for the servant to draw him up again.

But instead of pulling him up, the servant said: "Listen, you, kingly son! From your cradle-days until now you have lived a happy life, surrounded by luxury and love, and I have always led the life of a miserable wretch. Now you must agree to become my servant, and I will be the prince instead of you. If you will not exchange, say your last prayer, for I am going to drown you."

"Do not drown me, my true servant, you will not gain anything by it. You will never find such a good master as I am, and you know what a murderer may expect in the next world."

"Let me suffer in the next world, but I will make you suffer in this one," answered the servant and he began to loosen the ropes.

"Stop!" cried the prince, "I will be thy servant and you shall be the prince. I will give you my word for it."

"I do not believe your word. Swear that you will write down what you promise me, now, for words are lost in the air, and writing always remains as a testimony against us."

"I swear!"

The servant let down into the well a sheet of paper and a pencil, and told the prince to write the following: "The bearer of this is Prince Kindhearted, traveling with his servant, a subject of his father's kingdom."

The servant glanced over the note, pulled the prince out of the well, gave him his shabby clothes, and put on the prince's rich dress. Then having changed armor and horses, they went on.

In a week or so they came to the capital of a certain kingdom. When they approached the palace, the false prince gave his horse to the false servant and told him to go to the stable, and he himself went straight into the throne chamber and said to the king: "I come to you to ask for the hand of your daughter, whose beauty and wisdom are known all over the world. If you consent, you will have our favor; if not, we will decide it by war."

"You do not speak to me in a nice way at all, not as a prince ought to speak, but it may be that in your country you are not used to better manners. Now listen to me, my future son-in-

law. My kingdom is now in the hands of an enemy of mine. His troops have captured my best soldiers and now they are approaching my capital. If you will clear my kingdom from these troops, my daughter's hand will be yours as a reward."

"All right," answered the false prince, "I will drive your enemies away. Do not worry if they come to the capital. Tomorrow morning not one enemy will be left in your land." In the evening he went out of the palace, called his servant and said to him: "Listen, my dear! Go out to the city walls, drive away the foreign troops, and for this service I will return to you your note, by which you denied your kingdom and swore to be my servant."

The honest Prince Kindhearted put on his knightly armor, mounted his steed, went out to the city walls and called in a loud voice: "Knight Invisible! Come to my help!"

"Here I am," said Knight Invisible, "what do you wish me to do for you? I am ready to do everything for you, because you saved my child from the terrible Koshchey."

Prince Kindhearted showed him the troops, and the Knight Invisible whistled loudly and called: "Oh you, my wise horse, come to me quickly!"

There was a rustling in the air, it thundered, the earth trembled, and a wonderful horse appeared, having a golden mane, from his nostrils a fire was burning, from his eyes bright sparks were flying, and from his ears thick clouds of smoke were coming.

Knight Invisible jumped upon the horse and said to the prince: "Take this magic sword and attack the troops from the left, and I upon my golden-maned horse will attack them from the right."

They both attacked the army. From the left the soldiers were falling like wood, from the right like whole forests. In less than an hour the entire army vanished. Some of them remained upon the spot, dead; some of them fled. Prince Kindhearted and the Knight Invisible met upon the battlefield, shook hands in a friendly way, and in a minute the Knight Invisible and his horse turned into a bright red flame, then into thick smoke, which disappeared in the darkness. The prince returned quietly to the palace.

The young princess felt very sad that evening. She could not sleep and so leaned out of her window, whence she overheard the conversation between the prince and the servant. Then she saw what was going on behind the city walls. She also saw the Knight Invisible disappear in the darkness, and Prince Kindhearted return to the palace. She saw the false prince coming out of the palace, taking the knightly armor from the servant, and Prince Kindhearted entering the stable to rest.

The next morning, the old king, seeing his land freed from the enemies, felt very happy, and gave the prince many rich presents. But when he announced the engagement of his daughter to him, she stood up, took the hand of the real prince, who helped to serve at the table, led him before the old king and said: "My dearest father and king, and all you that are present here! This man is my bridegroom, sent to me by God, for he is your savior, and the real prince. And that one who calls himself a prince, is a traitor; a false and dishonest man." Then the princess told everything she knew and said: "Let him show some proof that he really is a prince."

The false prince gave to the king the note, which was given to him in the well. The king opened it and read aloud: "The

bearer of this note, the false and untrue servant of Prince Kindhearted, asks for pardon and expects a just punishment. The note was given to him in the well by Prince Kindhearted."

"Is it really so?" cried the wretch and he became pale as death."

"Yes, read it yourself, if you do not believe it," answered the king.

"I cannot read," said the poor fellow. He knelt before his master and begged for mercy, but he received what he deserved.

Prince Kindhearted and the princess were happily married, and I was present at the wedding feast and also felt happy.

The Timid Hare and the Flight of the Beasts [29]
(India)

Once upon a time when Brahmadatta reigned in Benares, the Bodhisatta came to life as a young lion. And when fully grown he lived in a wood. At this same time there was near the Western Ocean a grove of palms mixed with vilva trees. A certain hare lived here beneath a palm sapling, at the foot of a vilva tree.

One day this hare after feeding came and lay down beneath a young palm tree. And the thought struck him: "If this earth should be destroyed, what would become of me?" And at this very moment a ripe vilva fruit fell on a palm leaf. At the sound of it, the hare thought, "This solid earth is collapsing," and starting up he fled without so much as looking behind him.

Another saw him scampering off as if frightened to death, and asked the cause of his panic flight. "Pray, don't ask me," he said. The other hare cried, "Pray, sir, what is it?" and kept running after him. Then the hare stopped a moment and without looking back he said, "The earth here is breaking up." And at this the second hare ran after the other. And so first one and then another hare caught sight of him running, and joined in the chase till one hundred thousand hares all took flight together. They were seen by a deer, a boar, an elk, a buffalo, a wild ox, a rhinoceros, a tiger, a lion, and an elephant. And when they asked what it meant and were told that the earth was

breaking up, they too took flight. So by degrees this host of animals extended to the length of a full league.

When the Bodhisatta saw this headlong flight of the animals, and heard that the cause of it was that the earth was coming to an end, he thought: "The earth is nowhere coming to an end. Surely it must be some sound which was misunderstood by them. And if I don't make a great effort, they will surely perish. I will save their lives."

So with the speed of a lion he got before them to the foot of a mountain, and lion-like roared three times. They were terribly frightened at the lion, and stopped in their flight, stood huddled together. The lion went in amongst them and asked why they were running away.

"The earth is collapsing," they answered.

"Who saw it collapsing?" he said.

"The elephants know all about it," they replied.

He asked the elephants. "We don't know," they said; "the lions know." But the lions said, "We don't know; the tigers know." The tigers said, "The rhinoceroses know." The rhinoceroses said, "The wild oxen know." The wild oxen, "The buffaloes." The buffaloes, "The elks." The elks, "The boars." The boars, "The deer." The deer said, "We don't know; the hares know." When the hares were questioned, they pointed to one particular hare and said, "This one told us."

So the Bodhisatta asked, "Is it true, sir, that the earth is breaking up?"

"Yes, sir, I saw it," said the hare.

"Where," he asked, "were you living when you saw it?"

"Near the ocean, sir, in a grove of palms mixed with vilva trees. For as I was lying beneath the shade of a palm sapling at the foot of a vilva tree, methought, 'If this earth should break

up, where shall I go?' And at that very moment I heard the sound of breaking up of the earth, and I fled."

Thought the lion: "A ripe vilva fruit evidently must have fallen on a palm leaf and made a 'thud,' and this hare jumped to the conclusion that the earth was coming to an end, and ran away. I will find out the exact truth about it." So he reassured the herd of animals, and said: "I will take the hare and go find out exactly whether the earth is coming to an end or not, in the place pointed out by him. Until I return do you stay here." Then, placing the hare on his back, he sprang forward with the speed of a lion, and putting the hare down in a palm grove, he said, "Come, show us the place you meant."

"I dare not, my lord," said the hare.

"Come, don't be afraid," said the lion.

The hare, not venturing to go near the vilva tree, stood afar off and cried, "Yonder, sir, is the place of dreadful sounds," and so saying, he repeated the first stanza:

"From the spot where I did dwell
  Issued forth a fearful 'thud';
What it was I could not tell,
  Nor what caused it understood."

After hearing what the hare said, the lion went to the foot of the vilva tree, and saw the spot where the hare had been lying beneath the shade of the palm tree, and the ripe vilva fruit that fell on the palm leaf, and having carefully ascertained that the earth had not broken up, he placed the hare on his back and with the speed of a lion soon came again to the herd of beasts.

Then he told them the whole story, and said, "Don't be afraid." And having thus reassured the herd of beasts, he let them go.

Verily if it had not been for the Bodhisatta at that time, all the beasts would have rushed into the sea and perished. It was all owing to the Bodhisatta that they escaped death.

Alarmed at sound of fallen fruit,
  A hare once ran away;
The other beasts all followed suit,
  Moved by that hare's dismay.

They hastened not to view the scene,
  But lent a willing ear
To idle gossip, and were clean
  Distraught with foolish fear.

They who to Wisdom's calm delight
  And Virtue's heights attain,
Though ill example should invite,
  Such panic fear disdain.

These three stanzas were inspired by Perfect Wisdom.

Faithful Prince [30]
(India)

Long ago there lived a King who had an only son, by name Prince Bahramgor, who was as splendid as the noonday sun, and as beautiful as the midnight moon. Now one day the Prince went hunting, and he hunted to the north, but found no game; he hunted to the south, yet no quarry arose; he hunted to the east, and still found nothing. Then he turned towards the setting sun, when suddenly from a thicket flashed a golden deer. Burnished gold were its hoofs and horns, rich gold its body. Dazzled by the wonderful sight, the astonished Prince bade his retainers form a circle round the beautiful strange creature, and so gradually enclose and secure it.

'Remember,' said the Prince, 'I hold him towards whom the deer may run to be responsible for its escape, or capture.'

Closer and closer drew the glittering circle of horsemen, while in the center stood the golden deer, until, with marvelous speed, it fled straight towards the Prince. But he was swifter still, and caught it by the golden horns. Then the creature found human voice, and cried, 'Let me go, oh! Prince Bahramgor, and I will give you countless treasures!'

But the Prince laughed, saying, 'Not so! I have gold and jewels galore, but never a golden deer.'

'Let me go,' pleaded the deer, 'and I will give you more than treasures!'

'And what may that be?' asked the Prince, still laughing.

'I will give you a ride on my back such as never mortal man rode before,' replied the deer.

'Done!' cried the Prince, vaulting lightly to the deer's back; and immediately, like a bird from a thicket, the strange glittering creature rose through the air till it was lost to sight. For seven days and seven nights it carried the Prince over all the world, so that he could see everything like a picture passing below, and on the evening of the seventh day it touched the earth once more, and instantly vanished. Prince Bahramgor rubbed his eyes in bewilderment, for he had never been in such a strange country before. Everything seemed new and unfamiliar. He wandered about for some time looking for the trace of a house or a footprint, when suddenly from the ground at his feet popped a wee old man.

'How did you come here? and what are you looking for, my son?' quoth he politely.

So Prince Bahramgor told him how he had ridden thither on a golden deer, which had disappeared, and how he was now quite lost and bewildered in this strange country.

'Do not be alarmed, my son,' returned the wee old man; 'it is true you are in Demonsland, but no one shall hurt you, for I am the demon Jasdrul whose life you saved when I was on the earth in the shape of a golden deer.'

Then the demon Jasdrul took Prince Bahramgor to his house, and treated him right royally, giving him a hundred keys, and saying, 'These are the keys of my palaces and gardens. Amuse yourself by looking at them, and mayhap somewhere you may find a treasure worth having.'

So every day Prince Bahramgor opened a new garden, and examined a new palace, and in one he found rooms full of gold, and in another jewels, and in a third rich stuffs, in fact

everything the heart could desire, until he came to the hundredth palace, and that he found was a mere hovel, full of all poisonous things, herbs, stones, snakes, and insects. But the garden in which it stood was by far the most magnificent of all. It was seven miles this way, and seven miles that, full of tall trees and bright flowers, lakes, streams, fountains, and summer-houses. Beautiful butterflies flitted about, and birds sang in it all day and all night. The Prince, enchanted, wandered seven miles this way, and seven miles that, until he was so tired that he lay down to rest in a marble summer-house, where he found a golden bed, all spread with silken shawls. Now while he slept, the Fairy Princess Shahpasand, who was taking the air, fairy-fashion, in the shape of a pigeon, happened to fly over the garden, and catching sight of the beautiful, splendid, handsome young Prince, she sank to earth in sheer astonishment at beholding such a lovely sight, and, resuming her natural shape as fairies always do when they touch the ground she stooped over the young man and gave him a kiss.

He woke up in a hurry, and what was his astonishment on seeing the most beautiful Princess in the world kneeling gracefully beside him!

'Dearest Prince!' cried the maiden, clasping her hands, 'I have been looking for you everywhere!'

Now the very same thing befell Prince Bahramgor that had happened to the Princess Shahpasand that is to say, no sooner did he set eyes on her than he fell desperately in love, and so, of course, they agreed to get married without any delay. Nevertheless, the Prince thought it best first to consult his host, the demon Jasdrul, seeing how powerful he was in Demonsland. To the young man's delight, the demon not only gave his consent, but appeared greatly pleased, rubbing his

hands and saying, 'Now you will remain with me and be so happy that you will never think of returning to your own country anymore.'

So Prince Bahramgor and the Fairy Princess Shahpasand were married, and lived ever so happily, for ever so long a time.

At last the thought of the home he had left came back to the Prince, and he began to think longingly of his father the King, his mother the Queen, and of his favorite horse and hound. Then from thinking of them he fell to speaking of them to the Princess, his wife, and then from speaking he took to sighing and sighing and refusing his dinner, until he became quite pale and thin. Now the demon Jasdrul used to sit every night in a little echoing room below the Prince and Princess's chamber, and listen to what they said, so as to be sure they were happy; and when he heard the Prince talking of his far-away home on the earth, he sighed too, for he was a kind-hearted demon, and loved his handsome young Prince.

At last he asked Prince Bahramgor what was the cause of his growing so pale and sighing so often for so amiable was the young man that he would rather have died of grief than have committed the rudeness of telling his host he was longing to get away; but when he was asked he said piteously, 'Oh, good demon! let me go home and see my father the King, my mother the Queen, my horse and my hound, for I am very weary. Let me and my Princess go, or assuredly I shall die!' At first the demon refused, but at last he took pity on the Prince, and said, 'Be it so; nevertheless you will soon repent and long to be back in Demonsland; for the world has changed since you left it, and you will have trouble. Take this hair with you, and when you need help, burn it, then I will come immediately to your assistance.'

Then the demon Jasdrul said a regretful good-bye, and, Hey presto! Prince Bahramgor found himself standing outside his native city, with his beautiful bride beside him.

But, alas! as the good-natured demon had foretold, everything was changed. His father and mother were both dead, a usurper sat on the throne, and had put a price on Bahramgor's head should he ever return from his mysterious journey. Luckily no one recognized the young Prince (so much had he changed during his residence in Demonsland) save his old huntsman, who, though overjoyed to see his master once more, said it was as much as his life was worth to give the Prince shelter; still, being a faithful servant, he agreed to let the young couple live in the garret of his house.

'My old mother, who is blind,' he said, 'will never see you coming and going; and as you used to be fond of sport, you can help me to hunt, as I used to help you.'

So the splendid Prince Bahramgor and his lovely Princess hid in the garret of the huntsman's house, and no one knew they were there. Now one fine day, when the Prince had gone out to hunt, as servant to the huntsman, Princess Shahpasand took the opportunity of washing her beautiful golden hair, which hung round her ivory neck and down to her pretty ankles like a shower of sunshine, and when she had washed it she combed it, and set the window ajar so that the breeze might blow in and dry her hair.

Just at this moment the Chief Constable of the town happened to pass by, and hearing the window open, looked up and saw the lovely Shahpasand, with her glittering golden hair. He was so overcome at the sight that he fell right off his horse into the gutter. His servants, thinking he had a fit, picked him up and carried him back to his house, where he never ceased

raving about a beautiful fairy with golden hair in the huntsman's garret. This set everybody wondering whether he had been bewitched, and the story meeting the King's ear, he sent down some soldiers to make inquiries at the huntsman's house.

'No one lives here!' said the huntsman's cross old mother, 'no beautiful lady, nor ugly one either, nor any person at all, save me and my son. However, go to the garret and look for yourselves.'

Hearing these words of the old woman, Princess Shahpasand bolted the door, and, seizing a knife, cut a hole in the wooden roof. Then, taking the form of a pigeon, she flew out, so that when the soldiers burst open the door they found no one in the garret.

