

Tales from the British Isles

IMAGINATIVE SERIES

SELECTED AUTHORS

Tales from the British Isles

Selected Authors

Libraries of Hope

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Imaginative Series

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Imaginative Tales from the British Isles

Month 3

English Fairy Tales

by Flora Annie Webster Steele

I

The Story of the Three Bears

Once upon a time there were three Bears, who lived together in a house of their own, in a wood. One of them was a Little Wee Bear, and one was a Middle-sized Bear, and the other was a Great Big Bear. They had each a bowl for their porridge; a little bowl for the Little Wee Bear; and a middle-sized bowl for the Middle-sized Bear; and a great bowl for the Great Big Bear. And they had each a chair to sit in; a little chair for the Little Wee Bear; and a middle-sized chair for the Middle-sized Bear; and a great chair for the Great Big Bear. And they had each a bed to sleep in; a little bed for the Little Wee Bear; and a middle-sized bed for the Middle-sized Bear; and a great bed for the Great Big Bear.

One day, after they had made the porridge for their breakfast, and poured it into their porridge-bowls, they walked out into the wood while the porridge was cooling, that they might not burn their mouths by beginning too soon, for they were polite, well-brought-up Bears. And while they were away a little girl called Goldilocks, who lived at the other side of the wood and had been sent on an errand by her mother, passed by the house, and looked in at the window. And then she peeped in at the keyhole, for she was not at all a well-brought-up little girl. Then seeing nobody in the house she lifted the latch. The door was not fastened, because the Bears were good Bears, who did nobody any harm, and never suspected that anybody would harm them. So Goldilocks opened the

door and went in; and well pleased was she when she saw the porridge on the table. If she had been a well-brought-up little girl she would have waited till the Bears came home, and then, perhaps, they would have asked her to breakfast; for they were good Bears—a little rough or so, as the manner of Bears is, but for all that very good-natured and hospitable. But she was an impudent, rude little girl, and so she set about helping herself.

First she tasted the porridge of the Great Big Bear, and that was too hot for her. Next she tasted the porridge of the Middle-sized Bear, but that was too cold for her. And then she went to the porridge of the Little Wee Bear, and tasted it, and that was neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, and she liked it so well that she ate it all up, every bit!

Then Goldilocks, who was tired, for she had been catching butterflies instead of running on her errand, sat down in the chair of the Great Big Bear, but that was too hard for her. And then she sat down in the chair of the Middle-sized Bear, and that was too soft for her. But when she sat down in the chair of the Little Wee Bear, that was neither too hard nor too soft, but just right. So she seated herself in it, and there she sat till the bottom of the chair came out, and down she came, plump upon the ground; and that made her very cross, for she was a bad-tempered little girl.

Now, being determined to rest, Goldilocks went upstairs into the bedchamber in which the Three Bears slept. And first she lay down upon the bed of the Great Big Bear, but that was too high at the head for her. And next she lay down upon the bed of the Middle-sized Bear, and that was too high at the foot for her. And then she lay down upon the bed of the Little Wee Bear, and that was neither too high at the head nor at the foot, but just right. So she covered herself up comfortably, and lay there till she fell fast asleep.

By this time the Three Bears thought their porridge would be cool enough for them to eat it properly; so they came home

to breakfast. Now careless Goldilocks had left the spoon of the Great Big Bear standing in his porridge.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE!" said the Great Big Bear in his great, rough, gruff voice.

Then the Middle-sized Bear looked at his porridge and saw the spoon was standing in it too.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE!" said the Middle-sized Bear in his middle-sized voice.

Then the Little Wee Bear looked at his, and there was the spoon in the porridge-bowl, but the porridge was all gone!

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE, AND HAS EATEN IT ALL UP!" said the Little Wee Bear in his little wee voice.

Upon this the Three Bears, seeing that someone had entered their house, and eaten up the Little Wee Bear's breakfast, began to look about them. Now the careless Goldilocks had not put the hard cushion straight when she rose from the chair of the Great Big Bear.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!" said the Great Big Bear in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And the careless Goldilocks had squatted down the soft cushion of the Middle-sized Bear.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!" said the Middle-sized Bear in his middle-sized voice.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR, AND HAS SAT THE BOTTOM THROUGH!" said the Little Wee Bear in his little wee voice.

Then the Three Bears thought they had better make further search in case it was a burglar, so they went upstairs into their bedchamber. Now Goldilocks had pulled the pillow of the Great Big Bear out of its place.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED!" said the Great Big Bear in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And Goldilocks had pulled the bolster of the Middle-sized Bear out of its place.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED!" said the Middle-sized Bear in his middle-sized voice.

But when the Little Wee Bear came to look at his bed, there was the bolster in its place!

And the pillow was in its place upon the bolster!

And upon the pillow——?

There was Goldilocks's yellow head—which was not in its place, for she had no business there.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED—AND HERE SHE IS STILL!" said the Little Wee Bear in his little wee voice.

Now Goldilocks had heard in her sleep the great, rough, gruff voice of the Great Big Bear; but she was so fast asleep that it was no more to her than the roaring of wind, or the rumbling of thunder. And she had heard the middle-sized voice of the Middle-sized Bear, but it was only as if she had heard someone speaking in a dream. But when she heard the little wee voice of the Little Wee Bear, it was so sharp, and so shrill, that it awakened her at once. Up she started, and when she saw the Three Bears on one side of the bed, she tumbled herself out at the other, and ran to the window. Now the window was open, because the Bears, like good, tidy Bears, as they were, always opened their bedchamber window when they got up in the morning. So naughty, frightened little Goldilocks jumped; and whether she broke her neck in the fall, or ran into the wood and was lost there, or found her way out of the wood and got whipped for being a bad girl and playing truant, no one can say. But the Three Bears never saw anything more of her.

II
Tom-Tit-Tot

Once upon a time there was a woman and she baked five pies. But when they came out of the oven they were over-baked, and the crust was far too hard to eat. So she said to her daughter:

"Daughter," says she, "put them pies on to the shelf and leave 'em there awhile. Surely they'll come again in time."

By that, you know, she meant that they would become softer; but her daughter said to herself, "If Mother says the pies will come again, why shouldn't I eat these now?" So, having good, young teeth, she set to work and ate the lot, first and last.

Now when supper-time came the woman said to her daughter, "Go you and get one of the pies. They are sure to have come again by now."

Then the girl went and looked, but of course there was nothing but the empty dishes.

So back she came and said, "No, Mother, they ain't come again."

"Not one o' them?" asked the mother, taken aback like.

"Not one o' them," says the daughter, quite confident.

"Well," says the mother, "come again, or not come again, I will have one of them pies for my supper."

"But you can't," says the daughter. "How can you if they ain't come? And they ain't, as sure's sure."

"But I can," says the mother, getting angry. "Go you at

once, child, and bring me the best on them. My teeth must just tackle it."

"Best or worst is all one," answered the daughter, quite sulky, "for I've ate the lot, so you can't have one till it comes again—so there!"

Well, the mother she bounced up to see; but half an eye told her there was nothing save the empty dishes; so she was dished up herself and done for.

So, having no supper, she sat her down on the doorstep, and, bringing out her distaff, began to spin. And as she span she sang:

"My daughter ha' ate five pies today,
My daughter ha' ate five pies today,
My daughter ha' ate five pies today,"

for, see you, she was quite flabbergasted and fair astonished.

Now the King of that country happened to be coming down the street, and he heard the song going on and on, but could not quite make out the words. So he stopped his horse, and asked:

"What is that you are singing, my good woman?"

Now the mother, though horrified at her daughter's appetite, did not want other folk, leastwise the King, to know about it, so she sang instead:

"My daughter ha' spun five skeins today,
My daughter ha' spun five skeins today,
My daughter ha' spun five skeins today."

"Five skeins!" cried the King. "By my garter and my crown, I never heard tell of anyone who could do that! Look you here, I have been searching for a maiden to wife, and your daughter who can spin five skeins a day is the very one for me. Only, mind you, though for eleven months of the year she shall be Queen indeed, and have all she likes to eat, all the gowns she likes to get, all the company she likes to keep, and everything her heart desires, in the twelfth month she must set to work and spin five skeins a day, and if she does not she

must die. Come! is it a bargain?"

So the mother agreed. She thought what a grand marriage it was for her daughter. And as for the five skeins? Time enough to bother about them when the year came round. There was many a slip between cup and lip, and, likely as not, the King would have forgotten all about it by then.

Anyhow, her daughter would be Queen for eleven months. So they were married, and for eleven months the bride was happy as happy could be. She had everything she liked to eat, and all the gowns she liked to get, all the company she cared to keep, and everything her heart desired. And her husband the King was kind as kind could be. But in the tenth month she began to think of those five skeins and wonder if the King remembered. And in the eleventh month she began to dream about them as well. But ne'er a word did the King, her husband, say about them; so she hoped he had forgotten.

But on the very last day of the eleventh month, the King, her husband, led her into a room she had never set eyes on before. It had one window, and there was nothing in it but a stool and a spinning-wheel.

"Now, my dear," he said quite kind like, "you will be shut in here tomorrow morning with some victuals and some flax, and if by evening you have not spun five skeins, your head will come off."

Well she was fair frightened, for she had always been such a gatless thoughtless girl that she had never learnt to spin at all. So what she was to do on the morrow she could not tell; for, see you, she had no one to help her; for, of course, now she was Queen, her mother didn't live nigh her. So she just locked the door of her room, sat down on a stool, and cried and cried and cried until her pretty eyes were all red.

Now as she sat sobbing and crying she heard a queer little noise at the bottom of the door. At first she thought it was a mouse. Then she thought it must be something knocking.

So she upped and opened the door and what did she see? Why! a small, little, black Thing with a long tail that whisked round and round ever so fast.

"What are you crying for?" said that Thing, making a bow, and twirling its tail so fast that she could scarcely see it.

"What's that to you?" said she, shrinking a bit, for that Thing was very queer like.

"Don't look at my tail if you're frightened," says That, smirking. "Look at my toes. Ain't they beautiful?"

And sure enough That had on buckled shoes with high heels and big bows, ever so smart.

A small, little, black Thing with a long tail

So she kind of forgot about the tail, and wasn't so frightened, and when That asked her again why she was crying, she upped and said, "It won't do no good if I do."

"You don't know that," says That, twirling its tail faster and faster, and sticking out its toes. "Come, tell me, there's a good girl."

"Well," says she, "it can't do any harm if it doesn't do good." So she dried her pretty eyes and told That all about the pies, and the skeins, and everything from first to last.

And then that little, black Thing nearly burst with laughing. "If that is all, it's easy mended!" it says. "I'll come to your window every morning, take the flax, and bring it back spun into five skeins at night. Come! shall it be a bargain?"

Now she, for all she was so gatless and thoughtless, said, cautious like:

"But what is your pay?"

Then That twirled its tail so fast you couldn't see it, and stuck out its beautiful toes, and smirked and looked out of the corners of its eyes. "I will give you three guesses every night to guess my name, and if you haven't guessed it before the month is up, why"—and That twirled its tail faster and stuck out its toes further, and smirked and sniggered more than ever—"you shall be mine, my beauty."

Three guesses every night for a whole month! She felt sure she would be able for so much; and there was no other way out of the business, so she just said, "Yes! I agree!"

And lor! how That twirled its tail, and bowed, and smirked, and stuck out its beautiful toes.

Well, the very next day her husband led her to the strange room again, and there was the day's food, and a spinning-wheel and a great bundle of flax.

"There you are, my dear," says he as polite as polite. "And remember! if there are not five whole skeins tonight, I fear your head will come off!"

At that she began to tremble, and after he had gone away and locked the door, she was just thinking of a good cry, when she heard a queer knocking at the window. She upped at once and opened it, and sure enough there was the small, little, black Thing sitting on the window-ledge, dangling its beautiful toes and twirling its tail so that you could scarcely see it.

"Good-morning, my beauty," says That. "Come! hand over the flax, sharp, there's a good girl."

So she gave That the flax and shut the window and, you may be sure, ate her victuals, for, as you know, she had a good appetite, and the King, her husband, had promised to give her everything she liked to eat. So she ate to her heart's content, and when evening came and she heard that queer knocking at the window again, she upped and opened it, and there was the small, little, black Thing with five spun skeins on his arm!

And it twirled its tail faster than ever, and stuck out its beautiful toes, and bowed and smirked and gave her the five skeins.

Then That said, "And now, my beauty, what is That's name?"

And she answered quite easy like:

"That is Bill."

"No, it ain't," says That, and twirled its tail.

"Then That is Ned," says she.

"No, it ain't," says That, and twirled its tail faster.

"Well," says she a bit more thoughtful, "That is Mark."

"No, it ain't," says That, and laughs and laughs and laughs, and twirls its tail so as you couldn't see it, as away it flew.

Well, when the King, her husband, came in, he was fine and pleased to see the five skeins all ready for him, for he was fond of his pretty wife.

"I shall not have to order your head off, my dear," says he. "And I hope all the other days will pass as happily." Then he said good-night and locked the door and left her.

But next morning they brought her fresh flax and even more delicious foods. And the small, little, black Thing came knocking at the window and stuck out its beautiful toes and twirled its tail faster and faster, and took away the bundle of flax and brought it back all spun into five skeins by evening.

Then That made her guess three times what That's name was; but she could not guess right, and That laughed and laughed and laughed as it flew away.

Now every morning and evening the same thing happened, and every evening she had her three guesses; but she never guessed right. And every day the small, little, black Thing laughed louder and louder and smirked more and more, and looked at her quite maliceful out of the corners of its eyes until she began to get frightened, and instead of eating all the fine foods left for her, spent the day in trying to think of names to say. But she never hit upon the right one.

So it came to the last day of the month but one, and when the small, little, black Thing arrived in the evening with the five skeins of flax all ready spun, it could hardly say for smirking:

"Ain't you got That's name yet?"

So says she—for she had been reading her Bible:

"Is That Nicodemus?"

"No, it ain't," says That, and twirled its tail faster than you

could see.

"Is That Samuel?" says she all of a flutter.

"No, it ain't, my beauty," chuckles That, looking malicious.

"Well—is That Methuselah?" says she, inclined to cry.

Then That just fixes her with eyes like a coal a-fire, and says, "No, it ain't that neither, so there is only tomorrow night and then you'll be mine, my beauty."

And away the small, little, black Thing flew, its tail twirling and whisking so fast that you couldn't see it.

Well, she felt so bad she couldn't even cry; but she heard the King, her husband, coming to the door, so she made bold to be cheerful, and tried to smile when he said, "Well done, wife! Five skeins again! I shall not have to order your head off after all, my dear, of that I'm quite sure, so let us enjoy ourselves." Then he bade the servants bring supper, and a stool for him to sit beside his Queen, and down they sat, lover-like, side by side.

But the poor Queen could eat nothing; she could not forget the small, little, black Thing. And the King hadn't eaten but a mouthful or two when he began to laugh, and he laughed so long and so loud that at last the poor Queen, all lackadaisical as she was, said:

"Why do you laugh so?"

"At something I saw today, my love," says the King. "I was out a-hunting, and by chance I came to a place I'd never been in before. It was in a wood, and there was an old chalk-pit there, and out of the chalk-pit there came a queer kind of a sort of a humming, bumming noise. So I got off my hobby to see what made it, and went quite quiet to the edge of the pit and looked down. And what do you think I saw? The funniest, queerest, smallest, little, black Thing you ever set eyes upon. And it had a little spinning-wheel and it was spinning away for dear life, but the wheel didn't go so fast as its tail, and that span round and round—ho-ho-ha-ha!—you

never saw the like. And its little feet had buckled shoes and bows on them, and they went up and down in a desperate hurry. And all the time that small, little, black Thing kept bumming and booming away at these words:

"Name me, name me not,
Who'll guess it's Tom-Tit-Tot."

Well, when she heard these words the Queen nearly jumped out of her skin for joy; but she managed to say nothing, but ate her supper quite comfortably.

And she said no word when next morning the small, little, black Thing came for the flax, though it looked so gleeful and maliceful that she could hardly help laughing, knowing she had got the better of it. And when night came and she heard that knocking against the window-panes, she put on a wry face, and opened the window slowly as if she was afraid. But that Thing was as bold as brass and came right inside, grinning from ear to ear. And oh, my goodness! how That's tail was twirling and whisking!

"Well, my beauty," says That, giving her the five skeins all ready spun, "what's my name?"

Then she put down her lip, and says, tearful like, "Is—is—That—Solomon?"

"No, it ain't," laughs That, smirking out of the corner of That's eye. And the small, little, black Thing came further into the room.

So she tried again—and this time she seemed hardly able to speak for fright.

"Well—is That—Zebedee?" she says.

"No, it ain't," cried the impet, full of glee. And it came quite close and stretched out its little black hands to her, and O-oh, its tail...!!!

"Take time, my beauty," says That, sort of jeering like, and its small, little, black eyes seemed to eat her up. "Take time! Remember! next guess and you're mine!" Well, she backed just a wee bit from it, for it was just horrible to look at; but

then she laughed out and pointed her finger at it and said, says she:

"Name me, name me not,
Your name is
Tom
TIT
TOT."

And you never heard such a shriek as that small, little, black Thing gave out. Its tail dropped down straight, its feet all crumpled up, and away That flew into the dark, and she never saw it no more.

And she lived happy ever after with her husband, the King.

III

The Three Feathers

Once upon a time there lived a girl who was wooed and married by a man she never saw; for he came a-courting her after nightfall, and when they were married he never came home till it was dark, and always left before dawn.

Still he was good and kind to her, giving her everything her heart could desire, so she was well content for a while. But, after a bit, some of her friends, doubtless full of envy for her good luck, began to whisper that the unseen husband must have something dreadful the matter with him which made him averse to being seen.

Now from the very beginning the girl had wondered why her lover did not come a-courting her as other girls' lovers came, openly and by day, and though, at first, she paid no heed to her neighbours' nods and winks, she began at last to think there might be something in what they said. So she determined to see for herself, and one night when she heard her husband come into her room, she lit her candle suddenly and saw him.

And, lo and behold! he was handsome as handsome; beautiful enough to make every woman in the world fall in love with him on the spot. But even as she got her glimpse of him, he changed into a big brown bird which looked at her with eyes full of anger and blame.

"Because you have done this faithless thing," it said, "you will see me no more, unless for seven long years and a day you

serve for me faithfully."

And she cried with tears and sobs, "I will serve seven times seven years and a day if you will only come back. Tell me what I am to do."

Then the bird-husband said, "I will place you in service, and there you must remain and do good work for seven years and a day, and you must listen to no man who may seek to beguile you to leave that service. If you do I will never return."

To this the girl agreed, and the bird, spreading its broad brown wings, carried her to a big mansion.

"Here they need a laundry-maid," said the bird-husband. "Go in, ask to see the mistress, and say you will do the work; but remember you must do it for seven years and a day."

"But I cannot do it for seven days," answered the girl. "I cannot wash or iron."

"That matters nothing," replied the bird. "All you have to do is to pluck three feathers from under my wing close to my heart, and these feathers will do your bidding whatever it may be. You will only have to put them on your hand, and say, 'By virtue of these three feathers from over my true love's heart may this be done,' and it will be done."

So the girl plucked three feathers from under the bird's wing, and after that the bird flew away.

Then the girl did as she was bidden, and the lady of the house engaged her for the place. And never was such a quick laundress; for, see you, she had only to go into the wash-house, bolt the door and close the shutters, so that no one should see what she was at; then she would out with the three feathers and say, "By virtue of these three feathers from over my true love's heart may the copper be lit, the clothes sorted, washed, boiled, dried, folded, mangled, ironed," and lo! there they came tumbling on to the table, clean and white, quite ready to be put away. So her mistress set great store by her and said there never was such a good laundry-maid. Thus four years passed and there was no talk of her leaving. But the

other servants grew jealous of her, all the more so, because, being a very pretty girl, all the men-servants fell in love with her and wanted to marry her.

But she would have none of them, because she was always waiting and longing for the day when her bird-husband would come back to her in man's form.

Now one of the men who wanted her was the stout butler, and one day as he was coming back from the cider-house he chanced to stop by the laundry, and he heard a voice say, "By virtue of these three feathers from over my true love's heart may the copper be lit, the clothes sorted, boiled, dried, folded, mangled, and ironed."

He thought this very queer, so he peeped through the key-hole. And there was the girl sitting at her ease in a chair, while all the clothes came flying to the table ready and fit to put away.

Well, that night he went to the girl and said that if she turned up her nose at him and his proposal any longer, he would up and tell the mistress that her fine laundress was nothing but a witch; and then, even if she were not burnt alive, she would lose her place.

Now the girl was in great distress what to do, since if she were not faithful to her bird-husband, or if she failed to serve her seven years and a day in one service, he would alike fail to return; so she made an excuse by saying she could think of no one who did not give her enough money to satisfy her.

At this the stout butler laughed. "Money?" said he. "I have seventy pounds laid by with master. Won't that satisfy thee?"

"Happen it would," she replied.

So the very next night the butler came to her with the seventy pounds in golden sovereigns, and she held out her apron and took them, saying she was content; for she had thought of a plan. Now as they were going upstairs together she stopped and said:

"Mr. Butler, excuse me for a minute. I have left the shutters of the wash-house open, and I must shut them, or they will be banging all night and disturb master and missus!"

Now though the butler was stout and beginning to grow old, he was anxious to seem young and gallant; so he said at once:

"Excuse me, my beauty, you shall not go. I will go and shut them. I shan't be a moment!"

So off he set, and no sooner had he gone than she out with her three feathers, and putting them on her hand, said in a hurry:

"By virtue of the three feathers from over my true love's heart may the shutters never cease banging till morning, and may Mr. Butler's hands be busy trying to shut them."

And so it happened.

Mr. Butler shut the shutters, but—bru-u-u! there they were hanging open again. Then he shut them once more, and this time they hit him on the face as they flew open. Yet he couldn't stop; he had to go on. So there he was the whole livelong night. Such a cursing, and banging, and swearing, and shutting, never was, until dawn came, and, too tired to be really angry, he crept back to his bed, resolving that come what might he would not tell what had happened to him and thus get the laugh on him. So he kept his own counsel, and the girl kept the seventy pounds, and laughed in her sleeve at her would-be lover.

Now after a time the coachman, a spruce middle-aged man, who had long wanted to marry the clever, pretty laundry-maid, going to the pump to get water for his horses overheard her giving orders to the three feathers, and peeping through the keyhole as the butler had done, saw her sitting at her ease in a chair while the clothes, all washed and ironed and mangled, came flying to the table.

So, just as the butler had done, he went to the girl and said, "I have you now, my pretty. Don't dare to turn up your

nose at me, for if you do I'll tell mistress you are a witch."

Then the girl said quite calmly, "I look on none who has no money."

"If that is all," replied the coachman, "I have forty pounds laid by with master. That I'll bring and ask for payment tomorrow night."

So when the night came the girl held out her apron for the money, and as she was going up the stairs she stopped suddenly and said, "Goody me! I've left my clothes on the line. Stop a bit till I fetch them in."

Now the coachman was really a very polite fellow, so he said at once:

"Let me go. It is a cold, windy night and you'll be catching your death."

So off he went, and the girl out with her feathers and said:

"By virtue of the three feathers from over my true love's heart may the clothes slash and blow about till dawn, and may Mr. Coachman not be able to gather them up or take his hand from the job."

And when she had said this she went quietly to bed, for she knew what would happen. And sure enough it did. Never was such a night as Mr. Coachman spent with the wet clothes flittering and fluttering about his ears, and the sheets wrapping him into a bundle, and tripping him up, while the towels slashed at his legs. But though he smarted all over he had to go on till dawn came, and then a very weary, woebegone coachman couldn't even creep away to his bed, for he had to feed and water his horses! And he, also, kept his own counsel for fear of the laugh going against him; so the clever laundry-maid put the forty pounds with the seventy in her box, and went on with her work gaily. But after a time the footman, who was quite an honest lad and truly in love, going by the laundry peeped through the keyhole to get a glimpse of his dearest dear, and what should he see but her sitting at her ease in a chair, and the clothes coming all ready folded and

ironed on to the table.

Now when he saw this he was greatly troubled. So he went to his master and drew out all his savings; and then he went to the girl and told her that he would have to tell the mistress what he had seen, unless she consented to marry him.

"You see," he said, "I have been with master this while back, and have saved up this bit, and you have been here this long while back and must have saved as well. So let us put the two together and make a home, or else stay on at service as pleases you."

Well, she tried to put him off; but he insisted so much that at last she said:

"James! there's a dear, run down to the cellar and fetch me a drop of brandy. You've made me feel so queer!" And when he had gone she out with her three feathers, and said, "By virtue of the three feathers from over my true love's heart may James not be able to pour the brandy straight, except down his throat."

Well! so it happened. Try as he would, James could not get the brandy into the glass. It splashed a few drops into it, then it trickled over his hand, and fell on the floor. And so it went on and on till he grew so tired that he thought he needed a dram himself. So he tossed off the few drops and began again; but he fared no better. So he took another little drain, and went on, and on, and on, till he got quite fuddled. And who should come down into the cellar but his master to know what the smell of brandy meant!

Now James the footman was truthful as well as honest, so he told the master how he had come down to get the sick laundry-maid a drop of brandy, but that his hand had shaken so that he could not pour it out, and it had fallen on the ground, and that the smell of it had got to his head.

"A likely tale," said the master, and beat James soundly.

Then the master went to the mistress, his wife, and said: "Send away that laundry-maid of yours. Something has come

over my men. They have all drawn out their savings as if they were going to be married, yet they don't leave, and I believe that girl is at the bottom of it."

But his wife would not hear of the laundry-maid being blamed; she was the best servant in the house, and worth all the rest of them put together; it was his men who were at fault. So they quarrelled over it; but in the end the master gave in, and after this there was peace, since the mistress bade the girl keep herself to herself, and none of the men would say ought of what had happened for fear of the laughter of the other servants.

So it went on until one day when the master was going a-driving, the coach was at the door, and the footman was standing to hold the coach open, and the butler on the steps all ready, when who should pass through the yard, so saucy and bright with a great basket of clean clothes, but the laundry-maid. And the sight of her was too much for James, the footman, who began to blub.

"She is a wicked girl," he said. "She got all my savings, and got me a good thrashing besides."

Then the coachman grew bold. "Did she?" he said. "That was nothing to what she served me." So he up and told all about the wet clothes and the awful job he had had the live-long night. Now the butler on the steps swelled with rage until he nearly burst, and at last he out with his night of banging shutters.

"And one," he said, "hit me on the nose."

This settled the three men, and they agreed to tell their master the moment he came out, and get the girl sent about her business. Now the laundry-maid had sharp ears and had paused behind a door to listen; so when she heard this she knew she must do something to stop it. So she out with her three feathers and said, "By virtue of the three feathers from over my true love's heart may there be striving as to who suffered most between the men so that they get into the pond

for a ducking."

Well! no sooner had she said the words than the three men began disputing as to which of them had been served the worst; then James up and hit the stout butler, giving him a black eye, and the fat butler fell upon James and pommelled him hard, while the coachman scrambled from his box and belaboured them both, and the laundry-maid stood by laughing.

So out comes the master, but none of them would listen, and each wanted to be heard, and fought, and shoved, and pommelled away until they shoved each other into the pond, and all got a fine ducking.

Then the master asked the girl what it was all about, and she said:

"They all wanted to tell a story against me because I won't marry them, and one said his was the best, and the next said his was the best, so they fell a-quarrelling as to which was the likeliest story to get me into trouble. But they are well punished, so there is no need to do more."

Then the master went to his wife and said, "You are right. That laundry-maid of yours is a very wise girl."

So the butler and the coachman and James had nothing to do but look sheepish and hold their tongues, and the laundry-maid went on with her duties without further trouble.

Then when the seven years and a day were over, who should drive up to the door in a fine gilded coach but the bird-husband restored to his shape as a handsome young man. And he carried the laundry-maid off to be his wife again, and her master and mistress were so pleased at her good fortune that they ordered all the other servants to stand on the steps and give her good luck. So as she passed the butler she put a bag with seventy pounds in it into his hand and said sweetly, "That is to recompense you for shutting the shutters."

And when she passed the coachman she put a bag with

forty pounds into his hand and said, "That is your reward for bringing in the clothes." But when she passed the footman she gave him a bag with a hundred pounds in it, and laughed, saying, "That is for the drop of brandy you never brought me!"

So she drove off with her handsome husband, and lived happy ever after.

IV
The Three Sillies

Once upon a time, when folk were not so wise as they are nowadays, there lived a farmer and his wife who had one daughter. And she, being a pretty lass, was courted by the young squire when he came home from his travels.

Now every evening he would stroll over from the Hall to see her and stop to supper in the farm-house, and every evening the daughter would go down into the cellar to draw the cider for supper.

So one evening when she had gone down to draw the cider and had turned the tap as usual, she happened to look up at the ceiling, and there she saw a big wooden mallet stuck in one of the beams.

It must have been there for ages and ages, for it was all covered with cobwebs; but somehow or another she had never noticed it before, and at once she began thinking how dangerous it was to have the mallet just there.

"For," thought she, "supposing him and me was married, and supposing we was to have a son, and supposing he were to grow up to be a man, and supposing he were to come down to draw cider like as I'm doing, and supposing the mallet were to fall on his head and kill him, how dreadful it would be!"

And with that she put down the candle she was carrying and, seating herself on a cask, began to cry. And she cried and cried and cried.

Now, upstairs, they began to wonder why she was so long

drawing the cider; so after a time her mother went down to the cellar to see what had come to her, and found her, seated on the cask, crying ever so hard, and the cider running all over the floor.

"Lawks a mercy me!" cried her mother, "whatever is the matter?"

"O mother!" says she between her sobs, "it's that horrid mallet. Supposing him and me was married, and supposing we was to have a son, and supposing he was to grow up to be a man, and supposing he was to come down to draw cider like as I'm doing, and supposing the mallet were to fall on his head and kill him, how dreadful it would be!"

"Dear heart!" said the mother, seating herself beside her daughter and beginning to cry: "How dreadful it would be!"

So they both sat a-crying.

Now after a time, when they did not come back, the farmer began to wonder what had happened, and going down to the cellar found them seated side by side on the cask, crying hard, and the cider running all over the floor.

"Zounds!" says he, "whatever is the matter?"

"Just look at that horrid mallet up there, father," moaned the mother. "Supposing our daughter was to marry her sweetheart, and supposing they was to have a son, and supposing he was to grow to man's estate, and supposing he was to come down to draw cider like as we're doing, and supposing that there mallet was to fall on his head and kill him, how dreadful it would be!"

"Dreadful indeed!" said the father and, seating himself beside his wife and daughter, started a-crying too.

Now upstairs the young squire wanted his supper; so at last he lost patience and went down into the cellar to see for himself what they were all after. And there he found them seated side by side on the cask a-crying, with their feet all a-wash in cider, for the floor was fair flooded. So the first thing he did was to run straight and turn off the tap. Then he said:

"What are you three after, sitting there crying like babies, and letting good cider run over the floor?"

Then they all three began with one voice, "Look at that horrid mallet! Supposing you and me/she was married, and supposing we/you had a son, and supposing he was to grow to man's estate, and supposing he was to come down here to draw cider like as we be, and supposing that there mallet was to fall down on his head and kill him, how dreadful it would be!"

Then the young squire burst out a-laughing, and laughed till he was tired. But at last he reached up to the old mallet and pulled it out, and put it safe on the floor. And he shook his head and said, "I've travelled far and I've travelled fast, but never have I met with three such sillies as you three. Now I can't marry one of the three biggest sillies in the world. So I shall start again on my travels, and if I can find three bigger sillies than you three, then I'll come back and be married—not otherwise."

So he wished them good-bye and started again on his travels, leaving them all crying; this time because the marriage was off!

Well, the young man travelled far and he travelled fast, but never did he find a bigger silly, until one day he came upon an old woman's cottage that had some grass growing on the thatched roof.

And the old woman was trying her best to cudgel her cow into going up a ladder to eat the grass. But the poor thing was afraid and durst not go. Then the old woman tried coaxing, but it wouldn't go. You never saw such a sight! The cow getting more and more flustered and obstinate, the old woman getting hotter and hotter.

At last the young squire said, "It would be easier if you went up the ladder, cut the grass, and threw it down for the cow to eat."

"A likely story that," says the old woman. "A cow can cut

grass for herself. And the foolish thing will be quite safe up there, for I'll tie a rope round her neck, pass the rope down the chimney, and fasten t'other end to my wrist, so as when I'm doing my bit o' washing, she can't fall off the roof without my knowing it. So mind your own business, young sir."

Well, after a while the old woman coaxed and codgered and bullied and badgered the cow up the ladder, and when she got it on to the roof she tied a rope round its neck, passed the rope down the chimney, and fastened t'other end to her wrist. Then she went about her bit of washing, and young squire he went on his way.

But he hadn't gone but a bit when he heard the awfullest hullabaloo. He galloped back, and found that the cow had fallen off the roof and got strangled by the rope round its neck, while the weight of the cow had pulled the old woman by her wrist up the chimney, where she had got stuck half-way and been smothered by the soot!

"That is one bigger silly," quoth the young squire as he journeyed on. "So now for two more!"

He did not find any, however, till late one night he arrived at a little inn. And the inn was so full that he had to share a room with another traveller. Now his room-fellow proved quite a pleasant fellow, and they forgathered, and each slept well in his bed.

But next morning, when they were dressing, what does the stranger do but carefully hang his breeches on the knobs of the tallboy!

"What are you doing?" asks young squire.

"I'm putting on my breeches," says the stranger; and with that he goes to the other end of the room, takes a little run, and tried to jump into the breeches.

But he didn't succeed, so he took another run and another try, and another and another and another, until he got quite hot and flustered, as the old woman had got over her cow that wouldn't go up the ladder. And all the time young

squire was laughing fit to split, for never in his life did he see anything so comical.

Then the stranger stopped a while and mopped his face with his handkerchief, for he was all in a sweat. "It's very well laughing," says he, "but breeches are the most awkwardest things to get into that ever were. It takes me the best part of an hour every morning before I get them on. How do you manage yours?"

Then young squire showed him, as well as he could for laughing, how to put on his breeches, and the stranger was ever so grateful and said he never should have thought of that way.

"So that," quoth young squire to himself, "is a second bigger silly." But he travelled far and he travelled fast without finding the third, until one bright night when the moon was shining right overhead he came upon a village. And outside the village was a pond, and round about the pond was a great crowd of villagers. And some had got rakes, and some had got pitchforks, and some had got brooms. And they were as busy as busy, shouting out, and raking, and forking, and sweeping away at the pond.

"What is the matter?" cried young squire, jumping off his horse to help. "Has anyone fallen in?"

"Aye! Matter enough," says they. "Can't 'ee see moon's fallen into the pond, an' we can't get her out nohow."

And with that they set to again raking, and forking, and sweeping away. Then the young squire burst out laughing, told them they were fools for their pains, and bade them look up over their heads where the moon was riding broad and full. But they wouldn't, and they wouldn't believe that what they saw in the water was only a reflection. And when he insisted they began to abuse him roundly and threaten to duck him in the pond. So he got on his horse again as quickly as he could, leaving them raking, and forking, and sweeping away; and for all we know they may be at it yet!

But the young squire said to himself, "There are many more sillies in this world than I thought for; so I'll just go back and marry the farmer's daughter. She is no sillier than the rest."

So they were married, and if they didn't live happy ever after, that has nothing to do with the story of the three sillies.

V

Mr. and Mrs. Vinegar

Mr. and Mrs. Vinegar, a worthy couple, lived in a glass pickle-jar. The house, though small, was snug, and so light that each speck of dust on the furniture showed like a mole-hill; so while Mr. Vinegar tilled his garden with a pickle-fork and grew vegetables for pickling, Mrs. Vinegar, who was a sharp, bustling, tidy woman, swept, brushed, and dusted, brushed and dusted and swept to keep the house clean as a new pin. Now one day she lost her temper with a cobweb and swept so hard after it that bang! bang! the broom-handle went right through the glass, and crash! crash! clitter! clatter! there was the pickle-jar house about her ears all in splinters and bits.

She picked her way over these as best she might, and rushed into the garden.

"Oh, Vinegar, Vinegar!" she cried. "We are clean ruined and done for! Quit these vegetables! they won't be wanted! What is the use of pickles if you haven't a pickle-jar to put them in, and—I've broken ours—into little bits!" And with that she fell to crying bitterly.

But Mr. Vinegar was of different mettle; though a small man, he was a cheerful one, always looking at the best side of things, so he said, "Accidents will happen, lovey! But there are as good pickle-bottles in the shop as ever came out of it. All we need is money to buy another. So let us go out into the world and seek our fortunes."

"But what about the furniture?" sobbed Mrs. Vinegar.

"I will take the door of the house with me, lovey," quoth Mr. Vinegar stoutly. "Then no one will be able to open it, will they?"

Mrs. Vinegar did not quite see how this fact would mend matters, but, being a good wife, she held her peace. So off they trudged into the world to seek fortune, Mr. Vinegar bearing the door on his back like a snail carries its house.

Well, they walked all day long, but not a brass farthing did they make, and when night fell they found themselves in a dark, thick forest. Now Mrs. Vinegar, for all she was a smart, strong woman, was tired to death, and filled with fear of wild beasts, so she began once more to cry bitterly; but Mr. Vinegar was cheerful as ever.

"Don't alarm yourself, lovey," he said. "I will climb into a tree, fix the door firmly in a fork, and you can sleep there as safe and comfortable as in your own bed."