The poor Princess was greatly distressed at having to leave her beautiful young Prince in this hurried way, and as she flew past the blind old crone she whispered in her ear, 'I go to my father's house in the Emerald Mountain.'

In the evening when Prince Bahramgor returned from hunting, great was his grief at finding the garret empty! Nor could the blind old crone tell him much of what had occurred; still, when he heard of the mysterious voice which whispered, 'I go to my father's house in the Emerald Mountain,' he was at first somewhat comforted. Afterwards, when he reflected that he had not the remotest idea where the Emerald Mountain was to be found, he fell into a very sad state, and casting himself on the ground he sobbed and sighed; he refused his dinner, and never ceased crying, 'Oh, my dearest Princess! my dearest Princess!'

At last he remembered the magic hair, and taking it from its hiding-place threw it into the fire. It had scarcely begun to

burn when, Hey presto! the demon Jasdrul appeared, and asked him what he wanted.

'Show me the way to the Emerald Mountain,' cried the Prince.

Then the kind-hearted demon shook his head sorrowfully, saying, 'You would never reach it alive, my son. Be guided by me, forget all that has passed, and begin a new life.'

'I have but one life,' answered the faithful Prince, 'and that is gone if I lose my dearest Princess! As I must die, let me die seeking her.'

Then the demon Jasdrul was touched by the constancy of the splendid young Prince, and promised to aid him as far as possible. So he carried the young man back to Demonsland, and giving him a magic wand, bade him travel over the country until he came to the demon Nanak Chand's house.

'You will meet with many dangers by the way,' said his old friend, 'but keep the magic wand in your hand day and night, and nothing will harm you. That is all I can do for you, but Nanak Chand, who is my elder brother, can help you farther on your way.'

So Prince Bahramgor travelled through Demonsland, and because he held the magic wand in his hand day and night, no harm came to him. At last he arrived at the demon Nanak Chand's house, just as the demon had awakened from sleep, which, according to the habit of demons, had lasted for twelve years. Naturally he was desperately hungry, and on catching sight of the Prince, thought what a dainty morsel he would be for breakfast; nevertheless, though his mouth watered, the demon restrained his appetite when he saw the wand, and asked the Prince politely what he wanted. But when the demon Nanak Chand had heard the whole story, he shook his head,

saying, 'You will never reach the Emerald Mountain, my son. Be guided by me, forget all that has passed, and begin a new life.'

Then the splendid young Prince answered as before, 'I have but one life, and that is gone if I lose my dearest Princess! If I must die, let me die seeking her.'

This answer touched the demon Nanak Chand, and he gave the faithful Prince a box of powdered antimony, and bade him travel on through Demonsland till he came to the house of the great demon Safed. 'For,' said he, 'Safed is my eldest brother, and if anybody can do what you want, he will. If you are in need, rub the powder on your eyes, and whatever you wish near will be near, but whatever you wish far will be far.'

So the constant Prince travelled on through all the dangers and difficulties of Demonsland, till he reached the demon Safed's house, to whom he told his story, showing the powder and the magic wand, which had brought him so far in safety.

But the great demon Safed shook his head, saying, 'You will never reach the Emerald Mountain alive, my son. Be guided by me, forget all that has passed, and begin a new life.'

Still the faithful Prince gave the same answer, 'I have but one life, and that is gone if I lose my dearest Princess! If I must die, let me die seeking her.'

Then the great demon nodded his head approvingly, and said, 'You are a brave lad, and I must do my best for you. Take this yech-cap: whenever you put it on you will become invisible. Journey to the north, and after a while in the far distance you will see the Emerald Mountain. Then put the powder on your eyes and wish the mountain near, for it is an enchanted hill, and the farther you climb the higher it grows.

On the summit lies the Emerald City: enter it by means of your invisible cap, and find the Princess if you can.'

So the Prince journeyed joyfully to the north, until in the far far distance he saw the glittering Emerald Mountain. Then he rubbed the powder on his eyes, and behold! what he desired was near, and the Emerald City lay before him, looking as if it had been cut out of a single jewel. But the Prince thought of nothing save his dearest Princess, and wandered up and down the gleaming city protected by his invisible cap. Still he could not find her. The fact was, the Princess Shahpasand's father had locked her up inside seven prisons, for fear she should fly away again, for he doated on her, and was in terror lest she should escape back to earth and her handsome young Prince, of whom she never ceased talking.

'If your husband comes to you, well and good,' said the old man, 'but you shall never go back to him.'

So the poor Princess wept all day long inside her seven prisons, for how could mortal man ever reach the Emerald Mountain?

Now the Prince, whilst roaming disconsolately about the city, noticed a servant woman who every day at a certain hour entered a certain door with a tray of sweet dishes on her head. Being curious, he took advantage of his invisible cap, and when she opened the door he slipped in behind her. Nothing was to be seen but a large door, which, after shutting and locking the outer one, the servant opened. Again Prince Bahramgor slipped in behind her, and again saw nothing but a huge door. And so on he went through all the seven doors, till he came to the seventh prison, and there sat the beautiful Princess Shahpasand, weeping salt tears. At the sight of her he could scarcely refrain from flinging himself at her feet, but

remembering that he was invisible, he waited till the servant after putting down the tray retired, locking all the seven prisons one by one. Then he sat down by the Princess and began to eat out of the same dish with her.

She, poor thing, had not the appetite of a sparrow, and scarcely ate anything, so when she saw the contents of the dish disappearing, she thought she must be dreaming. But when the whole had vanished, she became convinced some one was in the room with her, and cried out faintly, 'Who eats in the same dish with me?'

Then Prince Bahramgor lifted the yech-cap from his forehead, so that he was no longer quite invisible, but showed like a figure seen in early dawn. At this the Princess wept bitterly, calling him by name, thinking she had seen his ghost, but as he lifted the yech-cap more and more, and, growing from a shadow to real flesh and blood, clasped her in his arms, her tears changed to radiant smiles.

Great was the astonishment of the servant next day when she found the handsome young Prince seated beside his dearest Princess. She ran to tell the King, who, on hearing the whole story from his daughter's lips, was very much pleased at the courage and constancy of Prince Bahramgor, and ordered Princess Shahpasand to be released at once; 'For,' he said, 'now her husband has found his way to her, my daughter will not want to go to him.'

Then he appointed the Prince to be his heir, and the faithful Prince Bahramgor and his beautiful bride lived happily ever afterwards in the Emerald kingdom.

The Ruby Prince [31]
(India)

Once upon a time a poor Brahman was walking along a dusty road, when he saw something sparkling on the ground. On picking it up, it turned out to be a small red stone, so, thinking it somewhat curious, the Brahman put it into his pocket and went on his way. By and by he came to a corn-merchant's shop, at the side of the road, and being hungry he bethought himself of the red stone, and taking it out, offered it to the corn-dealer in exchange for a bite and sup, as he had no money in his pocket. Now, for a wonder, the shopkeeper was an honest man, so, after looking at the stone, he bade the Brahman take it to the king, for, said he, 'all the goods in my shop are not its equal in value!'

Then the Brahman carried the stone to the king's palace, and asked to be shown into his presence. But the prime minister refused at first to admit him; nevertheless, when the Brahman persisted that he had something beyond price to show, he was allowed to see the king.

Now the snake-stone was just like a ruby, red and fiery; therefore, when the king saw it he said, 'What dost thou want for this ruby, O Brahman?'

Then the Brahman replied, 'Only a pound of meal to make a girdle cake, for I am hungry!'

'Nay,' said the king, 'it is worth more than that!'

So he sent for a lakh of rupees from his treasury, and counted it over to the Brahman, who went on his way rejoicing.

Then the king called his queen, and gave the jewel into her custody, with many instructions for its safe keeping, for, said he, there was not its like in the whole world. The queen, determined to be careful, wrapped it in cotton-wool, and put it away in an empty chest, locking the chest with double locks.

So there the ruby snake-stone lay for twelve long years. At the end of that time the king sent for his queen, and said, 'Bring me the ruby; I wish to satisfy myself that it is safe.'

The queen took her keys, and going to her room, opened the chest, and, lo! the ruby was gone, and in its place was a handsome stripling! She shut down the box again in a great hurry, and thought and thought what she had better do to break the news to the king.

Now as she thought, the king became impatient, and sent a servant to ask what the delay was. Then the queen bade the servant carry the box to the audience chamber, and going thither with her keys, she unlocked the chest before the king.

Out stepped the handsome stripling, to everybody's astonishment.

'Who are you?' quoth the king, 'and where is my jewel? '

'I am Ruby Prince,' returned the boy; 'more than that you cannot know.'

Then the king was angry, and drove him from the palace, but, being a just man, he first gave the boy a horse and arms, so that he might fight his way in the world.

Now, as Prince Ruby journeyed on his steed, he came to the outskirts of the town, and saw an old woman making bread, and as she mixed the flour she laughed, and as she kneaded it she cried.

'Why do you laugh and cry, mother?' quoth Prince Ruby.

'Because my son must die today,' returned the woman. 'There is an ogre in this town, which every day eats a young man. It is my son's turn to provide the dinner, and that is why I weep.'

Then Prince Ruby laughed at her fears, and said he would kill the ogre and set the town free; only the old woman must let him sleep a while in her house, and promise to wake him when the time came to go forth and meet the ogre.

'What good will that do to me?' quoth the old woman; 'you will only be killed, and then my son will have to go tomorrow. Sleep on, stranger, if you will, but I will not wake you!'

Then Prince Ruby laughed again. 'It is of no use, mother!' he said, 'fight the ogre I will; and as you will not wake me I must even go to the place of meeting and sleep there.'

So he rode off on his steed beyond the gates of the city, and, tying his horse to a tree he lay down to sleep peacefully. By and by the ogre came for its dinner, but hearing no noise, and seeing no one, it thought the townspeople had failed in their bargain, and prepared to revenge itself. But Ruby Prince jumped up, refreshed by slumber, and falling on the ogre, cut off its head and hands in a trice. These he stuck on the gate of the town, and returning to the old woman's house, told her he had killed the ogre, and lay down to sleep again.

Now when the townspeople saw the ogre's head and hands peering over the city gate, they thought the dreadful creature had come to revenge itself for some slight. Therefore they ran to the king in a great fright, and he, thinking the old woman, whose son was to have formed the ogre's dinner, must have played some trick, went with his officers to the place where she lived, and found her laughing and singing.

'Why do you laugh?' he asked sternly.

'I laugh because the ogre is killed!' she replied, 'and because the prince who killed it is sleeping in my house.'

Great was the astonishment at these words, yet, sure enough, when they came to examine more closely, they saw that the ogre's head and hands were those of a dead thing.

Then the king said, 'Show me this valiant prince who sleeps so soundly.' And when he saw the handsome young stripling, he recognized him as the lad whom he had driven from the palace. Then he turned to his prime minister, and said, 'What reward should this youth have?'

And the prime minister answered at once, 'Your daughter in marriage, and half your kingdom, is not too high a reward for the service he has rendered!'

So Ruby Prince was married in great state to the king's fair daughter, and half the kingdom was given him to rule.

But the young bride, much as she loved her gallant husband, was vexed because she knew not who he was, and because the other women in the palace twitted her with having married a stranger, a man come from No-man's-land, whom none called brother.

So, day after day, she would ask her husband to tell her who he was and whence he came, and every day Ruby Prince would reply, 'Dear heart, ask me anything but that; for that you must not know!'

Yet still the princess begged, and prayed, and wept, and coaxed, until one day, when they were standing by the river side, she whispered, 'If you love me, tell me of what race you are!'

Now Ruby Prince's foot touched the water as he replied, 'Dear heart, anything but that; for that you must not know!'

Still the princess, imagining she saw signs of yielding in his face, said again, 'If you love me, tell me of what race you are!'

Then Ruby Prince stood knee-deep in the water, and his face was sad as he replied, 'Dear heart, anything but that; for that you must not know! '

Once again the wilful bride put her question, and Ruby Prince was waist-deep in the stream.

'Dear heart, anything but that!'

'Tell me! tell me!' cried the princess, and, lo! as she spoke, a jeweled snake with a golden crown and ruby star reared itself from the water, and with a sorrowful look towards her, disappeared beneath the wave.

Then the princess went home and wept bitterly, cursing her own curiosity, which had driven away her handsome, gallant young husband. She offered a reward of a bushel of gold to anyone who would bring her any information about him; yet day after day passed, and still no news came, so that the princess grew pale with weeping salt tears. At last a dancing-woman, one of those who attend the women's festivals, came to the princess, and said, 'Last night I saw a strange thing. When I was out gathering sticks, I lay down to rest under a tree, and fell asleep. When I awoke it was light, neither daylight nor moonlight; and while I wondered, a sweeper came out from a snake-hole at the foot of the tree, and swept the ground with his broom; then followed a water-carrier, who sprinkled the ground with water; and after that two carpet-bearers, who spread costly rugs, and then disappeared. Even as I wondered what these preparations meant, a noise of music fell upon my ear, and from the snake-hole came forth a goodly procession of young men, glittering with jewels, and one in the midst, who seemed to be the king. Then, while the musicians played, one

by one the young men rose and danced before the king. But one, who wore a red star on his forehead, danced but ill, and looked pale and wan. That is all I have to say.'

So the next night the princess went with the dancing-girl to the tree, where, hiding themselves behind the trunk, they waited to see what might happen.

Sure enough, after a while it became light that was neither sunlight nor moonlight; then the sweeper came forth and swept the ground, the water-carrier sprinkled it, the carpet-bearers placed the rugs, and last of all, to the sound of music the glittering procession swept out. How the princess's heart beat when, in the young prince with the red star, she recognized her dearest husband; and how it ached when she saw how pale he was, and how little he seemed to care to dance.

Then, when all had performed before the king, the light went out, and the princess crept home. Every night she would go to the tree and watch; but all day she would weep, because she seemed no nearer getting back her lover.

At last, one day, the dancing-girl said to her, 'O princess, I have hit upon a plan. The Snake-king is passionately fond of dancing, and yet it is only men who dance before him. Now, if a woman were to do so, who knows but he might be so pleased that he would grant her anything she asked? Let me try!'

'Nay,' replied the princess, 'I will learn of you and try myself.'

So the princess learnt to dance, and in an incredibly short time she far surpassed her teacher. Never before or since was such a graceful, charming, elegant dancer seen. Everything about her was perfection. Then she dressed herself in finest muslins and silver brocades, with diamonds on her veil, till she shone and sparkled like a star.

With beating heart she hid behind the tree and waited. The sweeper, the water-carrier, the carpet-bearers, came forth in turn, and then the glittering procession. Ruby Prince looked paler and sadder than ever, and when his turn came to dance, he hesitated, as if sick at heart; but from behind the tree stepped a veiled woman, clad in white, with jewels flashing, and danced before the king. Never was there such a dance! everybody held their breath till it was done, and then the king cried aloud, 'O unknown dancer, ask what you will, and it shall be yours!'

'Give me the man for whom I danced!' replied the princess.

The Snake-king looked very fierce, and his eyes glittered, as he said, 'You have asked something you had no right to ask, and I should kill you were it not for my promise. Take him, and begone!'

Quick as thought, the princess seized Ruby Prince by the hand, dragged him beyond the circle, and fled.

After that they lived very happily, and though the women still taunted her, the princess held her tongue, and never again asked her husband of what race he came.

The Magic Well [32]
(Ireland)

A long, long time ago, where the Lakes of Killarney now are, there was just a green and fertile valley, and in the depths of the valley was a town and a handsome palace. The palace was the home of King Core, and he took great pride in it, but still more in a well that was in the courtyard. Indeed, the water of this well was so clear and pure that it was the wonder of all the world. Much did the king rejoice at having such a possession, but as people came in crowds from far and near to draw the precious water he was sorely afraid that in time they might exhaust the supply and the well would go dry. So at last he decided he would not allow the people to have any more water, and to keep them away he ordered a high wall to be built around the well.

On the day the wall was started an old hermit who dwelt far up on one of the neighboring mountains came down from the hut in which he lived to fill a jar with the water. As he approached, the workmen stopped him.

"What does this mean?" said he. "I want to fill my jar."

"We would gladly let you have water," they replied, "but that is contrary to the king's commands."

Just then the king himself drew near to see how the work was progressing, and the hermit bowed before him and said, "I come for water just as I have twice a week for many years. Why do these men turn me away, and why is this wall being built?"

"Go elsewhere for your water," responded the king. "In future this well is only for the use of my own household."

"You do badly," said the hermit. "It is not right that the good things of the world should be selfishly hoarded. Stop this wicked work."

"I will not!" exclaimed the king, angrily.

"Then may this well be cursed!" said the old hermit, raising his hands toward heaven. "You will live to repent the day you ordered it shut away from your people. The well is almost as ancient as the valley itself and has belonged, not alone to the dwellers in the palace, but to all of us, from time immemorial. It was dug by the fairies and it has magic power. Whenever any gold is dropped into it the well will become a torrent of destruction and will then punish you for your greed in keeping its water all to yourself."

With these words the aged hermit took up his jar and turned his steps toward his home on the mountain.

The work on the well continued till it was completed. The people roundabout all felt that they had suffered a great loss, and there was no lack of grumbling and protests. However, what the king chose to do he did, and there was no helping the matter. A stout door in the wall furnished access to the well, but the door was kept locked, and the king himself carried the key. Such was his concern about the precious water that he would not even trust his servants to draw it lest they should give some away, and when he wanted any for his own drinking he sent his daughter for it.

One night the king gave a grand entertainment. Many princes were present and no end of lords and nobles. There were wonderful doings throughout the palace, and in the town square great bonfires burned whose flames streamed up to the

very sky. There was dancing and sweet music, and feasting in plenty for all who came. Nor was anyone turned away from the palace gates. "You are welcome, you are welcome heartily!" was the porter's salute to each new arrival. Among those who attended this grand entertainment was one young prince who was comely to behold above all the rest. Right merrily did he dance that night with the old king's daughter, wheeling here and wheeling there as light as a feather, and footing it to the admiration of everyone.

After the dancing came the supper, and the young prince sat at table beside the beautiful princess. She smiled on him as often as he spoke to her, and he would have won more smiles by speaking to her still oftener than he did had it not been that he was obliged constantly to turn to the company and thank them for the many compliments passed on his fair partner and himself.

In the midst of the banquet one of the great lords said to King Core, "May it please your majesty, here is everything in abundance that heart can wish for, both to eat and drink, except water."

'Water!" said the king, mightily pleased because someone had called for that of which intentionally there was a want; "water you shall have, my lord, speedily, and of such a delicious quality that I challenge all Ireland to equal it. Daughter, go fetch some in the golden vessel I caused to be made for the purpose."

The princess was annoyed to be told to perform so menial a service in the presence of all those people. She hesitated to obey, and looked down on the floor. The king, who loved his daughter very much, seeing this, was sorry he had made such a request, but having said the word he would not recall it. He,

however, thought of a way to make the proposal more to her liking, and said in a loud voice, "Daughter, I wonder not at your fearing to go alone so late at night, but no doubt the young prince at your side will go with you."

Of course this plan delighted the prince. He was on his feet instantly, took the golden vessel in one hand and a light in the other, and stood waiting for the princess. She only delayed him till she could get the key from her father, and then the two passed out of the hall together, while all present gazed admiringly after them.

They arrived at the well, and the princess unlocked the door.

"You hold the light," said the prince, "and I will dip up the water."

"Oh no," she replied, "my father would not like to have anyone but me do the dipping. Give me the vessel and I will fill it while you guard the door. We have to take the greatest care about this water."

So the prince stood at the door, and the princess reached down into the well to fill the golden vessel.

She had not used this receptacle before, and as it was much heavier than any to which she had been accustomed, she in some way lost her balance and fell into the well.

The prince sprang to save her, but in his haste he dropped the light he carried and was in darkness. He called the princess by name. There was no answer. He could see nothing, and still calling to her he groped his way to the well. To his surprise he found a stream of water gushing forth. He splashed into it ankle deep, and in a moment more it was swirling about his knees with a violence that compelled him to turn back.

Greatly distressed, he ran to the palace hall to tell what had happened. The king and his guests hastened out, but as they started to go down the palace steps they discovered that the courtyard was full of water. They could hear it rushing from the well and see it surging everywhere. All the time it was rapidly rising. Now it flooded the steps, and they retreated into the great hall. The water followed them, and they were up to their necks in it before they could collect their thoughts and decide what to do. Then the water passed over their heads, and at length it reached such a height that the entire green valley where the town and palace stood was filled, and thus the present Lakes of Killarney were formed.

Yet the king and his guests were not drowned. Neither was the fair princess. She appeared in the banquet hall the very next night, and so did all the rest of the company, and they continued their grand entertainment. Every night since, the same merrymaking and dancing and feasting go on in the palace at the bottom of the lake, and this nightly revel will continue for all time, unless someone brings forth out of the water the golden vessel which was the cause of all the mischief. If that vessel could be fished up from the depths where it has lain in the ooze all these centuries the lakes would vanish. Their basin would again be a green valley, and the life in the old town and in the palace of King Core would be resumed where the flood cut it off.

Should there be any who do not credit this story they can go and see the Lakes of Killarney, for there the lakes are to this day; and it is told that when the waters are low and clear the ancient dwellings and the stately palace may be viewed in the bottom by those who have good eyesight, and the buildings can be seen so plainly there is no need of the help of spectacles.

The Two Brothers [33]
(Eastern Europe)

ONCE upon a time there were two brothers whose father left them each a small property; and the elder brother, who was sharp and miserly, grew very rich, but the younger brother became poorer and poorer. This younger brother had many children, and there were times when he could scarcely furnish them with bread to eat. At last the bread too failed, and he was greatly grieved, for nowhere was there a more honest or kinder man than he. "I will go to my rich brother and ask him for a loaf of bread," he said.

But he only wasted his time. The rich brother called him a beggar and a vagabond and slammed the door in his face. After this brutal reception the poor fellow did not know which way to turn. Hungry, scantily clad, shivering with cold, his legs could scarcely carry him along. He had not the heart to go home with nothing for his children. So he went toward the mountain forest. In the woods he found a few wild pears on the ground, and he ate them, though they were so sour they set his teeth on edge. But what was he to do to warm himself? The wind pierced him through and through with its chill blast. "Where shall I go?" he said. "What will become of my little ones in the cottage? They have neither food nor fire, and my brother has driven me from his door."

Just then he remembered to have heard that the top of the mountain was made of crystal, and that a fire was forever

burning there. "I will try to find the fire," said he, "and then I may be able to warm myself."

So he went on climbing higher and higher, till he reached the mountain top, and it was made of crystal, as he had heard. At the very summit was a small sheltered glen, and in this glen he was startled to see twelve strange beings sitting around a huge fire. He was frightened and stopped for a moment, but then said to himself, "What have I to lose? Why should I fear? God be with me! Courage!"

He advanced toward the fire, and bowing respectfully said, "Good people, take pity on my distress. I am very poor. There is no fire in my cottage. Will you let me warm myself at this fire of yours?"

They all looked kindly at him, and one of them said, "Come and sit down with us. You are quite welcome to share the warmth of our fire as long as you choose to stay."

He sat down and soon was thoroughly warmed and comfortable. While he lingered enjoying the grateful heat an old man with a long white beard and a bald head rose from the midst of the flames and stepped forth from the fire and spoke to him. "My friend," said the old man, "I am the King of Time, and thou seest about the fire the twelve months, my attendants. It is my advice that thou waste not the day here. Return to thy cottage and work and live honestly. Take with thee as many embers from our fire as thou wilt, for we have more than we need."

"The embers would indeed be welcome," responded the man; "but how can I carry them?"

"We will put them in a sack for thee," the old man said, "and thou need not fear that they will burn either the sack or thee."

Then the old man stepped back into the fire and vanished. Immediately the twelve months rose and filled a sack with embers. This sack they put on the man's shoulders and advised him to hasten home.

Humbly thanking them, he set off. He wondered that the embers did not feel hot, and that they seemed so heavy. Presently he had descended from the mountain and come forth from the forest As he passed his brother's house his brother saw him and was so curious to know what was in the sack that he ran out to the road and said, "You seem to be heavily burdened. I can't imagine what you are carrying."

"It is nothing but a sack of embers which some friends on the mountain gave me from their fire," replied the poor brother.

"Embers! Impossible!" exclaimed the other. "Let me see them."

The poor brother put down the sack, and they were both equally surprised on looking inside to find it full of gold pieces. "Ah!" said the bearer of the sack, "I now have wealth and shall be able to provide generously for my family."

He was overjoyed, but the older brother was envious, and when he learned how the money had been acquired he said to himself, "I also will visit the mountain, and perhaps I will meet with the same luck."

So he set forth, and on reaching the crystal summit he found the twelve months seated around the fire. He approached them and said, "I beg of you, good people, to let me warm myself, for it is bitterly cold, and I am poor and homeless."

But one of the months replied, "Sir, we know thee. Thou art a rich miser and hast dared to lie to us. Well dost thou deserve punishment."

Amazed and terrified the man stood silent, and then he saw emerging from the flames a white-bearded old man, who addressed him sternly and said, "Woe unto the selfish! Thy brother is good. Therefore have we blessed him. As for thee, thou art wicked and shalt not escape our vengeance."

At these words the twelve arose. One of them seized the unfortunate man, struck him a sharp blow, and passed him along to the next. The second also struck him and passed him to the third, and they all in turn served him in like manner. Then he was given over to the old man, who disappeared with him into the fire.

Weeks and months went by, but the rich man did not come back, and none knew what had become of him; nor has he returned even to this day.

The Golden Duck [34]
(Eastern Europe)

Once upon a time there was a king who had four sons. One day the queen said to him:

"It is time that one of our boys went out into the world to make his fortune."

"I have been thinking that very same thing," the king said. "Let us get ready Raduz, our youngest, and send him off with God's blessing."

Preparations were at once made and in a few days Raduz bid his parents farewell and set forth.

He traveled many days and many nights over desert plains and through dense forests until he came to a high mountain. Halfway up the mountain he found a house.

"I'll stop here," he thought to himself, "and see if they'll take me into service."

Now this house was occupied by three people: old Yezibaba, who was a bad old witch; her husband, who was a wizard but not so bad as Yezibaba; and their daughter, Ludmila, the sweetest, kindest girl that two wicked parents ever had.

"Good day to you all," Raduz said, as he stepped into the house and bowed.

"The same to you," old Yezibaba answered. "What brings you here?"

"I'm looking for work and I thought you might have something for me to do."

"What can you do? " Yezibaba asked.

"I'll do anything you set me to. I'm trustworthy and industrious."

Yezibaba didn't want to take him, but the old man wanted him and in the end Yezibaba with very ill grace consented to give him a trial.

He rested that night and early next morning presented himself to the old witch and said:

"What work am I to do today, mistress?"

Yezibaba looked him over from head to foot. Then she took him to a window and said: "What do you see out there?"

"I see a rocky hillside."

"Good. Go to that rocky hillside, cultivate it, plant it in trees that will grow, blossom, and bear fruit tonight. Tomorrow morning bring me the ripe fruit. Here is a wooden hoe with which to work."

"Alas," thought Raduz to himself, "did ever a man have such a task as this? What can I do on that rocky hillside with a wooden hoe? How can I finish my task in so short a time?"

He started to work but he hadn't struck three blows with the wooden hoe before it broke. In despair he tossed it aside and sat down under a beech tree.

In the meantime wicked old Yezibaba had cooked a disgusting mess of toads which she told Ludmila to carry out to the serving man for his dinner. Ludmila was sorry for the poor young man who had fallen into her mother's clutches and she said to herself: "What has he done to deserve such unkind treatment? I won't let him eat this nasty mess. I'll share my own dinner with him."

She waited until her mother was out of the room, then she took Yezibaba's magic wand and hid it under her apron. After

that she hurried out to Raduz, whom she found sitting under the beech tree with his face in his hands.

"Don't be discouraged," she said to him. "It is true your mistress cooked you a mess of toads for your dinner but, see, I have thrown them away and have brought you my own dinner instead. As for your task," she continued, "I will help you with that. Here is my mother's magic wand. I have but to strike the rocky hillside and by tomorrow the trees that my mother has ordered will spring up, blossom, and bear fruit."

Ludmila did as she promised. She struck the ground with the magic wand and instantly instead of the rocky hillside there appeared an orchard with rows on rows of trees that blossomed and bore fruit as you watched them.

Raduz looked from Ludmila to the orchard and couldn't find words with which to express his surprise and gratitude. Then Ludmila spread out her dinner and together they ate it, laughing merrily and talking. Raduz would have kept Ludmila all the afternoon but she remembered that Yezibaba was waiting for her and she hurried away.

The next morning Raduz presented Yezibaba a basket of ripe fruit. She sniffed it suspiciously and then very grudgingly acknowledged that he had accomplished his task.

"What am I to do today?" Raduz asked.

Yezibaba led him to a second window and asked him what he saw there.

"I see a rocky ravine covered with brambles," he said.

"Right. Go now and clear away the brambles, dig up the ravine, and plant it in grape vines. Tomorrow morning bring me the ripe grapes. Here is another wooden hoe with which to work."

Raduz took the hoe and set to work manfully. At the first blow the hoe broke into three pieces.

"Alas," he thought, "what is going to happen to me now? Unless Ludmila helps me again, I am lost."

At home Yezibaba was busy cooking a mess of serpents. When noonday came she said to Ludmila: "Here, my child, is dinner for the serving man. Take it out to him."

Ludmila took the nasty mess and, as on the day before, threw it away. Then again hiding Yezibaba's wand under her apron, she went to Raduz, carrying in her hands her own dinner.

Raduz saw her coming and at once his heart grew light and he thought to himself how kind Ludmila was and how beautiful.

"I have been sitting here idle," he told her, "for at the first blow my hoe broke. Unless you help me, I don't know what I shall do."

"Don't worry," Ludmila said. "It is true your mistress sent you a mess of serpents for your dinner, but I threw them out and have brought you my own dinner instead. And I've brought the magic wand, too, so it will be easy enough to plant a vineyard that will produce ripe grapes by tomorrow morning."

They ate together and after dinner Ludmila took the wand and struck the earth. At once a vineyard appeared and, as they watched, the vines blossomed and the blooms turned to grapes.

It was harder than before for Raduz to let Ludmila go, for he wanted to keep on talking to her forever, but she remembered that Yezibaba was waiting for her and she hurried away.

The next morning when Raduz presented a basket of ripe grapes, old Yezibaba could scarcely believe her eyes. She sniffed the grapes suspiciously and then very grudgingly acknowledged that he had accomplished his second task.

"What am I to do today?" Raduz asked.

Yezibaba led him to a third window and told him to look out and tell her what he saw.

"I see a great rocky cliff."

"Right," she said. "Go now to that cliff and grind me flour out of the rocks and from the flour bake me bread. Tomorrow morning bring me the fresh loaves. Today you shall have no tools of any kind. Go now and do this task or suffer the consequences."

As Raduz started off, Yezibaba looked after him and shook her head suspiciously.

"I don't understand this," she said to her husband. "He could never have done these two tasks alone. Do you suppose Ludmila has been helping him? I'll punish her if she has!" "Shame on you," the old man said, "to talk so of your own daughter! Ludmila is a good girl and has always been loyal and obedient."

"I hope so," Yezibaba said, "but just the same I think I myself will carry him out his dinner today."

"Nonsense, old woman! You'll do no such thing! You're always smelling a rat somewhere! Let the boy alone and don't go nagging at Ludmila either!"

So Yezibaba said no more. This time she cooked a mess of lizards for Raduz' dinner.

"Here, Ludmila," she said, "carry this out to the young man. But see that you don't talk to him. And hurry back."

Poor Raduz had been pounding stones one on another as well as he could, but he hadn't been able to grind any of them into flour. As noonday approached he kept looking up anxiously to see whether beautiful Ludmila was again coming to help him.

"Here I am," she called while she was yet some distance away. "You were to have lizard stew today but, see, I am bringing you my own dinner!"

Then she told him what she had heard Yezibaba say to her father.

"Today she almost brought you your dinner herself, for she suspects that I have been helping you. If she knew that I really had she would kill you."

"Dear Ludmila," Raduz said, "I know very well that without you I am lost! How can I ever thank you for all you have done for me?"

Ludmila said she didn't want thanks. She was helping Raduz because she was sorry for him and loved him.

Then she took Yezibaba's wand and struck the rocky cliff. At once, instead of the bare rock, there were sacks of grain and a millstone that worked merrily away grinding out fine flour. As you watched, the flour was kneaded up into loaves and then, pop went the loaves into a hot oven and soon the air was sweet with the smell of baking bread.

Raduz begged Ludmila to stay and talk to him, but she remembered that the old witch was waiting for her and she hurried home.

The next morning Raduz carried the baked loaves to Yezibaba. She sniffed at them suspiciously and then her wicked heart nearly cracked with bitterness to think that Raduz had accomplished his third task. But she hid her disappointment

and pretending to smile, she said: "I see, my dear boy, that you have been able to do all the tasks that I have set you. This is enough for the present. Today you may rest."

That night the old witch hatched the plot of boiling Raduz alive. She had him fill a big cauldron with water and put it on the fire. Then she said to her husband:

"Now, old man, I'm going to take a nap but when the water boils wake me up."

As soon as Yezibaba was asleep Ludmila gave the old man strong wine until he, too, fell asleep. Then she called Raduz and told him what Yezibaba was planning to do.

"You must escape while you can," she said, "for if you are here tomorrow you will surely be thrown into the boiling cauldron."

But Raduz had fallen too deeply in love with Ludmila to leave her and now he declared that he would never go unless she went with him.