So he climbed the tree, fixed the door, and Mrs. Vinegar lay down on it, and being dead tired was soon fast asleep. But her weight tilted the door sideways, so, after a time, Mr. Vinegar, being afraid she might slip off, sat down on the other side to balance her and keep watch.

Now in the very middle of the night, just as he was beginning to nod, what should happen but that a band of robbers should meet beneath that very tree in order to divide their spoils. Mr. Vinegar could hear every word said quite distinctly, and began to tremble like an aspen as he listened to the terrible deeds the thieves had done to gain their ends.

"Don't shake so!" murmured Mrs. Vinegar, half asleep. "You'll have me off the bed."

"I'm not shaking, lovey," whispered back Mr. Vinegar in a quaking voice. "It is only the wind in the trees."

But for all his cheerfulness he was not really very brave inside, so he went on trembling and shaking, and shaking and trembling, till, just as the robbers were beginning to parcel out

the money, he actually shook the door right out of the tree-fork, and down it came—with Mrs. Vinegar still asleep upon it—right on top of the robbers' heads!

As you may imagine, they thought the sky had fallen, and made off as fast as their legs would carry them, leaving their booty behind them. But Mr. Vinegar, who had saved himself from the fall by clinging to a branch, was far too frightened to go down in the dark to see what had happened. So up in the tree he sat like a big bird until dawn came.

Then Mrs. Vinegar woke, rubbed her eyes, yawned, and said, "Where am I?"

"On the ground, lovey," answered Mr. Vinegar, scrambling down.

And when they lifted up the door, what do you think they found?

One robber squashed flat as a pancake, and forty golden guineas all scattered about!

My goodness! How Mr. and Mrs. Vinegar jumped for joy!

"Now, Vinegar!" said his wife when they had gathered up all the gold pieces, "I will tell you what we must do. You must go to the next market-town and buy a cow; for, see you, money makes the mare to go, truly; but it also goes itself. Now a cow won't run away, but will give us milk and butter, which we can sell. So we shall live in comfort for the rest of our days."

"What a head you have, lovey!" said Mr. Vinegar admiringly, and started off on his errand.

"Mind you make a good bargain," bawled his wife after him.

"I always do," bawled back Mr. Vinegar. "I made a good bargain when I married such a clever wife, and I made a better one when I shook her down from the tree. I am the happiest man alive!"

So he trudged on, laughing and jingling the forty gold pieces in his pocket.

Now the first thing he saw in the market was an old red cow.

"I am in luck today," he thought; "that is the very beast for me. I shall be the happiest of men if I get that cow." So he went up to the owner, jingling the gold in his pocket.

"What will you take for your cow?" he asked.

And the owner of the cow, seeing he was a simpleton, said, "What you've got in your pocket."

"Done!" said Mr. Vinegar, handed over the forty guineas, and led off the cow, marching her up and down the market, much against her will, to show off his bargain.

Now, as he drove it about, proud as Punch, he noticed a man who was playing the bagpipes. He was followed about by a crowd of children who danced to the music, and a perfect shower of pennies fell into his cap every time he held it out.

"Ho, ho!" thought Mr. Vinegar. "That is an easier way of earning a livelihood than by driving about a beast of a cow! Then the feeding, and the milking, and the churning! Ah, I should be the happiest man alive if I had those bagpipes!"

So he went up to the musician and said, "What will you take for your bagpipes?"

"Well," replied the musician, seeing he was a simpleton, "it is a beautiful instrument, and I make so much money by it, that I cannot take anything less than that red cow."

"Done!" cried Mr. Vinegar in a hurry, lest the man should repent of his offer.

So the musician walked off with the red cow, and Mr. Vinegar tried to play the bagpipes. But, alas and alack! though he blew till he almost burst, not a sound could he make at first, and when he did at last, it was such a terrific squeal and screech that all the children ran away frightened, and the people stopped their ears.

But he went on and on, trying to play a tune, and never earning anything, save hootings and peltings, until his fingers were almost frozen with the cold, when of course the noise he

made on the bagpipes was worse than ever.

Then he noticed a man who had on a pair of warm gloves, and he said to himself, "Music is impossible when one's fingers are frozen. I believe I should be the happiest man alive if I had those gloves."

So he went up to the owner and said, "You seem, sir, to have a very good pair of gloves." And the man replied, "Truly, sir, my hands are as warm as toast this bitter November day."

That quite decided Mr. Vinegar, and he asked at once what the owner would take for them; and the owner, seeing he was a simpleton, said, "As your hands seem frozen, sir, I will, as a favour, let you have them for your bagpipes."

"Done!" cried Mr. Vinegar, delighted, and made the exchange.

Then he set off to find his wife, quite pleased with himself. "Warm hands, warm heart!" he thought. "I'm the happiest man alive!"

But as he trudged he grew very, very tired, and at last began to limp. Then he saw a man coming along the road with a stout stick.

"I should be the happiest man alive if I had that stick," he thought. "What is the use of warm hands if your feet ache!" So he said to the man with the stick, "What will you take for your stick?" and the man, seeing he was a simpleton, replied:

"Well, I don't want to part with my stick, but as you are so pressing I'll oblige you, as a friend, for those warm gloves you are wearing."

"Done for you!" cried Mr. Vinegar delightedly; and trudged off with the stick, chuckling to himself over his good bargain.

But as he went along a magpie fluttered out of the hedge and sat on a branch in front of him, and chuckled and laughed as magpies do. "What are you laughing at?" asked Mr. Vinegar.

"At you, forsooth!" chuckled the magpie, fluttering just a

little further. "At you, Mr. Vinegar, you foolish man—you simpleton—you blockhead! You bought a cow for forty guineas when she wasn't worth ten, you exchanged her for bagpipes you couldn't play—you changed the bagpipes for a pair of gloves, and the pair of gloves for a miserable stick. Ho, ho! Ha, ha! So you've nothing to show for your forty guineas save a stick you might have cut in any hedge. Ah, you fool! you simpleton! you blockhead!"

And the magpie chuckled, and chuckled, and chuckled in such guffaws, fluttering from branch to branch as Mr. Vinegar trudged along, that at last he flew into a violent rage and flung his stick at the bird. And the stick stuck in a tree out of his reach; so he had to go back to his wife without anything at all.

But he was glad the stick had stuck in a tree, for Mrs. Vinegar's hands were quite hard enough.

When it was all over Mr. Vinegar said cheerfully, "You are too violent, lovey. You broke the pickle-jar, and now you've nearly broken every bone in my body. I think we had better turn over a new leaf and begin afresh. I shall take service as a gardener, and you can go as a housemaid, until we have enough money to buy a new pickle-jar. There are as good ones in the shop as ever came out of it."

And that is the story of Mr. and Mrs. Vinegar.

VI

The Three Heads of the Well

Once upon a time there reigned a King in Colchester, valiant, strong, wise, famous as a good ruler.

But in the midst of his glory his dear Queen died, leaving him with a daughter just touching woman's estate; and this maiden was renowned, far and wide, for beauty, kindness, grace. Now strange things happen, and the King of Colchester, hearing of a lady who had immense riches, had a mind to marry her, though she was old, ugly, hook-nosed, and ill-tempered; and though she was, furthermore, possessed of a daughter as ugly as herself. None could give the reason why, but only a few weeks after the death of his dear Queen, the King brought this loathly bride to Court, and married her with great pomp and festivities. Now the very first thing she did was to poison the King's mind against his own beautiful, kind, gracious daughter, of whom, naturally, the ugly Queen and her ugly daughter were dreadfully jealous.

Now when the young Princess found that even her father had turned against her, she grew weary of Court life, and longed to get away from it; so, one day, happening to meet the King alone in the garden, she went down on her knees, and begged and prayed him to give her some help, and let her go out into the world to seek her fortune. To this the King agreed, and told his consort to fit the girl out for her enterprise in proper fashion. But the jealous woman only gave her a canvas bag of brown bread and hard cheese, with a bottle of

small-beer.

Though this was but a pitiful dowry for a King's daughter, the Princess was too proud to complain; so she took it, returned her thanks, and set off on her journey through woods and forests, by rivers and lakes, over mountain and valley.

At last she came to a cave at the mouth of which, on a stone, sate an old, old man with a white beard.

"Good morrow, fair damsel," he said; "whither away so fast?"

"Reverend father," replies she, "I go to seek my fortune."

"And what hast thou for dowry, fair damsel," said he, "in thy bag and bottle?"

"Bread and cheese and small-beer, father," says she, smiling. "Will it please you to partake of either?"

"With all my heart," says he, and when she pulled out her provisions he ate them nearly all. But once again she made no complaint, but bade him eat what he needed, and welcome.

Now when he had finished he gave her many thanks, and said:

"For your beauty, and your kindness, and your grace, take this wand. There is a thick thorny hedge before you which seems impassable. But strike it thrice with this wand, saying each time, 'Please, hedge, let me through,' and it will open a pathway for you. Then, when you come to a well, sit down on the brink of it; do not be surprised at anything you may see, but, whatever you are asked to do, that do!"

So saying the old man went into the cave, and she went on her way. After a while she came to a high, thick thorny hedge; but when she struck it three times with the wand, saying, "Please, hedge, let me through," it opened a wide pathway for her. So she came to the well, on the brink of which she sat down, and no sooner had she done so, than a golden head without any body came up through the water, singing as it came:

"Wash me, and comb me, lay me on a bank to dry

Softly and prettily to watch the passers-by."

"Certainly," she said, pulling out her silver comb. Then, placing the head on her lap, she began to comb the golden hair. When she had combed it, she lifted the golden head softly, and laid it on a primrose bank to dry. No sooner had she done this than another golden head appeared, singing as it came:

"Wash me, and comb me, lay me on a bank to dry
Softly and prettily to watch the passers-by."

"Certainly," says she, and after combing the golden hair, placed the golden head softly on the primrose bank, beside the first one.

Then came a third head out of the well, and it said the same thing:

"Wash me, and comb me, lay me on a bank to dry
Softly and prettily to watch the passers-by."

"With all my heart," says she graciously, and after taking the head on her lap, and combing its golden hair with her silver comb, there were the three golden heads in a row on the primrose bank. And she sat down to rest herself and looked at them, they were so quaint and pretty; and as she rested she cheerfully ate and drank the meagre portion of the brown bread, hard cheese, and small-beer which the old man had left to her; for, though she was a king's daughter, she was too proud to complain.

Then the first head spoke. "Brothers, what shall we weird for this damsel who has been so gracious unto us? I weird her to be so beautiful that she shall charm everyone she meets."

"And I," said the second head, "weird her a voice that shall exceed the nightingale's in sweetness."

"And I," said the third head, "weird her to be so fortunate that she shall marry the greatest King that reigns."

"Thank you with all my heart," says she; "but don't you think I had better put you back in the well before I go on? Remember you are golden, and the passers-by might steal

you."

To this they agreed; so she put them back. And when they had thanked her for her kind thought and said good-bye, she went on her journey.

Now she had not travelled far before she came to a forest where the King of the country was hunting with his nobles, and as the gay cavalcade passed down the glade she stood back to avoid them; but the King caught sight of her, and drew up his horse, fairly amazed at her beauty.

"Fair maid," he said, "who art thou, and whither goest thou through the forest thus alone?"

"I am the King of Colchester's daughter, and I go to seek my fortune," says she, and her voice was sweeter than the nightingale's.

Then the King jumped from his horse, being so struck by her that he felt it would be impossible to live without her, and falling on his knee begged and prayed her to marry him without delay.

And he begged and prayed so well that at last she consented. So, with all courtesy, he mounted her on his horse behind him, and commanding the hunt to follow, he returned to his palace, where the wedding festivities took place with all possible pomp and merriment. Then, ordering out the royal chariot, the happy pair started to pay the King of Colchester a bridal visit: and you may imagine the surprise and delight with which, after so short an absence, the people of Colchester saw their beloved, beautiful, kind, and gracious princess return in a chariot all gemmed with gold, as the bride of the most powerful King in the world. The bells rang out, flags flew, drums beat, the people huzzaed, and all was gladness, save for the ugly Queen and her ugly daughter, who were ready to burst with envy and malice; for, see you, the despised maiden was now above them both, and went before them at every Court ceremonial.

So, after the visit was ended, and the young King and his

bride had gone back to their own country, there to live happily ever after, the ugly ill-natured princess said to her mother, the ugly Queen:

"I also will go into the world and seek my fortune. If that drab of a girl with her mincing ways got so much, what may I not get?"

So her mother agreed, and furnished her forth with silken dresses and furs, and gave her as provisions sugar, almonds, and sweetmeats of every variety, besides a large flagon of Malaga sack. Altogether a right royal dowry.

Armed with these she set forth, following the same road as her step-sister. Thus she soon came upon the old man with a white beard, who was seated on a stone by the mouth of a cave.

"Good morrow," says he. "Whither away so fast?"

"What's that to you, old man?" she replied rudely.

"And what hast thou for dowry in bag and bottle?" he asked quietly.

"Good things with which you shall not be troubled," she answered pertly.

"Wilt thou not spare an old man something?" he said.

The thorns closed in around her so that she was all scratched and torn

Then she laughed. "Not a bite, not a sup, lest they should choke you: though that would be small matter to me," she replied, with a toss of her head.

"Then ill luck go with thee," remarked the old man as he rose and went into the cave.

So she went on her way, and after a time came to the thick thorny hedge, and seeing what she thought was a gap in it, she tried to pass through; but no sooner had she got well into the middle of the hedge than the thorns closed in around her so that she was all scratched and torn before she won her way. Thus, streaming with blood, she went on to the well, and seeing water, sat on the brink intending to cleanse herself. But

just as she dipped her hands, up came a golden head singing as it came:

"Wash me, and comb me, lay me on the bank to dry
Softly and prettily to watch the passers-by."

"A likely story," says she. "I'm going to wash myself." And with that she gave the head such a bang with her bottle that it bobbed below the water. But it came up again, and so did a second head, singing as it came:

"Wash me, and comb me, lay me on the bank to dry
Softly and prettily to watch the passers-by."

"Not I," scoffs she. "I'm going to wash my hands and face and have my dinner." So she fetches the second head a cruel bang with the bottle, and both heads ducked down in the water.

But when they came up again all draggled and dripping, the third head came also, singing as it came:

"Wash me, and comb me, lay me on the bank to dry
Softly and prettily to watch the passers-by."

By this time the ugly princess had cleansed herself, and, seated on the primrose bank, had her mouth full of sugar and almonds.

"Not I," says she as well as she could. "I'm not a washer-woman nor a barber. So take that for your washing and combing."

And with that, having finished the Malaga sack, she flung the empty bottle at the three heads.

But this time they didn't duck. They looked at each other and said, "How shall we weird this rude girl for her bad manners?" Then the first head said:

"I weird that to her ugliness shall be added blotches on her face."

And the second head said:

"I weird that she shall ever be hoarse as a crow and speak as if she had her mouth full."

Then the third head said:

"And I weird that she shall be glad to marry a cobbler."

Then the three heads sank into the well and were no more seen, and the ugly princess went on her way. But, lo and behold! when she came to a town, the children ran from her ugly blotched face screaming with fright, and when she tried to tell them she was the King of Colchester's daughter, her voice squeaked like a corn-crake's, was hoarse as a crow's, and folk could not understand a word she said, because she spoke as if her mouth was full!

Now in the town there happened to be a cobbler who not long before had mended the shoes of a poor old hermit; and the latter, having no money, had paid for the job by the gift of a wonderful ointment which would cure blotches on the face, and a bottle of medicine that would banish any hoarseness.

So, seeing the miserable, ugly princess in great distress, he went up to her and gave her a few drops out of his bottle; and then understanding from her rich attire and clearer speech that she was indeed a King's daughter, he craftily said that if she would take him for a husband he would undertake to cure her.

"Anything! Anything!" sobbed the miserable princess.

So they were married, and the cobbler straightway set off with his bride to visit the King of Colchester. But the bells did not ring, the drums did not beat, and the people, instead of huzzaing, burst into loud guffaws at the cobbler in leather, and his wife in silks and satins.

As for the ugly Queen, she was so enraged and disappointed that she went mad, and hanged herself in wrath. Whereupon the King, really pleased at getting rid of her so soon, gave the cobbler a hundred pounds and bade him go about his business with his ugly bride.

Which he did quite contentedly, for a hundred pounds means much to a poor cobbler. So they went to a remote part of the kingdom and lived unhappily for many years, he cobbling shoes, and she spinning the thread for him.

VII

The Bogey-Beast

There was once a woman who was very, very cheerful, though she had little to make her so; for she was old, and poor, and lonely. She lived in a little bit of a cottage and earned a scant living by running errands for her neighbours, getting a bite here, a sup there, as reward for her services. So she made shift to get on, and always looked as spry and cheery as if she had not a want in the world.

Now one summer evening, as she was trotting, full of smiles as ever, along the high road to her hovel, what should she see but a big black pot lying in the ditch!

"Goodness me!" she cried, "that would be just the very thing for me if I only had something to put in it! But I haven't! Now who could have left it in the ditch?"

And she looked about her expecting the owner would not be far off; but she could see nobody.

"Maybe there is a hole in it," she went on, "and that's why it has been cast away. But it would do fine to put a flower in for my window; so I'll just take it home with me."

And with that she lifted the lid and looked inside. "Mercy me!" she cried, fair amazed. "If it isn't full of gold pieces. Here's luck!"

And so it was, brimful of great gold coins. Well, at first she simply stood stock-still, wondering if she was standing on her head or her heels. Then she began saying:

"Lawks! But I do feel rich. I feel awful rich!"

After she had said this many times, she began to wonder how she was to get her treasure home. It was too heavy for her to carry, and she could see no better way than to tie the end of her shawl to it and drag it behind her like a go-cart.

"It will soon be dark," she said to herself as she trotted along. "So much the better! The neighbours will not see what I'm bringing home, and I shall have all the night to myself, and be able to think what I'll do! Mayhap I'll buy a grand house and just sit by the fire with a cup o' tea and do no work at all like a queen. Or maybe I'll bury it at the garden foot and just keep a bit in the old china teapot on the chimney-piece. Or maybe—Goody! Goody! I feel that grand I don't know myself."

By this time she was a bit tired of dragging such a heavy weight, and, stopping to rest a while, turned to look at her treasure.

And lo! it wasn't a pot of gold at all! It was nothing but a lump of silver.

She stared at it, and rubbed her eyes, and stared at it again.

"Well! I never!" she said at last. "And me thinking it was a pot of gold! I must have been dreaming. But this is luck! Silver is far less trouble—easier to mind, and not so easy stolen. Them gold pieces would have been the death o' me, and with this great lump of silver—"

So she went off again planning what she would do, and feeling as rich as rich, until becoming a bit tired again she stopped to rest and gave a look round to see if her treasure was safe; and she saw nothing but a great lump of iron!

"Well! I never!" says she again. "And I mistaking it for silver! I must have been dreaming. But this is luck! It's real convenient. I can get penny pieces for old iron, and penny pieces are a deal handier for me than your gold and silver. Why! I should never have slept a wink for fear of being robbed. But a penny piece comes in useful, and I shall sell that

iron for a lot and be real rich—rolling rich."

So on she trotted full of plans as to how she would spend her penny pieces, till once more she stopped to rest and looked round to see her treasure was safe. And this time she saw nothing but a big stone.

"Well! I never!" she cried, full of smiles. "And to think I mistook it for iron. I must have been dreaming. But here's luck indeed, and me wanting a stone terrible bad to stick open the gate. Eh my! but it's a change for the better! It's a fine thing to have good luck."

So, all in a hurry to see how the stone would keep the gate open, she trotted off down the hill till she came to her own cottage. She unlatched the gate and then turned to unfasten her shawl from the stone which lay on the path behind her. Aye! It was a stone sure enough. There was plenty light to see it lying there, douce and peaceable as a stone should.

So she bent over it to unfasten the shawl end, when—"Oh my!" All of a sudden it gave a jump, a squeal, and in one moment was as big as a haystack. Then it let down four great lanky legs and threw out two long ears, nourished a great long tail and romped off, kicking and squealing and whinnying and laughing like a naughty, mischievous boy!

The old woman stared after it till it was fairly out of sight, then she burst out laughing too.

"Well!" she chuckled, "I am in luck! Quite the luckiest body hereabouts. Fancy my seeing the Bogey-Beast all to myself; and making myself so free with it too! My goodness! I do feel that uplifted—that GRAND!"—

So she went into her cottage and spent the evening chuckling over her good luck.

VIII
The Red Ettin

There was once a widow that lived on a small bit of ground, which she rented from a farmer. And she had two sons; and by and by it was time for the wife to send them away to seek their fortune. So she told her eldest son one day to take a can and bring her water from the well, that she might bake a cake for him; and however much or however little water he might bring, the cake would be great or small accordingly, and that cake was to be all that she could give him when he went on his travels.

The lad went away with the can to the well, and filled it with water, and then came away home again; but the can being broken, the most part of the water had run out before he got back. So his cake was very small; yet small as it was, his mother asked him if he was willing to take the half of it with her blessing, telling him that, if he chose rather to take the whole, he would only get it with her curse. The young man, thinking he might have to travel a far way, and not knowing when or how he might get other provisions, said he would like to have the whole cake, come of his mother's malison what might; so she gave him the whole cake, and her malison along with it. Then he took his brother aside, and gave him a knife to keep till he should come back, desiring him to look at it every morning, and as long as it continued to be clear, then he might be sure that the owner of it was well; but if it grew dim and rusty, then for certain some ill had

befallen him.

So the young man went to seek his fortune. And he went all that day, and all the next day; and on the third day, in the afternoon, he came up to where a shepherd was sitting with a flock of sheep. And he went up to the shepherd and asked him to whom the sheep belonged; and he answered:

"To the Red Ettin of Ireland
Who lives in Ballygan,
He stole King Malcolm's daughter,
The king of fair Scotland.
He beats her, he binds her,
He lays her on a hand;
And every day he strikes her
With a bright silver wand.
'Tis said there's one predestinate
To be his mortal foe;
But sure that man is yet unborn,
And long may it be so!"

After this the shepherd told him to beware of the beasts he should next meet, for they were of a very different kind from any he had yet seen.

So the young man went on, and by and by he saw a multitude of very dreadful, terrible, horrible beasts, with two heads, and on every head four horns! And he was sore frightened, and ran away from them as fast as he could; and glad was he when he came to a castle that stood on a hillock, with the door standing wide open to the wall. And he went in to the castle for shelter, and there he saw an old wife sitting beside the kitchen fire. He asked the wife if he might stay for the night, as he was tired with a long journey; and the wife said he might, but it was not a good place for him to be in, as it belonged to the Red Ettin, who was a very terrible monster with three heads, who spared no living man it could get hold

of. The young man would have gone away, but he was afraid of the two-headed four-horned beasts outside; so he beseeched the old woman to hide him as best she could, and not tell the Ettin he was there. He thought, if he could put over the night, he might get away in the morning, without meeting with the dreadful, terrible, horrible beasts, and so escape.

But he had not been long in his hiding-hole, before the awful Ettin came in; and no sooner was he in, than he was heard crying:

"Snouk but! and snouk ben!
I find the smell of an earthly man;
Be he living, or be he dead,
His heart this night shall kitchen my bread."

Well, the monster began to search about, and he soon found the poor young man, and pulled him from his hiding-place. And when he had got him out, he told him that if he could answer him three questions his life should be spared.

So the first head asked: "A thing without an end; what's that?"

But the young man knew not.

Then the second head said: "The smaller the more dangerous; what's that?"

But the young man knew not.

And then the third head asked: "The dead carrying the living? riddle me that."

But the young man knew not.

So the lad not being able to answer one of these questions, the Red Ettin took a mallet from behind the door, knocked him on the head, and turned him into a pillar of stone.

Now on the morning after this happened the younger brother took out the knife to look at it, and he was grieved to find it all brown with rust. So he told his mother that the time was now come for him to go away upon his travels also. At

first she refused to let him go; but at last she requested him to take the can to the well for water, that she might make a cake for him. So he went, but as he was bringing home the water, a raven over his head cried to him to look, and he would see that the water was running out. Now being a young man of sense, and seeing the water running out, he took some clay and patched up the holes, so that he brought home enough water to bake a large cake. And when his mother put it to him to take the half cake with her blessing, he took it instead of having the whole with her malison.

So he went away on his journey with his mother's blessing. Now after he had travelled a far way, he met with an old woman who asked him if he would give her a bit of his cake. And he said, "I will gladly do that"; so he gave her a piece of the cake. Then the old woman, who was a fairy, gave him a magic wand, that might yet be of service to him, if he took care to use it rightly; and she told him a great deal that would happen to him, and what he ought to do in all circumstances; and after that, she vanished in an instant, out of his sight. Then he went on his way until he came up to the old man who was herding the sheep; and when he asked him to whom the sheep belonged, the answer was:

"To the Red Ettin of Ireland
Who lives in Ballygan,
He stole King Malcolm's daughter,
The king of fair Scotland.
He beats her, he binds her,
He lays her on a band;
And every day he strikes her
With a bright silver wand.
But now I fear his end is near,
And death is close at hand;
For you're to be, I plainly see,
The heir of all his land."

So the younger brother went on his way; but when he came to the place where the dreadful, terrible, horrible beasts were standing, he did not stop nor run away, but went boldly through amongst them. One came up roaring with open mouth to devour him, when he struck it with his wand, and laid it in an instant dead at his feet. He soon came to the Ettin's castle, where he found the door shut, but he knocked boldly, and was admitted. Then the old woman who sat by the fire warned him of the terrible Ettin, and what had been the fate of his brother; but he was not to be daunted, and would not even hide.

Then by and by the monster came in, crying as before:

"Snouk but! and snouk ben!
I find the smell of an earthly man;
Be he living, or be he dead,
His heart this night shall kitchen my bread."

Well, he quickly espied the young man, and bade him stand forth on the floor, and told him that if he could answer three questions his life would be spared.

So the first head asked: "What's the thing without an end?"

Now the younger brother had been told by the fairy to whom he had given a piece of his cake what he ought to say; so he answered:

"A bowl."

Then the first head frowned, but the second head asked:

"The smaller the more dangerous; what's that?"

"A bridge," says the younger brother, quite fast.

Then the first and the second heads frowned, but the third head asked:

"When does the dead carry the living? riddle me that."

At this the young man answered up at once and said:

"When a ship sails on the sea with men inside her."

When the Red Ettin found all his riddles answered, he knew that his power was gone, so he tried to escape, but the young man took up an axe and hewed off the monster's three heads. Then he asked the old woman to show him where the king's daughter lay; and the old woman took him upstairs, and opened a great many doors, and out of every door came a beautiful lady who had been imprisoned there by the Red Ettin; and last of all the ladies was the king's daughter. Then the old woman took him down into a low room, and there stood a stone pillar; but he had only to touch it with his wand, and his brother started into life.

So the whole of the prisoners were overjoyed at their deliverance, for which they thanked the younger brother again and again. Next day they all set out for the king's court, and a gallant company they made. Then the king married his daughter to the young man who had delivered her, and gave a noble's daughter to his brother.

So they all lived happily all the rest of their days.

English Fairy Tales

Collected by Joseph Jacobs

I
Teeny-Tiny

Once upon a time there was a teeny-tiny woman lived in a teeny-tiny house in a teeny-tiny village. Now, one day this teeny-tiny woman put on her teeny-tiny bonnet, and went out of her teeny-tiny house to take a teeny-tiny walk. And when this teeny-tiny woman had gone a teeny-tiny way she came to a teeny-tiny gate; so the teeny-tiny woman opened the teeny-tiny gate, and went into a teeny-tiny churchyard. And when this teeny-tiny woman had got into the teeny-tiny churchyard, she saw a teeny-tiny bone on a teeny-tiny grave, and the teeny-tiny woman said to her teeny-tiny self, "This teeny-tiny bone will make me some teeny-tiny soup for my teeny-tiny supper." So the teeny-tiny woman put the teeny-tiny bone into her teeny-tiny pocket, and went home to her teeny-tiny house.

Now when the teeny-tiny woman got home to her teeny-tiny house she was a teeny-tiny bit tired; so she went up her teeny-tiny stairs to her teeny-tiny bed, and put the teeny-tiny bone into a teeny-tiny cupboard. And when this teeny-tiny woman had been to sleep a teeny-tiny time, she was awakened by a teeny-tiny voice from the teeny-tiny cupboard, which said:

"Give me my bone!"

And this teeny-tiny woman was a teeny-tiny frightened, so she hid her teeny-tiny head under the teeny-tiny clothes and went to sleep again. And when she had been to sleep

again a teeny-tiny time, the teeny-tiny voice again cried out from the teeny-tiny cupboard a teeny-tiny louder, "Give me my bone!"

This made the teeny-tiny woman a teeny-tiny more frightened, so she hid her teeny-tiny head a teeny-tiny further under the teeny-tiny clothes. And when the teeny-tiny woman had been to sleep again a teeny-tiny time, the teeny-tiny voice from the teeny-tiny cupboard said again a teeny-tiny louder,

"Give me my bone!"

And this teeny-tiny woman was a teeny-tiny bit more frightened, but she put her teeny-tiny head out of the teeny-tiny clothes, and said in her loudest teeny-tiny voice, "TAKE IT!"

II

Johnny-Cake

Once upon a time there was an old man, and an old woman, and a little boy. One morning the old woman made a Johnny-cake, and put it in the oven to bake. "You watch the Johnny-cake while your father and I go out to work in the garden." So the old man and the old woman went out and began to hoe potatoes, and left the little boy to tend the oven. But he didn't watch it all the time, and all of a sudden he heard a noise, and he looked up and the oven door popped open, and out of the oven jumped Johnny-cake, and went rolling along end over end, towards the open door of the house. The little boy ran to shut the door, but Johnny-cake was too quick for him and rolled through the door, down the steps, and out into the road long before the little boy could catch him. The little boy ran after him as fast as he could clip it, crying out to his father and mother, who heard the uproar, and threw down their hoes and gave chase too. But Johnny-cake outran all three a long way, and was soon out of sight, while they had to sit down, all out of breath, on a bank to rest.

On went Johnny-cake, and by-and-by he came to two well-diggers who looked up from their work and called out: "Where ye going, Johnny-cake?"

He said: "I've outrun an old man, and an old woman, and a little boy, and I can outrun you too-o-o!"

"Ye can, can ye? we'll see about that?" said they; and they threw down their picks and ran after him, but couldn't catch

up with him, and soon they had to sit down by the roadside to rest.

On ran Johnny-cake, and by-and-by he came to two ditch-diggers who were digging a ditch. "Where ye going, Johnny-cake?" said they. He said: "I've outrun an old man, and an old woman, and a little boy, and two well-diggers, and I can outrun you too-o-o!"

"Ye can, can ye? we'll see about that!" said they; and they threw down their spades, and ran after him too. But Johnny-cake soon outstripped them also, and seeing they could never catch him, they gave up the chase and sat down to rest.

On went Johnny-cake, and by-and-by he came to a bear. The bear said: "Where are ye going, Johnny-cake?"

He said: "I've outrun an old man, and an old woman and a little boy, and two well-diggers, and two ditch-diggers, and I can outrun you too-o-o!"

"Ye can, can ye?" growled the bear, "we'll see about that!" and trotted as fast as his legs could carry him after Johnny-cake, who never stopped to look behind him. Before long the bear was left so far behind that he saw he might as well give up the hunt first as last, so he stretched himself out by the roadside to rest.

On went Johnny-cake, and by-and-by he came to a wolf. The wolf said: "Where ye going, Johnny-cake?" He said: "I've outrun an old man, and an old woman, and a little boy, and two well-diggers, and two ditch-diggers and a bear, and I can outrun you too-o-o!"

"Ye can, can ye?" snarled the wolf, "we'll see about that!" And he set into a gallop after Johnny-cake, who went on and on so fast that the wolf too saw there was no hope of overtaking him, and he too lay down to rest.

On went Johnny-cake, and by-and-by he came to a fox that lay quietly in a corner of the fence. The fox called out in a sharp voice, but without getting up: "Where ye going Johnny-cake?"

He said: "I've outrun an old man, and an old woman, and a little boy, and two well-diggers, and two ditch-diggers, a bear, and a wolf, and I can outrun you too-o-o!"

The fox said: "I can't quite hear you, Johnny-cake, won't you come a little closer?" turning his head a little to one side.

Johnny-cake stopped his race for the first time, and went a little closer, and called out in a very loud voice "I've outrun an old man, and an old woman, and a little boy, and two well-diggers, and two ditch-diggers, and a bear, and a wolf, and I can outrun you too-o-o."

"Can't quite hear you; won't you come a little closer?" said the fox in a feeble voice, as he stretched out his neck towards Johnny-cake, and put one paw behind his ear.

Johnny-cake came up close, and leaning towards the fox screamed out: I'VE OUTRUN AN OLD MAN, AND AN OLD WOMAN, AND A LITTLE BOY, AND TWO WELL-DIGGERS, AND TWO DITCH-DIGGERS, AND A BEAR, AND A WOLF, AND I CAN OUTRUN YOU TOO-O-O!"

"You can, can you?" yelped the fox, and he snapped up the Johnny-cake in his sharp teeth in the twinkling of an eye.

III

Mr. Miacca

Tommy Grimes was sometimes a good boy, and sometimes a bad boy; and when he was a bad boy, he was a very bad boy. Now his mother used to say to him: "Tommy, Tommy, be a good boy, and don't go out of the street, or else Mr. Miacca will take you." But still when he was a bad boy he would go out of the street; and one day, sure enough, he had scarcely got round the corner, when Mr. Miacca did catch him and popped him into a bag upside down, and took him off to his house.

When Mr. Miacca got Tommy inside, he pulled him out of the bag and set him down, and felt his arms and legs. "You're rather tough," says he; "but you're all I've got for supper, and you'll not taste bad boiled. But body o' me, I've forgot the herbs, and it's bitter you'll taste without herbs. Sally! Here, I say, Sally!" and he called Mrs. Miacca.

So Mrs. Miacca came out of another room and said: "What d'ye want, my dear?"

"Oh, here's a little boy for supper," said Mr. Miacca, "and I've forgot the herbs. Mind him, will ye, while I go for them."

"All right, my love," says Mrs. Miacca, and off he goes.

Then Tommy Grimes said to Mrs. Miacca: "Does Mr. Miacca always have little boys for supper?"

"Mostly, my dear," said Mrs. Miacca, "if little boys are bad enough, and get in his way."

"And don't you have anything else but boy-meat? No pudding?" asked Tommy.

"Ah, I loves pudding," says Mrs. Miacca. "But it's not often the likes of me gets pudding."

"Why, my mother is making a pudding this very day," said Tommy Grimes, "and I am sure she'd give you some, if I ask her. Shall I run and get some?"

"Now, that's a thoughtful boy," said Mrs. Miacca, "only don't be long and be sure to be back for supper."

So off Tommy pelters, and right glad he was to get off so cheap; and for many a long day he was as good as good could be, and never went round the corner of the street. But he couldn't always be good; and one day he went round the corner, and as luck would have it, he hadn't scarcely got round it when Mr. Miacca grabbed him up, popped him in his bag, and took him home.

When he got him there, Mr. Miacca dropped him out; and when he saw him, he said: "Ah, you're the youngster what served me and my missus that shabby trick, leaving us without any supper. Well, you shan't do it again. I'll watch over you myself. Here, get under the sofa, and I'll set on it and watch the pot boil for you."

So poor Tommy Grimes had to creep under the sofa, and Mr. Miacca sat on it and waited for the pot to boil. And they waited, and they waited, but still the pot didn't boil, till at last Mr. Miacca got tired of waiting, and he said: "Here, you under there, I'm not going to wait any longer; put out your leg, and I'll stop your giving us the slip."

So Tommy put out a leg, and Mr. Miacca got a chopper, and chopped it off, and pops it in the pot.

Suddenly he calls out: "Sally, my dear, Sally!" and nobody answered. So he went into the next room to look out for Mrs. Miacca, and while he was there, Tommy crept out from under the sofa and ran out of the door. For it was a leg of the sofa that he had put out.

So Tommy Grimes ran home, and he never went round the corner again till he was old enough to go alone.

IV

How Jack Went to Seek His Fortune

Once on a time there was a boy named Jack, and one morning he started to go and seek his fortune.

He hadn't gone very far before he met a cat.

"Where are you going, Jack?" said the cat.

"I am going to seek my fortune."

"May I go with you?"

"Yes," said Jack, "the more the merrier."

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt.

They went a little further and they met a dog.

"Where are you going, Jack?" said the dog.

"I am going to seek my fortune."

"May I go with you?"

"Yes," said Jack, "the more the merrier."

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt. They went a little further and they met a goat.

"Where are you going, Jack?" said the goat.

"I am going to seek my fortune."

"May I go with you?"

"Yes," said Jack, "the more the merrier."

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt.

They went a little further and they met a bull.

"Where are you going, Jack?" said the bull.

"I am going to seek my fortune."

"May I go with you?"

"Yes," said Jack, "the more the merrier."

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt.

They went a little further and they met a rooster.

"Where are you going, Jack?" said the rooster.

"I am going to seek my fortune."

"May I go with you?"

"Yes," said Jack, "the more the merrier."

So on they went, jiggelty-jolt, jiggelty-jolt.

Well, they went on till it was about dark, and they began to think of some place where they could spend the night. About this time they came in sight of a house, and Jack told them to keep still while he went up and looked in through the window. And there were some robbers counting over their money. Then Jack went back and told them to wait till he gave the word, and then to make all the noise they could. So when they were all ready Jack gave the word, and the cat mewed, and the dog barked, and the goat bleated, and the bull bellowed, and the rooster crowed, and all together they made such a dreadful noise that it frightened the robbers all away.

And then they went in and took possession of the house. Jack was afraid the robbers would come back in the night, and so when it came time to go to bed he put the cat in the rocking-chair, and he put the dog under the table, and he put the goat upstairs, and he put the bull down cellar, and the rooster flew up on to the roof, and Jack went to bed.

By-and-by the robbers saw it was all dark and they sent one man back to the house to look after their money. Before long he came back in a great fright and told them his story.

"I went back to the house," said he, "and went in and tried to sit down in the rocking-chair, and there was an old woman knitting, and she stuck her knitting-needles into me." That was the cat, you know.

"I went to the table to look after the money and there was a shoemaker under the table, and he stuck his awl into me." That was the dog, you know.

"I started to go upstairs, and there was a man up there threshing, and he knocked me down with his flail." That was the goat, you know.

"I started to go down cellar, and there was a man down there chopping wood, and he knocked me up with his axe." That was the bull, you know.

"But I shouldn't have minded all that if it hadn't been for that little fellow on top of the house, who kept a-hollering, 'Chuck him up to me-e! Chuck him up to me-e!'" Of course that was the cock-a-doodle-do.

V

Jack Hannaford

There was an old soldier who had been long in the wars—so long, that he was quite out-at-elbows, and he did not know where to go to find a living. So he walked up moors, down glens, till at last he came to a farm, from which the good man had gone away to market. The wife of the farmer was a very foolish woman, who had been a widow when he married her; the farmer was foolish enough, too, and it is hard to say which of the two was the more foolish. When you've heard my tale you may decide.

Now before the farmer goes to market says he to his wife: "Here is ten pounds all in gold, take care of it till I come home." If the man had not been a fool he would never have given the money to his wife to keep. Well, off he went in his cart to market, and the wife said to herself: "I will keep the ten pounds quite safe from thieves;" so she tied it up in a rag, and she put the rag up the parlour chimney.

"There," said she, "no thieves will ever find it now, that is quite sure."

Jack Hannaford, the old soldier, came and rapped at the door.

"Who is there?" asked the wife.

"Jack Hannaford."

"Where do you come from?"

"Paradise."

"Lord a' mercy! and maybe you've seen my old man

there," alluding to her former husband.

"Yes, I have."

"And how was he a-doing?" asked the goody.

"But middling; he cobbles old shoes, and he has nothing but cabbage for victuals."

"Deary me!" exclaimed the woman. "Didn't he send a message to me?"

"Yes, he did," replied Jack Hannaford. "He said that he was out of leather, and his pockets were empty, so you were to send him a few shillings to buy a fresh stock of leather."

"He shall have them, bless his poor soul!" And away went the wife to the parlour chimney, and she pulled the rag with the ten pounds in it from the chimney, and she gave the whole sum to the soldier, telling him that her old man was to use as much as he wanted, and to send back the rest.

It was not long that Jack waited after receiving the money; he went off as fast as he could walk.

Presently the farmer came home and asked for his money. The wife told him that she had sent it by a soldier to her former husband in Paradise, to buy him leather for cobbling the shoes of the saints and angels of Heaven. The farmer was very angry, and he swore that he had never met with such a fool as his wife. But the wife said that her husband was a greater fool for letting her have the money.

There was no time to waste words; so the farmer mounted his horse and rode off after Jack Hannaford. The old soldier heard the horse's hoofs clattering on the road behind him, so he knew it must be the farmer pursuing him. He lay down on the ground, and shading his eyes with one hand, looked up into the sky, and pointed heavenwards with the other hand.

"What are you about there?" asked the farmer, pulling up.

"Lord save you!" exclaimed Jack: "I've seen a rare sight."

"What was that?"

"A man going straight up into the sky, as if he were walking on a road."

"Can you see him still?"

"Yes, I can."

"Where?"

"Get off your horse and lie down."

"If you will hold the horse."

Jack did so readily.

"I cannot see him," said the farmer.

"Shade your eyes with your hand, and you'll soon see a man flying away from you."

Sure enough he did so, for Jack leaped on the horse, and rode away with it. The farmer walked home without his horse.

"You are a bigger fool than I am," said the wife; "for I did only one foolish thing, and you have done two."

VI
Cap o' Rushes

Well, there was once a very rich gentleman, and he'd three daughters, and he thought he'd see how fond they were of him. So he says to the first, "How much do you love me, my dear?"

"Why," says she, "as I love my life."

"That's good," says he.

So he says to the second, "How much do you love me, my dear?"

"Why," says she, "better nor all the world."

"That's good," says he.

So he says to the third, "How much do you love me, my dear?"

"Why, I love you as fresh meat loves salt," says she.

Well, he was that angry. "You don't love me at all," says he, "and in my house you stay no more." So he drove her out there and then, and shut the door in her face.

Well, she went away on and on till she came to a fen, and there she gathered a lot of rushes and made them into a kind of a sort of a cloak with a hood, to cover her from head to foot, and to hide her fine clothes. And then she went on and on till she came to a great house.

"Do you want a maid?" says she.

"No, we don't," said they.

"I haven't nowhere to go," says she; "and I ask no wages, and do any sort of work," says she.

"Well," says they, "if you like to wash the pots and scrape the saucepans you may stay," said they.

So she stayed there and washed the pots and scraped the saucepans and did all the dirty work. And because she gave no name they called her "Cap o' Rushes."

Well, one day there was to be a great dance a little way off, and the servants were allowed to go and look on at the grand people. Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go, so she stayed at home.

But when they were gone she offed with her cap o' rushes, and cleaned herself, and went to the dance. And no one there was so finely dressed as her.

Well, who should be there but her master's son, and what should he do but fall in love with her the minute he set eyes on her. He wouldn't dance with anyone else.

But before the dance was done Cap o' Rushes slipt off, and away she went home. And when the other maids came back she was pretending to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Well, next morning they said to her, "You did miss a sight, Cap o' Rushes!"

"What was that?" says she.

"Why, the beautifullest lady you ever see, dressed right gay and ga'. The young master, he never took his eyes off her."

"Well, I should have liked to have seen her," says Cap o' Rushes.

"Well, there's to be another dance this evening, and perhaps she'll be there."

But, come the evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go with them. Howsoever, when they were gone, she offed with her cap o' rushes and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance.

The master's son had been reckoning on seeing her, and he danced with no one else, and never took his eyes off her. But, before the dance was over, she slipt off, and home she went, and when the maids came back she, pretended to be

asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Next day they said to her again, "Well, Cap o' Rushes, you should ha' been there to see the lady. There she was again, gay and ga', and the young master he never took his eyes off her."

"Well, there," says she, "I should ha' liked to ha' seen her."

"Well," says they, "there's a dance again this evening, and you must go with us, for she's sure to be there."

Well, come this evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go, and do what they would she stayed at home. But when they were gone she offed with her cap o' rushes and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance.

The master's son was rarely glad when he saw her. He danced with none but her and never took his eyes off her. When she wouldn't tell him her name, nor where she came from, he gave her a ring and told her if he didn't see her again he should die.

Well, before the dance was over, off she slipped, and home she went, and when the maids came home she was pretending to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Well, next day they says to her, "There, Cap o' Rushes, you didn't come last night, and now you won't see the lady, for there's no more dances."

"Well I should have rarely liked to have seen her," says she.

The master's son he tried every way to find out where the lady was gone, but go where he might, and ask whom he might, he never heard anything about her. And he got worse and worse for the love of her till he had to keep his bed.

"Make some gruel for the young master," they said to the cook. "He's dying for the love of the lady." The cook she set about making it when Cap o' Rushes came in.

"What are you a-doing of?", says she.

"I'm going to make some gruel for the young master," says

the cook, "for he's dying for love of the lady."

"Let me make it," says Cap o' Rushes.

Well, the cook wouldn't at first, but at last she said yes, and Cap o' Rushes made the gruel. And when she had made it she slipped the ring into it on the sly before the cook took it upstairs.

The young man he drank it and then he saw the ring at the bottom.

"Send for the cook," says he.

So up she comes.

"Who made this gruel here?" says he.

"I did," says the cook, for she was frightened.

And he looked at her,

"No, you didn't," says he. "Say who did it, and you shan't be harmed."

"Well, then, 'twas Cap o' Rushes," says she.

"Send Cap o' Rushes here," says he.

So Cap o' Rushes came.

"Did you make my gruel?" says he.

"Yes, I did," says she.

"Where did you get this ring?" says he.

"From him that gave it me," says she.

"Who are you, then?" says the young man.

"I'll show you," says she. And she offed with her cap o' rushes, and there she was in her beautiful clothes.

Well, the master's son he got well very soon, and they were to be married in a little time. It was to be a very grand wedding, and everyone was asked far and near. And Cap o' Rushes' father was asked. But she never told anybody who she was.

But before the wedding she went to the cook, and says she:

"I want you to dress every dish without a mite o' salt."

"That'll be rare nasty," says the cook.

"That doesn't signify," says she.

"Very well," says the cook.

Well, the wedding-day came, and they were married. And after they were married all the company sat down to the dinner. When they began to eat the meat, that was so tasteless they couldn't eat it. But Cap o' Rushes' father he tried first one dish and then another, and then he burst out crying.

"What is the matter?" said the master's son to him.

"Oh!" says he, "I had a daughter. And I asked her how much she loved me. And she said 'As much as fresh meat loves salt.' And I turned her from my door, for I thought she didn't love me. And now I see she loved me best of all. And she may be dead for aught I know."

"No, father, here she is!" says Cap o' Rushes. And she goes up to him and puts her arms round him.

And so they were happy ever after.

VII

Jack and the Beanstalk

There was once upon a time a poor widow who had an only son named Jack, and a cow named Milky-white. And all they had to live on was the milk the cow gave every morning which they carried to the market and sold. But one morning Milky-white gave no milk and they didn't know what to do.

"What shall we do, what shall we do?" said the widow, wringing her hands.

"Cheer up, mother, I'll go and get work somewhere," said Jack.

"We've tried that before, and nobody would take you," said his mother; "we must sell Milky-white and with the money do something, start shop, or something."

"All right, mother," says Jack; "it's market-day today, and I'll soon sell Milky-white, and then we'll see what we can do."

So he took the cow's halter in his hand, and off he starts. He hadn't gone far when he met a funny-looking old man who said to him: "Good morning, Jack."

"Good morning to you," said Jack, and wondered how he knew his name.

"Well, Jack, and where are you off to?" said the man.

"I'm going to market to sell our cow here."

"Oh, you look the proper sort of chap to sell cows," said the man; "I wonder if you know how many beans make five."

"Two in each hand and one in your mouth," says Jack, as sharp as a needle.

"Right you are," said the man, "and here they are the very

beans themselves," he went on pulling out of his pocket a number of strange-looking beans. "As you are so sharp," says he, "I don't mind doing a swap with you—your cow for these beans."

"Walker!" says Jack; "wouldn't you like it?"

"Ah! you don't know what these beans are," said the man; "if you plant them over-night, by morning they grow right up to the sky."

"Really?" says Jack; "you don't say so."

"Yes, that is so, and if it doesn't turn out to be true you can have your cow back."

"Right," says Jack, and hands him over Milky-white's halter and pockets the beans.

Back goes Jack home, and as he hadn't gone very far it wasn't dusk by the time he got to his door.

"What back, Jack?" said his mother; "I see you haven't got Milky-white, so you've sold her. How much did you get for her?"

"You'll never guess, mother," says Jack.

"No, you don't say so. Good boy! Five pounds, ten, fifteen, no, it can't be twenty."

"I told you you couldn't guess, what do you say to these beans; they're magical, plant them over-night and——"

"What!" says Jack's mother, "have you been such a fool, such a dolt, such an idiot, as to give away my Milky-white, the best milker in the parish, and prime beef to boot, for a set of paltry beans. Take that! Take that! Take that! And as for your precious beans here they go out of the window. And now off with you to bed. Not a sup shall you drink, and not a bit shall you swallow this very night."

So Jack went upstairs to his little room in the attic, and sad and sorry he was, to be sure, as much for his mother's sake, as for the loss of his supper.

At last he dropped off to sleep.

When he woke up, the room looked so funny. The sun

was shining into part of it, and yet all the rest was quite dark and shady. So Jack jumped up and dressed himself and went to the window. And what do you think he saw? why, the beans his mother had thrown out of the window into the garden, had sprung up into a big beanstalk which went up and up and up till it reached the sky. So the man spoke truth after all.

The beanstalk grew up quite close past Jack's window, so all he had to do was to open it and give a jump on to the beanstalk which was made like a big plaited ladder. So Jack climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed till at last he reached the sky. And when he got there he found a long broad road going as straight as a dart. So he walked along and he walked along and he walked along till he came to a great big tall house, and on the doorstep there was a great big tall woman.

"Good morning, mum," says Jack, quite polite-like. "Could you be so kind as to give me some breakfast." For he hadn't had anything to eat, you know, the night before and was as hungry as a hunter.

"It's breakfast you want, is it?" says the great big tall woman, "it's breakfast you'll be if you don't move off from here. My man is an ogre and there's nothing he likes better than boys broiled on toast. You'd better be moving on or he'll soon be coming."

"Oh! please mum, do give me something to eat, mum. I've had nothing to eat since yesterday morning, really and truly, mum," says Jack. "I may as well be broiled, as die of hunger."

Well, the ogre's wife wasn't such a bad sort, after all. So she took Jack into the kitchen, and gave him a junk of bread and cheese and a jug of milk. But Jack hadn't half finished these when thump! thump! thump! the whole house began to tremble with the noise of someone coming.

"Goodness gracious me! It's my old man," said the ogre's

wife, "what on earth shall I do? Here, come quick and jump in here." And she bundled Jack into the oven just as the ogre came in.

He was a big one, to be sure. At his belt he had three calves strung up by the heels, and he unhooked them and threw them down on the table and said: "Here, wife, broil me a couple of these for breakfast. Ah what's this I smell?

Fee-fi-fo-fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman,
Be he alive, or be he dead
I'll have his bones to grind my bread."

"Nonsense, dear," said his wife, "you're dreaming. Or perhaps you smell the scraps of that little boy you liked so much for yesterday's dinner. Here, go you and have a wash and tidy up, and by the time you come back your breakfast'll be ready for you."

So the ogre went off, and Jack was just going to jump out of the oven and run off when the woman told him not. "Wait till he's asleep," says she; "he always has a snooze after breakfast."

Well, the ogre had his breakfast, and after that he goes to a big chest and takes out of it a couple of bags of gold and sits down counting them till at last his head began to nod and he began to snore till the whole house shook again.

Then Jack crept out on tiptoe from his oven, and as he was passing the ogre he took one of the bags of gold under his arm, and off he pelters till he came to the beanstalk, and then he threw down the bag of gold which of course fell in to his mother's garden, and then he climbed down and climbed down till at last he got home and told his mother and showed her the gold and said: "Well, mother, wasn't I right about the beans. They are really magical, you see."

So they lived on the bag of gold for some time, but at last

they came to the end of that so Jack made up his mind to try his luck once more up at the top of the beanstalk. So one fine morning he got up early, and got on to the beanstalk, and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed till at last he got on the road again and came to the great big tall house he had been to before. There, sure enough, was the great big tall woman a-standing on the door-step.

"Good morning, mum," says Jack, as bold as brass, "could you be so good as to give me something to eat?"

"Go away, my boy," said the big, tall woman, "or else my man will eat you up for breakfast. But aren't you the youngster who came here once before? Do you know, that very day, my man missed one of his bags of gold."

"That's strange, mum," says Jack, "I dare say I could tell you something about that but I'm so hungry I can't speak till I've had something to eat."

Well the big tall woman was that curious that she took him in and gave him something to eat. But he had scarcely begun munching it as slowly as he could when thump! thump! thump! they heard the giant's footstep, and his wife hid Jack away in the oven.

All happened as it did before. In came the ogre as he did before, said: "Fee-fi-fo-fum," and had his breakfast off three broiled oxen. Then he said: "Wife, bring me the hen that lays the golden eggs." So she brought it, and the ogre said: "Lay," and it laid an egg all of gold. And then the ogre began to nod his head, and to snore till the house shook.

Then Jack crept out of the oven on tiptoe and caught hold of the golden hen, and was off before you could say "Jack Robinson." But this time the hen gave a cackle which woke the ogre, and just as Jack got out of the house he heard him calling: "Wife, wife, what have you done with my golden hen?"

And the wife said: "Why, my dear?"

But that was all Jack heard, for he rushed off to the beanstalk and climbed down like a house on fire. And when he got home he showed his mother the wonderful hen and said "Lay," to it; and it laid a golden egg every time he said "Lay."

Well, Jack was not content, and it wasn't very long before he determined to have another try at his luck up there at the top of the beanstalk. So one fine morning, he got up early, and went on to the beanstalk, and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed till he got to the top. But this time he knew better than to go straight to the ogre's house. And when he got near it he waited behind a bush till he saw the ogre's wife come out with a pail to get some water, and then he crept into the house and got into the copper. He hadn't been there long when he heard thump! thump! thump! as before, and in come the ogre and his wife.

"Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman," cried out the ogre; "I smell him, wife, I smell him."

"Do you, my dearie?" says the ogre's wife. "Then if it's that little rogue that stole your gold and the hen that laid the golden eggs he's sure to have got into the oven." And they both rushed to the oven. But Jack wasn't there, luckily, and the ogre's wife said: "There you are again with your fee-fi-fo-fum. Why of course it's the laddie you caught last night that I've broiled for your breakfast. How forgetful I am, and how careless you are not to tell the difference between a live un and a dead un."

So the ogre sat down to the breakfast and ate it, but every now and then he would mutter: "Well, I could have sworn——" and he'd get up and search the larder and the cupboards, and everything, only luckily he didn't think of the copper.

After breakfast was over, the ogre called out: "Wife, wife, bring me my golden harp." So she brought it and put it on the table before him. Then he said: "Sing!" and the golden harp sang most beautifully. And it went on singing till the ogre fell asleep, and commenced to snore like thunder.

Then Jack lifted up the copper-lid very quietly and got down like a mouse and crept on hands and knees till he got to the table when he got up and caught hold of the golden harp and dashed with it towards the door. But the harp called out quite loud: "Master! Master!" and the ogre woke up just in time to see Jack running off with his harp.

Jack ran as fast as he could, and the ogre came rushing after, and would soon have caught him only Jack had a start and dodged him a bit and knew where he was going. When he got to the beanstalk the ogre was not more than twenty yards away when suddenly he saw Jack disappear like, and when he got up to the end of the road he saw Jack underneath climbing down for dear life. Well, the ogre didn't like trusting himself to such a ladder, and he stood and waited, so Jack got another start. But just then the harp cried out: "Master! master!" and the ogre swung himself down on to the beanstalk which shook with his weight. Down climbs Jack, and after him climbed the ogre. By this time Jack had climbed down and climbed down and climbed down till he was very nearly home. So he called out: "Mother! mother! bring me an axe, bring me an axe." And his mother came rushing out with the axe in her hand, but when she came to the beanstalk she stood stock still with fright for there she saw the ogre just coming down below the clouds.

But Jack jumped down and got hold of the axe and gave a chop at the beanstalk which cut it half in two. The ogre felt the beanstalk shake and quiver so he stopped to see what was the matter. Then Jack gave another chop with the axe, and the beanstalk was cut in two and began to topple over. Then the ogre fell down and broke his crown, and the beanstalk came toppling after.

Then Jack showed his mother his golden harp, and what with showing that and selling the golden eggs, Jack and his mother became very rich, and he married a great princess, and they lived happy ever after.

VIII

The Story of the Three Little Pigs

There was an old sow with three little pigs, and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out to seek their fortune. The first that went off met a man with a bundle of straw, and said to him:

"Please, man, give me that straw to build me a house."

Which the man did, and the little pig built a house with it. Presently came along a wolf, and knocked at the door, and said:

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

To which the pig answered:

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

The wolf then answered to that:

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew his house in, and ate up the little pig.

The second little pig met a man with a bundle of furze, and said:

"Please, man, give me that furze to build a house."

Which the man did, and the pig built his house. Then along came the wolf, and said:

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

"Then I'll puff, and I'll huff, and I'll blow your house in."

So he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and at last he blew the house down, and he ate up the little

pig.

The third little pig met a man with a load of bricks, and said:

"Please, man, give me those bricks to build a house with."

So the man gave him the bricks, and he built his house with them. So the wolf came, as he did to the other little pigs, and said:

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

Well, he huffed, and he puffed, and he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and huffed; but he could not get the house down. When he found that he could not, with all his huffing and puffing, blow the house down, he said:

"Little pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips."

"Where?" said the little pig.

"Oh, in Mr. Smith's Home-field, and if you will be ready tomorrow morning I will call for you, and we will go together, and get some for dinner."

"Very well," said the little pig, "I will be ready. What time do you mean to go?"

"Oh, at six o'clock."

Well, the little pig got up at five, and got the turnips before the wolf came (which he did about six) and who said:

"Little Pig, are you ready?"

The little pig said: "Ready! I have been and come back again, and got a nice potful for dinner."

The wolf felt very angry at this, but thought that he would be up to the little pig somehow or other, so he said:

"Little pig, I know where there is a nice apple-tree."

"Where?" said the pig.

"Down at Merry-garden," replied the wolf, "and if you will not deceive me I will come for you, at five o'clock tomorrow and get some apples."

Well, the little pig bustled up the next morning at four

o'clock, and went off for the apples, hoping to get back before the wolf came; but he had further to go, and had to climb the tree, so that just as he was coming down from it, he saw the wolf coming, which, as you may suppose, frightened him very much. When the wolf came up he said:

"Little pig, what! are you here before me? Are they nice apples?"

"Yes, very," said the little pig. "I will throw you down one."

And he threw it so far, that, while the wolf was gone to pick it up, the little pig jumped down and ran home. The next day the wolf came again, and said to the little pig:

"Little pig, there is a fair at Shanklin this afternoon, will you go?"

"Oh yes," said the pig, "I will go; what time shall you be ready?"

"At three," said the wolf. So the little pig went off before the time as usual, and got to the fair, and bought a butter-churn, which he was going home with, when he saw the wolf coming. Then he could not tell what to do. So he got into the churn to hide, and by so doing turned it round, and it rolled down the hill with the pig in it, which frightened the wolf so much, that he ran home without going to the fair. He went to the little pig's house, and told him how frightened he had been by a great round thing which came down the hill past him. Then the little pig said:

"Hah, I frightened you, then. I had been to the fair and bought a butter-churn, and when I saw you, I got into it, and rolled down the hill."

Then the wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he would eat up the little pig, and that he would get down the chimney after him. When the little pig saw what he was about, he hung on the pot full of water, and made up a blazing fire, and, just as the wolf was coming down, took off the cover, and in fell the wolf; so the little pig put on the cover again in

an instant, boiled him up, and ate him for supper, and lived happy ever afterwards.

IX

The Master and His Pupil

There was once a very learned man in the north-country who knew all the languages under the sun, and who was acquainted with all the mysteries of creation. He had one big book bound in black calf and clasped with iron, and with iron corners, and chained to a table which was made fast to the floor; and when he read out of this book, he unlocked it with an iron key, and none but he read from it, for it contained all the secrets of the spiritual world. It told how many angels there were in heaven, and how they marched in their ranks, and sang in their quires, and what were their several functions, and what was the name of each great angel of might. And it told of the demons, how many of them there were, and what were their several powers, and their labours, and their names, and how they might be summoned, and how tasks might be imposed on them, and how they might be chained to be as slaves to man.

Now the master had a pupil who was but a foolish lad, and he acted as servant to the great master, but never was he suffered to look into the black book, hardly to enter the private room.

One day the master was out, and then the lad, as curious as could be, hurried to the chamber where his master kept his wondrous apparatus for changing copper into gold, and lead into silver, and where was his mirror in which he could see all that was passing in the world, and where was the shell which

when held to the ear whispered all the words that were being spoken by anyone the master desired to know about. The lad tried in vain with the crucibles to turn copper and lead into gold and silver—he looked long and vainly into the mirror; smoke and clouds passed over it, but he saw nothing plain, and the shell to his ear produced only indistinct murmurings, like the breaking of distant seas on an unknown shore. "I can do nothing," he said; "as I don't know the right words to utter, and they are locked up in yon book."

He looked round, and, see! the book was unfastened; the master had forgotten to lock it before he went out. The boy rushed to it, and unclosed the volume. It was written with red and black ink, and much of it he could not understand; but he put his finger on a line and spelled it through.

At once the room was darkened, and the house trembled; a clap of thunder rolled through the passage and the old room, and there stood before him a horrible, horrible form, breathing fire, and with eyes like burning lamps. It was the demon Beelzebub, whom he had called up to serve him.

"Set me a task!" said he, with a voice like the roaring of an iron furnace.

The boy only trembled, and his hair stood up.

"Set me a task, or I shall strangle thee!"

But the lad could not speak. Then the evil spirit stepped towards him, and putting forth his hands touched his throat. The fingers burned his flesh. "Set me a task!"

"Water yon flower," cried the boy in despair, pointing to a geranium which stood in a pot on the floor. Instantly the spirit left the room, but in another instant he returned with a barrel on his back, and poured its contents over the flower; and again and again he went and came, and poured more and more water, till the floor of the room was ankle-deep.

"Enough, enough!" gasped the lad; but the demon heeded him not; the lad didn't know the words by which to send him away, and still he fetched water.

It rose to the boy's knees and still more water was poured. It mounted to his waist, and Beelzebub still kept on bringing barrels full. It rose to his armpits, and he scrambled to the table-top. And now the water in the room stood up to the window and washed against the glass, and swirled around his feet on the table. It still rose; it reached his breast. In vain he cried; the evil spirit would not be dismissed, and to this day he would have been pouring water, and would have drowned all Yorkshire. But the master remembered on his journey that he had not locked his book, and therefore returned, and at the moment when the water was bubbling about the pupil's chin, rushed into the room and spoke the words which cast Beelzebub back into his fiery home.

X

Jack and His Golden Snuff-Box

Once upon a time, and a very good time it was, though it was neither in my time nor in your time nor in anyone else's time, there was an old man and an old woman, and they had one son, and they lived in a great forest. And their son never saw any other people in his life, but he knew that there was some more in the world besides his own father and mother, because he had lots of books, and he used to read every day about them. And when he read about some pretty young women, he used to go mad to see some of them; till one day, when his father was out cutting wood, he told his mother that he wished to go away to look for his living in some other country, and to see some other people besides them two. And he said, "I see nothing at all here but great trees around me; and if I stay here, maybe I shall go mad before I see anything." The young man's father was out all this time, when this talk was going on between him and his poor old mother.

The old woman begins by saying to her son before leaving, "Well, well, my poor boy, if you want to go, it's better for you to go, and God be with you."—(The old woman thought for the best when she said that.)—"But stop a bit before you go. Which would you like best for me to make you, a little cake and bless you, or a big cake and curse you?" "Dear, dear!" said he, "make me a big cake. Maybe I shall be hungry on the road." The old woman made the big cake, and she went on top of the house, and she cursed him as far as she could see

him.

He presently meets with his father, and the old man says to him: "Where are you going, my poor boy?" when the son told the father the same tale as he told his mother. "Well," says his father, "I'm sorry to see you going away, but if you've made your mind to go, it's better for you to go."

The poor lad had not gone far, when his father called him back; then the old man drew out of his pocket a golden snuff-box, and said to him: "Here, take this little box, and put it in your pocket, and be sure not to open it till you are near your death." And away went poor Jack upon his road, and walked till he was tired and hungry, for he had eaten all his cake upon the road; and by this time night was upon him, so he could hardly see his way before him. He could see some light a long way before him, and he made up to it, and found the back door and knocked at it, till one of the maid-servants came and asked him what he wanted. He said that night was on him, and he wanted to get some place to sleep. The maid-servant called him in to the fire, and gave him plenty to eat, good meat and bread and beer; and as he was eating his food by the fire, there came the young lady to look at him, and she loved him well and he loved her. And the young lady ran to tell her father, and said there was a pretty young man in the back kitchen; and immediately the gentleman came to him, and questioned him, and asked what work he could do. Jack said, the silly fellow, that he could do anything. (He meant that he could do any foolish bit of work, that would be wanted about the house.)

"Well," says the gentleman to him, "if you can do anything, at eight o'clock in the morning I must have a great lake and some of the largest man-of-war vessels sailing before my mansion, and one of the largest vessels must fire a royal salute, and the last round must break the leg of the bed where my young daughter is sleeping. And if you don't do that, you will have to forfeit your life."

"All right," said Jack; and away he went to his bed, and said his prayers quietly, and slept till it was near eight o'clock, and he had hardly any time to think what he was to do, till all of a sudden he remembered about the little golden box that his father gave him. And he said to himself: "Well, well, I never was so near my death as I am now;" and then he felt in his pocket, and drew the little box out. And when he opened it, out there hopped three little red men, and asked Jack: "What is your will with us?" "Well," said Jack, "I want a great lake and some of the largest man-of-war vessels in the world before this mansion, and one of the largest vessels to fire a royal salute, and the last round to break one of the legs of the bed where this young lady is sleeping." "All right," said the little men; "go to sleep."

Jack had hardly time to bring the words out of his mouth, to tell the little men what to do, but what it struck eight o'clock, when Bang, bang went one of the largest man-of-war vessels; and it made Jack jump out of bed to look through the window; and I can assure you it was a wonderful sight for him to see, after being so long with his father and mother living in a wood.

By this time Jack dressed himself, and said his prayers, and came down laughing; for he was proud, he was, because the thing was done so well. The gentleman comes to him, and says to him: "Well, my young man, I must say that you are very clever indeed. Come and have some breakfast." And the gentleman tells him, "Now there are two more things you have to do, and then you shall have my daughter in marriage." Jack gets his breakfast, and has a good squint at the young lady, and also she at him.

The other thing that the gentleman told him to do was to fell all the great trees for miles around by eight o'clock in the morning; and, to make my long story short, it was done, and it pleased the gentleman well. The gentleman said to him: "The other thing you have to do"—(and it was the last

thing)—"you must get me a great castle standing on twelve golden pillars; and there must come regiments of soldiers and go through their drill. At eight o'clock the commanding officer must say, 'Shoulder up.'" "All right," said Jack; when the third and last morning came the third great feat was finished, and he had the young daughter in marriage. But, oh dear! there is worse to come yet.

The gentleman now makes a large hunting party, and invites all the gentlemen around the country to it, and to see the castle as well. And by this time Jack has a beautiful horse and a scarlet dress to go with them. On that morning his valet, when putting Jack's clothes by, after changing them to go a hunting, put his hand in one of Jack's waistcoat-pockets, and pulled out the little golden snuffbox, as poor Jack left behind in a mistake. And that man opened the little box, and there hopped the three little red men out, and asked him what he wanted with them. "Well," said the valet to them, "I want this castle to be moved from this place far and far across the sea." "All right," said the little red men to him; "do you wish to go with it?" "Yes," said he. "Well, get up," said they to him; and away they went far and far over the great sea.

Now the grand hunting party comes back, and the castle upon the twelve golden pillars had disappeared, to the great disappointment of those gentlemen as did not see it before. That poor silly Jack is threatened by taking his beautiful young wife from him, for taking them in in the way he did. But the gentleman at last made an agreement with him, and he is to have a twelvemonths and a day to look for it; and off he goes with a good horse and money in his pocket.

Now poor Jack goes in search of his missing castle, over hills, dales, valleys, and mountains, through woolly woods and sheepwalks, further than I can tell you or ever intend to tell you. Until at last he comes up to the place where lives the King of all the little mice in the world. There was one of the little mice on sentry at the front gate going up to the palace,

and did try to stop Jack from going in. He asked the little mouse: "Where does the King live? I should like to see him." This one sent another with him to show him the place; and when the King saw him, he called him in. And the King questioned him, and asked him where he was going that way. Well, Jack told him all the truth, that he had lost the great castle, and was going to look for it, and he had a whole twelvemonths and a day to find it out. And Jack asked him whether he knew anything about it; and the King said: "No, but I am the King of all the little mice in the world, and I will call them all up in the morning, and maybe they have seen something of it."

Then Jack got a good meal and bed, and in the morning he and the King went on to the fields; and the King called all the mice together, and asked them whether they had seen the great beautiful castle standing on golden pillars. And all the little mice said, No, there was none of them had seen it. The old King said to him that he had two other brothers: "One is the King of all the frogs; and my other brother, who is the oldest, he is the King of all the birds in the world. And if you go there, maybe they know something about the missing castle." The King said to him: "Leave your horse here with me till you come back, and take one of my best horses under you, and give this cake to my brother; he will know then who you got it from. Mind and tell him I am well, and should like dearly to see him." And then the King and Jack shook hands together.

And when Jack was going through the gates, the little mouse asked him, should he go with him; and Jack said to him: "No, I shall get myself into trouble with the King." And the little thing told him: "It will be better for you to let me go with you; maybe I shall do some good to you some time without you knowing it." "Jump up, then." And the little mouse ran up the horse's leg, and made it dance; and Jack put the mouse in his pocket.

Now Jack, after wishing good morning to the King and pocketing the little mouse which was on sentry, trudged on his way; and such a long way he had to go and this was his first day. At last he found the place; and there was one of the frogs on sentry, and gun upon his shoulder, and did try to hinder Jack from going in; but when Jack said to him that he wanted to see the King, he allowed him to pass; and Jack made up to the door. The King came out, and asked him his business; and Jack told him all from beginning to end. "Well, well, come in." He gets good entertainment that night; and in the morning the King made such a funny sound, and collected all the frogs in the world. And he asked them, did they know or see anything of a castle that stood upon twelve golden pillars; and they all made a curious sound, Kro-kro, kro-kro, and said, No.

Jack had to take another horse, and a cake to this King's brother, who is the King of all the fowls of the air; and as Jack was going through the gates, the little frog that was on sentry asked John should he go with him. Jack refused him for a bit; but at last he told him to jump up, and Jack put him in his other waistcoat pocket. And away he went again on his great long journey; it was three times as long this time as it was the first day; however, he found the place, and there was a fine bird on sentry. And Jack passed him, and he never said a word to him; and he talked with the King, and told him everything, all about the castle. "Well," said the King to him, "you shall know in the morning from my birds, whether they know anything or not." Jack put up his horse in the stable, and then went to bed, after having something to eat. And when he got up in the morning the King and he went on to some field, and there the King made some funny noise, and there came all the fowls that were in all the world. And the King asked them; "Did they see the fine castle?" and all the birds answered, No. "Well," said the King, "where is the great bird?" They had to wait then for a long time for the eagle to make his appearance,

when at last he came all in a perspiration, after sending two little birds high up in the sky to whistle on him to make all the haste he possibly could. The King asked the great bird, Did he see the great castle? and the bird said: "Yes, I came from there where it now is." "Well," says the King to him; "this young gentleman has lost it, and you must go with him back to it; but stop till you get a bit of something to eat first."

They killed a thief, and sent the best part of it to feed the eagle on his journey over the seas, and had to carry Jack on his back. Now when they came in sight of the castle, they did not know what to do to get the little golden box. Well, the little mouse said to them: "Leave me down, and I will get the little box for you." So the mouse stole into the castle, and got hold of the box; and when he was coming down the stairs, it fell down, and he was very near being caught. He came running out with it, laughing his best. "Have you got it?" Jack said to him; he said: "Yes;" and off they went back again, and left the castle behind.

As they were all of them (Jack, mouse, frog, and eagle) passing over the great sea, they fell to quarrelling about which it was that got the little box, till down it slipped into the water. (It was by them looking at it and handing it from one hand to the other that they dropped the little box to the bottom of the sea.) "Well, well," said the frog, "I knew that I would have to do something, so you had better let me go down in the water." And they let him go, and he was down for three days and three nights; and up he comes, and shows his nose and little mouth out of the water; and all of them asked him, Did he get it? and he told them, No. "Well, what are you doing there, then?" "Nothing at all," he said, "only I want my full breath;" and the poor little frog went down the second time, and he was down for a day and a night, and up he brings it.

And away they did go, after being there four days and nights; and after a long tug over seas and mountains, arrive at

the palace of the old King, who is the master of all the birds in the world. And the King is very proud to see them, and has a hearty welcome and a long conversation. Jack opens the little box, and told the little men to go back and to bring the castle here to them; "and all of you make as much haste back again as you possibly can."

The three little men went off; and when they came near the castle they were afraid to go to it till the gentleman and lady and all the servants were gone out to some dance. And there was no one left behind there only the cook and another maid with her; and the little red men asked them which would they rather—go, or stop behind? and they both said: "I will go with you;" and the little men told them to run upstairs quick. They were no sooner up and in one of the drawing-rooms than here comes just in sight the gentleman and lady and all the servants; but it was too late. Off the castle went at full speed, with the women laughing at them through the window, while they made motions for them to stop, but all to no purpose.

They were nine days on their journey, in which they did try to keep the Sunday holy, when one of the little men turned to be the priest, the other the clerk, and third presided at the organ, and the women were the singers, for they had a grand chapel in the castle already. Very remarkable, there was a discord made in the music, and one of the little men ran up one of the organ-pipes to see where the bad sound came from, when he found out it only happened to be that the two women were laughing at the little red man stretching his little legs full length on the bass pipes, also his two arms the same time, with his little red night-cap, which he never forgot to wear, and what they never witnessed before, could not help calling forth some good merriment while on the face of the deep. And poor thing! through them not going on with what they begun with, they very near came to danger, as the castle was once very near sinking in the middle of the sea.