"Very well," Ludmila said, "I will go with you if you swear you will never forget me."

"Forget you? How could I forget you," Raduz said, "when I wouldn't give you up for the whole world!" So Raduz took a solemn oath and they made ready to flee. Ludmila threw down her kerchief in one corner of the house and Raduz' cap in another. Then she took Yezibaba's wand and off they started.

The next morning when the old man awoke, he called out: "Hi, there, boy! Are you still asleep?"

"No, I'm not asleep," answered Raduz' cap. "I'm just stretching."

Presently the old man called out again: "Here, boy, hand me my clothes."

"In a minute," the cap answered. "Just wait till I put on my slippers."

Then old Yezibaba awoke. "Ludmila!" she cried. "Get up, you lazy girl, and hand me my skirt and bodice."

"In a minute! In a minute!" the kerchief answered.

"What's the matter?" Yezibaba scolded. "Why are you so long dressing?"

"Just one more minute!" the kerchief said.

But Yezibaba, who was an impatient old witch, sat up in bed and then she could see that Ludmila's bed was empty. That threw her into a fine rage and she called out to her husband:

"Now, old man, what have you got to say? As sure as I'm alive that good-for-nothing boy is gone and that precious daughter of yours has gone with him!"

"No, no," the old man said. "I don't think so."

Then they both got up and sure enough neither Raduz nor Ludmila was to be found.

"What do you think now, you old booby!" Yezibaba shouted. "A mighty good and loyal and obedient girl that daughter of yours is! But why do you stand there all day? Mount the black steed and fly after them and when you overtake them bring them back to me and I'll punish them properly!"

In the meantime Raduz and Ludmila were fleeing as fast as they could.

Suddenly Ludmila said: "Oh, how my left cheek burns! I wonder what it means? Look back, dear Raduz, and see if there is any one following us."

Raduz turned and looked. "There's nothing following us," he said, "but a black cloud in the sky."

"A black cloud? That's the old man on the black horse that rides on the clouds. Quick! We must be ready for him!"

Ludmila struck the ground with Yezibaba's wand and changed it into a field. She turned herself into the growing rye and made Raduz the reaper who was cutting the rye. Then she instructed him how to answer the old man with cunning.

The black cloud descended upon them with thunder and a shower of hailstones that beat down the growing rye.

"Take care!" Raduz cried. "You're trampling my rye! Leave some of it for me."

"Very well," the old man said, alighting from his steed, "I'll leave some of it for you. But tell me, reaper, have you seen anything of two young people passing this way?"

"Not a soul has passed while I've been reaping, but I do remember that while I was planting this field two such people did pass."

The old man shook his head, mounted his steed, and flew home again on the black cloud.

"Well, old wiseacre," said Yezibaba, "what brings you back so soon?"

"No use my going on," the old man said. "The only person I saw was a reaper in a field of rye."

"You booby!" cried Yezibaba, "not to know that Raduz was the reaper and Ludmila the rye! How they fooled you! And didn't you bring me back just one stalk of rye? Go after them again and this time don't let them fool you!"

In the meantime Raduz and Ludmila were hurrying on. Suddenly Ludmila said:

"I wonder why my left cheek burns? Look back, dear Raduz, and see if there is any one following us."

Raduz turned and looked "There's nothing following us but a gray cloud in the sky."

"A gray cloud? That's the old man on the gray horse that rides on the clouds. But don't be afraid. Only have ready a cunning answer."

Ludmila struck her hat with the wand and changed it into a chapel. Herself she changed into a fly that attracted a host of other flies. She changed Raduz into a hermit. All the flies flew into the chapel and Raduz began preaching to them.

Suddenly the gray cloud descended on the chapel with a flurry of snow and such cold that the shingles of the roof crackled.

The old man alighted from the gray steed and entered the chapel.

"Hermit," he said to Raduz, "have you seen two travelers go by here, a girl and a youth?"

"As long as I've been preaching here," Raduz said, "I've had only flies for a congregation. But I do remember that while the chapel was building two such people did go by. But now I must beg you, good sir, to go out, for you are letting in so much cold that my congregation is freezing."

At that the old man mounted his steed and flew back home on the gray cloud.

Old Yezibaba was waiting for him. When she saw him coming she called out:

"Again you bring no one, you good-for-nothing! Where did you leave them this time?"

"Where did I leave them?" the old man said. "How could I leave them when I didn't even see them? All I saw was a little chapel and a hermit preaching to a congregation of flies. I almost froze the congregation to death!"

"Oh, what a booby you are!" Yezibaba cried. "Raduz was the hermit and Ludmila one of the flies! Why didn't you bring me just one shingle from the roof of the chapel? I see I'll have to go after them myself!" In a rage she mounted the third magic steed and flew off.

In the meantime Raduz and Ludmila were hurrying on. Suddenly Ludmila said:

"I wonder why my left cheek burns? Look back, dear Raduz, again, and see if there is any one following us."

Raduz turned and looked. "There's nothing following us but a red cloud in the sky."

"A red cloud? That must be Yezibaba herself on the steed of fire. Now indeed we must be careful. Up to this it has been easy enough but it won't be easy to deceive her. Here we are beside a lake. I will change myself into a golden duck and float on the water. Do you dive into the water so that she can't burn you. When she alights and tries to catch me, do you jump up and get the horse by the bridle. Don't be afraid at what will happen."

The fiery cloud descended, burning up everything it touched. At the edge of the water Yezibaba alighted from her steed and tried to catch the golden duck. The duck fluttered on and on just out of her reach and Yezibaba went farther and farther from her horse.

Then Raduz leaped out of the water and caught the horse by its bridle. At once the duck rose on its wings and flew to Raduz and became again Ludmila. Together they mounted the fiery steed and flew off over the lake.

Yezibaba, helpless with rage and dismay, called after them a bitter curse:

"If you, Raduz, are kissed by woman before you wed Ludmila, then will you forget Ludmila! And you, ungrateful girl, if once Raduz forgets you then he shall not remember you again until seven long years have come and gone!"

Raduz and Ludmila rode on and on until they neared Raduz' native city. There they met a man of whom Raduz asked the news.

"News indeed!" the man said. "The king and his three older sons are dead. Only the queen is alive and she cries night and day for her youngest son who went out into the world and has never been heard of since. The whole city is in an uproar as to who shall be the new king."

When Raduz heard this he said to Ludmila: "Do you, my dear Ludmila, wait for me here outside the city while I go quickly to the palace and let it be known that I am alive and am returned. It would not be fitting to present you to my mother, the queen, in those ragged clothes. As soon as I am made king I shall come for you, bringing you a beautiful dress."

Ludmila agreed to this and Raduz left her and hurried to the castle. His mother recognized him at once and ran with open arms to greet him. She wanted to kiss him but he wouldn't let her. The news of his return flew abroad and he was immediately proclaimed king. A great feast was spread and all the people ate and drank and made merry.

Fatigued with his journey and with the excitement of his return, Raduz lay down to rest. While he slept his mother came in and kissed him on both cheeks. Instantly Yezibaba's curse was fulfilled and all memory of Ludmila left him.

Poor Ludmila waited for his return but he never came. Then she knew what must have happened. Heartbroken and lonely she found a spot near a farmhouse that commanded a

view of the castle, and she stood there day after day hoping to see Raduz. She stood there so long that finally she took root and grew up into a poplar tree that was so beautiful that soon throughout the countryside people began talking about it. Everyone admired it but the young king. He when he looked at it always felt unhappy and he supposed this was because it obstructed the view from his window. At last he ordered it to be cut down.

The farmer near whose house it stood begged hard to have it saved, but the king was firm.

Shortly after the poplar was cut down there grew up under the king's very window a pretty little pear tree that bore golden pears. It was a wonderful little tree. No matter how many pears you picked in the evening, by the next morning the tree would again be full.

The king loved the little tree and was forever talking about it. The old queen, on the other hand, disliked it.

"I wish that tree would die," she used to say. "There's something strange about it that makes me nervous."

The king begged her to leave the tree alone but she worried and complained and nagged until at last for his own peace of mind he had the poor little pear tree cut down.

The seven years of Yezibaba's curse at last ran out. Then Ludmila changed herself again into a little golden duck and went swimming about on the lake that was under the king's window.

Suddenly the king began to remember that he had seen that duck before. He ordered it to be caught and brought to him. But none of his people could catch it. Then he called together all the fishermen and bird catchers in the country but none of them could catch the strange duck.

The days went by and the king's mind was more and more engrossed with the thought of the golden duck. "If no one can catch it for me," he said at last, "I must try to catch it myself."

So he went to the lake and reached out his hand after the golden duck. The duck led him on and on but at last she allowed herself to be caught. As soon as she was in his hand she changed to herself and Raduz recognized her as his own beautiful Ludmila.

She said to him: "I have been true to you but you have forgotten me all these years. Yet I forgive you, for it was not your fault."

In Raduz' heart his old love returned a hundred-fold and he was overjoyed to lead Ludmila to the castle. He presented her to his mother and said:

"This is she who saved my life many times. She and no one else will be my wife."

A great wedding feast was prepared and so at last Raduz married the faithful Ludmila.

The Golden Godmother [35]
(Eastern Europe)

There was once a wealthy farmer named Lukas who was so careless in the management of his affairs that there came a time when all his property was gone and he had nothing left but one old tumble-down cottage. Then when it was too late he realized how foolish he had been.

He had always prayed for a child but during the years of his prosperity God had never heard him. Now when he was so poor that he had nothing to eat, his wife gave birth to a little daughter. He looked at the poor unwelcome little stranger and sighed, for he didn't know how he was going to take care of it.

The first thing to be thought about was the christening. Lukas went to the wife of a laborer who lived nearby and asked her to be godmother. She refused because she didn't see that it would do her any good to be godmother to a child of a man as poor as Lukas.

"You see, Lukas, what happens to a man who has wasted his property," his wife said. "While we were rich the burgomaster himself was our friend, but now even that poverty-stricken woman won't raise a finger to help us. See how the poor infant shivers, for I haven't even any old rags in which to wrap it! And it has to lie on the bare straw! God have mercy on us, how poor we are!" So she wept over the baby, covering it with tears and kisses.

Suddenly a happy thought came to her. She wiped away her tears and said to her husband:

"I beg you, Lukas, go to our old neighbor, the burgomaster's wife. She is wealthy. I'm sure she hasn't forgotten that I was godmother to her child. Go and ask her if she will be godmother to mine."

"I don't think she will," Lukas answered, "but I'll ask her."

With a heavy heart he went by the fields and the barns that had once been his own and entered the house of his old friend, the burgomaster.

"God bless you, neighbor," he said to the burgomaster's wife. "My wife sends her greeting and bids me tell you that God has given us a little daughter whom she wants you to hold at the christening."

The burgomaster's wife looked at him and laughed in his face.

"My dear Lukas, of course I should like to do this for you, but times are hard. Nowadays a person needs every penny and it would take a good deal to help such poor beggars as you. Why don't you ask someone else? Why have you picked me out?"

"Because my wife was godmother to your child."

"Oh, that's it, is it? What you did for me at that time was a loan, was it? And now you want me to give you back as much as you gave me, eh? I'll do no such thing! If I were as generous as you used to be, I'd soon go the way you have gone. No! I shall not walk one step toward that christening!"

Without answering her, Lukas turned and went home in tears.

"You see, dear wife," he said when he got there, "it turned out as I knew it would. But don't be discouraged, for God never entirely forsakes any one. Give me the child and I myself will carry it to the christening and the first person I meet I shall take for godmother."

Weeping all the while, the wife wrapped the baby in a piece of old skirt and placed it in her husband's arms.

On the way to the chapel, Lukas came to a crossroads where he met an old woman. "Grandmother," he said, "will you be godmother to my child?" And he explained to her how everyone else had refused on account of his poverty and how in desperation he had decided to ask the first person he met. "And so, dear grandmother," he concluded, "I am asking you."

"Of course I'll be godmother," the old woman said. "Here, give me the dear wee thing!"

So Lukas gave her the child and together they went on to the chapel.

As they arrived the priest was just ready to leave. The sexton hurried up to him and whispered that a christening party was coming.

"Who is it?" he asked, impatiently.

"Oh, it's only that good-for-nothing of a Lukas who is poorer than a church mouse."

The godmother saw that the sexton was whispering something unfriendly, so she pulled out a shining ducat from her pocket, stepped up to the priest, and pressed it into his hand.

The priest blinked his eyes in amazement, looking first at the ducat and then at the shabby old woman who had given it. He stuffed the ducat into his pocket, whispered hurriedly to the sexton to bring him the font, and then christened the child of poor Lukas with as much ceremony as the child of the richest townsman. The little girl received the name Marishka.

After the christening the priest accompanied the godmother to the door of the chapel and the sexton went even

farther until he, too, received the reward for which he was hoping.

When Lukas and the old woman came to the crossroads where they had met, she handed him the child. Then she reached into her pocket, drew out another golden ducat which she stuck into a fold of the child's clothes, and said: "From this ducat with which I endow my godchild, you will have enough to bring her up properly. She will always be a joy and a comfort to you, and when she grows up she will make a happy marriage. Now good-bye."

She drew a green wand from her bosom and touched the earth. Instantly a lovely rosebush appeared, covered with blooms. At the same moment the old woman vanished.

In bewilderment Lukas looked this way and that but she was gone. He was so surprised that he didn't know what had happened. I really think he would be standing on that same spot to this day if little Marishka had not begun to cry and by this reminded him of home.

His wife, meantime, was anxiously awaiting him. She, poor soul, was suffering the pangs of hunger, thirst, and bodily pain. There wasn't a mouthful of bread in the house, nor a cent of money.

As Lukas entered the room, he said: "Weep no more, dear wife. Here is your little Marishka. But before you kiss the child, take out the christening gift that you will find tucked away in her clothes. From it you will know what an excellent godmother she has."

The wife reached into the clothes and pulled out not one ducat but a whole handful of ducats!

"Oh!" she gasped and in her surprise she dropped the ducats and they rolled about in the straw that littered the wretched floor.

"Husband! Husband! Who gave you so much money? Just look!"

"I have already looked and at first when I saw them I was more surprised than you are. Now let me tell you where they come from."

So Lukas related to his wife all that had happened at the christening. In conclusion he said: "When I saw the old woman was really gone, I started home. On the way curiosity overcame me and I drew out the christening present and instead of one ducat I found a handful. I can tell you I was surprised but instead of letting them drop on the ground I let them slip back into the baby's clothes. I said to myself: 'Let your wife also have the pleasure of pulling out those golden horses.' And now, dear wife, leave off exclaiming. Give thanks to God for that which he has bestowed upon us and help me gather up the golden darlings, for we don't want any one coming in and spying on us just now."

As they began picking them up, they had a new surprise. Wherever there was one ducat, there they found ten! When they got them all together they made a fine big heap.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" said the woman as she gazed at the pile. "Who knows whether this money will be blessed to our use? Perhaps that old woman was an evil spirit who just wants to buy our souls!"

Lukas looked at his wife reprovingly. "How can you be so foolish? Do you suppose an evil spirit would have gone with me to church, allowed herself to be sprinkled with holy water, yes, and even herself make the sign of the cross! Never! I don't say

that she is just an ordinary human being, but I do say that she must be a good spirit whom God has sent to us to help us. I'm sure we can keep this money with a clear conscience. The first question is where to hide it so that no one can find it. For the present I shall put it into the chest, but tomorrow night I shall bury it under the pear tree. And one thing, wife, I warn you: don't say anything about it to anyone. I shall take one ducat and go to the burgomaster's wife and ask her to change it. Then I shall go buy some milk and eggs and bread and flour, and I'll bring back a woman with me who will make us a fine supper. Tomorrow I'll go to town and buy some clothes and feather beds. After that what else shall I buy? Can you guess?"

"The best thing to do would be to buy back our old property the house, the fields, and the livestock, and then manage it more wisely than before."

"You're right, wife, that's just what I'll do. And I will manage prudently this time! I have learned my lesson, I can tell you, for poverty is a good teacher."

When Lukas had hidden the money in the chest and turned the key, he took one ducat and went out to make his purchases. While he was gone his wife spent the time nursing the child and weaving happy dreams that now, she was sure, would come to pass.

After a short hour the door opened and Lukas and a red-cheeked maid entered. The maid carried a great pail of foaming milk. Lukas followed her with a basket of eggs in one hand and on top of the eggs two big round brown cakes, and in the other hand a load of feather beds tied in a knot.

"God be with you!" said the maid, placing the milk pail on the bench. "My mistress, the burgomaster's wife, greets you and sends you some milk for pudding. If there is anything else

you need you are to let her know." The maid curtsied and went away before the poor woman could express her thanks.