At length, after a merry journey, they come again to Jack and the King. The King was quite struck with the sight of the castle; and going up the golden stairs, went to see the inside.

The King was very much pleased with the castle, but poor Jack's time of a twelvemonths and a day was drawing to a close; and he, wishing to go home to his young wife, gives orders to the three little men to get ready by the next morning at eight o'clock to be off to the next brother, and to stop there for one night; also to proceed from there to the last or the youngest brother, the master of all the mice in the world, in such place where the castle shall be left under his care until it's sent for. Jack takes a farewell of the King, and thanks him very much for his hospitality.

Away went Jack and his castle again, and stopped one night in that place; and away they went again to the third place, and there left the castle under his care. As Jack had to leave the castle behind, he had to take to his own horse, which he left there when he first started.

Now poor Jack leaves his castle behind and faces towards home; and after having so much merriment with the three brothers every night, Jack became sleepy on horseback, and would have lost the road if it was not for the little men a-guiding him. At last he arrived weary and tired, and they did not seem to receive him with any kindness whatever, because he had not found the stolen castle; and to make it worse, he was disappointed in not seeing his young and beautiful wife to come and meet him, through being hindered by her parents. But that did not stop long. Jack put full power on and despatched the little men off to bring the castle from there, and they soon got there.

Jack shook hands with the King, and returned many thanks for his kingly kindness in minding the castle for him; and then Jack instructed the little men to spur up and put speed on. And off they went, and were not long before they reached their journey's end, when out comes the young wife

to meet him with a fine lump of a young SON, and they all lived happy ever afterwards.

XI

The History of Tom Thumb

In the days of the great Prince Arthur, there lived a mighty magician, called Merlin, the most learned and skilful enchanter the world has ever seen.

This famous magician, who could take any form he pleased, was travelling about as a poor beggar, and being very tired, he stopped at the cottage of a ploughman to rest himself, and asked for some food.

The countryman bade him welcome, and his wife, who was a very good-hearted woman, soon brought him some milk in a wooden bowl, and some coarse brown bread on a platter.

Merlin was much pleased with the kindness of the ploughman and his wife; but he could not help noticing that though everything was neat and comfortable in the cottage, they seemed both to be very unhappy. He therefore asked them why they were so melancholy, and learned that they were miserable because they had no children.

The poor woman said, with tears in her eyes: "I should be the happiest creature in the world if I had a son; although he was no bigger than my husband's thumb, I would be satisfied."

Merlin was so much amused with the idea of a boy no bigger than a man's thumb, that he determined to grant the poor woman's wish. Accordingly, in a short time after, the ploughman's wife had a son, who, wonderful to relate! was not a bit bigger than his father's thumb.

The queen of the fairies, wishing to see the little fellow,

came in at the window while the mother was sitting up in the bed admiring him. The queen kissed the child, and, giving it the name of Tom Thumb, sent for some of the fairies, who dressed her little godson according to her orders:

"An oak-leaf hat he had for his crown;
His shirt of web by spiders spun;
With jacket wove of thistle's down;
His trowsers were of feathers done.
His stockings, of apple-rind, they tie
With eyelash from his mother's eye
His shoes were made of mouse's skin,
Tann'd with the downy hair within."

Tom never grew any larger than his father's thumb, which was only of ordinary size; but as he got older he became very cunning and full of tricks. When he was old enough to play with the boys, and had lost all his own cherry-stones, he used to creep into the bags of his playfellows, fill his pockets, and, getting out without their noticing him, would again join in the game.

One day, however, as he was coming out of a bag of cherry-stones, where he had been stealing as usual, the boy to whom it belonged chanced to see him. "Ah, ah! my little Tommy," said the boy, "so I have caught you stealing my cherry-stones at last, and you shall be rewarded for your thievish tricks." On saying this, he drew the string tight round his neck, and gave the bag such a hearty shake, that poor little Tom's legs, thighs, and body were sadly bruised. He roared out with pain, and begged to be let out, promising never to steal again.

A short time afterwards his mother was making a batter-pudding, and Tom, being very anxious to see how it was made, climbed up to the edge of the bowl; but his foot slipped, and he plumped over head and ears into the batter, without his mother noticing him, who stirred him into the pudding-bag, and put him in the pot to boil.

The batter filled Tom's mouth, and prevented him from crying; but, on feeling the hot water, he kicked and struggled so much in the pot, that his mother thought that the pudding was bewitched, and, pulling it out of the pot, she threw it outside the door. A poor tinker, who was passing by, lifted up the pudding, and, putting it into his budget, he then walked off. As Tom had now got his mouth cleared of the batter, he then began to cry aloud, which so frightened the tinker that he flung down the pudding and ran away. The pudding being broke to pieces by the fall, Tom crept out covered all over with the batter, and walked home. His mother, who was very sorry to see her darling in such a woeful state, put him into a teacup, and soon washed off the batter; after which she kissed him, and laid him in bed.

Soon after the adventure of the pudding, Tom's mother went to milk her cow in the meadow, and she took him along with her. As the wind was very high, for fear of being blown away, she tied him to a thistle with a piece of fine thread. The cow soon observed Tom's oak-leaf hat, and liking the appearance of it, took poor Tom and the thistle at one mouthful. While the cow was chewing the thistle Tom was afraid of her great teeth, which threatened to crush him in pieces, and he roared out as loud as he could: "Mother, mother!"

"Where are you, Tommy, my dear Tommy?" said his mother.

"Here, mother," replied he, "in the red cow's mouth."

His mother began to cry and wring her hands; but the cow, surprised at the odd noise in her throat, opened her mouth and let Tom drop out. Fortunately his mother caught him in her apron as he was falling to the ground, or he would have been dreadfully hurt. She then put Tom in her bosom and ran home with him.

Tom's father made him a whip of a barley straw to drive the cattle with, and having one day gone into the fields, he slipped a foot and rolled into the furrow. A raven, which was

flying over, picked him up, and flew with him over the sea, and there dropped him.

A large fish swallowed Tom the moment he fell into the sea, which was soon after caught, and bought for the table of King Arthur. When they opened the fish in order to cook it, everyone was astonished at finding such a little boy, and Tom was quite delighted at being free again. They carried him to the king, who made Tom his dwarf, and he soon grew a great favourite at court; for by his tricks and gambols he not only amused the king and queen, but also all the Knights of the Round Table.

It is said that when the king rode out on horseback, he often took Tom along with him, and if a shower came on, he used to creep into his majesty's waistcoat-pocket, where he slept till the rain was over.

King Arthur one day asked Tom about his parents, wishing to know if they were as small as he was, and whether they were well off. Tom told the king that his father and mother were as tall as anybody about the court, but in rather poor circumstances. On hearing this, the king carried Tom to his treasury, the place where he kept all his money, and told him to take as much money as he could carry home to his parents, which made the poor little fellow caper with joy. Tom went immediately to procure a purse, which was made of a water-bubble, and then returned to the treasury, where he received a silver three-penny-piece to put into it.

Our little hero had some difficulty in lifting the burden upon his back; but he at last succeeded in getting it placed to his mind, and set forward on his journey. However, without meeting with any accident, and after resting himself more than a hundred times by the way, in two days and two nights he reached his father's house in safety.

Tom had travelled forty-eight hours with a huge silver-piece on his back, and was almost tired to death, when his mother ran out to meet him, and carried him into the house.

But he soon returned to Court.

As Tom's clothes had suffered much in the batter-pudding, and the inside of the fish, his majesty ordered him a new suit of clothes, and to be mounted as a knight on a mouse.

Of Butterfly's wings his shirt was made,
His boots of chicken's hide;
And by a nimble fairy blade,
Well learned in the tailoring trade,
His clothing was supplied.
A needle dangled by his side;
A dapper mouse he used to ride,
Thus strutted Tom in stately pride!

It was certainly very diverting to see Tom in this dress and mounted on the mouse, as he rode out a-hunting with the king and nobility, who were all ready to expire with laughter at Tom and his fine prancing charger.

The king was so charmed with his address that he ordered a little chair to be made, in order that Tom might sit upon his table, and also a palace of gold, a span high, with a door an inch wide, to live in. He also gave him a coach, drawn by six small mice.

The queen was so enraged at the honours conferred on Sir Thomas that she resolved to ruin him, and told the king that the little knight had been saucy to her.

The king sent for Tom in great haste, but being fully aware of the danger of royal anger, he crept into an empty snail-shell, where he lay for a long time until he was almost starved with hunger; but at last he ventured to peep out, and seeing a fine large butterfly on the ground, near the place of his concealment, he got close to it and jumping astride on it, was carried up into the air. The butterfly flew with him from tree to tree and from field to field, and at last returned to the court, where the king and nobility all strove to catch him; but at last poor Tom fell from his seat into a watering-pot, in

which he was almost drowned.

When the queen saw him she was in a rage, and said he should be beheaded; and he was again put into a mouse trap until the time of his execution.

However a cat, observing something alive in the trap, patted it about till the wires broke, and set Thomas at liberty.

The king received Tom again into favour, which he did not live to enjoy, for a large spider one day attacked him; and although he drew his sword and fought well, yet the spider's poisonous breath at last overcame him.

He fell dead on the ground where he stood,
And the spider suck'd every drop of his blood.

King Arthur and his whole court were so sorry at the loss of their little favourite that they went into mourning and raised a fine white marble monument over his grave with the following epitaph:

Here lies Tom Thumb, King Arthur's knight,
Who died by a spider's cruel bite.
He was well known in Arthur's court,
Where he afforded gallant sport;
He rode at tilt and tournament,
And on a mouse a-hunting went.
Alive he filled the court with mirth;
His death to sorrow soon gave birth.
Wipe, wipe your eyes, and shake your head
And cry,—Alas! Tom Thumb is dead!

XII

Lazy Jack

Once upon a time there was a boy whose name was Jack, and he lived with his mother on a common. They were very poor, and the old woman got her living by spinning, but Jack was so lazy that he would do nothing but bask in the sun in the hot weather, and sit by the corner of the hearth in the winter-time. So they called him Lazy Jack. His mother could not get him to do anything for her, and at last told him, one Monday, that if he did not begin to work for his porridge she would turn him out to get his living as he could.

This roused Jack, and he went out and hired himself for the next day to a neighbouring farmer for a penny; but as he was coming home, never having had any money before, he lost it in passing over a brook. "You stupid boy," said his mother, "you should have put it in your pocket." "I'll do so another time," replied Jack.

On Wednesday, Jack went out again and hired himself to a cow-keeper, who gave him a jar of milk for his day's work. Jack took the jar and put it into the large pocket of his jacket, spilling it all, long before he got home. "Dear me!" said the old woman; "you should have carried it on your head." "I'll do so another time," said Jack.

So on Thursday, Jack hired himself again to a farmer, who agreed to give him a cream cheese for his services. In the evening Jack took the cheese, and went home with it on his head. By the time he got home the cheese was all spoilt, part

of it being lost, and part matted with his hair. "You stupid lout," said his mother, "you should have carried it very carefully in your hands." "I'll do so another time," replied Jack.

On Friday, Lazy Jack again went out, and hired himself to a baker, who would give him nothing for his work but a large tom-cat. Jack took the cat, and began carrying it very carefully in his hands, but in a short time pussy scratched him so much that he was compelled to let it go. When he got home, his mother said to him, "You silly fellow, you should have tied it with a string, and dragged it along after you." "I'll do so another time," said Jack.

So on Saturday, Jack hired himself to a butcher, who rewarded him by the handsome present of a shoulder of mutton. Jack took the mutton, tied it to a string, and trailed it along after him in the dirt, so that by the time he had got home the meat was completely spoilt. His mother was this time quite out of patience with him, for the next day was Sunday, and she was obliged to make do with cabbage for her dinner. "You ninney-hammer," said she to her son; "you should have carried it on your shoulder." "I'll do so another time," replied Jack.

On the next Monday, Lazy Jack went once more, and hired himself to a cattle-keeper, who gave him a donkey for his trouble. Jack found it hard to hoist the donkey on his shoulders, but at last he did it, and began walking slowly home with his prize. Now it happened that in the course of his journey there lived a rich man with his only daughter, a beautiful girl, but deaf and dumb. Now she had never laughed in her life, and the doctors said she would never speak till somebody made her laugh. This young lady happened to be looking out of the window when Jack was passing with the donkey on his shoulders, with the legs sticking up in the air, and the sight was so comical and strange that she burst out into a great fit of laughter, and immediately recovered her speech and hearing. Her father was overjoyed, and fulfilled his promise by

marrying her to Lazy Jack, who was thus made a rich gentleman. They lived in a large house, and Jack's mother lived with them in great happiness until she died.

XIII

Whittington and His Cat

In the reign of the famous King Edward III. there was a little boy called Dick Whittington, whose father and mother died when he was very young. As poor Dick was not old enough to work, he was very badly off; he got but little for his dinner, and sometimes nothing at all for his breakfast; for the people who lived in the village were very poor indeed, and could not spare him much more than the parings of potatoes, and now and then a hard crust of bread.

Now Dick had heard a great many very strange things about the great city called London; for the country people at that time thought that folks in London were all fine gentlemen and ladies; and that there was singing and music there all day long; and that the streets were all paved with gold.

One day a large waggon and eight horses, all with bells at their heads, drove through the village while Dick was standing by the sign-post. He thought that this waggon must be going to the fine town of London; so he took courage, and asked the waggoner to let him walk with him by the side of the waggon. As soon as the waggoner heard that poor Dick had no father or mother, and saw by his ragged clothes that he could not be worse off than he was, he told him he might go if he would, so off they set together.

So Dick got safe to London, and was in such a hurry to see the fine streets paved all over with gold, that he did not even stay to thank the kind waggoner; but ran off as fast as his legs would carry him, through many of the streets, thinking every moment to come to those that were paved with gold; for Dick had seen a guinea three times in his own little

village, and remembered what a deal of money it brought in change; so he thought he had nothing to do but to take up some little bits of the pavement, and should then have as much money as he could wish for.

Poor Dick ran till he was tired, and had quite forgot his friend the waggoner; but at last, finding it grow dark, and that every way he turned he saw nothing but dirt instead of gold, he, sat down in a dark corner and cried himself to sleep.

Little Dick was all night in the streets; and next morning, being very hungry, he got up and walked about, and asked everybody he met to give him a halfpenny to keep him from starving; but nobody stayed to answer him, and only two or three gave him a halfpenny; so that the poor boy was soon quite weak and faint for the want of victuals.

In this distress he asked charity of several people, and one of them said crossly: "Go to work, for an idle rogue." "That I will," says Dick, "I will to go work for you, if you will let me." But the man only cursed at him and went on.

At last a good-natured looking gentleman saw how hungry he looked. "Why don't you go to work my lad?" said he to Dick. "That I would, but I do not know how to get any," answered Dick. "If you are willing, come along with me," said the gentleman, and took him to a hay-field, where Dick worked briskly, and lived merrily till the hay was made.

After this he found himself as badly off as before; and being almost starved again, he laid himself down at the door of Mr. Fitzwarren, a rich merchant. Here he was soon seen by the cook-maid, who was an ill-tempered creature, and happened just then to be very busy dressing dinner for her master and mistress; so she called out to poor Dick: "What business have you there, you lazy rogue? there is nothing else but beggars; if you do not take yourself away, we will see how you will like a sousing of some dish-water; I have some here hot enough to make you jump."

Just at that time Mr. Fitzwarren himself came home to

dinner; and when he saw a dirty ragged boy lying at the door, he said to him: "Why do you lie there, my boy? You seem old enough to work; I am afraid you are inclined to be lazy."

"No, indeed, sir," said Dick to him, "that is not the case, for I would work with all my heart, but I do not know anybody, and I believe I am very sick for the want of food."

"Poor fellow, get up; let me see what ails you." Dick now tried to rise, but was obliged to lie down again, being too weak to stand, for he had not eaten any food for three days, and was no longer able to run about and beg a halfpenny of people in the street. So the kind merchant ordered him to be taken into the house, and have a good dinner given him, and be kept to do what work he was able to do for the cook.

Little Dick would have lived very happy in this good family if it had not been for the ill-natured cook. She used to say: "You are under me, so look sharp; clean the spit and the dripping-pan, make the fires, wind up the jack, and do all the scullery work nimbly, or—" and she would shake the ladle at him. Besides, she was so fond of basting, that when she had no meat to baste, she would baste poor Dick's head and shoulders with a broom, or anything else that happened to fall in her way. At last her ill-usage of him was told to Alice, Mr. Fitzwarren's daughter, who told the cook she should be turned away if she did not treat him kinder.

The behaviour of the cook was now a little better; but besides this Dick had another hardship to get over. His bed stood in a garret, where there were so many holes in the floor and the walls that every night he was tormented with rats and mice. A gentleman having given Dick a penny for cleaning his shoes, he thought he would buy a cat with it. The next day he saw a girl with a cat, and asked her, "Will you let me have that cat for a penny?" The girl said: "Yes, that I will, master, though she is an excellent mouser."

Dick hid his cat in the garret, and always took care to carry a part of his dinner to her; and in a short time he had

no more trouble with the rats and mice, but slept quite sound every night.

Soon after this, his master had a ship ready to sail; and as it was the custom that all his servants should have some chance for good fortune as well as himself, he called them all into the parlour and asked them what they would send out.

They all had something that they were willing to venture except poor Dick, who had neither money nor goods, and therefore could send nothing. For this reason he did not come into the parlour with the rest; but Miss Alice guessed what was the matter, and ordered him to be called in. She then said: "I will lay down some money for him, from my own purse;" but her father told her: "This will not do, for it must be something of his own."

When poor Dick heard this, he said: "I have nothing but a cat which I bought for a penny some time since of a little girl."

"Fetch your cat then, my lad," said Mr. Fitzwarren, "and let her go."

Dick went upstairs and brought down poor puss, with tears in his eyes, and gave her to the captain; "For," he said, "I shall now be kept awake all night by the rats and mice." All the company laughed at Dick's odd venture; and Miss Alice, who felt pity for him, gave him some money to buy another cat.

This, and many other marks of kindness shown him by Miss Alice, made the ill-tempered cook jealous of poor Dick, and she began to use him more cruelly than ever, and always made game of him for sending his cat to sea.

She asked him: "Do you think your cat will sell for as much money as would buy a stick to beat you?"

At last poor Dick could not bear this usage any longer, and he thought he would run away from his place; so he packed up his few things, and started very early in the morning, on All-hallows Day, the first of November. He walked as

far as Holloway; and there sat down on a stone, which to this day is called "Whittington's Stone," and began to think to himself which road he should take.

While he was thinking what he should do, the Bells of Bow Church, which at that time were only six, began to ring, and their sound seemed to say to him:

"Turn again, Whittington, Thrice Lord Mayor of London."

"Lord Mayor of London!" said he to himself. "Why, to be sure, I would put up with almost anything now, to be Lord Mayor of London, and ride in a fine coach, when I grow to be a man! Well, I will go back, and think nothing of the cuffing and scolding of the old cook, if I am to be Lord Mayor of London at last."

Dick went back, and was lucky enough to get into the house, and set about his work, before the old cook came downstairs.

We must now follow Miss Puss to the coast of Africa. The ship with the cat on board, was a long time at sea; and was at last driven by the winds on a part of the coast of Barbary, where the only people were the Moors, unknown to the English. The people came in great numbers to see the sailors, because they were of different colour to themselves, and treated them civilly; and, when they became better acquainted, were very eager to buy the fine things that the ship was loaded with.

When the captain saw this, he sent patterns of the best things he had to the king of the country; who was so much pleased with them, that he sent for the captain to the palace. Here they were placed, as it is the custom of the country, on rich carpets flowered with gold and silver. The king and queen were seated at the upper end of the room; and a number of dishes were brought in for dinner. They had not sat long, when a vast number of rats and mice rushed in, and devoured all the meat in an instant. The captain wondered at

this, and asked if these vermin were not unpleasant.

"Oh yes," said they, "very offensive, and the king would give half his treasure to be freed of them, for they not only destroy his dinner, as you see, but they assault him in his chamber, and even in bed, and so that he is obliged to be watched while he is sleeping, for fear of them."

The captain jumped for joy; he remembered poor Whittington and his cat, and told the king he had a creature on board the ship that would despatch all these vermin immediately. The king jumped so high at the joy which the news gave him, that his turban dropped off his head. "Bring this creature to me," says he; "vermin are dreadful in a court, and if she will perform what you say, I will load your ship with gold and jewels in exchange for her."

The captain, who knew his business, took this opportunity to set forth the merits of Miss Puss. He told his majesty; "It is not very convenient to part with her, as, when she is gone, the rats and mice may destroy the goods in the ship—but to oblige your majesty, I will fetch her."

"Run, run!" said the queen; "I am impatient to see the dear creature."

Away went the captain to the ship, while another dinner was got ready. He put Puss under his arm, and arrived at the place just in time to see the table full of rats. When the cat saw them, she did not wait for bidding, but jumped out of the captain's arms, and in a few minutes laid almost all the rats and mice dead at her feet. The rest of them in their fright scampered away to their holes.

The king was quite charmed to get rid so easily of such plagues, and the queen desired that the creature who had done them so great a kindness might be brought to her, that she might look at her. Upon which the captain called: "Pussy, pussy, pussy!" and she came to him. He then presented her to the queen, who started back, and was afraid to touch a creature who had made such a havoc among the rats and

mice. However, when the captain stroked the cat and called: "Pussy, pussy," the queen also touched her and cried: "Putty, putty," for she had not learned English. He then put her down on the queen's lap, where she purred and played with her majesty's hand, and then purred herself to sleep.

The king, having seen the exploits of Mrs. Puss, and being informed that her kittens would stock the whole country, and keep it free from rats, bargained with the captain for the whole ship's cargo, and then gave him ten times as much for the cat as all the rest amounted to.

The captain then took leave of the royal party, and set sail with a fair wind for England, and after a happy voyage arrived safe in London.

One morning, early, Mr. Fitzwarren had just come to his counting-house and seated himself at the desk, to count over the cash, and settle the business for the day, when somebody came tap, tap, at the door. "Who's there?" said Mr. Fitzwarren. "A friend," answered the other; "I come to bring you good news of your ship Unicorn." The merchant, bustling up in such a hurry that he forgot his gout, opened the door, and who should he see waiting but the captain and factor, with a cabinet of jewels, and a bill of lading; when he looked at this the merchant lifted up his eyes and thanked Heaven for sending him such a prosperous voyage.

They then told the story of the cat, and showed the rich present that the king and queen had sent for her to poor Dick. As soon as the merchant heard this, he called out to his servants:

"Go send him in, and tell him of his fame;
Pray call him Mr. Whittington by name."

Mr. Fitzwarren now showed himself to be a good man; for when some of his servants said so great a treasure was too much for him, he answered: "God forbid I should deprive him of the value of a single penny, it is his own, and he shall have it to a farthing." He then sent for Dick, who at that time was

scouring pots for the cook, and was quite dirty. He would have excused himself from coming into the counting-house, saying, "The room is swept, and my shoes are dirty and full of hob-nails." But the merchant ordered him to come in.

Mr. Fitzwarren ordered a chair to be set for him, and so he began to think they were making game of him, at the same time said to them: "Do not play tricks with a poor simple boy, but let me go down again, if you please, to my work."

"Indeed, Mr. Whittington," said the merchant, "we are all quite in earnest with you, and I most heartily rejoice in the news that these gentlemen have brought you; for the captain has sold your cat to the King of Barbary, and brought you in return for her more riches than I possess in the whole world; and I wish you may long enjoy them!"

Mr. Fitzwarren then told the men to open the great treasure they had brought with them; and said: "Mr. Whittington has nothing to do but to put it in some place of safety."

Poor Dick hardly knew how to behave himself for joy. He begged his master to take what part of it he pleased, since he owed it all to his kindness. "No, no," answered Mr. Fitzwarren, "this is all your own; and I have no doubt but you will use it well."

Dick next asked his mistress, and then Miss Alice, to accept a part of his good fortune; but they would not, and at the same time told him they felt great joy at his good success. But this poor fellow was too kind-hearted to keep it all to himself; so he made a present to the captain, the mate, and the rest of Mr. Fitzwarren's servants; and even to the ill-natured old cook.

After this Mr. Fitzwarren advised him to send for a proper tailor and get himself dressed like a gentleman; and told him he was welcome to live in his house till he could provide himself with a better.

When Whittington's face was washed, his hair curled, his

hat cocked, and he was dressed in a nice suit of clothes he was as handsome and genteel as any young man who visited at Mr. Fitzwarren's; so that Miss Alice, who had once been so kind to him, and thought of him with pity, now looked upon him as fit to be her sweetheart; and the more so, no doubt, because Whittington was now always thinking what he could do to oblige her, and making her the prettiest presents that could be.

Mr. Fitzwarren soon saw their love for each other, and proposed to join them in marriage; and to this they both readily agreed. A day for the wedding was soon fixed; and they were attended to church by the Lord Mayor, the court of aldermen, the sheriffs, and a great number of the richest merchants in London, whom they afterwards treated with a very rich feast.

History tells us that Mr. Whittington and his lady liven in great splendour, and were very happy. They had several children. He was Sheriff of London, thrice Lord Mayor, and received the honour of knighthood by Henry V.

He entertained this king and his queen at dinner after his conquest of France so grandly, that the king said "Never had prince such a subject;" when Sir Richard heard this, he said: "Never had subject such a prince."

The figure of Sir Richard Whittington with his cat in his arms, carved in stone, was to be seen till the year 1780 over the archway of the old prison of Newgate, which he built for criminals.

XIV

The Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh

In Bamborough Castle once lived a king who had a fair wife and two children, a son named Childe Wynd and a daughter named Margaret. Childe Wynd went forth to seek his fortune, and soon after he had gone the queen his mother died. The king mourned her long and faithfully, but one day while he was hunting he came across a lady of great beauty, and became so much in love with her that he determined to marry her. So he sent word home that he was going to bring a new queen to Bamborough Castle.

Princess Margaret was not very glad to hear of her mother's place being taken, but she did not repine but did her father's bidding. And at the appointed day came down to the castle gate with the keys all ready to hand over to her step-mother. Soon the procession drew near, and the new queen came towards Princess Margaret who bowed low and handed her the keys of the castle. She stood there with blushing cheeks and eye on ground, and said: "O welcome, father dear, to your halls and bowers, and welcome to you my new mother, for all that's here is yours," and again she offered the keys. One of the king's knights who had escorted the new queen, cried out in admiration: "Surely this northern Princess is the loveliest of her kind." At that the new queen flushed up and cried out: "At least your courtesy might have excepted me," and then she muttered below her breath: "I'll soon put an end to her beauty."

That same night the queen, who was a noted witch, stole down to a lonely dungeon wherein she did her magic and with spells three times three, and with passes nine times nine she cast Princess Margaret under her spell. And this was her spell:

I weird ye to be a Laidly Worm,
And borrowed shall ye never be,
Until Childe Wynd, the King's own son
Come to the Heugh and thrice kiss thee;
Until the world comes to an end,
Borrowed shall ye never be.

So Lady Margaret went to bed a beauteous maiden, and rose up a Laidly Worm. And when her maidens came in to dress her in the morning they found coiled up on the bed a dreadful dragon, which uncoiled itself and came towards them. But they ran away shrieking, and the Laidly Worm crawled and crept, and crept and crawled till it reached the Heugh or rock of the Spindlestone, round which it coiled itself, and lay there basking with its terrible snout in the air.

Soon the country round about had reason to know of the Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh. For hunger drove the monster out from its cave and it used to devour everything it could come across. So at last they went to a mighty warlock and asked him what they should do. Then he consulted his works and his familiar, and told them: "The Laidly Worm is really the Princess Margaret and it is hunger that drives her forth to do such deeds. Put aside for her seven kine, and each day as the sun goes down, carry every drop of milk they yield to the stone trough at the foot of the Heugh, and the Laidly Worm will trouble the country no longer. But if ye would that she be borrowed to her natural shape, and that she who bespelled her be rightly punished, send over the seas for her brother, Childe Wynd."

All was done as the warlock advised, the Laidly Worm lived on the milk of the seven kine, and the country was troubled no longer. But when Childe Wynd heard the news,

he swore a mighty oath to rescue his sister and revenge her on her cruel stepmother. And three-and-thirty of his men took the oath with him. Then they set to work and built a long ship, and its keel they made of the rowan tree. And when all was ready, they out with their oars and pulled sheer for Bamborough Keep.

But as they got near the keep, the stepmother felt by her magic power that something was being wrought against her, so she summoned her familiar imps and said: "Childe Wynd is coming over the seas; he must never land. Raise storms, or bore the hull, but nohow must he touch shore." Then the imps went forth to meet Childe Wynd's ship, but when they got near, they found they had no power over the ship, for its keel was made of the rowan tree. So back they came to the queen witch, who knew not what to do. She ordered her men-at-arms to resist Childe Wynd if he should land near them, and by her spells she caused the Laidly Worm to wait by the entrance of the harbour.

As the ship came near, the Worm unfolded its coils, and dipping into the sea, caught hold of the ship of Childe Wynd, and banged it off the shore. Three times Childe Wynd urged his men on to row bravely and strong, but each time the Laidly Worm kept it off the shore. Then Childe Wynd ordered the ship to be put about, and the witch-queen thought he had given up the attempt. But instead of that, he only rounded the next point and landed safe and sound in Budle Creek, and then, with sword drawn and bow bent, rushed up followed by his men, to fight the terrible Worm that had kept him from landing.

But the moment Childe Wynd had landed, the witch-queen's power over the Laidly Worm had gone, and she went back to her bower all alone, not an imp, nor a man-at-arms to help her, for she knew her hour was come. So when Childe Wynd came rushing up to the Laidly Worm it made no attempt to stop him or hurt him, but just as he was going to

raise his sword to slay it, the voice of his own sister Margaret came from its jaws saying:

"O, quit your sword, unbend your bow,
And give me kisses three;
For though I am a poisonous worm,
No harm I'll do to thee."

Childe Wynd stayed his hand, but he did not know what to think if some witchery were not in it. Then said the Laidly Worm again:

"O, quit your sword, unbend your bow,
And give me kisses three,
If I'm not won ere set of sun,
Won never shall I be."

Then Childe Wynd went up to the Laidly Worm and kissed it once; but no change came over it. Then Childe Wynd kissed it once more; but yet no change came over it. For a third time he kissed the loathsome thing, and with a hiss and a roar the Laidly Worm reared back and before Childe Wynd stood his sister Margaret. He wrapped his cloak about her, and then went up to the castle with her. When he reached the keep, he went off to the witch queen's bower, and when he saw her, he touched her with a twig of a rowan tree. No sooner had he touched her than she shrivelled up and shrivelled up, till she became a huge ugly toad, with bold staring eyes and a horrible hiss. She croaked and she hissed, and then hopped away down the castle steps, and Childe Wynd took his father's place as king, and they all lived happy afterwards.

But to this day, the loathsome toad is seen at times, haunting the neighbourhood of Bamborough Keep, and the wicked witch-queen is a Laidly Toad.

XV

Master of All Masters

A girl once went to the fair to hire herself for servant. At last a funny-looking old gentleman engaged her, and took her home to his house. When she got there, he told her that he had something to teach her, for that in his house he had his own names for things.

He said to her: "What will you call me?"

"Master or mister, or whatever you please sir," says she.

He said: "You must call me 'master of all masters.' And what would you call this?" pointing to his bed.

"Bed or couch, or whatever you please, sir."

"No, that's my 'barnacle.' And what do you call these?" said he pointing to his pantaloons.

"Breeches or trousers, or whatever you please, sir."

"You must call them 'squibs and crackers.' And what would you call her?" pointing to the cat.

"Cat or kit, or whatever you please, sir."

"You must call her 'white-faced simminy.' And this now," showing the fire, "what would you call this?"

"Fire or flame, or whatever you please, sir."

"You must call it 'hot cockalorum,' and what this?" he went on, pointing to the water.

"Water or wet, or whatever you please, sir."

"No, 'pondalorum' is its name. And what do you call all this?" asked he, as he pointed to the house.

"House or cottage, or whatever you please, sir."

"You must call it 'high topper mountain.'"

That very night the servant woke her master up in a fright and said: "Master of all masters, get out of your barnacle and put on your squibs and crackers. For white-faced simminy has got a spark of hot cockalorum on its tail, and unless you get some pondalorum high topper mountain will be all on hot cockalorum." .... That's all.

XVI

The Well of the World's End

Once upon a time, and a very good time it was, though it wasn't in my time, nor in your time, nor anyone else's time, there was a girl whose mother had died, and her father had married again. And her stepmother hated her because she was more beautiful than herself, and she was very cruel to her. She used to make her do all the servant's work, and never let her have any peace. At last, one day, the stepmother thought to get rid of her altogether; so she handed her a sieve and said to her: "Go, fill it at the Well of the World's End and bring it home to me full, or woe betide you." For she thought she would never be able to find the Well of the World's End, and, if she did, how could she bring home a sieve full of water?

Well, the girl started off, and asked everyone she met to tell her where was the Well of the World's End. But nobody knew, and she didn't know what to do, when a queer little old woman, all bent double, told her where it was, and how she could get to it. So she did what the old woman told her, and at last arrived at the Well of the World's End. But when she dipped the sieve in the cold, cold water, it all ran out again. She tried and she tried again, but every time it was the same; and at last she sat down and cried as if her heart would break.

Suddenly she heard a croaking voice, and she looked up and saw a great frog with goggle eyes looking at her and speaking to her.

"What's the matter, dearie?" it said.

"Oh, dear, oh dear," she said, "my stepmother has sent me all this long way to fill this sieve with water from the Well of the World's End, and I can't fill it no how at all."

"Well," said the frog, "if you promise me to do whatever I bid you for a whole night long, I'll tell you how to fill it."

So the girl agreed, and then the frog said:

"Stop it with moss and daub it with clay,
And then it will carry the water away;"

and then it gave a hop, skip and jump, and went flop into the Well of the World's End.

So the girl looked about for some moss, and lined the bottom of the sieve with it, and over that she put some clay, and then she dipped it once again into the Well of the World's End; and this time, the water didn't run out, and she turned to go away.

Just then the frog popped up its head out of the Well of the World's End, and said: "Remember your promise."

"All right," said the girl; for thought she, "what harm can a frog do me?"

So she went back to her stepmother, and brought the sieve full of water from the Well of the World's End. The stepmother was fine and angry, but she said nothing at all.

That very evening they heard something tap tapping at the door low down, and a voice cried out:

"Open the door, my hinny, my heart,
Open the door, my own darling;
Mind you the words that you and I spoke,
Down in the meadow, at the World's End Well."

"Whatever can that be?" cried out the stepmother, and the girl had to tell her all about it, and what she had promised the frog.

"Girls must keep their promises," said the stepmother.

"Go and open the door this instant." For she was glad the girl would have to obey a nasty frog.

So the girl went and opened the door, and there was the frog from the Well of the World's End. And it hopped, and it skipped, and it jumped, till it reached the girl, and then it said:

"Lift me to your knee, my hinny, my heart;
Lift me to your knee, my own darling;
Remember the words you and I spoke,
Down in the meadow by the World's End Well."

But the girl didn't like to, till her stepmother said "Lift it up this instant, you hussy! Girls must keep their promises!"

So at last she lifted the frog up on to her lap, and it lay there for a time, till at last it said:

"Give me some supper, my hinny, my heart,
Give me some supper, my darling;
Remember the words you and I spake,
In the meadow, by the Well of the World's End."

Well, she didn't mind doing that, so she got it a bowl of milk and bread, and fed it well. And when the frog, had finished, it said:

"Go with me to bed, my hinny, my heart,
Go with me to bed, my own darling;
Mind you the words you spake to me,
Down by the cold well, so weary."

But that the girl wouldn't do, till her stepmother said: "Do what you promised, girl; girls must keep their promises. Do what you're bid, or out you go, you and your froggie."

So the girl took the frog with her to bed, and kept it as far away from her as she could. Well, just as the day was beginning to break what should the frog say but:

"Chop off my head, my hinny, my heart,
Chop off my head, my own darling;
Remember the promise you made to me,
Down by the cold well so weary."

At first the girl wouldn't, for she thought of what the frog had done for her at the Well of the World's End. But when the frog said the words over again, she went and took an axe and chopped off its head, and lo! and behold, there stood before her a handsome young prince, who told her that he had been enchanted by a wicked magician, and he could never be unspelled till some girl would do his bidding for a whole night, and chop off his head at the end of it.

The stepmother was that surprised when she found the young prince instead of the nasty frog, and she wasn't best pleased, you may be sure, when the prince told her that he was going to marry her stepdaughter because she had unspelled him. So they were married and went away to live in the castle of the king, his father, and all the stepmother had to console her was, that it was all through her that her stepdaughter was married to a prince.

XVII

Kate Crackernuts

Once upon a time there was a king and a queen, as in many lands have been. The king had a daughter, Anne, and the queen had one named Kate, but Anne was far bonnier than the queen's daughter, though they loved one another like real sisters. The queen was jealous of the king's daughter being bonnier than her own, and cast about to spoil her beauty. So she took counsel of the henwife, who told her to send the lassie to her next morning fasting.

So next morning early, the queen said to Anne, "Go, my dear, to the henwife in the glen, and ask her for some eggs." So Anne set out, but as she passed through the kitchen she saw a crust, and she took and munched it as she went along.

When she came to the henwife's she asked for eggs, as she had been told to do; the henwife said to her, "Lift the lid off that pot there and see." The lassie did so, but nothing happened. "Go home to your minnie and tell her to keep her larder door better locked," said the henwife. So she went home to the queen and told her what the henwife had said. The queen knew from this that the lassie had had something to eat, so watched the next morning and sent her away fasting; but the princess saw some country-folk picking peas by the roadside, and being very kind she spoke to them and took a handful of the peas, which she ate by the way.

When she came to the henwife's, she said, "Lift the lid off the pot and you'll see." So Anne lifted the lid but nothing

happened. Then the henwife was rare angry and said to Anne, "Tell your minnie the pot won't boil if the fire's away." So Anne went home and told the queen.

The third day the queen goes along with the girl herself to the henwife. Now, this time, when Anne lifted the lid off the pot, off falls her own pretty head, and on jumps a sheep's head.

So the queen was now quite satisfied, and went back home.

Her own daughter, Kate, however, took a fine linen cloth and wrapped it round her sister's head and took her by the hand and they both went out to seek their fortune. They went on, and they went on, and they went on, till they came to a castle. Kate knocked at the door and asked for a night's lodging for herself and a sick sister. They went in and found it was a king's castle, who had two sons, and one of them was sickening away to death and no one could find out what ailed him. And the curious thing was that whoever watched him at night was never seen any more. So the king had offered a peck of silver to anyone who would stop up with him. Now Katie was a very brave girl, so she offered to sit up with him.

Till midnight all goes well. As twelve o'clock rings, however, the sick prince rises, dresses himself, and slips downstairs. Kate followed, but he didn't seem to notice her. The prince went to the stable, saddled his horse, called his hound, jumped into the saddle, and Kate leapt lightly up behind him. Away rode the prince and Kate through the greenwood, Kate, as they pass, plucking nuts from the trees and filling her apron with them. They rode on and on till they came to a green hill. The prince here drew bridle and spoke, "Open, open, green hill, and let the young prince in with his horse and his hound," and Kate added, "and his lady him behind."

Immediately the green hill opened and they passed in. The prince entered a magnificent hall, brightly lighted up, and many beautiful fairies surrounded the prince and led him

off to the dance. Meanwhile, Kate, without being noticed, hid herself behind the door. There she sees the prince dancing, and dancing, and dancing, till he could dance no longer and fell upon a couch. Then the fairies would fan him till he could rise again and go on dancing.

At last the cock crew, and the prince made all haste to get on horseback; Kate jumped up behind, and home they rode. When the morning sun rose they came in and found Kate sitting down by the fire and cracking her nuts. Kate said the prince had a good night; but she would not sit up another night unless she was to get a peck of gold. The second night passed as the first had done. The prince got up at midnight and rode away to the green hill and the fairy ball, and Kate went with him, gathering nuts as they rode through the forest. This time she did not watch the prince, for she knew he would dance and dance, and dance. But she sees a fairy baby playing with a wand, and overhears one of the fairies say: "Three strokes of that wand would make Kate's sick sister as bonnie as ever she was." So Kate rolled nuts to the fairy baby, and rolled nuts till the baby toddled after the nuts and let fall the wand, and Kate took it up and put it in her apron. And at cockcrow they rode home as before, and the moment Kate got home to her room she rushed and touched Anne three times with the wand, and the nasty sheep's head fell off and she was her own pretty self again. The third night Kate consented to watch, only if she should marry the sick prince. All went on as on the first two nights. This time the fairy baby was playing with a birdie; Kate heard one of the fairies say: "Three bites of that birdie would make the sick prince as well as ever he was." Kate rolled all the nuts she had to the fairy baby till the birdie was dropped, and Kate put it in her apron.

At cockcrow they set off again, but instead of cracking her nuts as she used to do, this time Kate plucked the feathers off and cooked the birdie. Soon there arose a very savoury smell. "Oh!" said the sick prince, "I wish I had a bite of that birdie,"

so Kate gave him a bite of the birdie, and he rose up on his elbow. By-and-by he cried out again: "Oh, if I had another bite of that birdie!" so Kate gave him another bite, and he sat up on his bed. Then he said again: "Oh! if I only had a third bite of that birdie!" So Kate gave him a third bite, and he rose quite well, dressed himself, and sat down by the fire, and when the folk came in next morning they found Kate and the young prince cracking nuts together. Meanwhile his brother had seen Annie and had fallen in love with her, as everybody did who saw her sweet pretty face. So the sick son married the well sister, and the well son married the sick sister, and they all lived happy and died happy, and never drank out of a dry cappy.

XVIII
The Fish and the Ring

Once upon a time, there was a mighty baron in the North Countrie who was a great magician that knew everything that would come to pass. So one day, when his little boy was four years old, he looked into the Book of Fate to see what would happen to him. And to his dismay, he found that his son would wed a lowly maid that had just been born in a house under the shadow of York Minster. Now the Baron knew the father of the little girl was very, very poor, and he had five children already. So he called for his horse, and rode into York; and passed by the father's house, and saw him sitting by the door, sad and doleful. So he dismounted and went up to him and said: "What is the matter, my good man?" And the man said: "Well, your honour, the fact is, I've five children already, and now a sixth's come, a little lass, and where to get the bread from to fill their mouths, that's more than I can say."

"Don't be downhearted, my man," said the Baron. "If that's your trouble, I can help you. I'll take away the last little one, and you wont have to bother about her."

"Thank you kindly, sir," said the man; and he went in and brought out the lass and gave her to the Baron, who mounted his horse and rode away with her. And when he got by the bank of the river Ouse, he threw the little, thing into the river, and rode off to his castle.

But the little lass didn't sink; her clothes kept her up for

a time, and she floated, and she floated, till she was cast ashore just in front of a fisherman's hut. There the fisherman found her, and took pity on the poor little thing and took her into his house, and she lived there till she was fifteen years old, and a fine handsome girl.

One day it happened that the Baron went out hunting with some companions along the banks of the River Ouse, and stopped at the fisherman's hut to get a drink, and the girl came out to give it to them. They all noticed her beauty, and one of them said to the Baron: "You can read fates, Baron, whom will she marry, d'ye think?"

"Oh! that's easy to guess," said the Baron; "some yokel or other. But I'll cast her horoscope. Come here girl, and tell me on what day you were born?"

"I don't know, sir," said the girl, "I was picked up just here after having been brought down by the river about fifteen years ago."

Then the Baron knew who she was, and when they went away, he rode back and said to the girl: "Hark ye, girl, I will make your fortune. Take this letter to my brother in Scarborough, and you will be settled for life." And the girl took the letter and said she would go. Now this was what he had written in the letter:

"Dear Brother—Take the bearer and put her to death immediately.

"Yours affectionately,

"Albert."

So soon after the girl set out for Scarborough, and slept for the night at a little inn. Now that very night a band of robbers broke into the inn, and searched the girl, who had no money, and only the letter. So they opened this and read it, and thought it a shame. The captain of the robbers took a pen and paper and wrote this letter:

"Dear Brother—Take the bearer and marry her to my son immediately.

"Yours affectionately,

"Albert."

And then he gave it to the girl, bidding her begone. So she went on to the Baron's brother at Scarborough, a noble knight, with whom the Baron's son was staying. When she gave the letter to his brother, he gave orders for the wedding to be prepared at once, and they were married that very day.

Soon after, the Baron himself came to his brother's castle, and what was his surprise to find that the very thing he had plotted against had come to pass. But he was not to be put off that way; and he took out the girl for a walk, as he said, along the cliffs. And when he got her all alone, he took her by the arms, and was going to throw her over. But she begged hard for her life. "I have not done anything," she said: "if you will only spare me, I will do whatever you wish. I will never see you or your son again till you desire it." Then the Baron took off his gold ring and threw it into the sea, saying: "Never let me see your face till you can show me that ring;" and he let her go.

The poor girl wandered on and on, till at last she came to a great noble's castle, and she asked to have some work given to her; and they made her the scullion girl of the castle, for she had been used to such work in the fisherman's hut.

Now one day, who should she see coming up to the noble's house but the Baron and his brother and his son, her husband. She didn't know what to do; but thought they would not see her in the castle kitchen. So she went back to her work with a sigh, and set to cleaning a huge big fish that was to be boiled for their dinner. And, as she was cleaning it, she saw something shine inside it, and what do you think she found? Why, there was the Baron's ring, the very one he had thrown over the cliff at Scarborough. She was right glad to see it, you may be sure. Then she cooked the fish as nicely as she could, and served it up.

Well, when the fish came on the table, the guests liked it

so well that they asked the noble who cooked it. He said he didn't know, but called to his servants: "Ho, there, send up the cook that cooked that fine fish." So they went down to the kitchen and told the girl she was wanted in the hall. Then she washed and tidied herself and put the Baron's gold ring on her thumb and went up into the hall.

When the banqueters saw such a young and beautiful cook they were surprised. But the Baron was in a tower of a temper, and started up as if he would do her some violence. So the girl went up to him with her hand before her with the ring on it; and she put it down before him on the table. Then at last the Baron saw that no one could fight against Fate, and he handed her to a seat and announced to all the company that this was his son's true wife; and he took her and his son home to his castle; and they all lived as happy as could be ever afterwards.

More English Fairy Tales

Collected by Joseph Jacobs

I
The Pied Piper

Newtown, or Franchville, as it was called of old, is a sleepy little town, as you all may know, upon the Solent shore. Sleepy as it is now, it was once noisy enough, and what made the noise was—rats. The place was so infested with them as to be scarce worth living in. There wasn't a barn or a corn-rick, a store-room or a cupboard, but they ate their way into it. Not a cheese but they gnawed it hollow, not a sugar puncheon but they cleared out. Why the very mead and beer in the barrels was not safe from them. They'd gnaw a hole in the top of the tun, and down would go one master rat's tail, and when he brought it up round would crowd all the friends and cousins, and each would have a suck at the tail.

Had they stopped here it might have been borne. But the squeaking and shrieking, the hurrying and scurrying, so that you could neither hear yourself speak nor get a wink of good honest sleep the live-long night! Not to mention that, Mamma must needs sit up, and keep watch and ward over baby's cradle, or there'd have been a big ugly rat running across the poor little fellow's face, and doing who knows what mischief.

Why didn't the good people of the town have cats? Well they did, and there was a fair stand-up fight, but in the end the rats were too many, and the pussies were regularly driven from the field. Poison, I hear you say? Why, they poisoned so many that it fairly bred a plague. Ratcatchers! Why there

wasn't a ratcatcher from John o' Groat's house to the Land's End that hadn't tried his luck. But do what they might, cats or poison, terrier or traps, there seemed to be more rats than ever, and every day a fresh rat was cocking his tail or pricking his whiskers.

The Mayor and the town council were at their wits' end. As they were sitting one day in the town hall racking their poor brains, and bewailing their hard fate, who should run in but the town beadle. "Please your Honour," says he, "here is a very queer fellow come to town. I don't rightly know what to make of him." "Show him in," said the Mayor, and in he stepped. A queer fellow, truly. For there wasn't a colour of the rainbow but you might find it in some corner of his dress, and he was tall and thin, and had keen piercing eyes.

"I'm called the Pied Piper," he began. "And pray what might you be willing to pay me, if I rid you of every single rat in Franchville?"

Well, much as they feared the rats, they feared parting with their money more, and fain would they have higgled and haggled. But the Piper was not a man to stand nonsense, and the upshot was that fifty pounds were promised him (and it meant a lot of money in those old days) as soon as not a rat was left to squeak or scurry in Franchville.

Out of the hall stepped the Piper, and as he stepped he laid his pipe to his lips and a shrill keen tune sounded through street and house. And as each note pierced the air you might have seen a strange sight. For out of every hole the rats came tumbling. There were none too old and none too young, none too big and none too little to crowd at the Piper's heels and with eager feet and upturned noses to patter after him as he paced the streets. Nor was the Piper unmindful of the little toddling ones, for every fifty yards he'd stop and give an extra flourish on his pipe just to give them time to keep up with the older and stronger of the band.

Up Silver Street he went, and down Gold Street, and at

the end of Gold Street is the harbour and the broad Solent beyond. And as he paced along, slowly and gravely, the townsfolk flocked to door and window, and many a blessing they called down upon his head.

As for getting near him there were too many rats. And now that he was at the water's edge he stepped into a boat, and not a rat, as he shoved off into deep water, piping shrilly all the while, but followed him, splashing, paddling, and wagging their tails with delight. On and on he played and played until the tide went down, and each master rat sank deeper and deeper in the slimy ooze of the harbour, until every mother's son of them was dead and smothered.

The tide rose again, and the Piper stepped on shore, but never a rat followed. You may fancy the townsfolk had been throwing up their caps and hurrahing and stopping up rat holes and setting the church bells a-ringing. But when the Piper stepped ashore and not so much as a single squeak was to be heard, the Mayor and the Council, and the townsfolk



generally, began to hum and to ha and to shake their heads.

For the town money chest had been sadly emptied of late, and where was the fifty pounds to come from? Such an easy job, too! Just getting into a boat and playing a pipe! Why the Mayor himself could have done that if only he had thought of it.

So he hummed and ha'ad and at last, "Come, my good man," said he, "you see what poor folk we are; how can we manage to pay you fifty pounds? Will you not take twenty? When all is said and done, 't will be good pay for the trouble you've taken."

"Fifty pounds was what I bargained for," said the piper shortly; "and if I were you I'd pay it quickly. For I can pipe many kinds of tunes, as folk sometimes find to their cost."

"Would you threaten us, you strolling vagabond?" shrieked the Mayor, and at the same time he winked to the Council; "the rats are all dead and drowned," muttered he; and so "You may do your worst, my good man," and with that he turned short upon his heel.

"Very well," said the Piper, and he smiled a quiet smile. With that he laid his pipe to his lips afresh, but now there came forth no shrill notes, as it were, of scraping and gnawing, and squeaking and scurrying, but the tune was joyous and resonant, full of happy laughter and merry play. And as he paced down the streets the elders mocked, but from school-room and play-room, from nursery and workshop, not a child but ran out with eager glee and shout following gaily at the Piper's call. Dancing, laughing, joining hands and tripping feet, the bright throng moved along up Gold Street and down Silver Street, and beyond Silver Street lay the cool green forest full of old oaks and wide-spreading beeches. In and out among the oak-trees you might catch glimpses of the Piper's many-coloured coat. You might hear the laughter of the children break and fade and die away as deeper and deeper into the lone green wood the stranger went and the children

followed.

All the while, the elders watched and waited. They mocked no longer now. And watch and wait as they might, never did they set their eyes again upon the Piper in his parti-coloured coat. Never were their hearts gladdened by the song and dance of the children issuing forth from amongst the ancient oaks of the forest.



II

Hereafterthis

Once upon a time there was a farmer called Jan, and he lived all alone by himself in a little farmhouse.

By-and-by he thought that he would like to have a wife to keep it all vitty for him.

So he went a-courting a fine maid, and he said to her: "Will you marry me?"

"That I will, to be sure," said she.

So they went to church, and were wed. After the wedding was over, she got up on his horse behind him, and he brought her home. And they lived as happy as the day was long.

One day, Jan said to his wife, "Wife can you milk-y?"

"Oh, yes, Jan, I can milk-y. Mother used to milk-y, when I lived home."

So he went to market and bought her ten red cows. All went well till one day when she had driven them to the pond to drink, she thought they did not drink fast enough. So she drove them right into the pond to make them drink faster, and they were all drowned.

When Jan came home, she up and told him what she had done, and he said, "Oh, well, there, never mind, my dear, better luck next time."

So they went on for a bit, and then, one day, Jan said to his wife, "Wife can you serve pigs?"

"Oh, yes, Jan, I can serve pigs. Mother used to serve pigs when I lived home."

So Jan went to market and bought her some pigs. All went well till one day, when she had put their food into the trough she thought they did not eat fast enough, and she pushed their heads into the trough to make them eat faster, and they were all choked.

When Jan came home, she up and told him what she had done, and he said, "Oh, well, there, never mind, my dear, better luck next time."

So they went on for a bit, and then, one day, Jan said to his wife, "Wife can you bake-y?"

"Oh, yes, Jan, I can bake-y. Mother used to bake-y when I lived home."

So he bought everything for his wife so that she could bake bread. All went well for a bit, till one day, she thought she would bake white bread for a treat for Jan. So she carried her meal to the top of a high hill, and let the wind blow on it, for she thought to herself that the wind would blow out all the bran. But the wind blew away meal and bran and all—so there was an end of it.

When Jan came home, she up and told him what she had done, and he said, "Oh, well, there, never mind, my dear, better luck next time."

So they went on for a bit, and then, one day, Jan said to his wife, "Wife can you brew-y?"

"Oh, yes, Jan, I can brew-y. Mother used to brew-y when I lived home."

So he bought everything proper for his wife to brew ale with. All went well for a bit, till one day when she had brewed

her ale and put it in the barrel, a big black dog came in and looked up in her face. She drove him out of the house, but he stayed outside the door and still looked up in her face. And she got so angry that she pulled out the plug of the barrel, threw it at the dog, and said, "What dost look at me for? I be Jan's wife." Then the dog ran down the road, and she ran after him to chase him right away. When she came back again, she found that the ale had all run out of the barrel, and so there was an end of it.

When Jan came home, she up and told him what she had done, and he said, "Oh well, there, never mind, my dear, better luck next time."

So they went on for a bit, and then, one day, she thought to herself, "'T is time to clean up my house." When she was taking down her big bed she found a bag of groats on the tester. So when Jan came home, she up and said to him, "Jan, what is that bag of groats on the tester for?"

"That is for Hereafterthis, my dear."

Now, there was a robber outside the window, and he heard what Jan said. Next day, he waited till Jan had gone to market, and then he came and knocked at the door. "What do you please to want?" said Mally.

"I am Hereafterthis," said the robber, "I have come for the bag of groats."

Now the robber was dressed like a fine gentleman, so she thought to herself it was very kind of so fine a man to come for the bag of groats, so she ran upstairs and fetched the bag of groats, and gave it to the robber and he went away with it.

When Jan came home, she said to him, "Jan, Hereafterthis has been for the bag of groats."

"What do you mean, wife?" said Jan.

So she up and told him, and he said, "Then I'm a ruined man, for that money was to pay our rent with. The only thing we can do is to roam the world over till we find the bag of groats." Then Jan took the house-door off its hinges, "That's

all we shall have to lie on," he said. So Jan put the door on his back, and they both set out to look for Hereafterthis. Many a long day they went, and in the night Jan used to put the door on the branches of a tree, and they would sleep on it. One night they came to a big hill, and there was a high tree at the foot. So Jan put the door up in it, and they got up in the tree and went to sleep. By-and-by Jan's wife heard a noise, and she looked to see what it was. It was an opening of a door in the side of the hill. Out came two gentlemen with a long table, and behind them fine ladies and gentlemen, each carrying a bag, and one of them was Hereafterthis with the bag of groats. They sat round the table, and began to drink and talk and count up all the money in the bags. So then Jan's wife woke him up, and asked what they should do.

"Now's our time," said Jan, and he pushed the door off the branches, and it fell right in the very middle of the table, and frightened the robbers so that they all ran away. Then Jan and his wife got down from the tree, took as many money-bags as they could carry on the door, and went straight home. And Jan bought his wife more cows, and more pigs, and they lived happy ever after.



III

The Hedley Kow

There was once an old woman, who earned a poor living by going errands and such like, for the farmers' wives round about the village where she lived. It wasn't much she earned by it; but with a plate of meat at one house, and a cup of tea at another, she made shift to get on somehow, and always looked as cheerful as if she hadn't a want in the world.

Well, one summer evening as she was trotting away homewards, she came upon a big black pot lying at the side of the road.

"Now *that,*" said she, stopping to look at it, "would be just the very thing for me if I had anything to put into it! But who can have left it here?" and she looked round about, as if the person it belonged to must be not far off. But she could see no one.

"Maybe it'll have a hole in it," she said thoughtfully:—

"Ay, that'll be how they've left it lying, hinny. But then it 'd do fine to put a flower in for the window; I'm thinking I'll just take it home, anyways." And she bent her stiff old back, and lifted the lid to look inside.

"Mercy me!" she cried, and jumped back to the other side of the road; *"if it is fit brim full o' gold* PIECES!!"

For a while she could do nothing but walk round and round her treasure, admiring the yellow gold and wondering at her good luck, and saying to herself about every two minutes, "Well, I do be feeling rich and grand!" But presently she began to think how she could best take it home with her; and she couldn't see any other way than by fastening one end of her shawl to it, and so dragging it after her along the road.

"It'll certainly be soon dark," she said to herself, "and folk'll not see what I'm bringing home with me, and so I'll have all the night to myself to think what I'll do with it. I could buy a grand house and all, and live like the Queen herself, and not do a stroke of work all day, but just sit by the fire with a cup of tea; or maybe I'll give it to the priest to keep for me, and get a piece as I'm wanting; or maybe I'll just bury it in a hole at the garden-foot, and put a bit on the chimney, between the chiney teapot and the spoons—for ornament like. Ah! I feel so grand, I don't know myself rightly!"

And by this time, being already rather tired with dragging such a heavy weight after her, she stopped to rest for a minute, turning to make sure that her treasure was safe.

But when she looked at it, it wasn't a pot of gold at all, but a great lump of shining silver!

She stared at it, and rubbed her eyes and stared at it again; but she couldn't make it look like anything but a great lump of silver. "I'd have sworn it was a pot of gold," she said at last, "but I reckon I must have been dreaming. Ay, now, that's a change for the better; it'll be far less trouble to look after, and none so easy stolen; yon gold pieces would have been a sight of bother to keep 'em safe. Ay, I'm well quit of them; and with

my bonny lump I'm as rich as rich—!"

And she set off homewards again, cheerfully planning all the grand things she was going to do with her money. It wasn't very long, however, before she got tired again and stopped once more to rest for a minute or two.

Again she turned to look at her treasure, and as soon as she set eyes on it she cried out in astonishment. "Oh, my!" said she; "now it's a lump o' iron! Well, that beats all; and it's just real convenient! I can sell it as *easy* as *easy*, and get a lot o' penny pieces for it. Ay, hinny, an' it's much handier than a lot o' yer gold and silver as 'd have kept me from sleeping o' nights thinking the neighbours were robbing me—an' it's a real good thing to have by you in a house, ye niver can tell what ye mightn't use it for, an' it'll sell—ay, for a real lot. Rich? I'll be just *rolling!*"

And on she trotted again chuckling to herself on her good luck, till presently she glanced over her shoulder, "just to make sure it was there still," as she said to herself.

"Eh, my!" she cried as soon as she saw it; "if it hasn't gone and turned itself into a great stone this time! Now, how could it have known that I was just *terrible* wanting something to hold my door open with? Ay, if that isn't a good change! Hinny, it's a fine thing to have such good luck."

And, all in a hurry to see how the stone would look in its corner by her door, she trotted off down the hill, and stopped at the foot, beside her own little gate.

When she had unlatched it, she turned to unfasten her shawl from the stone, which this time seemed to lie unchanged and peaceably on the path beside her. There was still plenty of light, and she could see the stone quite plainly as she bent her stiff back over it, to untie the shawl end; when, all of a sudden, it seemed to give a jump and a squeal, and grew in a moment as big as a great horse; then it threw down four lanky legs, and shook out two long ears, flourished a tail, and went off kicking its feet into the air and laughing like a

naughty mocking boy.

The old woman stared after it, till it was fairly out of sight.

"WELL!" she said at last, "I *do* be the luckiest body hereabouts! Fancy me seeing the Hedley Kow all to myself, and making so free with it too! I can tell you, I *do* feel that GRAND—"

And she went into her cottage, and sat down by the fire to think over her good luck.

IV

Tattercoats

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 favourite 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 travelling through the land, and in the town near by 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 gay and merry, that she forgot all about her tears and her troubles, and before she well knew, the herdboy had taken her by the hand, and she, and he, and the geese before them, were dancing down the road towards 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 herdboy 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 goosegirl 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 herdboy 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 honoured 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 herdboy, followed by his flock of noisy geese, entered at the great doors, and walked straight up the ball-room, 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



Tattercoats

the land, and the sweetest as well!"

Before he had finished speaking, the herdboy 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 honour 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.

V

The Pedlar of Swaffham

In the old days when London Bridge was lined with shops from one end to the other, and salmon swam under the arches, there lived at Swaffham, in Norfolk, a poor pedlar. He'd much ado to make his living, trudging about with his pack at his back and his dog at his heels, and at the close of the day's labour was but too glad to sit down and sleep. Now it fell out that one night he dreamed a dream, and therein he saw the great bridge of London town, and it sounded in his ears that if he went there he should hear joyful news. He made little count of the dream, but on the following night it come back to him, and again on the third night.

Then he said within himself, "I must needs try the issue of it," and so he trudged up to London town. Long was the way



and right glad was he when he stood on the great bridge and saw the tall houses on right hand and left, and had glimpses of the water running and the ships sailing by. All day long he paced to and fro, but he heard nothing that might yield him comfort. And again on the morrow he stood and he gazed—he paced afresh the length of London Bridge, but naught did he see and naught did he hear.

Now the third day being come as he still stood and gazed, a shopkeeper hard by spoke to him.

"Friend," said he, "I wonder much at your fruitless standing. Have you no wares to sell?"

"No, indeed," quoth the pedlar.

"And you do not beg for alms."

"Not so long as I can keep myself."

"Then what, I pray thee, dost thou want here, and what may thy business be?"

"Well, kind sir, to tell the truth, I dreamed that if I came hither, I should hear good news."

Right heartily did the shopkeeper laugh.

"Nay, thou must be a fool to take a journey on such a silly errand. I'll tell thee, poor silly country fellow, that I myself dream too o' nights, and that last night I dreamt myself to be in Swaffham, a place clean unknown to me, but in Norfolk if I mistake not, and methought I was in an orchard behind a pedlar's house, and in that orchard was a great oak-tree. Then me seemed that if I digged I should find beneath that tree a great treasure. But think you I'm such a fool as to take on me a long and wearisome journey and all for a silly dream. No, my good fellow, learn wit from a wiser man than thyself. Get thee home, and mind thy business."

When the pedlar heard this he spoke no word, but was exceeding glad in himself, and returning home speedily, digged underneath the great oak-tree, and found a prodigious great treasure. He grew exceeding rich, but he did not forget his duty in the pride of his riches. For he built up again the

church at Swaffham, and when he died they put a statue of him therein all in stone with his pack at his back and his dog at his heels. And there it stands to this day to witness if I lie.

VI
The Old Witch

Once upon a time there were two girls who lived with their mother and father. Their father had no work, and the girls wanted to go away and seek their fortunes. Now one girl wanted to go to service, and her mother said she might if she could find a place. So she started for the town. Well, she went all about the town, but no one wanted a girl like her. So she went on farther into the country, and she came to the place where there was an oven where there was lots of bread baking. And the bread said, "Little girl, little girl, take us out, take us out. We have been baking seven years, and no one has come to take us out." So the girl took out the bread, laid it on the ground, and went on her way. Then she met a cow, and the cow said, "Little girl, little girl, milk me, milk me! Seven years have I been waiting, and no one has come to milk me." The girl milked the cow into the pails that stood by. As she was thirsty she drank some, and left the rest in the pails by the cow. Then she went on a little bit farther, and came to an apple tree, so loaded with fruit that its branches were breaking down, and the tree said, "Little girl, little girl, help me shake my fruit. My branches are breaking, it is so heavy." And the girl said, "Of course I will, you poor tree." So she shook the fruit all off, propped up the branches, and left the fruit on the ground under the tree. Then she went on again till she came to a house. Now in this house there lived a witch, and this witch took girls into her house as servants. And when she

heard that this girl had left her home to seek service, she said that she would try her, and give her good wages. The witch told the girl what work she was to do. "You must keep the house clean and tidy, sweep the floor and the fireplace; but there is one thing you must never do. You must never look up the chimney, or something bad will befall you."

So the girl promised to do as she was told, but one morning as she was cleaning, and the witch was out, she forgot what the witch said, and looked up the chimney. When she did this a great bag of money fell down in her lap. This happened again and again. So the girl started to go off home.

When she had gone some way she heard the witch coming after her. So she ran to the apple tree and cried:

"Apple-tree, apple-tree hide me,
So the old witch can't find me;
If she does she'll pick my bones,
And bury me under the marble stones."

So the apple-tree hid her. When the witch came up she said:

"Tree of mine, tree of mine,
Have you seen a girl
With a willy-willy wag, and a long-tailed bag,
Who's stole my money, all I had?"

And the apple-tree said, "No, mother; not for seven year."

When the witch had gone down another way, the girl went on again, and just as she got to the cow heard the witch coming after her again, so she ran to the cow and cried:

"Cow, cow, hide me,
So the old witch can't find me;

If she does she'll pick my bones,



And bury me under the marble stones."

So the cow hid her.

When the old witch came up, she looked about and said to the cow:

"Cow of mine, cow of mine,
Have you seen a girl

With a willy-willy wag, and a long-tailed bag,
Who's stole my money, all I had?"

And the cow said, "No, mother, not for seven year."

When the witch had gone off another way, the little girl went on again, and when she was near the oven she heard the witch coming after her again, so she ran to the oven and cried:

"Oven, oven, hide me,
So the old witch can't find me;
If she does she'll break my bones,
And bury me under the marble stones."

And the oven said, "I've no room, ask the baker," and the baker hid her behind the oven.

When the witch came up she looked here and there and everywhere, and then said to the baker:

"Man of mine, man of mine,
Have you seen a girl,
With a willy-willy wag, and a long-tailed bag,
Who's stole my money, all I had?"

So the baker said, "Look in the oven." The old witch went to look, and the oven said, "Get in and look in the furthest corner." The witch did so, and when she was inside the oven shut her door, and the witch was kept there for a very long time.

The girl then went off again, and reached her home with her money bags, married a rich man, and lived happy ever afterwards.

The other sister then thought she would go and do the same. And she went the same way. But when she reached the oven, and the bread said, "Little girl, little girl, take us out. Seven years have we been baking, and no one has come to take us out," the girl said, "No, I don't want to burn my

fingers." So she went on till she met the cow, and the cow said, "Little girl, little girl, milk me, milk me, do. Seven years have I been waiting, and no one has come to milk me." But the girl said, "No, I can't milk you, I'm in a hurry," and went on faster. Then she came to the apple-tree, and the apple-tree asked her to help shake the fruit. "No, I can't; another day p'raps I may," and went on till she came to the witch's house. Well, it happened to her just the same as to the other girl—she forgot what she was told, and one day when the witch was out, looked up the chimney, and down fell a bag of money. Well, she thought she would be off at once. When she reached the apple-tree, she heard the witch coming after her, and she cried:

"Apple-tree, apple-tree, hide me,
So the old witch can't find me;
If she does she'll break my bones,
And bury me under the marble stones."

But the tree didn't answer, and she ran on further. Presently the witch came up and said:

"Tree of mine, tree of mine,
Have you seen a girl,
With a willy-willy wag, and a long-tailed bag,
Who's stole my money, all I had?"

The tree said, "Yes, mother; she's gone down that way."

So the old witch went after her and caught her, she took all the money away from her, beat her, and sent her off home just as she was.

VII
The Three Wishes

Once upon a time, and be sure 't was a long time ago, there lived a poor woodman in a great forest, and every day of his life he went out to fell timber. So one day he started out, and the goodwife filled his wallet and slung his bottle on his back, that he might have meat and drink in the forest. He had marked out a huge old oak, which, thought he, would furnish many and many a good plank. And when he was come to it, he took his axe in his hand and swung it round his head as though he were minded to fell the tree at one stroke. But he hadn't given one blow, when what should he hear but the pitifullest entreating, and there stood before him a fairy who prayed and beseeched him to spare the tree. He was dazed, as you may fancy, with wonderment and affright, and he couldn't open his mouth to utter a word. But he found his tongue at last, and, "Well," said he, "I'll e'en do as thou wishest."

"You've done better for yourself than you know," answered the fairy, "and to show I'm not ungrateful, I'll grant you your next three wishes, be they what they may." And therewith the fairy was no more to be seen, and the woodman slung his wallet over his shoulder and his bottle at his side, and off he started home.

But the way was long, and the poor man was regularly dazed with the wonderful thing that had befallen him, and when he got home there was nothing in his noddle but the

wish to sit down and rest. Maybe, too, 't was a trick of the fairy's. Who can tell? Anyhow down he sat by the blazing fire, and as he sat he waxed hungry, though it was a long way off supper-time yet.

"Hasn't thou naught for supper, dame?" said he to his wife.

"Nay, not for a couple of hours yet," said she.

"Ah!" groaned the woodman, "I wish I'd a good link of black pudding here before me."

No sooner had he said the word, when clatter, clatter, rustle, rustle, what should come down the chimney but a link of the finest black pudding the heart of man could wish for.

If the woodman stared, the goodwife stared three times as much. "What's all this?" says she.

Then all the morning's work came back to the woodman, and he told his tale right out, from beginning to end, and as he told it the goodwife glowered and glowered, and when he had made an end of it she burst out, "Thou bee'st but a fool, Jan, thou bee'st but a fool; and I wish the pudding were at thy nose, I do indeed."

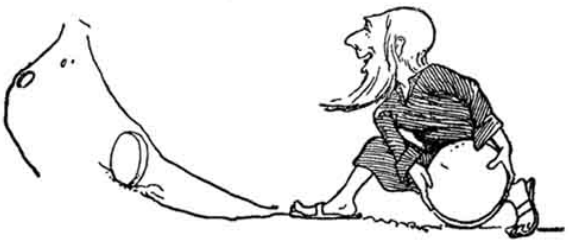
And before you could say Jack Robinson, there the goodman sat and his nose was the longer for a noble link of black pudding.

He gave a pull but it stuck, and she gave a pull but it stuck, and they both pulled till they had nigh pulled the nose off, but it stuck and stuck.

"What's to be done now?" said he.

"'T isn't so very unsightly," said she, looking hard at him.

Then the woodman saw that if he wished, he must need wish in a hurry; and wish he did, that the black pudding might come off his nose. Well! there it lay in a dish on the table, and if the goodman and goodwife didn't ride in a golden coach, or dress in silk and satin, why, they had at least as fine a black pudding for their supper as the heart of man could desire.



VIII

The Wise Men of Gotham

Of Buying of Sheep

There were two men of Gotham, and one of them was going to market to Nottingham to buy sheep, and the other came from the market, and they both met together upon Nottingham bridge.

"Where are you going?" said the one who came from Nottingham.

"Marry," said he that was going to Nottingham, "I am going to buy sheep."

"Buy sheep?" said the other, "and which way will you bring them home?"

"Marry," said the other, "I will bring them over this bridge."

"By Robin Hood," said he that came from Nottingham, "but thou shalt not."

"By Maid Marion," said he that was going thither, "but I will."

"You will not," said the one.

"I will."

Then they beat their staves against the ground one against the other, as if there had been a hundred sheep between them.

"Hold in," said one; "beware lest my sheep leap over the bridge."

"I care not," said the other; "they shall not come this way."

"But they shall," said the other.

Then the other said: "If that thou make much to do, I will put my fingers in thy mouth."

"Will you?" said the other.

Now, as they were at their contention, another man of Gotham came from the market with a sack of meal upon a horse, and seeing and hearing his neighbours at strife about sheep, though there were none between them, said:

"Ah, fools! will you ever learn wisdom? Help me, and lay my sack upon my shoulders."

They did so, and he went to the side of the bridge, unloosened the mouth of the sack, and shook all his meal out into the river.

"Now, neighbours," he said, "how much meal is there in my sack?"

"Marry," said they, "there is none at all."

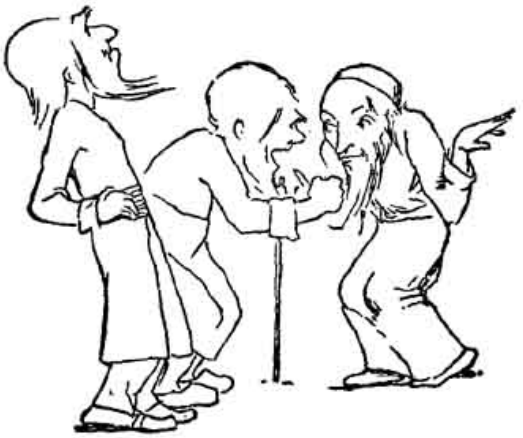
"Now, by my faith," said he, "even as much wit as is in your two heads to stir up strife about a thing you have not."

Which was the wisest of these three persons, judge yourself.

Of Hedging a Cuckoo

Once upon a time the men of Gotham would have kept the Cuckoo so that she might sing all the year, and in the midst of their town they made a hedge round in compass and they got a Cuckoo, and put her into it, and said, "Sing there all through the year, or thou shalt have neither meat nor water." The Cuckoo, as soon as she perceived herself within the hedge, flew away. "A vengeance on her!" said they. "We did not make our hedge high enough."

"Then they beat their staves against the ground one against the other, as if there had been a hundred sheep between them."



Of Sending Cheeses

There was a man of Gotham who went to the market at Nottingham to sell cheese, and as he was going down the hill to Nottingham bridge, one of his cheeses fell out of his wallet and rolled down the hill. "Ah, gaffer," said the fellow, "can you run to market alone? I will send one after another after you."

Then he laid down his wallet and took out the cheeses, and rolled them down the hill. Some went into one bush; and some went into another.