Lukas laughed and said: "You see, wife, what just one ducat did! If they knew how many more we had they would carry us about in their arms! The burgomaster's wife has sent us all these things. She is lending us feather beds until tomorrow and she is going to send us an old woman to help us out. I told her our child had received a handful of ducats as a christening gift. If she comes here to see you, make up your mind what you're going to say."

Then Lukas built a fire. Presently the old woman came and soon good hot soup was ready. It was just plain milk soup, but I can tell you it tasted better to hungry Lukas and his wife than the rich food which the king himself ate that day from a golden platter.

The next day after breakfast Lukas set out for town. The burgomaster's wife took advantage of his absence to visit his wife and find out what she could about the money.

"My dear neighbor," she said, after she had made the necessary inquiries about health, "the blessing of God came into your house with that child."

"Oh," said the other, "if you mean the christening gift, it isn't so very much. A handful of ducats soon roll away. However, may God repay that good woman, the godmother. At least we can now buy back our old farm and live like respectable people."

On the way home the burgomaster's wife stopped at the houses of her various friends and gave them a full account of Lukas' wealth. Before noon every small boy in the village knew that at Lukas' house they had a hogshead of ducats.

In the evening Lukas came back from town driving a cart that was piled high with furniture and clothing and feather beds and food. The next day he bought back his old farm with the cattle and the implements.

This marked the beginning of a new life for Lukas. He set to work with industry and put into practice all the lessons that poverty had taught him.

He and his wife lived happily. Their greatest joy was Marishka, a little girl so charming and so pretty that everyone loved her on sight.

"Dear neighbor," all the old women used to say to the child's mother, "that girl of yours will never grow up. She's far too wise for her years!"

But Marishka did very well. She grew up into a beautiful young woman and one day a prince saw her, fell in love with her, and married her. So the old godmother's prophecy that Marishka would make a happy marriage was fulfilled.

Tattercoats [36]
(England)

In a great palace by the sea there once dwelt a very rich old lord who had neither wife nor children living, only one little granddaughter, whose face he had never seen in all her life. He hated her bitterly, because at her birth his favorite daughter died; and when the old nurse brought him the baby he swore that it might live or die as it liked, but he would never look on its face as long as it lived.

So he turned his back and sat by his window looking out over the sea, and weeping great tears for his lost daughter, till his white hair and beard grew down over his shoulders and twined round his chair and crept into the chinks of the floor, and his tears, dropping on to the window ledge, wore a channel through the stone and ran away in a little river to the great sea. And meanwhile his granddaughter grew up with no one to care for her or clothe her; only the old nurse, when no one was by, would sometimes give her a dish of scraps from the kitchen or a torn petticoat from the rag bag; while the other servants of the palace would drive her from the house with blows and mocking words, calling her "Tattercoats," and pointing at her bare feet and shoulders, till she ran away crying, to hide among the bushes.

And so she grew up, with little to eat or wear, spending her days in the fields and lanes, with only the gooseherd for a companion, who would play to her so merrily on his little pipe when she was hungry or cold or tired that she forgot all her

troubles, and fell to dancing, with his flock of noisy geese for partners.

But one day people told each other that the King was traveling through the land, and in the town nearby was to give a great ball to all the lords and ladies of the country, when the Prince, his only son, was to choose a wife.

One of the royal invitations was brought to the palace by the sea, and the servants carried it up to the old lord who still sat by his window, wrapped in his long white hair and weeping into the little river that was fed by his tears.

But when he heard the King's command he dried his eyes and bade them bring shears to cut him loose, for his hair had bound him a fast prisoner and he could not move. And then he sent them for rich clothes and jewels, which he put on; and he ordered them to saddle the white horse with gold and silk that he might ride to meet the King.

Meanwhile Tattercoats had heard of the great doings in the town, and she sat by the kitchen door weeping because she could not go to see them. And when the old nurse heard her crying she went to the lord of the palace, and begged him to take his granddaughter with him to the King's ball.

But he only frowned and told her to be silent, while the servants laughed and said: "Tattercoats is happy in her rags, playing with the gooseherd; let her be — it is all she is fit for."

A second, and then a third time, the old nurse begged him to let the girl go with him, but she was answered only by black looks and fierce words, till she was driven from the room by the jeering servants with blows and mocking words.

Weeping over her ill success, the old nurse went to look for Tattercoats; but the girl had been turned from the door by the

cook, and had run away to tell her friend the gooseherd how unhappy she was because she could not go to the King's ball.

But when the gooseherd had listened to her story he bade her cheer up, and proposed that they should go together into the town to see the King and all the fine things; and when she looked sorrowfully down at her rags and bare feet he played a note or two upon his pipe, so joyful and merry that she forgot all about her tears and her troubles, and, before she well knew, the herd boy had taken her by the hand, and she and he, and the geese before them, were dancing down the road toward the town.

Before they had gone very far a handsome young man, splendidly dressed, rode up and stopped to ask the way to the castle where the King was staying; and when he found that they too were going thither, he got off his horse and walked beside them along the road.

The herd boy pulled out his pipe and played a low, sweet tune, and the stranger looked again and again at Tattercoats' lovely face, till he fell deeply in love with her and begged her to marry him.

But she only laughed and shook her golden head.

"You would be finely put to shame if you had a goose girl for your wife!" said she; "go and ask one of the great ladies you will see tonight at the King's ball, and do not flout poor Tattercoats."

But the more she refused him the sweeter the pipe played and the deeper the young man fell in love, till at last he begged her, as a proof of his sincerity, to come that night at twelve to the King's ball, just as she was, with the herd boy and his geese, and in her torn petticoat and bare feet, and he would dance

with her before the King and the lords and ladies, and present her to them all as his dear and honored bride.

So when night came, and the hall in the castle was full of light and music, and the lords and ladies were dancing before the King, just as the clock struck twelve, Tattercoats and the herd boy, followed by his flock of noisy geese, entered at the great doors and walked straight up the ballroom, while on either side the ladies whispered, the lords laughed, and the King, seated at the far end, stared in amazement.

But as they came in front of the throne Tattercoats' lover rose from beside the King and came to meet her. Taking her by the hand, he kissed her thrice before them all, and turned to the King.

"Father," he said, for it was the Prince himself, "I have made my choice, and here is my bride, the loveliest girl in all the land, and the sweetest as well!"

Before he had finished speaking the herd boy put his pipe to his lips and played a few low notes that sounded like a bird singing far off in the woods; and as he played, Tattercoats' rags were changed to shining robes sewn with glittering jewels, a golden crown lay upon her golden hair, and the flock of geese behind her became a crowd of dainty pages bearing her long train.

And, as the King rose to greet her as his daughter, the trumpets sounded loudly in honor of the new Princess, and the people outside in the street said to each other:

"Ah, now the Prince has chosen for his wife the loveliest girl in all the land!"

But the gooseherd was never seen again, and no one knew what became of him; while the old lord went home once more

to his palace by the sea, for he could not stay at court when he had sworn never to look on his granddaughter's face.

So there he still sits by his window, if you could only see him, as you some day may, weeping more bitterly than ever, as, he looks out over the sea.

Baba Yaga [37]
(Russia)

"Tell us about Baba Yaga," begged Maroosia.

"Yes," said Vanya,; "please, grandfather, and about the little hut on hen's legs."

"Baba Yaga is a witch," said old Peter; "a terrible old woman she is, but sometimes kind enough. You know it was she who told Prince Ivan how to win one of the daughters of the Tzar of the Sea, and that was the best daughter of the bunch, Vasilissa the Very Wise. But then Baba Yaga is usually bad, as in the case of Vasilissa the Very Beautiful, who was only saved from her iron teeth by the cleverness of her Magic Doll."

"Tell us the story of the Magic Doll," begged Maroosia.

"I will someday," said old Peter. "And has Baba Yaga really got iron teeth?" asked Vanya.

"Iron, like the poker and tongs," said old Peter.

"What for?" said Maroosia.

"To eat up little Russian children," said old Peter, "when she can get them. She usually only eats bad ones, because the good ones get away. She is bony all over, and her eyes flash, and she drives about in a mortar, beating it with a pestle, and sweeping up her tracks with a besom, so that you cannot tell which way she has gone."

"And her hut?" said Vanya. He had often heard about it before, but he wanted to hear about it again.

"She lives in a little hut which stands on hen's legs. Sometimes it faces the forest, sometimes it faces the path, and

sometimes it walks solemnly about. But in some of the stories she lives in another kind of hut, with a railing of tall sticks, and a skull on each stick. And all night long fire glows in the skulls and fades as the dawn rises."

"Now tell us one of the Baba Yaga stories," said Maroosia.

"Please," said Vanya.

"I will tell you how one little girl got away from her, and then, if ever she catches you, you will know exactly what to do." And old Peter put down his pipe and began:

Baba Yaga and the Little Girl with the Kind Heart

Once upon a time there was a widowed old man who lived alone in a hut with his little daughter. Very merry they were together, and they used to smile at each other over a table just piled with bread and jam. Everything went well, until the old man took it into his head to marry again.

Yes, the old man became foolish in the years of his old age, and he took another wife. And so the poor little girl had a stepmother. And after that everything changed. There was no more bread and jam on the table, and no more playing bo-peep, first this side of the samovar and then that, as she sat with her father at tea. It was worse than that, for she never did sit at tea. The step-mother said that everything that went wrong was the little girl's fault. And the old man believed his new wife, and so there were no more kind words for his little daughter. Day after day the step-mother used to say that the little girl was too naughty to sit at table. And then she would throw her a crust and tell her to get out of the hut and go and eat it somewhere else. And the poor little girl used to go away by herself into the

shed in the yard, and wet the dry crust with her tears, and eat it all alone. Ah me! she often wept for the old days, and she often wept at the thought of the days that were to come.

Mostly she wept because she was all alone, until one day she found a little friend in the shed. She was hunched up in a corner of the shed, eating her crust and crying bitterly, when she heard a little noise. It was like this: scratch scratch. It was just that, a little grey mouse who lived in a hole.

Out he came, his little pointed nose and his long whiskers, his little round ears and his bright eyes. Out came his little humpy body and his long tail. And then he sat up on his hind legs, and curled his tail twice round himself and looked at the little girl.

The little girl, who had a kind heart, forgot all her sorrows, and took a scrap of her crust and threw it to the little mouse. The mouseykin nibbled and nibbled, and there, it was gone, and he was looking for another. She gave him another bit, and presently that was gone, and another and another, until there was no crust left for the little girl. Well, she didn't mind that. You see, she was so happy seeing the little mouse nibbling and nibbling. When the crust was done the mouseykin looks up at her with his little bright eyes, and 'Thank you," he says, in a little squeaky voice. "Thank you," he says; "you are a kind little girl, and I am only a mouse, and I've eaten all your crust. But there is one thing I can do for you, and that is to tell you to take care. The old woman in the hut (and that was the cruel stepmother) is own sister to Baba Yaga, the bony-legged, the witch. So if ever she sends you on a message to your aunt, you come and tell me. For Baba Yaga would eat you soon enough with her iron teeth if you did not know what to do."

'"Oh, thank you," said the little girl; and just then she heard the stepmother calling to her to come in and clean up the tea things, and tidy the house, and brush out the floor, and clean everybody's boots.

So off she had to go.

When she went in she had a good look at her stepmother, and sure enough she had a long nose, and she was as bony as a fish with all the flesh picked off, and the little girl thought of Baba Yaga and shivered, though she did not feel so bad when she remembered the mouseykin out there in the shed in the yard.

The very next morning it happened. The old man went off to pay a visit to some friends of his in the next village, just as I go off sometimes to see old Fedor, God be with him. And as soon as the old man was out of sight the wicked stepmother called the little girl.

"You are to go today to your dear little aunt in the forest," says she, "and ask her for a needle and thread to mend a shirt."

"But here is a needle and thread," says the little girl.

"Hold your tongue," says the stepmother, and she gnashes her teeth, and they make a noise like clattering tongs. "Hold your tongue," she says.

"Didn't I tell you you are to go today to your dear little aunt to ask for a needle and thread to mend a shirt?"

"How shall I find her?" says the little girl, nearly ready to cry, for she knew that her aunt was Baba Yaga, the bony-legged, the witch.

The stepmother took hold of the little girl's nose and pinched it.

"That is your nose," she says. "Can you feel it?"

"Yes," says the poor little girl.

You must go along the road into the forest till you come to a fallen tree; then you must turn to your left, and then follow your nose and you will find her," says the stepmother. "Now, be off with you, lazy one. Here is some food for you to eat by the way." She gave the little girl a bundle wrapped up in a towel.

The little girl wanted to go into the shed to tell the mouseykin she was going to Baba Yaga, and to ask what she should do. But she looked back, and there was the stepmother at the door watching her. So she had to go straight on.

She walked along the road through the forest till she came to the fallen tree. Then she turned to the left. Her nose was still hurting where the step-mother had pinched it, so she knew she had to go straight ahead. She was just setting out when she heard a little noise under the fallen tree.

"Scratch scratch."

And out jumped the little mouse, and sat up in the road in front of her.

"O mouseykin, mouseykin," says the little girl, "my stepmother has sent me to her sister. And that is Baba Yaga, the bony-legged, the witch, and I do not know what to do."

"It will not be difficult," says the little mouse, "because of your kind heart. Take all the things you find in the road, and do with them what you like. Then you will escape from Baba Yaga, and everything will be well."

"Are you hungry, mouseykin?" said the little "I could nibble, I think," says the little mouse. The little girl unfastened the towel, and there was nothing in it but stones. That was what the stepmother had given the little girl to eat by the way.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," says the little girl. "There's nothing for you to eat."

"Isn't there;" said mouseykin, and as she looked at them the little girl saw the stones turn to bread and jam. The little girl sat down on the fallen tree, and the little mouse sat beside her, and they ate bread and jam until they were not hungry any more.

"Keep the towel," says the little mouse; "I think it will be useful. And remember what I said about the things you find on the way. And now good-bye," says he.

"Good-bye," says the little girl, and runs along.

As she was running along she found a nice new handkerchief lying in the road. She picked it up and took it with her. Then she found a little bottle of oil. She picked it up and took it with her. Then she found some scraps of meat.

"Perhaps I'd better take them too," she said; and she took them.

Then she found a pretty blue ribbon, and she took that. Then she found a little loaf of good bread, and she took that too.

"I daresay somebody will like it," she said.

And then she came to the hut of Baba Yaga, the bony-legged, the witch. There was a high fence round it with big gates. When she pushed them open they squeaked miserably, as if it hurt them to move. The little girl was sorry for them.

"How lucky," she says, "that I picked up the bottle of oil!" and she poured the oil into the hinges of the gates.

Inside the railing was Baba Yaga's hut, and it stood on hen's legs and walked about the yard. And in the yard there was standing Baba Yaga's servant, and she was crying bitterly because of the tasks Baba Yaga set her to do. She was crying bitterly and wiping her eyes on her petticoat.

"How lucky," says the little girl, "that I picked up a handkerchief!" And she gave the handkerchief to Baba Yaga's servant, who wiped her eyes on it and smiled through her tears.

Close by the hut was a huge dog, very thin, gnawing a dry crust.

"How lucky," says the little girl, "that I picked up a loaf!" And she gave the loaf to the dog, and he gobbled it up and licked his lips.

The little girl went bravely up to the hut and knocked on the door.

"Come in," says Baba Yaga.

The little girl went in, and there was Baba Yaga, the bony-legged, the witch, sitting weaving at a loom. In a corner of the hut was a thin black cat watching a mouse-hole.

"Good-day to you, auntie," says the little girl, trying not to tremble.

"Good-day to you, niece," says Baba Yaga.

"My step-mother has sent me to you to ask for a needle and thread to mend a shirt."

"Very well," says Baba Yaga, smiling, and showing her iron teeth. You sit down here at the loom, and go on with my weaving, while I go and get you the needle and thread."

The little girl sat down at the loom and began to weave.

Baba Yaga went out and called to her servant, "Go, make the bath hot, and scrub my niece. Scrub her clean. I'll make a dainty meal of her."

The servant came in for the jug. The little girl begged her, "Be not too quick in making the fire, and carry the water in a sieve." The servant smiled, but said nothing, because she was afraid of Baba Yaga. But she took a very long time about getting

the bath ready. Baba Yaga came to the window and asked: "Are you weaving, little niece? Are you weaving, my pretty?"

"I am weaving, auntie," says the little girl. When Baba Yaga went away from the window, the little girl spoke to the thin black cat who was watching the mouse-hole.

"What are you doing, thin black cat?" "Watching for a mouse," says the thin black cat. "I haven't had any dinner for three days."

"How lucky," says the little girl, "that I picked up the scraps of meat!" and she gave them to the thin black cat. The thin black cat gobbled them up, and said to the little girl:

"Little girl, do you want to get out of this?" "Catkin dear," says the little girl, "I do want to get out of this, for Baba Yaga is going to eat me with her iron teeth."

"Well," says the cat, "I will help you."