"I charge you all to meet me near the market-place;" and when the fellow came to the market to meet his cheeses, he stayed there till the market was nearly done. Then he went about to inquire of his friends and neighbours, and other men, if they did see his cheeses come to the market.

"Who should bring them?" said one of the market men.

"Marry, themselves," said the fellow; "they know the way well enough."

He said, "A vengeance on them all. I did fear, to see them run so fast, that they would run beyond the market. I am now fully persuaded that they must be now almost at York." Whereupon he forthwith hired a horse to ride to York, to seek his cheeses where they were not, but to this day no man can tell him of his cheeses.

Of Drowning Eels

When Good Friday came, the men of Gotham cast their heads together what to do with their white herrings, their red herrings, their sprats, and other salt fish. One consulted with the other, and agreed that such fish should be cast into their pond (which was in the middle of the town), that they might breed against the next year, and every man that had salt fish left cast them into the pool.

"I have many white herrings," said one.

"I have many sprats," said another.

"I have many red herrings," said the other.

"I have much salt fish. Let all go into the pond or pool, and we shall fare like lords next year."

At the beginning of next year following the men drew near the pond to have their fish, and there was nothing but a great eel. "Ah," said they all, "a mischief on this eel, for he has eaten up all our fish."

"What shall we do to him?" said one to the others.

"Kill him," said one.

"Chop him into pieces," said another. "Not so," said another; "let us drown him."

"Be it so," said all. And they went to another pond, and cast the eel into the pond. "Lie there and shift for yourself, for no help thou shalt have from us;" and they left the eel to drown.

Of Sending Rent

Once on a time the men of Gotham had forgotten to pay

their landlord. One said to the other, "Tomorrow is our pay-day, and what shall we find to send our money to our landlord?"

The one said, "This day I have caught a hare, and he shall carry it, for he is light of foot."

"Be it so," said all; "he shall have a letter and a purse to put our money in, and we shall direct him the right way." So when the letters were written and the money put in a purse, they tied it round the hare's neck, saying, "First you go to Lancaster, then thou must go to Loughborough, and Newarke is our landlord, and commend us to him and there is his dues."

The hare, as soon as he was out of their hands, ran on along the country way. Some cried, "Thou must go to Lancaster first."

"Let the hare alone," said another; "he can tell a nearer way than the best of us all. Let him go."

Another said, "It is a subtle hare, let her alone; she will not keep the highway for fear of dogs."

Of Counting

On a certain time there were twelve men of Gotham who went fishing, and some went into the water and some on dry ground; and, as they were coming back, one of them said, "We have ventured much this day wading; I pray God that none of us that did come from home be drowned."

"Marry," said one, "let us see about that. Twelve of us came out," and every man did count eleven, and the twelfth man did never count himself.

"Alas!" said one to another, "one of us is drowned." They went back to the brook where they had been fishing, and looked up and down for him that was drowned, and made great lamentation. A courtier came riding by, and he did ask what they were seeking, and why they were so sorrowful. "Oh," said they, "this day we came to fish in this brook, and there were twelve of us, and one is drowned."

"Why," said the courtier, "count me how many of you there be," and one counted eleven and did not count himself. "Well," said the courtier, "what will you give me if I find the twelfth man?"

"Sir," said they, "all the money we have."

"Give me the money," said the courtier; and he began with the first, and gave him a whack over the shoulders that he groaned, and said, "There is one," and he served all of them that they groaned; but when he came to the last he gave him a good blow, saying, "Here is the twelfth man."

"God bless you on your heart," said all the company; "you have found our neighbour."



The Happy Prince and Other Tales

by Oscar Wilde

I

The Happy Prince

High above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt.

He was very much admired indeed. "He is as beautiful as a weathercock," remarked one of the Town Councillors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes; "only not quite so useful," he added, fearing lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

"Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?" asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the moon. "The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything."

"I am glad there is someone in the world who is quite happy," muttered a disappointed man as he gazed at the wonderful statue.

"He looks just like an angel," said the Charity Children as they came out of the cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks and their clean white pinafores.

"How do you know?" said the Mathematical Master, "you have never seen one."

"Ah! but we have, in our dreams," answered the children; and the Mathematical Master frowned and looked very severe, for he did not approve of children dreaming.

One night there flew over the city a little Swallow. His friends had gone away to Egypt six weeks before, but he had

stayed behind, for he was in love with the most beautiful Reed. He had met her early in the spring as he was flying down the river after a big yellow moth, and had been so attracted by her slender waist that he had stopped to talk to her.

"Shall I love you?" said the Swallow, who liked to come to the point at once, and the Reed made him a low bow. So he flew round and round her, touching the water with his wings, and making silver ripples. This was his courtship, and it lasted all through the summer.

"It is a ridiculous attachment," twittered the other Swallows; "she has no money, and far too many relations"; and indeed the river was quite full of Reeds. Then, when the autumn came they all flew away.

After they had gone he felt lonely, and began to tire of his lady-love. "She has no conversation," he said, "and I am afraid that she is a coquette, for she is always flirting with the wind." And certainly, whenever the wind blew, the Reed made the most graceful curtseys. "I admit that she is domestic," he continued, "but I love travelling, and my wife, consequently, should love travelling also."

"Will you come away with me?" he said finally to her; but the Reed shook her head, she was so attached to her home.

"You have been trifling with me," he cried. "I am off to the Pyramids. Good-bye!" and he flew away.

All day long he flew, and at night-time he arrived at the city. "Where shall I put up?" he said; "I hope the town has made preparations."

Then he saw the statue on the tall column.

"I will put up there," he cried; "it is a fine position, with plenty of fresh air." So he alighted just between the feet of the Happy Prince.

"I have a golden bedroom," he said softly to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep; but just as he was putting his head under his wing a large drop of water fell on him. "What a curious thing!" he cried; "there is not a

single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful. The Reed used to like the rain, but that was merely her selfishness."

Then another drop fell.

"What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off?" he said; "I must look for a good chimney-pot," and he determined to fly away.

But before he had opened his wings, a third drop fell, and he looked up, and saw—Ah! what did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity.

"Who are you?" he said.

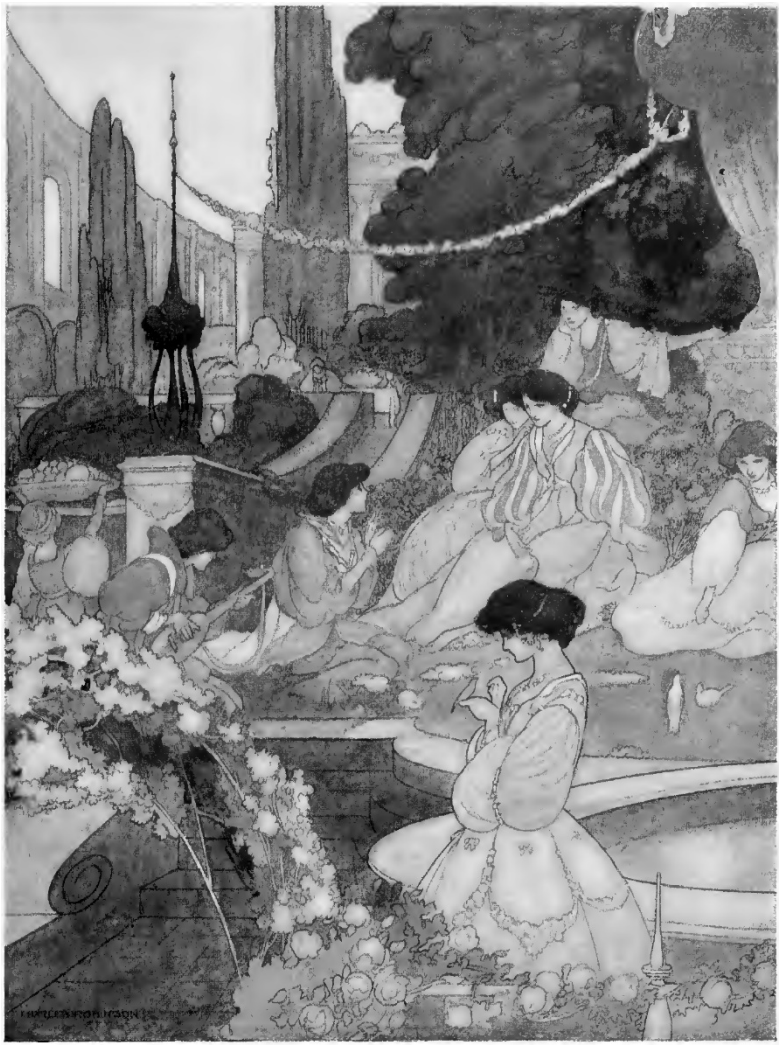
"I am the Happy Prince."

"Why are you weeping then?" asked the Swallow; "you have quite drenched me."

"When I was alive and had a human heart," answered the statue, "I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans-Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot chose but weep."

"What! is he not solid gold?" said the Swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks out loud.

"Far away," continued the statue in a low musical voice, "far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open, and through it I can see a woman seated at



The Palace of Sans-Souci

a table. Her face is thin and worn, and she has coarse, red hands, all pricked by the needle, for she is a seamstress. She is embroidering passion-flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen's maids-of-honour to wear at the next Court-ball. In a bed in the corner of the room her little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying. Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, will you not bring her the ruby out of my sword-hilt? My feet are fastened to this pedestal and I cannot move."

"I am waited for in Egypt," said the Swallow. "My friends are flying up and down the Nile, and talking to the large lotus-flowers. Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great King. The King is there himself in his painted coffin. He is wrapped in yellow linen, and embalmed with spices. Round his neck is a chain of pale green jade, and his hands are like withered leaves."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger? The boy is so thirsty, and the mother so sad."

"I don't think I like boys," answered the Swallow. "Last summer, when I was staying on the river, there were two rude boys, the miller's sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me, of course; we swallows fly far too well for that, and besides, I come of a family famous for its agility; but still, it was a mark of disrespect."

But the Happy Prince looked so sad that the little Swallow was sorry. "It is very cold here," he said; "but I will stay with you for one night, and be your messenger."

"Thank you, little Swallow," said the Prince.

So the Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.

He passed by the cathedral tower, where the white marble angels were sculptured. He passed by the palace and heard



The Loveliest of the Queen's Maids of Honor

the sound of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. "How wonderful the stars are," he said to her, "and how wonderful is the power of love!"

"I hope my dress will be ready in time for the State-ball," she answered; "I have ordered passion-flowers to be embroidered on it; but the seamstresses are so lazy."

He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hanging to the masts of the ships. He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales. At last he came to the poor house and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly on his bed, and the mother had fallen asleep, she was so tired. In he hopped, and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman's thimble. Then he flew gently round the bed, fanning the boy's forehead with his wings. "How cool I feel," said the boy, "I must be getting better"; and he sank into a delicious slumber.

Then the Swallow flew back to the Happy Prince, and told him what he had done. "It is curious," he remarked, "but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold."

"That is because you have done a good action," said the Prince. And the little Swallow began to think, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always made him sleepy.

When day broke he flew down to the river and had a bath. "What a remarkable phenomenon," said the Professor of Ornithology as he was passing over the bridge. "A swallow in winter!" And he wrote a long letter about it to the local newspaper. Everyone quoted it, it was full of so many words that they could not understand.

"Tonight I go to Egypt," said the Swallow, and he was in high spirits at the prospect. He visited all the public monuments, and sat a long time on top of the church steeple. Wherever he went the Sparrows chirruped, and said to each other, "What a distinguished stranger!" so he enjoyed himself very much.

When the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince.

"Have you any commissions for Egypt?" he cried; "I am just starting."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me one night longer?"

"I am waited for in Egypt," answered the Swallow. "To-morrow my friends will fly up to the Second Cataract. The river-horse couches there among the bulrushes, and on a great granite throne sits the God Memnon. All night long he watches the stars, and when the morning star shines he utters one cry of joy, and then he is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. They have eyes like green beryls, and their roar is louder than the roar of the cataract."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "far away across the city I see a young man in a garret. He is leaning over a desk covered with papers, and in a tumbler by his side there is a bunch of withered violets. His hair is brown and crisp, and his lips are red as a pomegranate, and he has large and dreamy eyes. He is trying to finish a play for the Director of the Theatre, but he is too cold to write any more. There is no fire in the grate, and hunger has made him faint."

"I will wait with you one night longer," said the Swallow, who really had a good heart. "Shall I take him another ruby?"

"Alas! I have no ruby now," said the Prince; "my eyes are all that I have left. They are made of rare sapphires, which were brought out of India a thousand years ago. Pluck out one of them and take it to him. He will sell it to the jeweller, and buy food and firewood, and finish his play."

"Dear Prince," said the Swallow, "I cannot do that"; and he began to weep.

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "do as I command you."

So the Swallow plucked out the Prince's eye, and flew away to the student's garret. It was easy enough to get in, as there was a hole in the roof. Through this he darted, and

came into the room. The young man had his head buried in his hands, so he did not hear the flutter of the bird's wings, and when he looked up he found the beautiful sapphire lying on the withered violets.

"I am beginning to be appreciated," he cried; "this is from some great admirer. Now I can finish my play," and he looked quite happy.

The next day the Swallow flew down to the harbour. He sat on the mast of a large vessel and watched the sailors hauling big chests out of the hold with ropes. "Heave a-hoy!" they shouted as each chest came up. "I am going to Egypt"! cried the Swallow, but nobody minded, and when the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince.

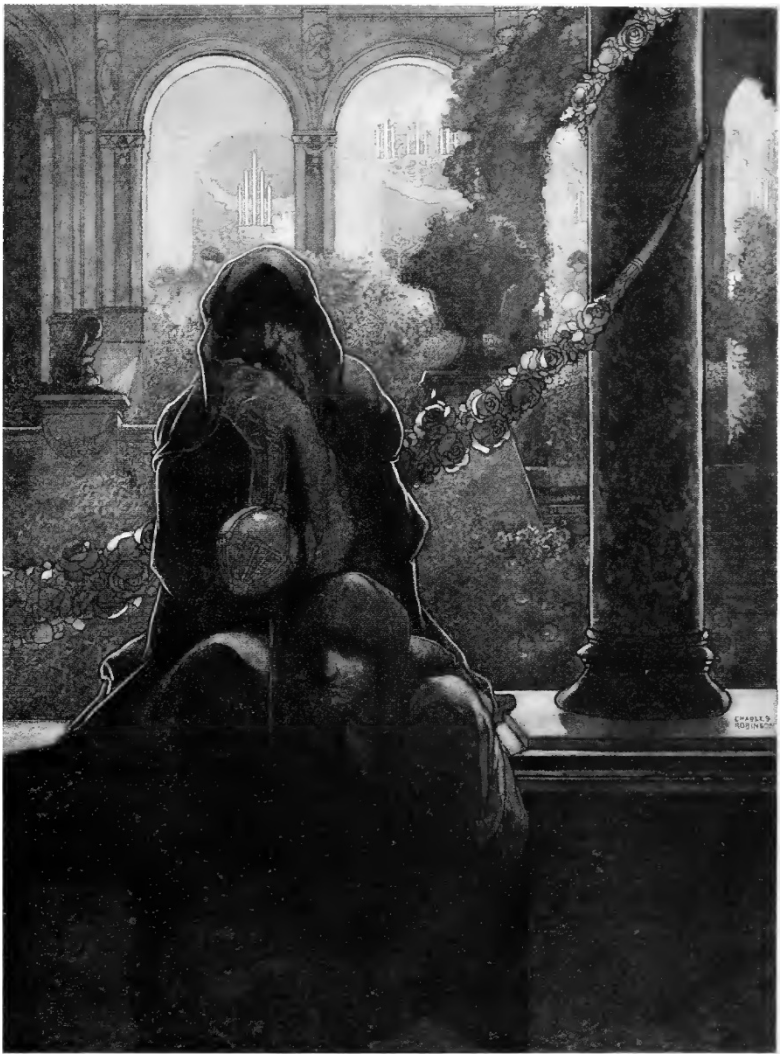
"I am come to bid you good-bye," he cried.

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me one night longer?"

"It is winter," answered the Swallow, "and the chill snow will soon be here. In Egypt the sun is warm on the green palm-trees, and the crocodiles lie in the mud and look lazily about them. My companions are building a nest in the Temple of Baalbec, and the pink and white doves are watching them, and cooing to each other. Dear Prince, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, and next spring I will bring you back two beautiful jewels in place of those you have given away. The ruby shall be redder than a red rose, and the sapphire shall be as blue as the great sea."

"In the square below," said the Happy Prince, "there stands a little match-girl. She has let her matches fall in the gutter, and they are all spoiled. Her father will beat her if she does not bring home some money, and she is crying. She has no shoes or stockings, and her little head is bare. Pluck out my other eye, and give it to her, and her father will not beat her."

"I will stay with you one night longer," said the Swallow, "but I cannot pluck out your eye. You would be quite blind



The Rich Making Merry in their Beautiful Houses,
While the Beggars Were Sitting at the Gates

then."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "do as I command you."

So he plucked out the Prince's other eye, and darted down with it. He swooped past the match-girl, and slipped the jewel into the palm of her hand. "What a lovely bit of glass," cried the little girl; and she ran home, laughing.

Then the Swallow came back to the Prince. "You are blind now," he said, "so I will stay with you always."

"No, little Swallow," said the poor Prince, "you must go away to Egypt."

"I will stay with you always," said the Swallow, and he slept at the Prince's feet.

All the next day he sat on the Prince's shoulder, and told him stories of what he had seen in strange lands. He told him of the red ibises, who stand in long rows on the banks of the Nile, and catch gold-fish in their beaks; of the Sphinx, who is as old as the world itself, and lives in the desert, and knows everything; of the merchants, who walk slowly by the side of their camels, and carry amber beads in their hands; of the King of the Mountains of the Moon, who is as black as ebony, and worships a large crystal; of the great green snake that sleeps in a palm-tree, and has twenty priests to feed it with honey-cakes; and of the pygmies who sail over a big lake on large flat leaves, and are always at war with the butterflies.

"Dear little Swallow," said the Prince, "you tell me of marvellous things, but more marvellous than anything is the suffering of men and of women. There is no Mystery so great as Misery. Fly over my city, little Swallow, and tell me what you see there."

So the Swallow flew over the great city, and saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates. He flew into dark lanes, and saw the white faces of starving children looking out listlessly at the black streets. Under the archway of a bridge two little boys



The King of the Mountains of the Moon

were lying in one another's arms to try and keep themselves warm. "How hungry we are!" they said. "You must not lie here," shouted the Watchman, and they wandered out into the rain.

Then he flew back and told the Prince what he had seen.

"I am covered with fine gold," said the Prince, "you must take it off, leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor; the living always think that gold can make them happy."

Leaf after leaf of the fine gold the Swallow picked off, till the Happy Prince looked quite dull and grey. Leaf after leaf of the fine gold he brought to the poor, and the children's faces grew rosier, and they laughed and played games in the street. "We have bread now!" they cried.

Then the snow came, and after the snow came the frost. The streets looked as if they were made of silver, they were so bright and glistening; long icicles like crystal daggers hung down from the eaves of the houses, everybody went about in furs, and the little boys wore scarlet caps and skated on the ice.

The poor little Swallow grew colder and colder, but he would not leave the Prince, he loved him too well. He picked up crumbs outside the baker's door when the baker was not looking and tried to keep himself warm by flapping his wings.

But at last he knew that he was going to die. He had just strength to fly up to the Prince's shoulder once more. "Good-bye, dear Prince!" he murmured, "will you let me kiss your hand?"

"I am glad that you are going to Egypt at last, little Swallow," said the Prince, "you have stayed too long here; but you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you."

"It is not to Egypt that I am going," said the Swallow. "I am going to the House of Death. Death is the brother of Sleep, is he not?"

And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet.

At that moment a curious crack sounded inside the statue, as if something had broken. The fact is that the leaden heart had snapped right in two. It certainly was a dreadfully hard frost.

Early the next morning the Mayor was walking in the square below in company with the Town Councillors. As they passed the column he looked up at the statue: "Dear me! how shabby the Happy Prince looks!" he said.

"How shabby indeed!" cried the Town Councillors, who always agreed with the Mayor; and they went up to look at it.

"The ruby has fallen out of his sword, his eyes are gone, and he is golden no longer," said the Mayor in fact, "he is little better than a beggar!"

"Little better than a beggar," said the Town Councillors.

"And here is actually a dead bird at his feet!" continued the Mayor. "We must really issue a proclamation that birds are not to be allowed to die here." And the Town Clerk made a note of the suggestion.

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince. "As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful," said the Art Professor at the University.

Then they melted the statue in a furnace, and the Mayor held a meeting of the Corporation to decide what was to be done with the metal. "We must have another statue, of course," he said, "and it shall be a statue of myself."

"Of myself," said each of the Town Councillors, and they quarrelled. When I last heard of them they were quarrelling still.

"What a strange thing!" said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. "This broken lead heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away." So they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

"Bring me the two most precious things in the city," said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

"You have rightly chosen," said God, "for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me."

II

The Selfish Giant

Every afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant's garden.

It was a large lovely garden, with soft green grass. Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were twelve peach-trees that in the spring-time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them. "How happy we are here!" they cried to each other.

One day the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend the Cornish ogre, and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over he had said all that he had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle. When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.

"What are you doing here?" he cried in a very gruff voice, and the children ran away.

"My own garden is my own garden," said the Giant; "anyone can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself." So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a notice-board.

TRESPASSERS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED

He was a very selfish Giant.

The poor children had now nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it. They used to wander round the high wall when their lessons were over, and talk about the beautiful garden inside. "How happy we were there," they said to each other.

Then the Spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giant it was still winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children, and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass, but when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again, and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost. "Spring has forgotten this garden," they cried, "so we will live here all the year round." The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak, and the Frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs, and he roared all day about the garden, and blew the chimney-pots down. "This is a delightful spot," he said, "we must ask the Hail on a visit." So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates, and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.

"I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming," said the Selfish Giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; "I hope there will be a change in the weather."

But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. The Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the Giant's garden she gave none. "He is too selfish," she said. So it was always Winter there, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and

the Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.

One morning the Giant was lying awake in bed when he heard some lovely music. It sounded so sweet to his ears that he thought it must be the King's musicians passing by. It was really only a little linnet singing outside his window, but it was so long since he had heard a bird sing in his garden that it seemed to him to be the most beautiful music in the world. Then the Hail stopped dancing over his head, and the North Wind ceased roaring, and a delicious perfume came to him through the open casement. "I believe the Spring has come at last," said the Giant; and he jumped out of bed and looked out.

What did he see?

He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in, and they were sitting in the branches of the trees. In every tree that he could see there was a little child. And the trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with blossoms, and were waving their arms gently above the children's heads. The birds were flying about and twittering with delight, and the flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene, only in one corner it was still winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree, and he was wandering all round it, crying bitterly. The poor tree was still quite covered with frost and snow, and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it. "Climb up! little boy," said the Tree, and it bent its branches down as low as it could; but the boy was too tiny.

And the Giant's heart melted as he looked out. "How selfish I have been!" he said; "now I know why the Spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the tree, and then I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground forever and ever."



In Every Tree He Could See There Was a Little Child

He was really very sorry for what he had done.

So he crept downstairs and opened the front door quite softly, and went out into the garden. But when the children saw him they were so frightened that they all ran away, and the garden became winter again. Only the little boy did not run, for his eyes were so full of tears that he did not see the Giant coming. And the Giant stole up behind him and took him gently in his hand, and put him up into the tree. And the tree broke at once into blossom, and the birds came and sang on it, and the little boy stretched out his two arms and flung them round the Giant's neck, and kissed him. And the other children, when they saw that the Giant was not wicked any longer, came running back, and with them came the Spring. "It is your garden now, little children," said the Giant, and he took a great axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market at twelve o'clock they found the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.

All day long they played, and in the evening they came to the Giant to bid him good-bye.

"But where is your little companion?" he said: "the boy I put into the tree." The Giant loved him the best because he had kissed him.

"We don't know," answered the children; "he has gone away."

"You must tell him to be sure and come here tomorrow," said the Giant. But the children said that they did not know where he lived, and had never seen him before; and the Giant felt very sad.

Every afternoon, when school was over, the children came and played with the Giant. But the little boy whom the Giant loved was never seen again. The Giant was very kind to all the children, yet he longed for his first little friend, and often spoke of him. "How I would like to see him!" he used to say.



The Little Boy He Had Loved

Years went over, and the Giant grew very old and feeble. He could not play about any more, so he sat in a huge arm-chair, and watched the children at their games, and admired his garden. "I have many beautiful flowers," he said; "but the children are the most beautiful flowers of all."

One winter morning he looked out of his window as he was dressing. He did not hate the Winter now, for he knew that it was merely the Spring asleep, and that the flowers were resting.

Suddenly he rubbed his eyes in wonder, and looked and looked. It certainly was a marvellous sight. In the farthest corner of the garden was a tree quite covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches were all golden, and silver fruit hung down from them, and underneath it stood the little boy he had loved.

Downstairs ran the Giant in great joy, and out into the garden. He hastened across the grass, and came near to the child. And when he came quite close his face grew red with anger, and he said, "Who hath dared to wound thee?" For on the palms of the child's hands were the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails were on the little feet.

"Who hath dared to wound thee?" cried the Giant; "tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him."

"Nay!" answered the child; "but these are the wounds of Love."

"Who art thou?" said the Giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child.

And the child smiled on the Giant, and said to him, "You let me play once in your garden, today you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise."

And when the children ran in that afternoon, they found the Giant lying dead under the tree, all covered with white blossoms.

Irish Fairy Tales

by Edmond Leamy

I

Princess Finola and the Dwarf

A long, long time ago there lived in a little hut in the midst of a bare, brown, lonely moor an old woman and a young girl. The old woman was withered, sour-tempered, and dumb. The young girl was as sweet and as fresh as an opening rosebud, and her voice was as musical as the whisper of a stream in the woods in the hot days of summer. The little hut, made of branches woven closely together, was shaped like a beehive. In the centre of the hut a fire burned night and day from year's end to year's end, though it was never touched or tended by human hand. In the cold days and nights of winter it gave out light and heat that made the hut cosy and warm, but in the summer nights and days it gave out light only. With their heads to the wall of the hut and their feet towards the fire were two sleeping-couches one of plain woodwork, in which slept the old woman; the other was Finola's. It was of bog-oak, polished as a looking-glass, and on it were carved flowers and birds of all kinds, that gleamed and shone in the light of the fire. This couch was fit for a princess, and a princess Finola was, though she did not know it herself.

Outside the hut the bare, brown, lonely moor stretched for miles on every side, but towards the east it was bounded by a range of mountains that looked to Finola blue in the daytime, but which put on a hundred changing colours as the sun went down. Nowhere was a house to be seen, nor a tree, nor a flower, nor sign of any living thing. From morning till

night, nor hum of bee, nor song of bird, nor voice of man, nor any sound fell on Finola' s ear. When the storm was in the air the great waves thundered on the shore beyond the mountains, and the wind shouted in the glens; but when it sped across the moor it lost its voice, and passed as silently as the dead. At first the silence frightened Finola, but she got used to it after a time, and often broke it by talking to herself and singing.

The only other person beside the old woman Finola ever saw was a dumb dwarf who, mounted on a broken-down horse, came once a month to the hut, bringing with him a sack of corn for the old woman and Finola. Although he couldn't speak to her, Finola was always glad to see the dwarf and his old horse, and she used to give them cake made with her own white hands. As for the dwarf he would have died for the little princess, he was so much in love with her, and often and often his heart was heavy and sad as he thought of her pining away in the lonely moor.

It chanced that he came one day, and she did not, as usual, come out to greet him. He made signs to the old woman, but she took up a stick and struck him, and beat his horse and drove him away; but as he was leaving he caught a glimpse of Finola at the door of the hut, and saw that she was crying. This sight made him so very miserable that he could think of nothing else but her sad face that he had always seen so bright, and he allowed the old horse to go on without minding where he was going. Suddenly he heard a voice saying: "It is time for you to come."

The dwarf looked, and right before him, at the foot of a green hill, was a little man not half as big as himself, dressed in a green jacket with brass buttons, and a red cap and tassel. "It is time for you to come," he said the second time; "but you are welcome, anyhow. Get off your horse and come in with me, that I may touch your lips with the wand of speech, that we may have a talk together."



The dwarf followed the little man through
a hole in the side of a green hill.

The dwarf got off his horse and followed the little man through a hole in the side of a green hill. The hole was so small that he had to go on his hands and knees to pass through it, and when he was able to stand he was only the same height as the little fairyman. After walking three or four steps they were in a splendid room, as bright as day. Diamonds sparkled in the roof as stars sparkle in the sky when the night is without a cloud. The roof rested on golden pillars, and between the pillars were silver lamps, but their light was dimmed by that of the diamonds. In the middle of the room was a table, on which were two golden plates and two silver knives and forks, and a brass bell as big as a hazelnut, and beside the table were two little chairs covered with blue silk and satin.

"Take a chair," said the fairy, "and I will ring for the wand of speech."

The dwarf sat down, and the fairyman rang the little brass bell, and in came a little weeny dwarf no bigger than your hand.

"Bring me the wand of speech," said the fairy, and the weeny dwarf bowed three times and walked out backwards, and in a minute he returned, carrying a little black wand with a red berry at the top of it, and, giving it to the fairy, he bowed three times and walked out backwards as he had done before.

The little man waved the rod three times over the dwarf, and struck him once on the right shoulder and once on the left shoulder, and then touched his lips with the red berry, and said: "Speak!"

The dwarf spoke, and he was so rejoiced at hearing the sound of his own voice that he danced about the room.

"Who are you at all, at all?" said he to the fairy.

"Who is yourself?" said the fairy. "But come, before we have any talk let us have something to eat, for I am sure you are hungry."

Then they sat down to table, and the fairy rang the little

brass bell twice, and the weeny dwarf brought in two boiled snails in their shells, and when they had eaten the snails he brought in a dormouse, and when they had eaten the dormouse he brought in two wrens, and when they had eaten the wrens he brought in two nuts full of wine, and they became very merry, and the fairyman sang "Cooleen dhas," and the dwarf sang "The little blackbird of the glen."

"Did you ever hear the 'Foggy Dew?'" said the fairy.

"No," said the dwarf.

"Well, then, I'll give it to you; but we must have some more wine."

And the wine was brought, and he sang the "Foggy Dew," and the dwarf said it was the sweetest song he had ever heard, and that the fairy man's voice would coax the birds off the bushes.

"You asked me who I am?" said the fairy.

"I did," said the dwarf.

"And I asked you who is yourself?"

"You did," said the dwarf,

"And who are you, then?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I don't know," said the dwarf, and he blushed like a rose.

"Well, tell me what you know about yourself."

"I remember nothing at all," said the dwarf, "before the day I found myself going along with a crowd of all sorts of people to the great fair of the Liffey. We had to pass by the king's palace on our way, and as we were passing the king sent for a band of jugglers to come and show their tricks before him. I followed the jugglers to look on, and when the play was over the king called me to him, and asked me who I was and where I came from. I was dumb then, and couldn't answer; but even if I could speak I could not tell him what he wanted to know, for I remember nothing of myself before that day. Then the King asked the jugglers, but they knew nothing about me, and no one knew anything, and then the king said

he would take me into his service; and the only work I have to do is to go once a month with a bag of corn to the hut in the lonely moor."

"And there you fell in love with the little princess," said the fairy, winking at the dwarf.

The poor dwarf blushed twice as much as he had done before.

"You need not blush," said the fairy; "it is a good man's case. And now tell me, truly, do you love the princess, and what would you give to free her from the spell of enchantment that is over her?"

"I would give my life," said the dwarf.

"Well, then, listen to me," said the fairy. "The Princess Finola was banished to the lonely moor by the king, your master. He killed her father, who was the rightful king, and would have killed Finola, only he was told by an old sorceress that if he killed her he would die himself on the same day, and she advised him to banish her to the lonely moor, and she said she would fling a spell of enchantment over it, and that until the spell was broken Finola could not leave the moor. And the sorceress also promised that she would send an old woman to watch over the princess by night and by day, so that no harm should come to her; but she told the king that he himself should select a messenger to take food to the hut, and that he should look out for someone who had never seen or heard of the princess, and whom he could trust never to tell anyone anything about her; and that is the reason he selected you."

"Since you know so much," said the dwarf, "can you tell me who I am, and where I came from?"

"You will know that time enough," said the fairy. "I have given you back your speech. It will depend solely on yourself whether you will get back your memory of who and what you were before the day you entered the king's service. But are you really willing to try and break the spell of enchantment

and free the princess?"

"I am," said the dwarf.

"Whatever it will cost you?"

"Yes, if it cost me my life," said the dwarf; "but tell me, how can the spell be broken?"

"Oh, it is easy enough to break the spell if you have the weapons," said the fairy.

"And what are they, and where are they?" said the dwarf.

"The spear of the shining haft and the dark blue blade and the silver shield," said the fairy. "They are on the farther bank of the Mystic Lake in the Island of the Western Seas. They are there for the man who is bold enough to seek them. If you are the man who will bring them back to the lonely moor you will only have to strike the shield three times with the haft, and three times with the blade of the spear, and the silence of the moor will be broken forever, the spell of enchantment will be removed, and the princess will be free."

"I will set out at once," said the dwarf, jumping from his chair.

"And whatever it cost you," said the fairy, "will you pay the price?"

"I will," said the dwarf.

"Well, then, mount your horse, give him his head, and he will take you to the shore opposite the Island of the Mystic Lake. You must cross to the island on his back, and make your way through the water-steeds that swim around the island night and day to guard it; but woe betide you if you attempt to cross without paying the price, for if you do the angry water-steeds will rend you and your horse to pieces. And when you come to the Mystic Lake you must wait until the waters are as red as wine, and then swim your horse across it, and on the farther side you will find the spear and shield; but woe betide you if you attempt to cross the lake before you pay the price, for if you do, the black Cormorants of the Western Seas will pick the flesh from your bones."

"What is the price?" said the dwarf.

"You will know that time enough," said the fairy; "but now go, and good luck go with you."

The dwarf thanked the fairy, and said good-bye! He then threw the reins on his horse's neck, and started up the hill, that seemed to grow bigger and bigger as he ascended, and the dwarf soon found that what he took for a hill was a great mountain. After travelling all the day, toiling up by steep crags and heathery passes, he reached the top as the sun was setting in the ocean, and he saw far below him out in the waters the island of the Mystic Lake.

He began his descent to the shore, but long before he reached it the sun had set, and darkness, unpierced by a single star, dropped upon the sea. The old horse, worn out by his long and painful journey, sank beneath him, and the dwarf was so tired that he rolled off his back and fell asleep by his side.

He awoke at the breaking of the morning, and saw that he was almost at the water's edge. He looked out to sea, and saw the island, but nowhere could he see the water-steeds, and he began to fear he must have taken a wrong course in the night, and that the island before him was not the one he was in search of. But even while he was so thinking he heard fierce and angry snortings, and, coming swiftly from the island to the shore, he saw the swimming and prancing steeds. Sometimes their heads and manes only were visible, and sometimes, rearing, they rose half out of the water, and, striking it with their hoofs, churned it into foam, and tossed the white spray to the skies. As they approached nearer and nearer their snortings became more terrible, and their nostrils shot forth clouds of vapour. The dwarf trembled at the sight and sound, and his old horse, quivering in every limb, moaned piteously, as if in pain. On came the steeds, until they almost touched the shore, then rearing, they seemed about to spring on to it. The frightened dwarf turned his head to fly, and as

he did so he heard the twang of a golden harp, and right before him who should he see but the little man of the hills, holding a harp in one hand and striking the strings with the other.

"Are you ready to pay the price?" said he, nodding gaily to the dwarf.

As he asked the question, the listening water-steeds snorted more furiously than ever.

"Are you ready to pay the price?" said the little man a second time.

A shower of spray, tossed on shore by the angry steeds, drenched the dwarf to the skin, and sent a cold shiver to his bones, and he was so terrified that he could not answer.

"For the third and last time, are you ready to pay the price?" asked the fairy, as he flung the harp behind him and turned to depart.

When the dwarf saw him going he thought of the little princess in the lonely moor, and his courage came back, and he answered bravely:

"Yes, I am ready."

The water-steeds, hearing his answer, and snorting with rage, struck the shore with their pounding hoofs.

"Back to your waves!" cried the little harper; and as he ran his fingers across his lyre, the frightened steeds drew back into the waters.

"What is the price?" asked the dwarf.

"Your right eye," said the fairy; and before the dwarf could say a word, the fairy scooped out the eye with his finger, and put it into his pocket.

The dwarf suffered most terrible agony; but he resolved to bear it for the sake of the little princess. Then the fairy sat down on a rock at the edge of the sea, and, after striking a few notes, he began to play the "Strains of Slumber."

The sound crept along the waters, and the steeds, so ferocious a moment before, became perfectly still. They had

no longer any motion of their own, and they floated on the top of the tide like foam before a breeze.

"Now," said the fairy, as he led the dwarf's horse to the edge of the tide.

The dwarf urged the horse into the water, and once out of his depth, the old horse struck out boldly for the island. The sleeping water-steeds drifted helplessly against him, and in a short time he reached the island safely, and he neighed joyously as his hoofs touched solid ground.

The dwarf rode on and on, until he came to a bridle-path, and following this, it led him up through winding lanes, bordered with golden furze that filled the air with fragrance, and brought him to the summit of the green hills that girdled and looked down on the Mystic Lake. Here the horse stopped of his own accord, and the dwarfs heart beat quickly as his eye rested on the lake, that, clipped round by the ring of hills, seemed in the breezeless and sunlit air

"As still as death,
And a bright as life can be."

After gazing at it for a long time, he dismounted, and lay at his ease in the pleasant grass. Hour after hour passed, but no change came over the face of the waters, and when the night fell sleep closed the eyelids of the dwarf.

The song of the lark awoke him in the early morning, and, starting up, he looked at the lake, but its waters were as bright as they had been the day before.

Towards midday he beheld what he thought was a black cloud sailing across the sky from east to west. It seemed to grow larger as it came nearer and nearer, and when it was high above the lake he saw it was a huge bird, the shadow of whose outstretched wings darkened the waters of the lake; and the dwarf knew it was one of the Cormorants of the Western Seas. As it descended slowly, he saw that it held in one of its claws

a branch of a iree larger than a full-grown oak, and laden with clusters of ripe red berries. It alighted at some distance from the dwarf, and, after resting for a time, it began to eat the berries and to throw the stones into the lake, and wherever a stone fell a bright red stain appeared in the water. As he looked more closely at the bird the dwarf saw that it had all the signs of old age, and he could not help wondering how it was able to carry such a heavy tree.

Later in the day, two other birds, as large as the first, but younger, came up from the west and settled down beside him. They also ate the berries, and throwing the stones into the lake it was soon as red as wine.

When they had eaten all the berries, the young birds began to pick the decayed feathers off the old bird and to smooth his plumage. As soon as they had completed their task, he rose slowly from the hill and sailed out over the lake, and dropping down on the waters, dived beneath them. In a moment he came to the surface, and shot up into the air with a joyous cry, and flew off to the west in all the vigour of renewed youth, followed by the other birds.

When they had gone so far that they were like specks in the sky, the dwarf mounted his horse and descended towards the lake.

He was almost at the margin, and in another minute would have plunged in, when he heard a fierce screaming in the air, and before he had time to look up, the three birds were hovering over the lake.

The dwarf drew back frightened.

The birds wheeled over his head, and then, swooping down, they flew close to the water, covering it with their wings, and uttering harsh cries.

Then, rising to a great height, they folded their wings and dropped headlong, like three rocks, on the lake, crashing its surface, and scattering a wine-red shower upon the hills.

Then the dwarf remembered what the fairy told him, that

if he attempted to swim the lake, without paying the price, the three Cormorants of the Western Seas would pick the flesh off his bones. He knew not what to do, and was about to turn away, when he heard once more the twang of the golden harp, and the little fairy of the hills stood before him.

"Faint heart never won fair lady," said the little harper. "Are you ready to pay the price? The spear and shield are on the opposite bank, and the Princess Finola is crying this moment in the lonely moor."

At the mention of Finola's name the dwarf's heart grew strong.

"Yes," he said; "I am ready win or die. What is the price?"

"Your left eye," said the fairy. And as soon as said he scooped out the eye, and put it in his pocket.

The poor blind dwarf almost fainted with pain.

"It's your last trial," said the fairy, "and now do what I tell you. Twist your horse's mane round your right hand, and I will lead him to the water. Plunge in, and fear not. I gave you back your speech. When you reach the opposite bank you will get back your memory, and you will know who and what you are."

Then the fairy led the horse to the margin of the lake.

"In with you now, and good luck go with you," said the fairy.

The dwarf urged the horse. He plunged into the lake, and went down and down until his feet struck the bottom. Then he began to ascend, and as he came near the surface of the water the dwarf thought he saw a glimmering light, and when he rose above the water he saw the bright sun shining and the green hills before him, and he shouted with joy at finding his sight restored.

But he saw more. Instead of the old horse he had ridden into the lake he was bestride a noble steed, and as the steed swam to the bank the dwarf felt a change coming over himself, and an unknown vigour in his limbs.

When the steed touched the shore he galloped up the hillside, and on the top of the hill was a silver shield, bright as the sun, resting against a spear standing upright in the ground.

The dwarf jumped off, and, running towards the shield, he saw himself as in a looking-glass.

He was no longer a dwarf, but a gallant knight. At that moment his memory came back to him, and he knew he was Conal, one of the Knights of the Red Branch, and he remembered now that the spell of dumbness and deformity had been cast upon him by the Witch of the Palace of the Quicken Trees.

Slinging his shield upon his left arm, he plucked the spear from the ground and leaped on to his horse. With a light heart he swam back over the lake, and nowhere could he see the black Cormorants of the Western Seas, but three white swans floating abreast followed him to the bank. When he reached the bank he galloped down to the sea, and crossed to the shore.

Then he flung the reins upon his horse's neck, and swifter than the wind the gallant horse swept on and on, and it was not long until he was bounding over the enchanted moor. Wherever his hoofs struck the ground, grass and flowers sprang up, and great trees with leafy branches rose on every side.

At last the knight reached the little hut. Three times he struck the shield with the haft and three times with the blade of his spear. At the last blow the hut disappeared, and standing before him was the little princess.

The knight took her in his arms and kissed her; then he lifted her on to the horse, and, leaping up before her, he turned towards the north, to the palace of the Red Branch Knights, and as they rode on beneath the leafy trees from every tree the birds sang out, for the spell of silence over the lonely moor was broken forever.

II

The House in the Lake

A long, long time ago there lived in a little hut, in the midst of one of the inland lakes of Erin, an old fisherman and his son. The hut was built on stakes driven into the bed of the lake, and was so high above the waters that even when they were stirred into waves by the wind coming down from the mountains they did not reach the threshold of the door. Around, outside the hut, on a level with the floor, was a little wicker-work platform, and under the platform, close to the steps leading up to it from the water, the fisherman's curragh, made of willows, covered with skins, was moored, and it was only by means of the curragh that he and his son, Enda, could leave their lake dwelling.

On many a summer evening Enda lay stretched on the platform, watching the sunset fading from the mountain-tops, and the twilight creeping over the waters of the lake, and it chanced that once when he was so engaged he heard a rustle in a clump of sedge that grew close to one side of the hut. He turned to where the sound came from, and what should he see but an otter swimming towards him, with a little trout in his mouth. When the otter came up to where Enda was lying, he lifted his head and half his body from the water, and flung the trout on the platform, almost at Enda's feet, and then disappeared.

Enda took the little panting trout in his hand; but as he did so he heard, quite close to him, in the lake, a sound like

that of water splashing upon water, and he saw the widening circles caused by a trout which had just risen to a fly; and he said to the little trout he held in his hand:

"I won't keep you, poor thing! Perhaps that was a little comrade come to look for you, and so I'll send you back to him."

And saying this, he dropped the little trout into the lake.

Well, when the next evening came, again Enda was lying stretched outside the hut, and once more he heard the rustle in the sedge, and once more the otter came and flung the little trout almost into his hands.

Enda, more surprised than ever, did not know what to do. He saw that it was the same little trout the otter had brought him the night before, and he said:

"Well, I gave you a chance last night. I'll give you another, if only to see what will come of it."

And he dropped the trout into the lake; but no sooner had it touched the waters than it was changed into a beautiful, milk-white swan. And Enda could hardly believe his eyes, as he saw it sailing across the lake, until it was lost in the sedges growing by the shore.

All that night he lay awake, thinking of what he had seen, and as soon as the morning stood on the hill-tops, and cast its shafts of golden light across the lake, Enda rose and got into his curragh.

He rowed all round the shores, beating the sedges with his oar, in pursuit of the swan; but all in vain; he could not catch a glimpse of her white plumage anywhere. Day after day he rowed about the lake in search of her, and every evening he lay outside the hut watching the waters. At long last, one night, when the full moon, rising above the mountains, flooded the whole lake with light, he saw the swan coming swiftly towards him, shining brighter than the moonbeams. The swan came on until it was almost within a boat's length of the hut; and what should Enda hear but the swan speaking

to him in his own language:

"Get into your curragh, Enda, and follow me," said she, and, saying this, she turned round and sailed away.

Enda jumped into the curragh, and soon the water, dripping from his oar, was flashing like diamonds in the moonlight. And he rowed after the swan, who glided on before him, until she came to where the shadows of the mountains lay deepest on the lake. Then the swan rested, and when Enda came up to her:

"Enda," said she, "I have brought you where none may hear what I wish to say to you. I am Mave, the daughter of the king of Erin. By the magic arts of my cruel stepmother I was changed into a trout, and cast into this lake a year and a day before the evening when you restored me to the waters the second time. If you had not done so the first night the otter brought me to you I should have been changed into a hooting owl; if you had not done so the second night, I should have been changed into a croaking raven. But, thanks to you, Enda, I am now a snow-white swan, and for one hour on the first night of every full moon the power of speech is and will be given to me as long as I remain a swan. And a swan I must always remain, unless you are willing to break the spell of enchantment that is over me; and you alone can break it."

"I'll do anything I can for you, princess!" said Enda. "But how can I break the spell?"

"You can do so," said the swan, "only by pouring upon my plumage the perfumed water that fills the golden bowl that is in the inmost room of the palace of the fairy queen, beneath the lake."

"And how can I get that?" said Enda.

"Well," said the swan, "you must dive beneath the lake, and walk along its bed, until you come to where the lake dragon guards the entrance of the fairy queen's dominions."

"I can dive like a fish," said Enda; "but how can I walk beneath the waters?"

"You can do it easily enough," said the swan, "if you get the water-dress of Brian, one of the three sons of Turenn, and his helmet of transparent crystal, by the aid of which he was able to walk under the green salt sea."

"And where shall I find them?"

"They are in the water-palace of Angus of the Boyne," said the swan; "but you should set out at once, for if the spell be not broken before the moon is full again, it cannot be broken for a year and a day."

"I'll set out in the first ray of the morning," said Enda.

"May luck and joy go with you," said the swan. "And now the hours of silence are coming upon me and I have only time to warn you that dangers you little dream of will lie before you in your quest for the golden cup."

"I am willing to face all dangers for your sake, princess," said Enda.

"Blessings be upon you, Enda," said the swan, and she sailed away from the shadow out into the light across the lake to the sedgy banks. And Enda saw her no more.

He rowed his curragh home, and he lay on his bed without taking off his clothes. And as the first faint glimmer of the morning came slanting down the mountains, he stepped into his curragh and pulled across the lake, and toon the road towards the water-palace of Angus of the Boyne.

When he reached the banks of the glancing river a little woman, dressed in red, was standing there before him.

"You are welcome, Enda," said she. "And glad am I to see the day that brings you here to help the winsome Princess Mave. And now wait a second, and the water-dress and crystal helmet will be ready for you."

And, having said this, the little woman plucked a handful of wild grasses, and she breathed upon them three times and then flung them on the river, and a dozen fairy nymphs came springing up through the water, bearing the water-dress and crystal helmet and a shining spear. And they laid them down

upon the bank at Enda's feet, and then disappeared.

"Now, Enda," said the fairy woman, "take these; by the aid of the dress and the helmet you can walk beneath the waters. You will need the spear to enable you to meet the dangers that lie before you. But with that spear, if you only have courage, you can overcome everything and everyone that may attempt to bar your way."

Having said this, she bid good-bye to Enda, and stepping off the bank, she floated out upon the river as lightly as a red poppy leaf. And when she came to the middle of the stream she disappeared beneath the waters.

Enda took the helmet, dress, and spear, and it was not long until he came to the sedgy banks where his little boat was waiting for him. As he stepped into the curragh the moon was rising above the mountains. He rowed on until he came to the hut, and having moored the boat to the door, he put on the water-dress and the crystal helmet, and taking the spear in his hand, he leaped over the side of the curragh, and sank down and down until he touched the bottom. Then he walked along without minding where he was going, and the only light he had was the shimmering moonlight, which descended as faintly through the waters as if it came through muffled glass. He had not gone very far when he heard a horrible hissing, and straight before him he saw what he thought were two flaming coals. After a few more steps he found himself face to face with the dragon of the lake, the guardian of the palace of the fairy queen. Before he had time to raise his spear, the dragon had wound its coils around him, and he heard its horrible teeth crunching against the side of his crystal helmet, and he felt the pressure of its coils around his side, and the breath almost left his body; but the dragon, unable to pierce the helmet, unwound his coils, and soon Enda's hands were free, and before the dragon could attempt to seize him again, he drove his spear through one of its fiery eyes, and, writhing with pain, the hissing dragon darted

through a cave behind him. Enda, gaining courage from the dragon's flight, marched on until he came to a door of dull brass set in the rocks. He tried to push it in before him, but he might as well have tried to push away the rocks. While he was wondering what he should do, he heard again the fierce hissing of the dragon, and saw the red glare of his fiery eye dimly in the water.

Lifting his spear and hastily turning round to meet the furious monster, Enda accidently touched the door with the point of the spear, and the door flew open. Enda passed through, and the door closed behind him with a grating sound, and he marched along through a rocky pass which led to a sandy plain.

As he stepped from the pass into the plain the sands began to move, as if they were alive. In a second a thousand hideous serpents, almost the colour of the sand, rose hissing up, and with their forked tongues made a horrible, poisonous hedge in front of him. For a second he stood dismayed, but then, levelling his spear, he rushed against the hedge of serpents, and they, shooting poison at him, sank beneath the sand. But the poison did not harm him, because of his water-dress and crystal helmet.

When he had passed over the sandy plain, he had to climb a great steep, jagged rock. When he got to the top of the rock he saw spread out before him a stony waste without a tuft or blade of grass. At some distance in front of him he noticed a large dark object, which he took to be a rock, but on looking at it more closely he saw that it was a huge, misshapen, swollen mass, apparently alive. And it was growing bigger and bigger every moment. Enda stood amazed at the sight, and before he knew where he was the loathsome creature rose from the ground, and sprang upon him before he could use his spear, and, catching him in its horrid grasp, flung him back over the rocks on to the sandy plain. Enda was almost stunned, but the hissing of the serpents rising from the sand

around him brought him to himself, and, jumping to his feet, once more he drove them down beneath the surface. He then approached the jagged rock, on the top of which he saw the filthy monster glaring at him with bloodshot eyes. Enda poised his spear and hurled it against his enemy. It entered between the monster's eyes, and from the wound the blood flowed down like a black torrent and dyed the plain, and the shrunken carcase slipped down the front of the rocks and disappeared beneath the sand. Enda once more ascended the rock, and without meeting or seeing anything he passed over the stony waste, and at last he came to a leafy wood. He had not gone far in the wood until he heard the sound of fairy music, and walking on he came upon a mossy glade, and there he found the fairies dancing around their queen. They were so small, and were all so brightly dressed, that they looked like a mass of waving flowers; but when he was seen by them they vanished like a glorious dream, and no one remained before him but the fairy queen. The queen blushed at finding herself alone, but on stamping her little foot three times upon the ground, the frightened fairies all crept back again.

"You are welcome, Enda," said the queen. "My little subjects have been alarmed by your strange dress and crystal helmet. I pray you take them off; you do not need them here."

Enda did as he was bidden, and he laid down his water-dress and helmet on the grass, and the little fairies, seeing him in his proper shape, got over their fright, and, unstrained by the presence of the queen, they ran tumbling over one another to try and get a good look at the crystal helmet.

"I know what you have come for, Enda," said the queen. The golden cup you shall have tomorrow; but tonight you must share our feast, so follow me to the palace."

Having said this, the queen beckoned her pages to her, and, attended by them and followed by Enda, she went on through the wood. When they had left it behind them Enda saw on a green hill before him the snow-white palace of the

fairy queen.

As the queen approached the steps that led up to the open door, a band of tiny fairies, dressed in rose-coloured silk, came out, carrying baskets of flowers, which they flung down on the steps to make a fragrant carpet for her. They were followed by a band of harpers dressed in yellow silken robes, who ranged themselves on each side of the steps and played their sweetest music as the queen ascended.

When the queen, followed by Enda, entered the palace, they passed through a crystal hall that led to a banquet-room. The room was lighted by a single star, large as a battle-shield. It was fixed against the wall above a diamond throne.

The queen seated herself upon the throne, and the pages, advancing towards her, and bending low, as they approached the steps, handed her a golden wand.

The queen waved the wand three times, and a table laden with all kinds of delicacies appeared upon the floor. Then she beckoned Enda to her, and when he stood beside her the fairy table was no higher than his knee.

"I am afraid I must make you smaller, Enda," said the queen, "or you will never be able to seat yourself at my fairy table."

And having said this, she touched Enda with the golden wand, and at once he became as small as her tallest page. Then she struck the steps of her throne, and all the nobles of her court, headed by her bards, took their places at the festive board.

The feast went on right merrily, and when the tiny jewelled drinking-cups were placed upon the table, the queen ordered the harpers to play.

And the little harpers struck the chords, and as Enda listened to the music it seemed to him as if he was being slowly lifted from his seat, and when the music ended the fairies vanished, the shining star went out, and Enda was in perfect darkness.

The air blew keenly in his face, and he knew not where he was. At last he saw a faint grey light, and soon this light grew broader and brighter, and as the shadows fled before it, he could hardly believe his eyes when he found himself in his curragh on the lake, and the moonlight streaming down from the mountain-tops.

For a moment he thought he must have been dreaming; but there in the boat before him were the crystal helmet, and the water-dress, and the gleaming spear, and the golden bowl of perfumed water that was to remove the spell of enchantment from the white swan of the lake, and sailing towards him from the sedgy bank came the snow-white swan; and when she touched the boat, Enda put out his hands and lifted her in, and then over her plumage he poured the perfumed water from the golden bowl, and the Princess Mave in all her maiden beauty stood before him.

"Take your oar, Enda," she said, "and row to the southern bank."

Enda seized his oar, and the curragh sped across the waters swifter than a swallow in its flight. When the boat touched the shore Enda jumped out, and lifted the princess on to the bank.

"Send your boat adrift, Enda," she said; "but first take out your shining spear; the water-dress and the crystal helmet will take care of themselves."

Enda took out the spear, and then pushed the boat from the bank. It sped on towards the hut in the middle of the lake; but before it had reached halfway six nymphs sprang up from the water and seizing the helmet and dress, sank with them beneath the tide, and the boat went on until it pushed its prow against the steps of the little hut, where it remained.

Then Enda and the princess turned towards the south, and it was not long until they came to a deep forest, that was folding up its shadows and spreading out its mossy glades before the glancing footsteps of the morning. They had not

gone far through the forest when they heard the music of hounds and the cries of huntsmen, and crashing towards them through the low branches they saw a fierce wild boar. Enda, gently pushing the princess behind him, levelled his spear, and when the boar came close to him he drove it into his throat. The brute fell dead at his feet, and the dogs rushing up began to tear it to pieces. The princess fainted at the sight, and while Enda was endeavouring to restore her, the king of Erin, followed by his huntsmen, appeared, and when the king saw the princess he started in amazement, as he recognised the features of his daughter Mave.

At that moment the princess came to herself, and her father, lifting her tenderly in his arms, kissed her again and again.

"I have mourned you as dead, my darling," said he, "and now you are restored to me more lovely than ever. I would gladly have given up my throne for this. But say who is the champion who has brought you hither, and who has slain the wild boar we have hunted so many years in vain?"

The princess blushed like a rose as she said:

"His name is Enda, father; it is he has brought me back to you."

Then the king embraced Enda and said:

"Forgive me, Enda, for asking any questions about you before you have shared the hospitality of my court. My palace lies beyond the forest, and we shall reach it soon."

Then the king ordered his huntsman to sound the bugle-horn, and all his nobles galloped up in answer to it, and when they saw the Princess Mave they were so dazzled by her beauty that they scarcely gave a thought to the death of the wild boar.

"It is my daughter, Mave, come back to me," said the king.

And all the nobles lowered their lances, and bowed in homage to the lady.

"And there stands the champion who has brought her

home," said the king, pointing to Enda.

The nobles looked at Enda, and bowed courteously, but in their hearts they were jealous of the champion, for they saw he was already a favourite of the king's.

Then the pages came up, leading milk-white steeds with golden bridles, and the king, ordering Enda to mount one of them, lifted Mave on to his own, and mounted behind her. The pages, carrying the boar's head on a hollow shield, preceded by the huntsmen sounding their horns, set out towards the palace, and the royal party followed them.

As the procession approached the palace crowds came rushing out to see the trophies of the chase, and through the snow-white door the queen, Mave's cruel stepmother, attended by her maids-of-honour and the royal bards, came forth to greet the king. But when she saw seated before him the Princess Mave, who she thought was at the bottom of the lake under a spell of enchantment, she uttered a loud cry, and fell senseless to the ground.

The king jumped from his horse, and rushing to the queen, lifted her up and carried her in his arms to her apartments, for he had no suspicion of the wickedness of which she had been guilty.

And the court leeches were summoned to attend her, but she died that very night, and it was not until a green mound, worthy of a queen of Erin, had been raised over her grave that the Princess Mave told her father of the wickedness of her step-mother. And when she told him the whole story of how Enda had broken the spell of enchantment, and of the dangers which he had faced for her sake, the king summoned an assembly of all his nobles, and seated on his throne, wearing his golden helmet, the bards upon his right hand and the Druids upon his left, and the nobles in ranks before him with gleaming helmets and flashing spears, he told them the story of the princess, and of the service which Enda had rendered to her.

"And now," said the king, "if the princess is willing to take her deliverer for her husband, I am willing that she shall be his bride; and if you, my subjects, Bards and Druids and Nobles and Chiefs of Erin, have anything to say against this union, speak. But first, Mave," said the king, as he drew the blushing princess to him, "speak, darling, as becomes the daughter of a king speak in the presence of the nobles of Erin, and say if it is your wish to become Enda's bride."

The princess flung her white arms around her father's neck, as she murmured:

"Father, it was Enda brought me back to you, and before all the princes and nobles of Erin I am willing to be his bride."

And she buried her head upon the king's breast, and as he stroked her silken hair falling to her feet, the bards struck their golden harps, but the sound of the joyous music could hardly drown the murmurs of the jealous nobles.

When the music ceased the king beckoned Enda to him, and was about to place his hand in Mave's when a Druid, whose white beard almost touched the ground, and who had been a favourite of the dead stepmother, and hated Mave for her sake, stepped forward and said:

"King of Erin, never yet has the daughter of a king been freely given in marriage to any save a battle champion; and that stripling there has never struck his spear against a warrior's shield."

A murmur of approbation rose from the jealous princes, and Congal, the bravest of them all, stepped out from the ranks, and said:

"The Druid speaks the truth, king! That stripling has never faced a battle champion yet, and, speaking for all the nobles of your land, I challenge him to fight any one of us; and as he is young and unused to arms, we are willing that the youngest and least experienced amongst us should be set against him."

When Congal had spoken, the nobles, in approval of his

words, struck their shields with their swords, and the brazen sound ascended to the skies.

The face of the princess, blushing a moment before like a rose, became as white as a lily; but the colour returned to her cheeks when she heard Enda's voice ringing loud and clear.

"It is true, king!" said he, "that I have never used my spear in battle yet. The Prince Congal has challenged me to meet the youngest and least experienced of the chiefs of Erin. I have risked my life already for your daughter's sake. I would face death a thousand times for the chance of winning her for my bride; but I would scorn to claim her hand if I dared not meet the boldest battle champion of the nobles of Erin, and here before you, king, and bards, Druids, and nobles, and chiefs of Erin, and here, in the presence of the Lady Mave, I challenge the boldest of them all."

The king's eyes flashed with joy as he listened to the brave words of Enda.

"It is well," said the king; "the contest shall take place tomorrow on the lawn outside our palace gates; but before our assembly dissolves I call on you, nobles and chiefs of Erin, to name your boldest champion."

Loud cries of "Congal! Congal!" answered the king's speech.

"Are you willing, Congal?" asked the king.

"Willing, king!" answered Congal.

"It is well," said the king. "We shall all meet again tonight in our banquet-hall."

And the king, with the Princess Mave on his arm, attended by his bards and Druids, entered the palace, and the chiefs and nobles went their several ways.

At the feast that night the princess sat beside the king, and Enda beside the princess, and the bards and Druids, nobles and chiefs, took their places in due order. And the bards sang songs of love and battle, and never merrier hours were spent than those which passed away that night in the

banquet-hall of Erin's king.

When the feast was over Enda retired to his apartment to spend the night dreaming of the Princess Mave, and Congal went to his quarters; but not to sleep or dream, for the Druid who had provoked the contest came to him bringing his golden wand, and all night long the Druid was weaving spells to charm the shield and spear and helmet of Congal, to make them invulnerable in the battle of the morrow.

But while Enda lay dreaming of the Princess Mave, the little fairy woman who gave him the water-dress, and crystal helmet, and shining spear on the banks of the Boyne, slid into his room, and she placed beside his couch a silver helmet and a silver shield. And she rubbed the helmet, and the shield, and the blue blade and haft of his spear with the juice of the red rowan berries, and she let a drop fall upon his face and hands, and then she slid out as silently as she came.

When the morning broke, Enda sprang from his couch, and he could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the silver shield and helmet. At the sight of them he longed for the hour of battle, and he watched with eager gaze the sun climbing the sky; and, after hours of suspense, he heard the trumpet's sound and the clangour of the hollow shields, struck by the hard-pointed spears.

Putting on the helmet, and fastening the shield upon his left arm, and taking the spear in his right hand, he stepped out bravely to the fight. The edge of the lawn before the palace gates was ringed by the princes, nobles, and chiefs of Erin. And the palace walls were thronged by all the beauties of the Court and all the noble ladies of the land. And on his throne, surrounded by his Druids, his brehons, and his bards, was the king of Erin, and at his feet sat the lovely Lady Mave.

As Enda stepped out upon the lawn, he saw Congal advancing from the ranks of the nobles, and the two champions approached each other until they met right in front of the throne.

Then both turned towards the throne, and bowed to the king and the Princess Mave; and then facing each other again, they retired a space, and when their spears were poised, ready for battle, the king gave the signal, which was answered by the clang of stricken shields, and Congal and Enda launched their gleaming spears. They flashed like lightning in the sunlit air, and in a second Congal's had broken against Enda's shield; but Enda's, piercing Congal's helmet, hurled him senseless on the plain.

The nobles and chiefs could hardly realize that in that single second their boldest champion was overthrown; but when they saw him stretched motionless on the grassy sward, from out their ranks six warriors advanced to where the chieftain lay, and sadly they bore him away upon their battle-shields, and Enda remained victor upon the field.

And then the king's voice rang out clear as the sound of a trumpet in the still morning:

"Bards and brehons, princes and nobles, and chiefs of Erin, Enda has proved himself a battle champion, and who amongst you now will dare gainsay his right to claim my daughter for his bride?"

And no answer came.

But when he summoned Enda to his throne, and placed the lady's hand in his, a cheer arose from the great assembly, that proved that jealousy was extinguished in all hearts, and that all believed that Enda was worthy of the winsome bride; and never since that day, although a thousand years have passed, was there in all the world a brighter and gayer wedding than the wedding of Enda and the Princess Mave.

III

The Little White Cat

A long, long time ago, in a valley far away, the giant Trencoss lived in a great castle, surrounded by trees that were always green. The castle had a hundred doors, and every door was guarded by a huge, shaggy hound, with tongue of fire and claws of iron, who tore to pieces anyone who went to the castle without the giant's leave. Trencoss had made war on the King of the Torrents, and, having killed the king, and slain his people, and burned his palace, he carried off his only daughter, the Princess Eileen, to the castle in the valley. Here he provided her with beautiful rooms, and appointed a hundred dwarfs, dressed in blue and yellow satin, to wait upon her, and harpers to play sweet music for her, and he gave her diamonds without number, brighter than the sun; but he would not allow her to go outside the castle, and told her if she went one step beyond its doors, the hounds, with tongues of fire and claws of iron, would tear her to pieces. A week after her arrival, war broke out between the giant and the king of the islands, and before he set out for battle, the giant sent for the princess, and informed her that on his return he would make her his wife. When the princess heard this she began to cry, for she would rather die than marry the giant who had slain her father.

"Crying will only spoil your bright eyes, my little princess," said Trencoss, "and you will have to marry me whether you like it or no."

He then bade her go back to her room, and he ordered the dwarfs to give her everything she asked for while he was away, and the harpers to play the sweetest music for her. When the princess gained her room she cried as if her heart would break. The long day passed slowly, and the night came, but brought no sleep to Eileen, and in the grey light of the morning she rose and opened the window, and looked about in every direction to see if there were any chance of escape. But the window was ever so high above the ground, and below were the hungry and ever watchful hounds. With a heavy heart she was about to close the window when she thought she saw the branches of the tree that was nearest to it moving. She looked again, and she saw a little white cat creeping along one of the branches.

"Mew!" cried the cat.

"Poor little pussy," said the princess. "Come to me, pussy."

"Stand back from the window," said the cat, "and I will."

The princess stepped back, and the little white cat jumped into the room. The princess took the little cat on her lap and stroked him with her hand, and the cat raised up its back and began to purr.

"Where do you come from, and what is your name?" asked the princess.

"No matter where I come from or what's my name," said the cat. "I am a friend of yours, and I come to help you?"

"I never wanted help worse," said the princess.

"I know that," said the cat; "and now listen to me. When the giant comes back from battle and asks you to marry him, say to him you will marry him."

"But I will never marry him," said the princess.

"Do what I tell you," said the cat. "When he asks you to marry him, say to him you will if his dwarfs will wind for you three balls from the fairy dew that lies on the bushes on a misty morning as big as these," said the cat, putting his right forefoot into his ear and taking out three balls one yellow, one



"Poor little pussy," said the Princess.

red, and one blue.

"They are very small," said the princess. "They are not much bigger than peas, and the dwarfs will not be long at their work."

"Won't they," said the cat. "It will take them a month and a day to make one, so that it will take three months and three days before the balls are wound; but the giant, like you, will think they can be made in a few days, and so he will readily promise to do what you ask. He will soon find out his mistake, but he will keep his word, and will not press you to marry him until the balls are wound."

"When will the giant come back?" asked Eileen.

"He will return tomorrow afternoon," said the cat.

"Will you stay with me until then?" said the princess. "I am very lonely."

"I cannot stay," said the cat. "I have to go away to my palace on the island on which no man ever placed his foot, and where no man but one shall ever come."

"And where is that island?" asked the princess, "and who is the man?"

"The island is in the far-off seas where vessel never sailed; the man you will see before many days are over; and if all goes well, he will one day slay the giant Trencoss, and free you from his power."

"Ah!" sighed the princess, "that can never be, for no weapon can wound the hundred hounds that guard the castle, and no sword can kill the giant Trencoss."

"There is a sword that will kill him," said the cat; "but I must go now. Remember what you are to say to the giant when he comes home, and every morning watch the tree on which you saw me, and if you see in the branches anyone you like better than yourself," said the cat, winking at the princess, "throw him these three balls and leave the rest to me; but take care not to speak a single word to him, for if you do all will be lost."

"Shall I ever see you again?" asked the princess.

"Time will tell," answered the cat, and, without saying so much as good-bye, he jumped through the window on to the tree, and in a second was out of sight.

The morrow afternoon came, and the giant Trencoss returned from battle. Eileen knew of his coming by the furious barking of the hounds, and her heart sank, for she knew that in a few moments she would be summoned to his presence. Indeed, he had hardly entered the castle when he sent for her, and told her to get ready for the wedding. The princess tried to look cheerful, as she answered:

"I will be ready as soon as you wish; but you must first promise me something."

"Ask anything you like, little princess," said Trencoss.

"Well, then," said Eileen, "before I marry you, you must make your dwarfs wind three balls as big as these from the fairy dew that lies on the bushes on a misty morning in summer."

"Is that all?" said Trencoss, laughing. "I shall give the dwarfs orders at once, and by this time tomorrow the balls will be wound, and our wedding can take place in the evening."

"And will you leave me to myself until then?"

"I will," said Trencoss.

"On your honour as a giant?" said Eileen.

"On my honour as a giant," replied Trencoss.

The princess returned to her rooms, and the giant summoned all his dwarfs, and he ordered them to go forth in the dawning of the morn and to gather all the fairy dew lying on the bushes, and to wind three balls one yellow, one red, and one blue. The next morning, and the next, and the next, the dwarfs went out into the fields and searched all the hedgerows, but they could gather only as much fairy dew as would make a thread as long as a wee girl's eyelash; and so they had to go out morning after morning, and the giant fumed and threatened, but all to no purpose. He was very angry with the

princess, and he was vexed with himself that she was so much cleverer than he was, and, moreover, he saw now that the wedding could not take place as soon as he expected.

When the little white cat went away from the castle he ran as fast as he could up hill and down dale, and never stopped until he came to the Prince of the Silver River. The prince was alone, and very sad and sorrowful he was, for he was thinking of the Princess Eileen, and wondering where she could be.

"Mew," said the cat, as he sprang softly into the room; but the prince did not heed him. "Mew," again said the cat; but again the prince did not heed him. "Mew," said the cat the third time, and he jumped up on the prince's knee.

"Where do you come from, and what do you want?" asked the prince.

"I come from where you would like to be," said the cat.

"And where is that?" said the prince.

"Oh, where is that, indeed! as if I didn't know what you are thinking of, and of whom you are thinking," said the cat; "and it would be far better for you to try and save her."

"I would give my life a thousand times over for her," said the prince.

"For whom?" said the cat, with a wink. "I named no name, your highness," said he.

"You know very well who she is," said the prince, "if you knew what I was thinking of; but do you know where she is?"

"She is in danger," said the cat. "She is in the castle of the giant Trencoss, in the valley beyond the mountains."

"I will set out there at once," said the prince, "and I will challenge the giant to battle, and will slay him."

"Easier said than done," said the cat. "There is no sword made by the hands of man can kill him, and even if you could kill him, his hundred hounds, with tongues of fire and claws of iron, would tear you to pieces."

"Then, what am I to do?" asked the prince.

"Be said by me," said the cat. "Go to the wood that surrounds the giant's castle, and climb the high tree that's nearest to the window that looks towards the sunset, and shake the branches, and you will see what you will see. Then hold out your hat with the silver plumes, and three balls one yellow, one red, and one blue will be thrown into it. And then come back here as fast as you can; but speak no word, for if you utter a single word the hounds will hear you, and you shall be torn to pieces."

Well, the prince set off at once, and after two days' journey he came to the wood around the castle, and he climbed the tree that was nearest to the window that looked towards the sunset, and he shook the branches. As soon as he did so, the window opened and he saw the Princess Eileen, looking lovelier than ever. He was going to call out her name, but she placed her fingers on her lips, and lie remembered what the cat had told him, that he was to speak no word. In silence he held out the hat with the silver plumes, and the princess threw into it the three balls, one after another, and, blowing him a kiss, she shut the window. And well it was she did so, for at that very moment she heard the voice of the giant, who was coming back from hunting.

The prince waited until the giant had entered the castle before he descended the tree. He set off as fast as he could. He went up hill and down dale, and never stopped until he arrived at his own palace, and there waiting for him was the little white cat.

"Have you brought the three balls?" said he.

"I have," said the prince.

"Then follow me," said the cat.

On they went until they left the palace far behind and came to the edge of the sea.

"Now," said the cat, "unravel a thread of the red ball, hold the thread in your right hand, drop the ball into the water, and you shall see what you shall see."

The prince did as he was told, and the ball floated out to sea, unravelling as it went, and it went on until it was out of sight.

"Pull now," said the cat.

The prince pulled, and, as he did, he saw far away something on the sea shining like silver. It came nearer and nearer, and he saw it was a little silver boat. At last it touched the strand.

"Now," said the cat, "step into this boat and it will bear you to the palace on the island on which no man has ever placed his foot the island in the unknown seas that were never sailed by vessels made of human hands. In that palace there is a sword with a diamond hilt, and by that sword alone the giant Trencoss can be killed. There also are a hundred cakes, and it is only on eating these the hundred hounds can die. But mind what I say to you: if you eat or drink until you reach the palace of the little cat in the island in the unknown seas, you will forget the Princess Eileen."

"I will forget myself first," said the prince, as he stepped into the silver boat, which floated away so quickly that it was soon out of sight of land.

The day passed and the night fell, and the stars shone down upon the waters, but the boat never stopped. On she went for two whole days and nights, and on the third morning the prince saw an island in the distance, and very glad he was; for he thought it was his journey's end, and he was almost fainting with thirst and hunger. But the day passed and the island was still before him.

At long last, on the following day, he saw by the first light of the morning that he was quite close to it, and that trees laden with fruit of every kind were bending down over the water. The boat sailed round and round the island, going closer and closer every round, until, at last, the drooping branches almost touched it. The sight of the fruit within his reach made the prince hungrier and thirstier than he was

before, and forgetting his promise to the little cat not to eat anything until he entered the palace in the unknown seas he caught one of the branches, and, in a moment, was in the tree eating the delicious fruit. While he was doing so the boat floated out to sea and soon was lost to sight; but the prince, having eaten, forgot all about it, and, worse still, forgot all about the princess in the giant's castle. When he had eaten enough he descended the tree, and, turning his back on the sea, set out straight before him. He had not gone far when he heard the sound of music, and soon after he saw a number of maidens playing on silver harps coming towards him. When they saw him they ceased playing, and cried out:

"Welcome! welcome! Prince of the Silver River, welcome to the island of fruits and flowers. Our king and queen saw you coming over the sea, and, they sent us to bring you to the palace."

The prince went with them, and at the palace gates the king and queen and their daughter Kathleen received him, and gave him welcome.