Just then Baba Yaga came to the window. "Are you weaving, little niece?" she asked.

"Are you weaving, my pretty?"

"I am weaving, auntie," says the little girl, working away, while the loom went clickety clack, clickety clack.

Baba Yaga went away.

Says the thin black cat to the little girl: "You have a comb in your hair, and you have a towel. Take them and run for it while Baba Yaga is in the bath-house. When Baba Yaga chases after you, you must listen; and when she is close to you, throw away the towel, and it will turn into a big, wide river. It will take her a little time to get over that. But when she does, you must listen; and as soon as she is close to you throw away the comb, and it will sprout up into such a forest that she will never get through it at all."

"But she'll hear the loom stop," says the little girl.

"I'll see to that," says the thin black cat. The cat took the little girl's place at the loom. Clickety clack, clickety clack; the loom never stopped for a moment.

The little girl looked to see that Baba Yaga was in the bath-house, and then she jumped down from the little hut on hen's legs, and ran to the gates as fast as her legs could flicker.

The big dog leapt up to tear her to pieces. Just as he was going to spring on her he saw who she was.

"Why, this is the little girl who gave me the loaf," says he. "A good journey to you, little girl;" and he lay down again with his head between his paws.

When she came to the gates they opened quietly, quietly, without making any noise at all, because of the oil she had poured into their hinges.

Outside the gates there was a little birch tree that beat her in the eyes so that she could not go by.

"How lucky," says the little girl, "that I picked up the ribbon!" And she tied up the birch tree with the pretty blue ribbon. And the birch tree was so pleased with the ribbon that it stood still, admiring itself, and let the little girl go by.

How she did run!

Meanwhile the thin black cat sat at the loom. Clickety clack, clickety clack, sang the loom; but you never saw such a tangle as the tangle made by the thin black cat.

And presently Baba Yaga came to the window.

"Are you weaving, little niece?" she asked. "Are you weaving, my pretty?"

"I am weaving, auntie," says the thin black cat, tangling and tangling, while the loom went clickety clack, clickety clack.

"That's not the voice of my little dinner," says Baba Yaga, and she jumped into the hut, gnashing her iron teeth; and there

was no little girl, but only the thin black cat, sitting at the loom, tangling and tangling the threads.

"Grr," says Baba Yaga, and jumps for the cat, and begins banging it about. 'Why didn't you tear the little girl's eyes out?"

"In all the years I have served you," says the cat, "you have only given me one little bone; but the kind little girl gave me scraps of meat."

Baba Yaga threw the cat into a corner, and went out into the yard.

"Why didn't you squeak when she opened you?" she asked the gates.

"Why didn't you tear her to pieces?" she asked the dog.

"Why didn't you beat her in the face, and not let her go by?" she asked the birch tree.

"Why were you so long in getting the bath ready? If you had been quicker, she never would have got away," said Baba Yaga to the servant. And she rushed about the yard, beating them all, and scolding at the top of her voice.

"Ah!" said the gates, "in all the years we have served you, you never even eased us with water; but the kind little girl poured good oil into our hinges."

"Ah!" said the dog, "in all the years I've served you, you never threw me anything but burnt crusts; but the kind little girl gave me a good loaf."

"Ah!" said the little birch tree, "in all the years I've served you, you never tied me up, even with thread; but the kind little girl tied me up with a pretty blue ribbon."

"Ah!" said the servant, "in all the years I've served you, you have never given me even a rag; but the kind little girl gave me a pretty handkerchief."

Baba Yaga gnashed at them with her iron teeth. Then she jumped into the mortar and sat down. She drove it along with the pestle, and swept up her tracks with a besom, and flew off in pursuit of the little girl. The little girl ran and ran. She put her ear to the ground and listened. Bang, bang, bangety bang! she could hear Baba Yaga beating the mortar with the pestle. Baba Yaga was quite close. There she was, beating with the pestle and sweeping with the besom, coming along the road.

As quickly as she could, the little girl took out the towel and threw it on the ground. And the towel grew bigger and bigger, and wetter and wetter, and there was a deep, broad river between Baba Yaga and the little girl.

The little girl turned and ran on. How she ran!

Baba Yaga came flying up in the mortar. But the mortar could not float in the river with Baba Yaga inside. She drove it in, but only got wet for her trouble. Tongs and pokers tumbling down a chimney are nothing to the noise she made as she gnashed her iron teeth. She turned home, and went flying back to the little hut on hen's legs. Then she got together all her cattle and drove them to the river.

"Drink, drink!"she screamed at them; and the cattle drank up all the river to the last drop. And Baba Yaga, sitting in the mortar, drove it with the pestle, and swept up her tracks with the besom, and flew over the dry bed of the river and on in pursuit of the little girl.

The little girl put her ear to the ground and listened. Bang, bang, bangety bang! She could hear Baba Yaga beating the mortar with the pestle. Nearer and nearer came the noise, and there was Baba Yaga, beating with the pestle and sweeping with the besom, coming along the road close behind.

The little girl threw down the comb, and it grew bigger and bigger, and its teeth sprouted up into a thick forest, thicker than this forest where we live so thick that not even Baba Yaga could force her way through. And Baba Yaga, gnashing her teeth and screaming with rage and disappointment, turned round and drove away home to her little hut on hen's legs.

The little girl ran on home. She was afraid to go in and see her stepmother, so she ran into the shed.

Scratch, scratch! Out came the little mouse.

"So you got away all right, my dear," says the little mouse. "Now run in. Don't be afraid. Your father is back, and you must tell him all about it."

The little girl went into the house.

"Where have you been?" says her father; "and why are you so out of breath?"

The stepmother turned yellow when she saw her, and her eyes glowed, and her teeth ground together until they broke.

But the little girl was not afraid, and she went to her father and climbed on his knee, and told him everything just as it had happened. And when the old man knew that the stepmother had sent his little daughter to be eaten by Baba Yaga, he was so angry that he drove her out of the hut, and ever afterwards lived alone with the little girl. Much better it was for both of them.

"And the little mouse?" said Ivan.

"The little mouse," said old Peter, "came and lived in the hut, and every day it used to sit up on the table and eat crumbs, and warm its paws on the little girl's glass of tea."

Salt [38]
(Russia)

One evening, when they were sitting round the table after their supper, old Peter asked the children what story they would like to hear. Vanya asked whether there were any stories left which they had not already heard.

"Why," said old Peter, "you have heard scarcely any of the stories, for there is a story to be told about everything in the world."

"About everything, grandfather?" asked Vanya.

"About everything," said old Peter.

"About the sky, and the thunder, and the dogs, and the flies, and the birds, and the trees, and the milk?"

"There is a story about every one of those things."

"I know something there isn't a story about," said Vanya.

"And what's that?" asked old Peter, smiling in his beard.

"Salt," said Vanya. "There can't be a story about salt." He put the tip of his finger into the little box of salt on the table, and then he touched his tongue with his finger to taste.

"But of course there is a story about salt," said old Peter.

"Tell it us," said Maroosia; and presently, when his pipe had been lit twice and gone out, old Peter began.

Once upon a time there were three brothers, and their father was a great merchant who sent his ships far over the sea, and traded here and there in countries the names of which I, being an old man, can never rightly call to mind. Well, the names of the two elder brothers do not matter, but the

youngest was called Ivan the Ninny, because he was always playing and never working; and if there was a silly thing to do, why, off he went and did it. And so, when the brothers grew up, the father sent the two elder ones off, each in a fine ship laden with gold and jewels, and rings and bracelets, and laces and silks, and sticks with little bits of silver hammered into their handles, and spoons with patterns of blue and red, and everything else you can think of that costs too much to buy. But he made Ivan the Ninny stay at home, and did not give him a ship at all. Ivan saw his brothers go sailing off over the sea on a summer morning, to make their fortunes and come back rich men; and then, for the first time in his life, he wanted to work and do something useful. He went to his father and kissed his hand, and he kissed the hand of his little old mother, and he begged his father to give him a ship so that he could try his fortune like his brothers.

"But you have never done a wise thing in your life, and no one could count all the silly things you've done if he spent a hundred days in counting," said his father.

"True," said Ivan; "but now I am going to be wise, and sail the sea and come back with something in my pockets to show that I am not a ninny any longer. Give me just a little ship, father mine just a little ship for myself."

"Give him a little ship," said the mother. "He may not be a ninny after all."

"Very well," said his father. "I will give him a little ship; but I am not going to waste good roubles by giving him a rich cargo."

"Give me any cargo you like," said Ivan. So his father gave him a little ship, a little old ship, and a cargo of rags and scraps and things that were not fit for anything but to be thrown away.

And he gave him a crew of ancient old sailormen who were past work; and Ivan went on board and sailed away at sunset, like the ninny he was. And the feeble, ancient, old sailormen pulled up the ragged, dirty sails, and away they went over the sea to learn what fortune, good or bad, God had in mind for a crew of old men with a ninny for a master.

The fourth day after they set sail there came a great wind over the sea. The feeble old men did the best they could with the ship; but the old, torn sails tore from the masts, and the wind did what it pleased, and threw the little ship on an unknown island away in the middle of the sea. Then the wind dropped, and left the little ship on the beach, and Ivan the Ninny and his ancient old men, like good Russians, praising God that they were still alive.

"Well, children," said Ivan, for he knew how to talk to sailors, "do you stay here and mend the sails, and make new ones out of the rags we carry as cargo, while I go inland and see if there is anything that could be of use to us."

So the ancient old sailormen sat on deck with their legs crossed, and made sails out of rags, of torn scraps of old brocades, of soiled embroidered shawls, of all the rubbish that they had with them for a cargo. You never saw such sails. The tide came up and floated the ship, and they threw out anchors at bow and stern, and sat there in the sunlight, making sails and patching them and talking of the days when they were young. All this while Ivan the Ninny went walking off into the island.

Now in the middle of that island was a high mountain, a high mountain it was, and so white that when he came near it Ivan the Ninny began thinking of sheepskin coats, although it was midsummer and the sun was hot in the sky. The trees were green round about, but there was nothing growing on the

mountain at all. It was just a great white mountain piled up into the sky in the middle of a green island. Ivan walked a little way up the white slopes of the mountain, and then, because he felt thirsty, he thought he would let a little snow melt in his mouth. He took some in his fingers and stuffed it in. Quickly enough it came out again, I can tell you, for the mountain was not made of snow but of good Russian salt. And if you want to try what a mouthful of salt is like, you may. "No, thank you, grandfather," the children said hurriedly together.

Old Peter went on with his tale.

Ivan the Ninny did not stop to think twice. The salt was so clean and shone so brightly in the sunlight. He just turned round and ran back to the shore, and called out to his ancient old sailormen and told them to empty everything they had on board over into the sea. Over it all went, rags and tags and rotten timbers, till the little ship was as empty as a soup bowl after supper. And then those ancient old men were set to work carrying salt from the mountain and taking it on board the little ship, and stowing it away below deck till there was not room for another grain. Ivan the Ninny would have liked to take the whole mountain, but there was not room in the little ship. And for that the ancient old sailormen thanked God, because their backs ached and their old legs were weak, and they said they would have died if they had had to carry any more.

Then they hoisted up the new sails they had patched together out of the rags and scraps of shawls and old brocades, and they sailed away once more over the blue sea. And the wind stood fair, and they sailed before it, and the ancient old sailors rested their backs, and told old tales, and took turn and turn about at the tiller.

And after many days' sailing they came to a town, with towers and churches and painted roofs, all set on the side of a hill that sloped down into the sea. At the foot of the hill was a quiet harbor, and they sailed in there and moored the ship and hauled down their patchwork sails.

Ivan the Ninny went ashore, and took with him a little bag of clean white salt to show what kind of goods he had for sale, and he asked his way to the palace of the Tzar of that town. He came to the palace, and went in and bowed to the ground before the Tzar.

"Who are you?" says the Tzar. "I, great lord, am a Russian merchant, and here in a bag is some of my merchandise, and I beg your leave to trade with your subjects in this town."

"Let me see what is in the bag," says the Tzar. Ivan the Ninny took a handful from the bag and showed it to the Tzar.

"What is it?" says the Tzar. "Good Russian salt," says Ivan the Ninny. Now in that country they had never heard of salt, and the Tzar looked at the salt, and he looked at Ivan and he laughed.

"Why, this," says he, "is nothing but white dust, and that we can pick up for nothing. The men of my town have no need to trade with you. You must be a ninny."

Ivan grew very red, for he knew what his father used to call him. He was ashamed to say anything. So he bowed to the ground, and went away out of the palace.

But when he was outside he thought to himself, "I wonder what sort of salt they use in these parts if they do not know good Russian salt when they see it. I will go to the kitchen."

So he went round to the back door of the palace, and put his head into the kitchen, and said, "I am very tired. May I sit down here and rest a little while?"

"Come in," says one of the cooks. "But you must sit just there, and not put even your little finger in the way of us; for we are the Tzar's cooks, and we are in the middle of making ready his dinner." And the cook put a stool in a corner out of the way, and Ivan slipped in round the door, and sat down in the corner and looked about him. There were seven cooks at least, boiling and baking, and stewing and toasting, and roasting and frying. And as for scullions, they were as thick as cockroaches, dozens of them, running to and fro, tumbling over each other, and helping the cooks.

Ivan the Ninny sat on his stool, with his legs tucked under him and the bag of salt on his knees. He watched the cooks and the scullions, but he did not see them put anything in the dishes which he thought could take the place of salt. No; the meat was without salt, the kasha was without salt, and there was no salt in the potatoes. Ivan nearly turned sick at the thought of the tastelessness of all that food.

There came the moment when all the cooks and scullions ran out of the kitchen to fetch the silver platters on which to lay the dishes. Ivan slipped down from his stool, and running from stove to stove, from saucepan to frying pan, he dropped a pinch of salt, just what was wanted, no more no less, in every one of the dishes. Then he ran back to the stool in the corner, and sat there, and watched the dishes being put on the silver platters and carried off in gold-embroidered napkins to be the dinner of the Tzar.

The Tzar sat at table and took his first spoonful of soup.

"The soup is very good today," says he, and he finishes the soup to the last drop.

"I've never known the soup so good," says the Tzaritza, and she finishes hers.

"This is the best soup I ever tasted," says the Princess, and down goes hers, and she, you know, was the prettiest princess who ever had dinner in this world.

It was the same with the kasha and the same with the meat. The Tzar and the Tzaritza and the Princess wondered why they had never had so good a dinner in all their lives before.

"Call the cooks," says the Tzar. And they called the cooks, and the cooks all came in, and bowed to the ground, and stood in a row before the Tzar.

"What did you put in the dishes today that you never put before?" says the Tzar.

"We put nothing unusual, your greatness," say the cooks, and bowed to the ground again. "Then why do the dishes taste better?" "We do not know, your greatness," say the cooks.

"Call the scullions," says the Tzar. And the scullions were called, and they too bowed to the ground, and stood in a row before the Tzar.

"What was done in the kitchen today that has not been done there before?" says the Tzar.

"Nothing, your greatness," say all the scullions except one.

And that one scullion bowed again, and kept on bowing, and then he said, "Please, your greatness, please, great lord, there is usually none in the kitchen but ourselves; but today there was a young Russian merchant, who sat on a stool in the corner and said he was tired."

"Call the merchant," says the Tzar.

So they brought in Ivan the Ninny, and he bowed before the Tzar, and stood there with his little bag of salt in his hand.

"Did you do anything to my dinner?" says the Tzar.

"I did, your greatness," says Ivan.

"What did you do?"

"I put a pinch of Russian salt in every dish."

"That white dust?" says the Tzar.

"Nothing but that."

"Have you got any more of it?"

"I have a little ship in the harbor laden with nothing else," says Ivan.

"It is the most wonderful dust in the world," says the Tzar, "and I will buy every grain of it you have. What do you want for it? "

Ivan the Ninny scratched his head and thought. He thought that if the Tzar liked it as much as all that it must be worth a fair price, so he said, "We will put the salt into bags, and for every bag of salt you must give me three bags of the same weight one of gold, one of silver, and one of precious stones. Cheaper than that, your greatness, I could not possibly sell."

"Agreed," says the Tzar. "And a cheap price, too, for a dust so full of magic that it makes dull dishes tasty, and tasty dishes so good that there is no looking away from them."

So all the day long, and far into the night, the ancient old sailormen bent their backs under sacks of salt, and bent them again under sacks of gold and silver and precious stones. When all the salt had been put in the Tzar's treasury yes, with twenty soldiers guarding it with great swords shining in the moonlight and when the little ship was loaded with riches, so that even the deck was piled high with precious stones, the ancient old men lay down among the jewels and slept till morning, when Ivan the Ninny went to bid good-bye to the Tzar.

"And whither shall you sail now? " asked the Tzar.

"I shall sail away to Russia in my little ship," says Ivan.

And the Princess, who was very beautiful, said, "A little Russian ship?"

"Yes," says Ivan. "I have never seen a Russian ship," says the Princess, and she begs her father to let her go to the harbor with her nurses and maids, to see the little Russian ship before Ivan set sail.

She came with Ivan to the harbor, and the ancient old sailormen took them on board.

She ran all over the ship, looking now at this and now at that, and Ivan told her the names of everything -- deck, mast, and rudder.

"May I see the sails?" she asked. And the ancient old men hoisted the ragged sails, and the wind filled the sails and tugged.

"Why doesn't the ship move when the sails are up?" asked the Princess.

"The anchor holds her," said Ivan.

"Please let me see the anchor," says the Princess.

"Haul up the anchor, my children, and show it to the Princess," says Ivan to the ancient old sailormen.

And the old men hauled up the anchor, and showed it to the Princess; and she said it was a very good little anchor. But, of course, as soon as the anchor was up the ship began to move. One of the ancient old men bent over the tiller, and, with a fair wind behind her, the little ship slipped out of the harbor and away to the blue sea. When the Princess looked round, thinking it was time to go home, the little ship was far from land, and away in the distance she could only see the gold towers of her father's palace, glittering like pin points in the sunlight. Her nurses and maids wrung their hands and made an outcry, and the Princess sat down on a heap of jewels, and put a handkerchief to her eyes, and cried and cried and cried.

Ivan the Ninny took her hands and comforted her, and told her of the wonders of the sea that he would show her, and the wonders of the land. And she looked up at him while he talked, and his eyes were kind and hers were sweet; and the end of it was that they were both very well content, and agreed to have a marriage feast as soon as the little ship should bring them to the home of Ivan's father. Merry was that voyage. All day long Ivan and the Princess sat on deck and said sweet things to each other, and at twilight they sang songs, and drank tea, and told stories. As for the nurses and maids, the Princess told them to be glad; and so they danced and clapped their hands, and ran about the ship, and teased the ancient old sailormen.

When they had been sailing many days, the Princess was looking out over the sea, and she cried out to Ivan, "See, over there, far away, are two big ships with white sails, not like our sails of brocade and bits of silk."

Ivan looked, shading his eyes with his hands. "Why, those are the ships of my elder brothers," said he. "We shall all sail home together."

And he made the ancient old sailormen give a hail in their cracked old voices. And the brothers heard them, and came on board to greet Ivan and his bride. And when they saw that she was a Tzar's daughter, and that the very decks were heaped with precious stones, because there was no room below, they said one thing to Ivan and something else to each other.

To Ivan they said, "Thanks be to God, He has given you good trading."

But to each other, "How can this be?" says one. "Ivan the Ninny bringing back such a cargo, while we in our fine ships have only a bag or two of gold."

"And what is Ivan the Ninny doing; with a princess?" says the other.

And they ground their teeth, and waited their time, and came up suddenly, when Ivan was alone in the twilight, and picked him up by his head and his heels, and hove him overboard into the dark blue sea.

Not one of the old men had seen them, and the Princess was not on deck. In the morning they said that Ivan the Ninny must have walked overboard in his sleep. And they drew lots. The eldest brother took the Princess, and the second brother took the little ship laden with gold and silver and precious stones. And so the brothers sailed home very well content. But the Princess sat and wept all day long, looking down into the blue water. The elder brother could not comfort her, and the second brother did not try. And the ancient old sailormen muttered in their beards, and were sorry, and prayed to God to give rest to Ivan's soul; for although he had been a ninny, and although he had made them carry a lot of salt and other things, yet they loved him, because he knew how to talk to ancient old sailormen.

But Ivan was not dead. As soon as he splashed into the water, he crammed his fur hat a little tighter on his head, and began swimming in the sea. He swam about until the sun rose, and then, not far away, he saw a floating timber log, and he swam to the log, and got astride of it, and thanked God. And he sat there on the log in the middle of the sea, twiddling his thumbs for want of something to do.

There was a strong current in the sea that carried him along, and at last, after floating for many days without ever a bite for his teeth or a drop for his gullet, his feet touched land.

Now that was at night, and he left the log and walked up out of the sea, and lay down on the shore and waited for morning.

When the sun rose he stood up, and saw that he was on a bare island, and he saw nothing at all on the island except a huge house as big as a mountain; and as he was looking at the house the great door creaked with a noise like that of a hurricane among the pine forests, and opened; and a giant came walking out, and came to the shore, and stood there, looking down at Ivan.

"What are you doing here, little one?" says the giant.

Ivan told him the whole story, just as I have told it to you.

The giant listened to the very end, pulling at his monstrous whiskers. Then he said, "Listen, little one. I know more of the story than you, for I can tell you that tomorrow morning your eldest brother is going to marry your Princess. But there is no need for you to take on about it. If you want to be there, I will carry you and set you down before the house in time for the wedding. And a fine wedding it is like to be, for your father thinks well of those brothers of yours bringing back all those precious stones, and silver and gold enough to buy a kingdom."

And with that he picked up Ivan the Ninny and set him on his great shoulders, and set off striding through the sea.

He went so fast that the wind of his going blew off Ivan's hat.

"Stop a moment," shouts Ivan; "my hat has blown off."

"We can't turn back for that," says the giant; "we have already left your hat five hundred versts behind us." And he rushed on, splashing through the sea. The sea was up to his armpits. He rushed on, and the sea was up to his waist. He rushed on, and before the sun had climbed to the top of the blue sky he was splashing up out of the sea with the water about

his ankles. He lifted Ivan from his shoulders and set him on the ground.

"Now," says he, "little man, off you run, and you'll be in time for the feast. But don't you dare to boast about riding on my shoulders. If you open your mouth about that you'll smart for it, if I have to come ten thousand thousand versts."

Ivan the Ninny thanked the giant for carrying him through the sea, promised that he would not boast, and then ran off to his father's house. Long before he got there he heard the musicians in the courtyard playing as if they wanted to wear out their instruments before night. The wedding feast had begun, and when Ivan ran in, there, at the high board, was sitting the Princess, and beside her his eldest brother. And there were his father and mother, his second brother, and all the guests. And every one of them was as merry as could be, except the Princess, and she was as white as the salt he had sold to her father.

Suddenly the blood flushed into her cheeks. She saw Ivan in the doorway. Up she jumped at the high board, and cried out, "'There, there is my true love, and not this man who sits beside me at the table."

"What is this? " says Ivan's father, and in a few minutes knew the whole story.

He turned the two elder brothers out of doors, gave their ships to Ivan, married him to the Princess, and made him his heir. And the wedding feast began again, and they sent for the ancient old sailormen to take part in it. And the ancient old sailormen wept with joy when they saw Ivan and the Princess, like two sweet pigeons, sitting side by side; yes, and they lifted their flagons with their old shaking hands, and cheered with

their old cracked voices, and poured the wine down their dry old throats.

There was wine enough and to spare, beer too, and mead enough to drown a herd of cattle. And as the guests drank and grew merry and proud they set to boasting. This one bragged of his riches, that one of his wife. Another boasted of his cunning, another of his new house, another of his strength, and this one was angry because they would not let him show he could lift the table on one hand. They all drank Ivan's health, and he drank theirs, and in the end he could not bear to listen to their proud boasts.

"That's all very well," says he, "but I am the only man in the world who rode on the shoulders of a giant to come to his wedding feast."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before there were a tremendous trampling and a roar of a great wind. The house shook with the footsteps of the giant as he strode up. The giant bent down over the courtyard and looked in at the feast.

"Little man, little man," says he, "you promised not to boast of me. I told you what would come if you did, and here you are and have boasted already."

"Forgive me," says Ivan; "it was the drink that boasted, not I."

"What sort of drink is it that knows how to boast?" says the giant.

"You shall taste it," says Ivan.

And he made his ancient old sailormen roll a great barrel of wine into the yard, more than enough for a hundred men, and after that a barrel of beer that was as big, and then a barrel of mead that was no smaller.

"Try the taste of that," says Ivan the Ninny.

Well, the giant did not wait to be asked twice. He lifted the barrel of wine as if it had been a little glass, and emptied it down his throat. He lifted the barrel of beer as if it had been an acorn, and emptied it after the wine. Then he lifted the barrel of mead as if it had been a very small pea, and swallowed every drop of mead that was in it. And after that he began stamping about and breaking things. Houses fell to pieces this way and that, and trees were swept flat like grass. Every step the giant took was followed by the crash of breaking timbers. Then suddenly he fell flat on his back and slept. For three days and nights he slept without waking. At last he opened his eyes.

"Just look about you," says Ivan, "and see the damage that you've done."

"And did that little drop of drink make me do all that?" says the giant. Well, well, I can well understand that a drink like that can do a bit of bragging. And after that," says he, looking at the wrecks of houses, and all the broken things scattered about "after that," says he, "you can boast of me for a thousand years, and I'll have nothing against you."

And he tugged at his great whiskers, and wrinkled his eyes, and went striding off into the sea.

That is the story about salt, and how it made a rich man of Ivan the Ninny, and besides, gave him the prettiest wife in the world, and she a Tzar's daughter.

Aladdin, or the Magic Lamp [39]
(Arabia)

In a city far away there once lived a lad named Aladdin. Aladdin's mother was a widow, and the boy had never had a father's care. He did as he pleased, and played in the streets all day, and was so idle that he was of no use to anyone.

One day, as Aladdin was playing with a band of companions, a tall man, richly dressed, stopped to watch them. Suddenly he called to Aladdin, "Come here, boy; I wish to speak to you."

The lad came, wondering.

"Are you not the son of Mustapha the tailor?" asked the stranger.

Aladdin said that he was.

"I knew it," cried the stranger. "I knew it from your likeness to your dear father." He then embraced the boy tenderly. "I, dear lad, am your uncle," said he. "I have spent many years in strange countries, and have made a fortune. I came back here in search of you, for I heard your father was dead, and I wish to take his place and be a father to you."

Aladdin was very much surprised. He had never known he had an uncle. And indeed he had not. The stranger was a magician who had need of a stout and active lad to help in a certain adventure. He had noticed Aladdin playing in the streets and had found out the lad's name and the name of his father, so as to pass himself off as Aladdin's uncle.

Aladdin was eager to believe the story the stranger told, for he thought it would be a fine thing to have a rich uncle to help him along in the world.

"Lead me to your mother's house, Aladdin," said the magician. "I wish to talk with her, and to weep with her over the memory of my dear brother." Aladdin took the stranger's hand and led him away through one street after another, each meaner and dirtier than the other. At last he stopped before a miserable looking hovel.

"This is where I live," said the boy.

"Here!" said the magician. "Oh, what a miserable place for my brother's child to live. But I will soon change all this. You must move into a handsome house, and you must have some better clothes than those you have on. I will make your fortune for you."

Aladdin was more delighted than ever when he heard this. He made haste to open the door and lead the magician to his mother, and to repeat to her the story he had been told.

The widow was even more surprised than her son over the magician's story, but she was quite as eager to believe it as he. It would indeed be a fine thing if the stranger would lift them out of their poverty. She begged him to sit down and share their evening meal, but this he would not do. He said he had business with some merchants, and went away, after promising to come back the next day.

On the morrow, as he had promised, the magician returned, and he took Aladdin out with him, and bought him fine clothes, and sweetmeats to eat, and he talked so much of all he meant to do for his dear nephew that the boy's head was quite turned.

The following morning he came again, and asked Aladdin whether he would not like to take a walk in the country, as it was such a fine day.

Aladdin gladly agreed to this plan. It was pleasant to be with his new uncle, and to hear him talk of all the grand things he intended to do.

The magician led the boy out of the city, talking pleasantly all the while, and on and on into the country, so far that at last the lad began to grow weary and to wonder when they would turn back.

In time they came to a lonely valley shut in by high hills, and here the stranger stopped. "My dear nephew, I wish to show you something here that is very curious," said the false uncle. "But first gather together a few dry sticks and build a little fire."

This Aladdin did.

When the fire was burning brightly the magician drew from under his robe a small box. He opened it, and taking from it a pinch of powder he threw it into the fire, at the same time saying some magic words. Immediately there was a loud noise like a clap of thunder, and the ground opened before them, showing a great stone in which was a brass ring.

Aladdin was so frightened by these happenings that he would have run away, but the stranger caught him roughly by the arm.

"Stay where you are," he cried. "I have brought you here to do a special thing for me, and if you refuse you shall not escape alive. If, however, you are obedient I will make you rich for life."

"What do you wish of me?" asked Aladdin in a trembling voice.

"First lift this stone for me."

Aladdin caught hold of the brass ring and tried to lift the stone, but it was too heavy for him, and the magician was obliged to help him. Together they dragged away the stone and showed an opening and a flight of stairs leading down into the earth.

"Now," said the pretended uncle, "you must go down these steps and they will bring you into a palace divided into three halls. You will see in these halls great chests filled with gold and silver, but for your life do not touch them; do not even brush against the walls or touch them either, for if you do you will surely perish. Go straight through the halls and you will come to a garden; it is full of fruit trees, and if you should wish to gather some of the fruit you may safely do so; no harm will come to you from so doing. At the farthest side of the garden is a wall. In this wall is a niche; in this niche is a small bronze lamp. Take it and empty out the oil and bring it to me."

Aladdin had no wish to descend the stairs into the earth, but the stranger frightened him, and he dared not refuse. He started down, but the magician called him back. "Here! take this," he said, and slipping a ring from his finger he placed it on Aladdin's hand. It will protect you from any dangers you may meet with."

Aladdin now went on down the stairs, and at the foot of them he found the palace halls the stranger had told him of. Everywhere he saw chests of silver and gold, but he was careful to touch none of them. He walked on very warily and out into the garden. He found the lamp without any trouble, emptied out the oil, and thrust it into the sash that was twisted about his waist.

All about him were fruit-trees loaded with the most beautiful fruits he had ever seen. They were of all colors, and

shone as though polished. Aladdin picked some of them, but instead of being juicy and delicious as he had expected, they were so hard he could neither bite nor break them. They seemed indeed to be made of glass, only much harder and brighter; they were so pretty the boy gathered a great quantity of them; he filled his pockets and sleeves and shirt with the fruit and then hurried back through the hall and up the steps. He saw his pretended uncle stooping over and watching for him impatiently.

"Did you get the lamp?" cried the magician eagerly.

"Yes, I have it here."

The magician's eyes sparkled with triumph. He reached down his hand. "Give it to me, quick, quick!" he cried.

"In a moment," said Aladdin; "but my hands are full of fruit and it is in my waistband. First help me out, and then I will give it to you."

"No, no! Give it to me now," cried the magician sharply. He did not, indeed, intend to let Aladdin ever come out alive. He meant as soon as he had the lamp to push the stone back into place and fasten the lad in.

Aladdin did not guess this, but for some reason he felt suddenly afraid.

"I cannot give you the lamp," he cried, "until you let me out."

"Give it to me I tell you."

"Not until you let me out."

Suddenly the magician flew into a black rage. "Then stay where you are," he cried fiercely.

He threw another pinch of powder into the fire which was still burning, and muttered a magic charm. At once the stone

rose and dropped back into its place, and Aladdin found himself shut in, in darkness.

Filled with terror, he beat upon the stone, and called to the magician to let him out. But there was no answer. He put his shoulders under the stone and tried to lift it, but it would not stir. Aladdin sat down and wept bitter tears. He felt he was a prisoner forever. Suddenly he remembered the garden. Perhaps he could find some way out through it.

He made his way slowly down the steps, feeling his way through the darkness. As he did this he happened to rub the magician's ring against the wall.

At once a horrible genie appeared before him, as black as pitch, but with eyes that shone like a red fire, and lightened up the darkness.

"What wouldst thou have?" asked this terrible being. "I and the other slaves of the ring upon thy finger stand ready to serve thee."

Aladdin was astonished beyond measure, but he made shift to say, "If you are able, take me away from here and back to my mother's house."

"To hear is to obey," answered the genie.

At once Aladdin felt himself caught up and carried through the air swifter than the wind, and almost before he could draw breath he was back in his mother's house, and the genie had disappeared.

His mother could hardly believe her eyes when Aladdin appeared so suddenly before her.

"My dear son, where did you come from, and where is your uncle?" she asked.

As soon as Aladdin could get his breath he told her the whole story. His mother listened and wondered. "Without

doubt," said she, "this man is not your uncle at all, but a magician who wished to use you for some wicked purpose."

To this Aladdin agreed, but he was so hungry that he begged his mother to get him something to eat before they talked further.

His mother began to weep. "Alas!" said she, "I have not a morsel of food in the house, and no money with which to buy any."

Aladdin remembered the lamp which was still in his waistband. He drew it out. "Look!" said he. "This lamp must be worth something since the magician was so anxious to have it. Take it to some shop, or to one of the neighbors, and perhaps they will pay you enough for it for us to buy some rice."

This seemed to the mother a wise plan. "I will do as you say," said she, "but first I will brighten the lamp, for it is very black and dirty."

She took some sand and water to polish it, but scarcely had she begun to rub it when a genie, even more terrible looking than the genie of the ring, appeared before them.

"What dost thou wish?" he asked in a voice of thunder. "I and the other slaves of the lamp stand ready to serve thee in all things."

The widow was so terrified at the sight of the genie, and at the sound of his voice, that she fell down on her face and lay there. But Aladdin caught the lamp from her hand.

"If you would serve me bring us something to eat," he cried.

"To hear is to obey," answered the genie. At once he disappeared, but scarcely was he gone before he appeared again with a great silver tray and a number of silver dishes and cups full of all sorts of delicious things to eat and drink. The

genie set it upon a table. "Hast thou any further commands?" he asked in a voice of thunder.

"Not at present," answered Aladdin.

At once the genie disappeared.

Aladdin called to his mother, and when she looked up and saw the genie had gone she was able to raise herself from the floor, though she still shook and trembled. She and her son sat down and ate and drank to their hearts' content, and there was enough food left over to serve them another day. Aladdin then took the silver tray and the dishes out to a merchant he knew and sold them for a good price; so in this way he had money to spend.

After this Aladdin and his mother lived very comfortably. Whenever they were hungry Aladdin had only to rub the lamp and command the genie to bring them food, and it was served to them immediately. It was always brought to them in silver dishes and upon a silver tray, and as Aladdin could sell these for a good price he and his mother lacked for nothing.

Aladdin now began to go about among the merchants of the city and talk with them, and before long he learned to his surprise that the fruits he had brought with him from the garden were not glass at all, but jewels, and jewels so rare and magnificent that they were not to be equaled anywhere.

Now the Sultan of that country had one daughter, the Princess Buddir al Baddoor, and she was the most beautiful princess in the world.

No man was ever allowed to see her face. When she rode through the city to the public baths the Sultan commanded that all the houses should be closed and that the people should stay indoors and not look out, upon pain of death.

Now Aladdin was very curious, as well as bold. One day when the Princess was to pass through the city he hid himself near the door of the baths without anyone knowing it.

The Princess came riding down the street with all her guards and ladies-in-waiting about her, and just as she reached the door near which Aladdin was hiding she dropped her veil, and he saw her face. At once he was filled with a violent love for her. It seemed to him he could not live unless he could have the Princess for a wife.

When he returned home his mother noticed that he was very thoughtful. She did not know what had happened to him. At last she asked, "My son, what ails you? Why are you so thoughtful and silent?"

"My mother," answered Aladdin, "I have seen the Princess Buddir al Baddoor, and unless I can marry her I no longer wish to live."

When the widow heard these words she thought her son must be crazy.

"How can you think of such a thing?" she cried. "Have you forgotten that your father was nothing but a tailor? How can a tailor's son hope to marry a princess?"

"Nevertheless that is what I intend to do," said Aladdin. He then urged and entreated his mother to go to the palace and ask the Sultan to give the Princess to him. The widow was very loth to do this, but she loved her son so tenderly that at last she consented.

"But have you forgotten," said she, "that no one can come before the Sultan without bringing him a present?"

"I have not forgotten," said Aladdin, "and I mean to send the Sultan such a gift as he has never seen before."

He then fetched from the cupboard a porcelain dish, and he also brought out the fruits he had brought from the garden. He arranged the fruits in the dish in a pyramid according to their colors, and when he had done this his mother was amazed at their beauty. They shone so brightly that it dazzled the eyes to look at them. "Now I will tell you," said Aladdin, "that these fruits are jewels so rare and magnificent that not the greatest ruler on earth has any that can equal them."

The widow was amazed when she heard this. She could hardly believe it, and it was with fear and trembling that she set out at length for the Sultan's palace. She carried the dish of jewels with her, covered over with a fine napkin.

When she reached the palace she went into the audience chamber with the rest of the crowd who had come to bring their cases before the Sultan. She sat down near the wall and stayed there all day, but she found no chance to speak to the Sultan or to offer her gift. And so it was day after day. Every morning she came to the audience chamber with the jewels, and every evening she returned home without having spoken to him.

But it so chanced the Sultan noticed how she came day after day with the covered dish in her hands, and he grew curious as to who she was and what she wanted. At last he spoke to his Grand Vizier about her, and commanded that she should be brought before him.

This was done, but the poor woman was so frightened by the honor done her that she stood there trembling and unable to say a word.

The Sultan saw her terror and spoke to her gently. "My good woman," said he, "do not be afraid. Tell me why you have

come here day after day. Is there something you wish to ask of me?"

"There is indeed something that I wish to ask, and yet I dare not," said the widow.

The Sultan, however, encouraged her. "Speak," said he. "Do not be afraid. Tell me what you wish." "My son," said the widow, "wishes to marry the Princess Buddir al Baddoor, and I have come here to ask you to give her to him as a wife; and my son also sends this small present, which he begs you to accept."

When this widow, so poor and meanly dressed, said that her son wished to marry the Princess the Sultan could hardly keep from laughing; but when she uncovered the dish of jewels he was amazed. He took up one after another and examined it with admiration. He turned to the Vizier, who stood beside him: "Never in all my life before," said he, "have I seen such beautiful jewels. Truly a man who can send me such a gift as this is worthy to have a princess for a wife. Do you not agree with me?"

When the Grand Vizier heard this he was troubled. He had indeed hoped that his own son might marry the Princess. Now he said, "Your Majesty, these jewels are indeed very wonderful; but we know nothing of the man who sent them. He may be only some beggarly rogue who has stolen them."

"That is true," said the Sultan. He thought for a moment, still turning the jewels with his fingers. Then he said to the woman, "I am indeed very much pleased with the gift your son has sent me. Go back and tell him I am inclined to give him the Princess for a wife, but first he must send me forty basins of massy gold filled with the same sort of jewels as these. If he can do this I will gladly have him for a son-in-law."

The widow returned home and told her son what the Sultan had said. Aladdin was overjoyed when he heard the message. He now felt sure that before long he would be married to the Princess. He took the lamp and rubbed it, and at once the genie appeared.

"What dost thou wish?" asked the genie. "I and the other slaves of the lamp are ready to serve thee in all things."

"I wish," said Aladdin, "for forty basins of massy gold, filled with jewels such as I gathered in the garden. I also wish for forty black slaves, magnificently dressed, to carry the basins, and forty white slaves, also magnificently dressed and mounted on fine horses, to ride before them and behind."

"To hear is to obey," answered the genie.

At once he disappeared, but almost in a moment of time a long procession of slaves appeared in the street where Aladdin lived and gathered before his house. There were forty black slaves, magnificently dressed, and each bearing on his head a golden basin filled with jewels even more magnificent than those Aladdin had gathered for himself, and there were also forty white slaves, mounted on horses, to ride before them and behind.

When Aladdin saw these slaves and the jewels they bore his eyes sparkled with joy. He at once commanded them to march to the palace and present the jewels to the Sultan, and the widow herself hastened away, so as to reach the palace at the same time that they did.

The slaves set out through the city; a great crowd followed them, shouting and rejoicing, for never had such a sight been seen there before.

The Sultan heard the sound of huzzahing and wondered what was the reason for it. But when the slaves entered the

palace bearing their basins of jewels he himself was filled with wonder and admiration. He turned to his Vizier. "Surely," said he, "anyone who can send me such a gift as this is worthy of the Princess Buddir al Baddoor"; and though the Vizier could hardly hide his envy he was obliged to agree with his master.

When Aladdin heard that the Sultan had consented to his marriage with the Princess he could hardly contain his joy. He at once rubbed the lamp, and when the genie appeared he commanded him to bring him the most magnificent clothes, such as were suitable for a Sultan's son to wear, also a handsome horse for him to ride upon, and a troop of horsemen, handsomely dressed to ride with him.

All this the genie did, and after Aladdin had bathed in a scented bath, and had dressed himself in his magnificent garments he was so handsome and noble-looking that his old friends would not have known him.

He rode away to the palace, and there the Sultan received him with the greatest respect and honor. He would have married Aladdin to his daughter at once, but this Aladdin did not wish.

"Your Majesty," said he, "greatly as I long to see the Princess Buddir al Baddoor I wish first to provide a palace for us to live in when we are married. For this purpose I beg of your Majesty to give me a plot of ground where I can build it."

The Sultan was surprised and disappointed when he heard this. He thought it would take years to build a palace, and he could not understand how Aladdin could want to wait that long before marrying the Princess. However, he gave him the ground he asked for.

Aladdin then returned home and rubbed the lamp. At once the genie appeared before him, and asked him what were his commands.

"I command you," said Aladdin, "to build me immediately a castle twice as handsome as that of the Sultan. I wish it to be furnished throughout in the most magnificent manner, and I also wish for a proper number of servants and guards to take charge of it. There must also be gardens around it with fountains and trees and flowers, and stables full of handsome horses, and above all there must be a treasure-house filled with gold and silver and precious stones."

"To hear is to obey," answered the genie; and at once he disappeared.

The next morning, when the Sultan awoke and looked from the window, he could hardly believe his eyes. He stared, and rubbed his eyes, and looked again. There, upon the bare piece of ground he had given to Aladdin, stood a great palace glittering with gold and silver and precious stones. It was far more magnificent than his own, and it had been built in one single night.

The Sultan at once sent for Aladdin, and when he came the Sultan made the tailor's son sit beside him, and talked with him as an equal. "My dear Aladdin," said he, "you are indeed a very wonderful man, and it is only fitting that the most beautiful princess in the world should be your wife, and you shall be as dear to me as though you were my own son."

That very day Aladdin and the Princess were married, and went to live in the magic palace, and as they loved each other dearly nothing could equal their happiness. Aladdin felt so secure in his good fortune that he never even thought of the

magician or wondered whether he might someday come to claim the lamp.

The magician had indeed left soon after his adventure with Aladdin. He journeyed back and forth over the earth in many places, and at last in his wanderings he came again to the city where he had met Aladdin. There he heard much talk of how a poor lad had married the daughter of the Sultan, and of the magnificent palace he had built. The magician never thought that Aladdin might be that poor lad, for he supposed he had perished in the hidden garden.

At last the magician became curious to see the palace that everyone was talking about, and he hired a horse and rode out to where it stood. As soon as he saw it he knew at once that it had been built by the genie of the lamp. He hastened home and got out his magic books, and from them learned that Aladdin was still alive, and that it was he who owned the palace and had become the Sultan's son-in-law.

When the magician learned this he was filled with rage and at once began to plot and plan as to how he could get the lamp for himself, and destroy Aladdin.

In order to carry out this purpose he bought a number of fine new lamps and disguised himself in poor, mean clothing. He waited until one time when Aladdin had gone hunting with the Sultan, and then he started out through the city with his tray of lamps, calling, "New lamps for old! New lamps for old!"

Many people heard his cry and came hurrying out of their houses with old broken lamps, and offered them to the magician to exchange. He took them willingly, and for all of these old lamps he gave in return fine new ones. The people thought he must be crazy. A great crowd followed him, shouting and laughing.

At last the magician arrived in front of Aladdin's castle. The Princess was sitting in an upper room with her attendants and yawning and feeling quite dull, because Aladdin was away. When she heard the noise and hubbub in the street she became curious. She sent one of her women to find out what the noise was about. She hoped it might be something amusing.

Presently the woman came back laughing. "Fancy!" cried she. "It is an old man with a tray of the most beautiful new lamps, and he is trading them for old ones."

The Princess was much amused at this idea. "Where is that old blackened lamp that I have seen your master have?" asked she. "Look about and see if you can find it."

Her woman began to search the palace, and at last they found the magic lamp hidden away in a corner of the treasure-room. They brought it to the Princess, and she at once caused the magician to be brought before her. "Here, old man," said she, laughing. "Here is an old lamp. Will you give me a new one for it?"

When the magician saw the lamp he could hardly hide his joy. "Gladly, madam," he answered. "Choose whichever of the lamps you will, and it shall be yours."

The Princess chose one that pleased her well, and the magician took the old lamp and hurried away with it.

No sooner had he reached home than he shut himself up alone in his room and rubbed the lamp. At once the genie appeared.

"What do you wish?" cried he. "I and the other slaves of the lamp stand ready to serve you."

"I wish," cried the magician in a terrible voice, "that the palace of Aladdin and all that are in it shall be carried away to Africa."

"To hear is to obey," answered the genie, and immediately disappeared.

That evening the Sultan and Aladdin came home from their hunt. They rode along together, talking pleasantly, until they came within sight of the Sultan's palace. Suddenly the Sultan drew rein and stared with blank surprise. The castle that Aladdin had built in a single night was gone. Not a sign of it was left.

"Your palace!" cried the Sultan. "Where is your palace?"

Aladdin, too, stared thunderstruck. "I I do not know!" he faltered.

"You do not know?" cried the Sultan. "And my daughter! Where is she?"

"I do not know," answered Aladdin again.

The Sultan was filled with rage. "You do not know!" he thundered. "Miserable wretch! was your castle only the work of enchantment? Have you carried off my daughter by your magic? Now unless you bring her back at once you shall surely die."

Aladdin was in despair. He begged the Sultan to allow him forty days in which to search for the Princess, and to this the Sultan at last consented.

Aladdin at once set out on the search, but he did not know in which direction to go. He wandered about from one place to another, without learning anything about the fate of the Princess or his palace.

At last one day he found himself in a rocky spot beside the sea. In descending the rocks he slipped and caught his hand on a sharp point, and in so doing he rubbed the magician's ring which he still wore, but which he had forgotten.

At once the genie of the ring appeared before him. "Master," said he, "what wouldst thou have? I and the other slaves of the ring stand ready to serve thee."

Aladdin was overjoyed to find that the ring still kept its magic powers. "I wish," said he, "that you would bring back my palace and the Princess, or else take me where they are."

"I cannot bring them back," answered the slave of the ring, "for they have been carried away by the genie of the lamp, who is mightier than I, but I can take you where they are."

The slave of the ring then caught up Aladdin, and in less time than it takes to tell he had carried him to Africa and had set him down in the apartment in the palace where the Princess was.

When the Princess saw Aladdin thus suddenly appear before her she gave a cry of joy and threw herself into his arms.

"The lamp!" cried Aladdin. "Where is the lamp?" for he wished to protect himself against the power of the magician.

"Alas," cried the Princess, "I do not know where it is. Already I feared that all our misfortunes had come from my trading off that lamp to a beggar." She then told Aladdin the whole story of how one had come offering new lamps for old, and of how her women had hunted up the old blackened lamp, and she had given it away for a new one.

Aladdin at once guessed that the beggar must have been the magician in disguise. "We will never be safe," said he, "until we have that lamp in our possession again. Does the magician ever come here?"

"Oh, yes," said the Princess; "he comes here every day and wearies me with his pretty speeches. He wishes me to marry him, but that I will never do."

"Now, listen," said Aladdin. "The next time the magician comes greet him pleasantly. Talk to him for a while, and then offer him a glass of sherbet. In this sherbet you must first put a powder that I will give you. It is a sleeping-powder. After the magician drinks it he will fall into a deep sleep. You must then at once call me. Together we will search his clothing, for I feel sure he is afraid to leave the lamp anywhere, and carries it always about him. If we can once get hold of the lamp all of our troubles are at an end."

The Princess promised to do exactly as Aladdin bade her, and then he gave her the powder, and hid himself in a room nearby.

Not long after this the magician came, as usual, to sit and talk with the Princess. She met him with smiling looks, and was so pleasant and friendly that the magician was delighted. He hoped the Princess was beginning to love him and that before long she would consent to be his wife. Presently the Princess took up a glass of sherbet in which she had already dissolved the powder. "I thought you might be thirsty," said she, "and I prepared this sherbet for you; will you not drink it?"

The magician thanked her, and taking the goblet he drank the sherbet at one draught. Almost at once his head dropped back on the cushions and he sank in a deep sleep.

The Princess did not delay a moment in calling Aladdin. He came in haste, and together they searched the garments of the magician. It did not take them long to find the lamp, which was hidden in his vest.

Aladdin rubbed it, and the genie of the lamp appeared before him.

"What dost thou wish?" he cried. "I and all the other slaves of the lamp stand ready to obey thee."

"First," said Aladdin, "I wish this magician carried away to the uttermost parts of the earth, and I wish him never to be allowed to come within a hundred miles of the lamp again. Secondly, I wish my palace to be returned to the place from which it was taken."

"To hear is to obey," answered the genie. He disappeared with the magician, and as the magician never was seen again he probably never escaped from the ends of the earth.

As for the palace it and all that was in it were returned to the place where it first stood, and the Sultan was so delighted to see his daughter again that he gladly forgave Aladdin. The tailor's son was raised to the greatest honors in the kingdom, and upon the Sultan's death he became Sultan, and lived happy forever after with his beautiful wife, Buddir al Baddoor.

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