He hardly saw the king and queen, for his eyes were fixed on the princess Kathleen, who looked more beautiful than a flower. He thought he had never seen anyone so lovely, for, of course, he had forgotten all about poor Eileen pining away in her castle prison in the lonely valley. When the king and queen had given welcome to the prince a great feast was spread, and all the lords and ladies of the court sat down to it, and the prince sat between the queen and the princess Kathleen, and long before the feast was finished he was over head and ears in love with her. When the feast was ended the queen ordered the ballroom to be made ready, and when night fell the dancing began, and was kept up until the morning star, and the prince danced all night with the princess, falling deeper and deeper in love with her every minute. Between dancing by night and feasting by day weeks went by. All the time poor Eileen in the giant's castle was counting the

hours, and all this time the dwarfs were winding the balls, and a ball and a half were already wound. At last the prince asked the king and queen for their daughter in marriage, and they were delighted to be able to say yes, and the day was fixed for the wedding. But on the evening before the day on which it was to take place the prince was in his room, getting ready for a dance, when he felt something rubbing against his leg, and, looking down, who should he see but the little white cat. At the sight of him the prince remembered everything, and sad and sorry he was when he thought of Eileen watching and waiting and counting the days until he returned to save her. But he was very fond of the princess Kathleen, and so he did not know what to do.

"You can't do anything tonight," said the cat, for he knew what the prince was thinking of, "but when morning comes go down to the sea, and look not to the right or the left, and let no living thing touch you, for if you do you shall never leave the island. Drop the second ball into the water, as you did the first, and when the boat comes step in at once. Then you may look behind you, and you shall see what you shall see, and you'll know which you love best, the Princess Eileen or the Princess Kathleen, and you can either go or stay.

The prince didn't sleep a wink that night, and at the first glimpse of the morning he stole from the palace. When he reached the sea he threw out the ball, and when it had floated out of sight, he saw the little boat sparkling on the horizon like a newly-risen star. The prince had scarcely passed through the palace doors when he was missed, and the king and queen and the princess, and all the lords and ladies of the court, went in search of him, taking the quickest way to the sea. While the maidens with the silver harps played sweetest music, the princess, whose voice was sweeter than any music, called on the prince by his name, and so moved his heart that he was about to look behind, when he remembered how the cat had told him he should not do so until he was in the boat.

Just as it touched the shore the princess put out her hand and almost caught the prince's arm, but he stepped into the boat in time to save himself, and it sped away like a receding wave. A loud scream caused the prince to look round suddenly, and when he did he saw no sign of king or queen, or princess, or lords or ladies, but only big green serpents, with red eyes and tongues, that hissed out fire and poison as they writhed in a hundred horrible coils.

The prince, having escaped from the enchanted island, sailed away for three days and three nights, and every night he hoped the coming morning would show him the island he was in search of. He was faint with hunger and beginning to despair, when on the fourth morning he saw in the distance an island that, in the first rays of the sun, gleamed like fire. On coming closer to it he saw that it was clad with trees, so covered with bright red berries that hardly a leaf was to be seen. Soon the boat was almost within a stone's cast of the island, and it began to sail round and round until it was well under the bending branches. The scent of the berries was so sweet that it sharpened the prince's hunger, and he longed to pluck them; but, remembering what had happened to him on the enchanted island, he was afraid to touch them. But the boat kept on sailing round and round, and at last a great wind rose from the sea and shook the branches, and the bright, sweet berries fell into the boat until it was filled with them, and they fell upon the prince's hands, and he took up some to look at them, and as he looked the desire to eat them grew stronger, and he said to himself it would be no harm to taste one; but when he tasted it the flavour was so delicious he swallowed it, and, of course, at once he forgot all about Eileen, and the boat drifted away from him and left him standing in the water.

He climbed on to the island, and having eaten enough of the berries, he set out to see what might be before him, and it was not long until he heard a great noise, and a huge iron ball

knocked down one of the trees in front of him, and before he knew where he was a hundred giants came running after it. When they saw the prince they turned towards him, and one of them caught him up in his hand and held him up that all might see him. The prince was nearly squeezed to death, and seeing this the giant put him on the ground again.

"Who are you, my little man?" asked the giant.

"I am a prince," replied the prince.

"Oh, you are a prince, are you?" said the giant. "And what are you good for?" said he.

The prince did not know, for nobody had asked him that question before.

"I know what he's good for," said an old giantess, with one eye in her forehead and one in her chin. "I know what he's good for. He's good to eat."

When the giants heard this they laughed so loud that the prince was frightened almost to death.

"Why," said one, "he wouldn't make a mouthful."

"Oh, leave him to me," said the giantess, "and I'll fatten him up; and when he is cooked and dressed he will be a nice dainty dish for the king."

The giants, on this, gave the prince into the hands of the old giantess. She took him home with her to the kitchen, and fed him on sugar and spice and all things nice, so that he should be a sweet morsel for the king of the giants when he returned to the island. The poor prince would not eat anything at first, but the giantess held him over the fire until his feet were scorched, and then he said to himself it was better to eat than to be burnt alive.

Well, day after day passed, and the prince grew sadder and sadder, thinking that he would soon be cooked and dressed for the king; but sad as the prince was, he was not half as sad as the Princess Eileen in the giant's castle, watching and waiting for the prince to return and save her.

And the dwarfs had wound two balls, and were winding a

third.

At last the prince heard from the old giantess that the king of the giants was to return on the following day, and she said to him:

"As this is the last night you have to live, tell me if you wish for anything, for if you do your wish will be granted."

"I don't wish for anything," said the prince, whose heart was dead within him.

"Well, I'll come back again," said the giantess, and she went away.

The prince sat down in a corner, thinking and thinking, until he heard close to his ear a sound like "purr, purr!" He looked around, and there before him was the little white cat.

"I ought not to come to you," said the cat; "but, indeed, it is not for your sake I come. I come for the sake of the Princess Eileen. Of course, you forgot all about her, and, of course, she is always thinking of you. It's always the way

"Favoured lovers may forget,
Slighted lovers never yet."

The prince blushed with shame when he heard the name of the princess.

"'Tis you that ought to blush," said the cat; "but listen to me now, and remember, if you don't obey my directions this time you'll never see me again, and you'll never set your eyes on the Princess Eileen. When the old giantess comes back tell her you wish, when the morning comes, to go down to the sea to look at it for the last time. When you reach the sea you will know what to do. But I must go now, as I hear the giantess coming." And the cat jumped out of the window and disappeared.

"Well," said the giantess, when she came in, "is there anything you wish?"

"Is it true I must die tomorrow?" asked the prince.

"It is."

"Then," said he, "I should like to go down to the sea to look at it for the last time."

"You may do that," said the giantess, "if you get up early."

"I'll be up with the lark in the light of the morning," said the prince.

"Very well," said the giantess, and, saying "good night," she went away.

The prince thought the night would never pass, but at last it faded away before the grey light of the dawn, and he sped down to the sea. He threw out the third ball, and before long he saw the little boat coming towards him swifter than the wind. He threw himself into it the moment it touched the shore. Swifter than the wind it bore him out to sea, and before he had time to look behind him the island of the giantess was like a faint red speck in the distance. The day passed and the night fell, and the stars looked down, and the boat sailed on, and just as the sun rose above the sea it pushed its silver 'prow on the golden strand of an island greener than the leaves in summer. The prince jumped out, and went on and on until he entered a pleasant valley, at the head of which he saw a palace white as snow.

As he approached the central door it opened for him. On entering the hall he passed into several rooms without meeting with anyone; but, when he reached the principal apartment, he found himself in a circular room, in which were a thousand pillars, and every pillar was of marble, and on every pillar save one, which stood in the centre of the room, was a little white cat with black eyes. Ranged round the wall, from one door-jamb to the other, were three rows of precious jewels. The first was a row of brooches of gold and silver, with their pins fixed in the wall and their heads outwards; the second a row of torques of gold and silver; and the third a row of great swords, with hilts of gold and silver. And on many tables was food of all kinds, and drinking horns filled with

foaming ale.

While the prince was looking about him the cats kept on jumping from pillar to pillar; but seeing that none of them jumped on to the pillar in the centre of the room, he began to wonder why this was so, when, all of a sudden, and before he could guess how it came about, there right before him on the centre pillar was the little white cat.

"Don't you know me?" said he.

"I do," said the prince.

"Ah, but you don't know who I am. This is the palace of the Little White Cat, and I am the King of the Cats. But you must be hungry, and the feast is spread."

Well, when the feast was ended, the king of the cats called for the sword that would kill the giant Trencoss, and the hundred cakes for the hundred watch-dogs.

The cats brought the sword and the cakes and laid them before the king.

"Now," said the king, "take these; you have no time to lose. Tomorrow the dwarfs will wind the last ball, and tomorrow the giant will claim the princess for his bride. So you should go at once; but before you go take this from me to your little girl."

And the king gave him a brooch lovelier than any on the palace walls.

The king and the prince, followed by the cats, went down to the strand, and when the prince stepped into the boat all the cats "mewed" three times for good luck, and the prince waved his hat three times, and the little boat sped over the waters all through the night as brightly and as swiftly as a shooting star. In the first flush of the morning it touched the strand. The prince jumped out and went on and on, up hill and down dale, until he came to the giant's castle. When the hounds saw him they barked furiously, and bounded towards him to tear him to pieces. The prince flung the cakes to them, and as each hound swallowed his cake he fell dead. The

prince then struck his shield three times with the sword which he had brought from the palace of the little white cat.

When the giant heard the sound he cried out:

"Who comes to challenge me on my wedding-day?"

The dwarfs went out to see, and, returning, told him it was a prince who challenged him to battle.

The giant, foaming with rage, seized his heaviest iron club, and rushed out to the fight. The fight lasted the whole day, and when the sun went down the giant said:

"We have had enough of fighting for the day We can begin at sunrise tomorrow."

"Not so," said the prince. "Now or never; win or die."

"Then take this," cried the giant, as he aimed a blow with all his force at the prince's head; but the prince, darting forward like a flash of lightning, drove his sword into the giant's heart, and, with a groan, he fell over the bodies of the poisoned hounds.

When the dwarfs saw the giant dead they began to cry and tear their hair. But the prince told them they had nothing to fear, and he bade them go and tell the princess Eileen he wished to speak with her. But the princess had watched the battle from her window, and when she saw the giant fall she rushed out to greet the prince, and that very night he and she and all the dwarfs and harpers set out for the Palace of the Silver River, which they reached the next morning, and from that day to this there never has been a gayer wedding than the wedding of the Prince of the Silver River and the Princess Eileen; and though she had diamonds and pearls to spare, the only jewel she wore on her wedding-day was the brooch which the prince had brought her from the Palace of the Little White Cat in the far-off seas.

IV
The Golden Spears

Once upon a time there lived in a little house under a hill a little old woman and her two children, whose names were Connla and Nora. Right in front of the door of the little house lay a pleasant meadow, and beyond the meadow rose up to the skies a mountain whose top was sharp-pointed like a spear. For more than half-way up it was clad with heather, and when the heather was in bloom it looked like a purple robe falling from the shoulders of the mountain down to its feet. Above the heather it was bare and grey, but when the sun was sinking in the sea, its last rays rested on the bare mountain top and made it gleam like a spear of gold, and so the children always called it the "Golden Spear."

In summer days they gambolled in the meadow, plucking the sweet wild grasses and often they clambered up the mountain side, knee deep in the heather, searching for frechans and wild honey, and sometimes they found a bird's nest but they only peeped into it, they never touched the eggs or allowed their breath to fall upon them, for next to their little mother they loved the mountain, and next to the mountain they loved the wild birds who made the spring and summer weather musical with their songs.

Sometimes the soft white mist would steal through the glen, and creeping up the mountain would cover it with a veil so dense that the children could not see it, and then they would say to each other: "Our mountain is gone away from

us." But when the mist would lift and float off into the skies, the children would clap their hands, and say: "Oh, there's our mountain back again." In the long nights of winter they babbled of the spring and summertime to come, when the birds would once more sing for them, and never a day passed that they didn't fling crumbs outside their door, and on the borders of the wood that stretched away towards the glen.

When the spring days came they awoke with the first light of the morning, and they knew the very minute when the lark would begin to sing, and when the thrush and the blackbird would pour out their liquid notes, and when the robin would make the soft, green, tender leaves tremulous at his song.

It chanced one day that when they were resting in the noontide heat, under the perfumed shade of a hawthorn in bloom, they saw on the edge of the meadow, spread out before them, a speckled thrush cowering in the grass.

"Oh, Connla! Connla! Look at the thrush and, look, look up in the sky, there is a hawk!" cried Nora.

Connla looked up, and he saw the hawk with quivering wings, and he knew that in a second it would pounce down on the frightened thrush. He jumped to his feet, fixed a stone in his sling, and before the whirr of the stone shooting through the air was silent, the stricken hawk tumbled headlong in the grass.

The thrush, shaking its wings, rose joyously in the air, and perching upon an elm-tree in sight of the children, he sang a song so sweet that they left the hawthorn shade and walked along together until they stood under the branches of the elm; and they listened and listened to the thrush's song, and at last Nora said:

"Oh, Connla! did you ever hear a song so sweet as this?"

"No," said Connla, "and I do believe sweeter music was never heard before."

"Ah," said the thrush, "that's because you never heard the nine little pipers playing. And now, Connla and Nora, you

saved my life today."

"It was Nora saved it," said Connla, "for she pointed you out to me, and also pointed out the hawk which was about to pounce on you."

"It was Connla saved you," said Nora, "for he slew the hawk with his sling."

"I owe my life to both of you," said the thrush. "You like my song, and you say you have never heard anything so sweet; but wait till you hear the nine little pipers playing."

"And when shall we hear them?" said the children.

"Well," said the thrush, "sit outside your door tomorrow evening, and wait and watch until the shadows have crept up the heather, and then, when the mountain top is gleaming like a golden spear, look at the line where the shadow on the heather meets the sunshine, and you shall see what you shall see."

And having said this, the thrush sang another song sweeter than the first, and then saying "good-bye," he flew away into the woods.

The children went home, and all night long they were dreaming of the thrush and the nine little pipers; and when the birds sang in the morning, they got up and went out into the meadow to watch the mountain.

The sun was shining in a cloudless sky, and no shadows lay on the mountain, and all day long they watched and waited, and at last, when the birds were singing their farewell song to the evening star, the children saw the shadows marching from the glen, trooping up the mountain side and dimming the purple of the heather.

And when the mountain top gleamed like a golden spear, they fixed their eyes on the line between the shadow and the sunshine.

"Now," said Connla, "the time has come."

"Oh, look! look!" said Nora, and as she spoke, just above the line of shadow a door opened out, and through its portals



A mountain whose top was gleaming
like a golden spear.

came a little piper dressed in green and gold. He stepped down, followed by another and another, until they were nine in all, and then the door slung back again. Down through the heather marched the pipers in single file, and all the time they played a music so sweet that the birds, who had gone to sleep in their nests, came out upon the branches to listen to them, and then they crossed the meadow, and they went on and on until they disappeared in the leafy woods.

While they were passing the children were spell-bound, and couldn't speak, but when the music had died away in the woods, they said:

"The thrush is right, that is the sweetest music that was ever heard in all the world."

And when the children went to bed that night the fairy music came to them in their dreams. But when the morning broke, and they looked out upon their mountain and could see no trace of the door above the heather, they asked each other whether they had really seen the little pipers, or only dreamt of them.

That day they went out into the woods, and they sat beside a stream that pattered along beneath the trees, and through the leaves tossing in the breeze the sun flashed down upon the streamlet, and shadow and sunshine danced upon it. As the children watched the water sparkling where the sunlight fell, Nora said:

"Oh, Connla, did you ever see anything so bright and clear and glancing as that?"

"No," said Connla, "I never did."

"That's because you never saw the crystal hall of the fairy of the mountains," said a voice above the heads of the children.

And when they looked up, who should they see perched on a branch but the thrush.

"And where is the crystal hall of the fairy?" said Connla.

"Oh, it is where it always was, and where it always will

be," said the thrush. "And you can see it if you like."

"We would like to see it," said the children.

"Well, then," said the thrush, "if you would, all you have to do is to follow the nine little pipers when they come down through the heather, and cross the meadow tomorrow evening."

And the thrush having said this, flew away.

Connla and Nora went home, and that night they fell asleep talking of the thrush and the fairy and the crystal hall.

All the next day they counted the minutes, until they saw the shadows thronging from the glen and scaling the mountain side. And, at last, they saw the door springing open, and the nine little pipers marching down.

They waited until the pipers had crossed the meadow and were about to enter the wood. And then they followed them, the pipers marching on before them and playing all the time. It was not long until they had passed through the wood, and then, what should the children see rising up before them but another mountain, smaller than their own, but, like their own, clad more than half-way up with purple heather, and whose top was bare and sharp-pointed, and gleaming like a golden spear.

Up through the heather climbed the pipers, up through the heather the children clambered after them, and the moment the pipers passed the heather a door opened and they marched in, the children following, and the door closed behind them.

Connla and Nora were so dazzled by the light that hit their eyes, when they had crossed the threshold, that they had to shade them with their hands; but, after a moment or two, they became able to bear the splendour, and when they looked around they saw that they were in a noble hall, whose crystal roof was supported by two rows of crystal pillars rising from a crystal floor; and the walls were of crystal, and along the walls were crystal couches, with coverings and cushions

of sapphire silk with silver tassels.

Over the crystal floor the little pipers marched; over the crystal floor the children followed, and when a door at the end of the hall was opened to let the pipers pass, a crowd of colours came rushing in, and floor, and ceiling, and stately pillars, and glancing couches, and shining walls, were stained with a thousand dazzling hues.

Out through the door the pipers marched; out through the door the children followed, and when they crossed the threshold they were treading on clouds of amber, of purple, and of gold.

"Oh, Connla," said Nora, "we have walked into the sunset!"

And around and about them everywhere were soft, fleecy clouds, and over their heads was the glowing sky, and the stars were shining through it, as a lady's eyes shine through a veil of gossamer. And the sky and stars seemed so near that Connla thought he could almost touch them with his hand.

When they had gone some distance, the pipers disappeared, and when Connla and Nora came up to the spot where they had seen the last of them, they found themselves at the head of a ladder, all the steps of which were formed of purple and amber clouds that descended to what appeared to be a vast and shining plain, streaked with purple and gold. In the spaces between the streaks of gold and purple they saw soft, milk-white stars. And the children thought that the great plain, so far below them, also belonged to cloudland.

They could not see the little pipers, but up the steps was borne by the cool, sweet air the fairy music; and lured on by it step by step they travelled down the fleecy stairway. When they were little more than half way down there came mingled with the music a sound almost as sweet the sound of waters toying in the still air with pebbles on a shelving beach, and with the sound came the odorous brine of the ocean. And then the children knew that what they thought was a plain in

the realms of cloudland was the sleeping sea unstirred by wind or tide, dreaming of the purple clouds and stars of the sunset sky above it.

When Connla and Nora reached the strand they saw the nine little pipers marching out towards the sea, and they wondered where they were going to. And they could hardly believe their eyes when they saw them stepping out upon the level ocean as if they were walking upon the land; and away the nine little pipers marched, treading the golden line cast upon the waters by the setting sun. And as the music became fainter and fainter as the pipers passed into the glowing distance, the children began to wonder what was to become of themselves. Just at that very moment they saw coming towards them from the sinking sun a little white horse, with flowing mane and tail and golden hoofs. On the horse's back was a little man dressed in shining green silk. When the horse galloped on to the strand the little man doffed his hat, and said to the children:

"Would you like to follow the nine little pipers?" The children said, "yes."

"Well, then," said the little man, "come up here behind me; you, Nora, first, and Connla after."

Connla helped up Nora, and then climbed on to the little steed himself; and as soon as they were properly seated the little man said "swish," and away went the steed, galloping over the sea without wetting hair or hoof. But fast as he galloped the nine little pipers were always ahead of him, although they seemed to be going only at a walking pace. When at last he came up rather close to the hindmost of them the nine little pipers disappeared, but the children heard the music playing beneath the waters. The white steed pulled up suddenly, and wouldn't move a step further.

"Now," said the little man to the children, "clasp me tight, Nora, and do you, Connla, cling on to Nora, and both of you shut your eyes."

The children did as they were bidden, and the little man cried:

"Swish! swash!"

And the steed went down and down until at last his feet struck the bottom.

"Now open your eyes," said the little man.

And when the children did so they saw beneath the horse's feet a golden strand, and above their heads the sea like a transparent cloud between them and the sky. And once more they heard the fairy music, and marching on the strand before them were the nine little pipers.

"You must get off now," said the little man, "I can go no farther with you."

The children scrambled down, and the little man cried "swish," and himself and the steed shot up through the sea, and they saw him no more. Then they set out after the nine little pipers, and it wasn't long until they saw rising up from the golden strand and pushing their heads up into the sea above, a mass of dark grey rocks. And as they were gazing at them they saw the rocks opening, and the nine little pipers disappearing through them.

The children hurried on, and when they came up close to the rocks they saw sitting on a flat and polished stone a mermaid combing her golden hair, and singing a strange sweet song that brought the tears to their eyes, and by the mermaid's side was a little sleek brown otter.

When the mermaid saw them she flung her golden tresses back over her snow-white shoulders, and she beckoned the children to her. Her large eyes were full of sadness; but there was a look so tender upon her face that the children moved towards her without any fear.

"Come to me, little one," she said to Nora, "come and kiss me," and in a second her arms were around the child. The mermaid kissed her again and again, as the tears rushed to her eyes, she said:

"Oh, Nora, avourneen, your breath is as sweet as the wild rose that blooms in the green fields of Erin, and happy are you, my children, who have come so lately from the pleasant land. Oh, Connla! Connla! I get the scent of the dew of the Irish grasses and of the purple heather from your feet. And you both can soon return to Erin of the Streams, but I shall not see it till three hundred years have passed away, for I am Liban the Mermaid, daughter of a line of kings. But I may not keep you here. The Fairy Queen is waiting for you in her snow-white palace and her fragrant bowers. And now kiss me once more, Nora, and kiss me, Connla. May luck and joy go with you, and all gentleness be upon you both."

Then the children said good-bye to the mermaid, and the rocks opened for them and they passed through, and soon they found themselves in a meadow starred with flowers, and through the meadow sped a sunlit stream. They followed the stream until it led them into a garden of roses, and beyond the garden, standing on a gentle hill, was a palace white as snow. Before the palace was a crowd of fairy maidens pelting each other with rose-leaves. But when they saw the children they gave over their play, and came trooping towards them.

"Our queen is waiting for you," they said; and then they led the children to the palace door. The children entered, and after passing through a long corridor they found themselves in a crystal hall so like the one they had seen in the mountain of the golden spear that they thought it was the same. But on all the crystal couches fairies, dressed in silken robes of many colours, were sitting, and at the end of the hall, on a crystal throne, was seated the fairy queen, looking lovelier than the evening star. The queen descended from her throne to meet the children, and taking them by the hands, she led them up the shining steps. Then, sitting down, she made them sit beside her, Connla on her right hand and Nora on her left.

Then she ordered the nine little pipers to come before her, and she said to them:

"So far you have done your duty faithfully, and now play one more sweet air and your task is done."

And the little pipers played, and from the couches at the first sound of the music all the fairies rose, and forming partners, they danced over the crystal floor as lightly as the young leaves dancing in the wind.

Listening to the fairy music, and watching the wavy motion of the dancing fairies, the children fell asleep. When they awoke next morning and rose from their silken beds they were no longer children. Nora was a graceful and stately maiden, and Connla a handsome and gallant youth. They looked at each other for a moment in surprise, and then Connla said:

"Oh, Nora, how tall and beautiful you are!"

"Oh, not so tall and handsome as you are, Connla," said Nora, as she flung her white arms round his neck and kissed her brother's lips.

Then they drew back to get a better look of each other, and who should step between them but the fairy queen.

"Oh, Nora, Nora," said she, "I am not as high as your knee, and as for you, Connla, you look as straight and as tall as one of the round towers of Erin."

"And how did we grow so tall in one night?" said Connla.

"In one night!" said the fairy queen. "One night, indeed! Why, you have been fast asleep, the two of you, for the last seven years!"

"And where was the little mother all that time?" said Connla and Nora together.

"Oh, the little mother was all right. She knew where you were; but she is expecting you today, and so you must go off to see her, although I would like to keep you if I had my way all to myself here in the fairyland under the sea. And you will see her today; but before you go here is a necklace for you, Nora; it is formed out of the drops of the ocean spray, sparkling in the sunshine. They were caught by my fairy nymph, for

you, as they skimmed the sunlit billows under the shape of sea-birds, and no queen or princess in the world can match their lustre with the diamonds won with toil from the caves of earth. As for you, Connla, see here's a helmet of shining gold fit for a king of Erin and a king of Erin you will be yet; and here's a spear that will pierce any shield, and here's a shield that no spear can pierce and no sword can cleave as long as you fasten your warrior cloak with this brooch of gold."

And as she spoke she flung round Connla's shoulders a flowing mantle of yellow silk, and pinned it at his neck with a red gold brooch.

"And now, my children, you must go away from me. You, Nora, will be a warrior's bride in Erin of the Streams. And you, Connla, will be king yet over the loveliest province in all the land of Erin; but you will have to fight for your crown, and days of battle are before you. They will not come for a long time after you have left the fairyland under the sea, and until they come lay aside your helmet, shield, and spear, and warrior's cloak and golden brooch. But when the time comes when you will be called to battle, enter not upon it without the golden brooch I give you fastened in your cloak, for if you do harm will come to you. Now, kiss me, children; your little mother is waiting for you at the foot of the golden spear, but do not forget to say good-bye to Liban the Mermaid, exiled from the land she loves, and pining in sadness beneath the sea."

Connla and Nora kissed the fairy queen, and Connla, wearing his golden helmet and silken cloak, and carrying his shield and spear, led Nora with him. They passed from the palace through the garden of roses, through the flowery meadow, through the dark grey rocks, until they reached the golden strand; and there, sitting and singing the strange, sweet song, was Liban the Mermaid.

"And so you are going up to Erin," she said, "up through the covering waters. Kiss me, children, once again; and when

you are in Erin of the Streams, sometimes think of the exile from Erin beneath the sea."

And the children kissed the mermaid, and with sad hearts, bidding her good-bye, they walked along the golden strand. When they had gone what seemed to them a long way, they began to feel weary; and just then they saw coming towards them a little man in a red jacket leading a coal-black steed.

When they met the little man, he said: "Connla, put Nora up on this steed; then jump up before her."

Connla did as he was told, and when both of them were mounted.

"Now, Connla," said the little man, "catch the bridle in your hands, and you, Nora, clasp Connla round the waist, and close your eyes."

They did as they were bidden, and then the little man said, "Swash, swish!" and the steed shot up from the strand like a lark from the grass, and pierced the covering sea, and went bounding on over the level waters; and when his hoofs struck the hard ground, Connla and Nora opened their eyes, and they saw that they were galloping towards a shady wood.

On went the steed, and soon he was galloping beneath the branches that almost touched Connla's head. And on they went until they had passed through the wood, and then they saw rising up before them the "Golden Spear."

"Oh, Connla," said Nora, "we are at home at last."

"Yes," said Connla, "but where is the little house under the hill?"

And no little house was there; but in its stead was standing a lime-white mansion.

"What can this mean?" said Nora.

But before Connla could reply, the steed had galloped up to the door of the mansion, and, in the twinkling of an eye, Connla and Nora were standing on the ground outside the door, and the steed had vanished.

Before they could recover from their surprise the little mother came rushing out to them, and flung her arms around their necks, and kissed them both again and again.

"Oh, children! children! You are welcome home to me; for though I knew it was all for the best, my heart was lonely without you."

And Connla and Nora caught up the little mother in their arms, and they carried her into the hall and set her down on the floor.

"Oh, Nora!" said the little mother, "you are a head over me; and as for you, Connla, you look almost as tall as one of the round towers of Erin."

"That's what the fairy queen said, mother," said Nora.

"Blessings on the fairy queen," said the little mother. "Turn round, Connla, till I look at you."

Connla turned round, and the little mother said:

"Oh, Connla, with your golden helmet and your spear, and your glancing shield, and your silken cloak, you look like a king. But take them off, my boy, beautiful as they are. Your little mother would like to see you, her own brave boy, without any fairy finery."

And Connla laid aside his spear and shield, and took off his golden helmet and his silken cloak. Then he caught the little mother and kissed her, and lifted her up until she was as high as his head. And said he:

"Don't you know, little mother, I'd rather have you than all the world."

And that night, when they were sitting down by the fire together, you may be sure that in the whole world no people were half as happy as Nora, Connla, and the little mother.

V

The Fairy Tree of Dooros

Once upon a time the fairies of the west, going home from a hurling-match with the fairies of the lakes, rested in Dooros Wood for three days and three nights. They spent the days feasting and the nights dancing in the light of the moon, and they danced so hard that they wore the shoes off their feet, and for a whole week after the leprechauns, the fairies' shoemakers, were working night and day making new ones, and the rip, rap, tap, tap of their little hammers were heard in all the hedgerows.

The food on which the fairies feasted were little red berries, and were so like those that grow on the rowan tree that if you only looked at them you might mistake one for the other; but the fairy berries grow only in fairyland, and are sweeter than any fruit that grows here in this world, and if an old man, bent and grey, ate one of them, he became young and active and strong again; and if an old woman, withered and wrinkled, ate one of them, she became young and bright and fair; and if a little maiden who was not handsome ate of them, she became lovelier than the flower of beauty.

The fairies guarded the berries as carefully as a miser guards his gold, and whenever they were about to leave fairyland they had to promise in the presence of the king and queen that they would not give a single berry to mortal man, nor allow one to fall upon the earth; for if a single berry fell upon the earth a slender tree of many branches, bearing

clusters of berries, would at once spring up, and mortal men might eat of them.

But it chanced that this time they were in Dooros Wood they kept up the feasting and dancing so long, and were so full of joy because of their victory over the lake fairies, that one little, weeny fairy, not much bigger than my finger, lost his head, and dropped a berry in the wood.

When the feast was ended the fairies went back to fairyland, and were at home for more than a week before they knew of the little fellow's fault, and this is how they came to know of it.

A great wedding was about to come off, and the queen of the fairies sent six of her pages to Dooros Wood to catch fifty butterflies with golden spots on their purple wings, and fifty white without speck or spot, and fifty golden, yellow as the cowslip, to make a dress for herself, and a hundred white, without speck or spot, to make dresses for the bride and bridesmaids.

When the pages came near the wood they heard the most wonderful music, and the sky above them became quite dark, as if a cloud had shut out the sun. They looked up, and saw that the cloud was formed of bees, who in a great swarm were flying towards the wood and humming as they flew. Seeing this they were sore afraid until they saw the bees settling on a single tree, and on looking closely at the tree they saw it was covered with fairy berries.

The bees took no notice of the fairies, and so they were no longer afraid, and they hunted the butterflies until they had captured the full number of various colours. Then they returned to fairyland, and they told the queen about the bees and the berries, and the queen told the king.

The king was very angry, and he sent his heralds to the four corners of fairyland to summon all his subjects to his presence that he might find out without delay who was the culprit.

They all came except the little weeny fellow who dropped the berry, and of course everyone said that it was fear that kept him away, and that he must be guilty.

The heralds were at once sent in search of him, and after a while they found him hiding in a cluster of ferns, and brought him before the king.

The poor little fellow was so frightened that at first he could scarcely speak a word, but after a time he told how he never missed the berry until he had returned to fairyland, and that he was afraid to say anything to anyone about it.

The king, who would hear of no excuse, sentenced the little culprit to be banished into the land of giants beyond the mountains, to stay there forever and a day unless he could find a giant willing to go to Dooros Wood and guard the fairy tree. When the king had pronounced sentence everyone was very sorry, because the little fellow was a favourite with them all. No fairy harper upon his harp, or piper upon his pipe, or fiddler upon his fiddle, could play half so sweetly as he could play upon an ivy leaf; and when they remembered all the pleasant moonlit nights on which they had danced to his music, and thought that they should never hear or dance to it any more, their little hearts were filled with sorrow. The queen was as sad as any of her subjects, but the king's word should be obeyed.

When the time came for the little fellow to set out into exile the queen sent her head page to him with a handful of berries. These the queen said he was to offer to the giants, and say at the same time that the giant who was willing to guard the tree could feast on berries just as sweet from morn till night.

As the little fellow went on his way nearly all the fairies followed him to the borders of the land, and when they saw him go up the mountain towards the land of the giants, they all took off their little red caps and waved them until he was out of sight.

On he went walking all day and night, and when the sun rose on the morrow he was on the top of the mountain, and he could see the land of the giants in the valley stretched far below him. Before beginning his descent he turned round for a last glimpse of fairyland; but he could see nothing, for a thick, dark cloud shut it out from view. He was very sad, and tired, and footsore, and as he struggled down the rough mountain side, he could not help thinking of the soft, green woods and mossy pathways of the pleasant land he had left behind him.

When he awoke the ground was trembling, and a noise that sounded like thunder fell on his ears. He looked up and saw coming towards him a terrible giant, with one eye that burned like a live coal in the middle of his forehead, his mouth stretched from ear to ear, his teeth were long and crooked, the skin of his face was as black as night, and his arms and chest were all covered with black, shaggy hair; round his body was an iron band, and hanging from this by a chain was a great club with iron spikes. With one blow of this club he could break a rock into splinters, and fire could not burn him, and water could not drown him, and weapons could not wound him, and there was no way to kill him but by giving him three blows of his own club. And he was so bad-tempered that the other giants called him Sharvan the Surly. When the giant spied the red cap of the little fairy he gave the shout that sounded like thunder. The poor fairy was shaking from head to foot.

"What brought you here?" said the giant.

"Please, Mr. Giant," said the fairy, "the king of the fairies banished me here, and here I must stay forever and a day, unless you come and guard the fairy tree in Dooros Wood."

"Unless what?" roared the giant, and he gave the fairy a touch of his foot that sent the little fellow rolling down head over heels.

The poor fairy lay as if he were dead, and then the giant,

feeling sorry for what he had done, took him up gently between his finger and thumb.

"Don't be frightened, little man," said he "and now, tell me all about the tree."

"It is the tree of the fairy berry that grows in the Wood of Dooros," said the fairy, "and I have some of the berries with me."

"Oh, you have, have you?" said the giant. "Let me see them."

The fairy took three berries from the pocket of his little green coat, and gave them to the giant.

The giant looked at them for a second. He then swallowed the three together, and when he had done so, he felt so happy that he began to shout and dance for joy,

"More, you little thief!" said he. "More, you little what's your name?" said the giant.

"Pinkeen, please, Mr. Giant," said the fairy, as he gave up all the berries.

The giant shouted louder than before, and his shouts were heard by all the other giants, who came running towards him.

When Sharvan saw them coming, he caught up Pinkeen, and put him in his pocket, that they shouldn't see him.

"What were you shouting for?" said the giants. "Because," said Sharvan, "that rock there fell down on my big toe."

"You did not shout like a man that was hurt," said they.

"What is it to you what way I shouted?" said he.

"You might give a civil answer to a civil question," said they; "but sure you were always Sharvan the Surly;" and they went away.

When the giants were out of sight, Sharvan took Pinkeen out of his wallet.

"Some more berries, you little thief I mean little Pinkeen," said he.

"I have not anymore," said Pinkeen; "but if you will guard the tree in Dooros Wood you can feast on them from morn



Sharvan took him up gently
between his finger and his thumb.

till night."

"I'll guard every tree in the wood, if I may do that," said the giant.

"You'll have to guard only one," said Pinkeen.

"How am I to get to it?" said Sharvan.

"You must first come with me towards fairyland," said the fairy.

"Very well," said Sharvan; "let us go." And he took up the fairy and put him into his wallet, and before very long they were on the top of the mountain. Then the giant looked around towards the giant's land; but a black cloud shut it out from view, while the sun was shining on the valley that lay before him, and he could see away in the distance the green woods and shining waters of fairyland.

It was not long until he reached its borders, but when he tried to cross them his feet stuck to the ground and he could not move a step. Sharvan gave three loud shouts that were heard all over fairyland, and made the trees in the woods tremble, as if the wind of a storm was sweeping over them.

"Oh, please, Mr. Giant, let me out," said Pinkeen. Sharvan took out the little fellow, who, as soon as he saw he was on the borders of fairyland ran as fast as his legs could carry him, and before he had gone very far he met all the little fairies who, hearing the shouts of the giant, came trooping out from the ferns to see what was the matter. Pinkeen told them it was the giant who was to guard the tree, shouting because he was stuck fast on the borders, and they need have no fear of him. The fairies were so delighted to have Pinkeen back again, that they took him up on their shoulders and carried him to the king's palace, and all the harpers and pipers and fiddlers marched before him playing the most jocund music that was ever heard. The king and queen were on the lawn in front of the palace when the gay procession came up and halted before them. The queen's eyes glistened with pleasure when she saw the little favourite, and the king was also glad

at heart, but he looked very grave as he said: "Why have you returned, sirrah?" Then Pinkeen told his majesty that he had brought with him a giant who was willing to guard the fairy tree.

"And who is he and where is he?" asked the king.

"The other giants called him Sharvan the Surly," said Pinkeen, "and he is stuck fast outside the borders of fairyland."

"It is well," said the king, "you are pardoned."

When the fairies heard this they tossed their little red caps in the air, and cheered so loudly that a bee who was clinging to a rose-bud fell senseless to the ground.

Then the king ordered one of his pages to take a handful of berries, and to go to Sharvan and show him the way to Dooros Wood. The page, taking the berries with him, went off to Sharvan, whose roaring nearly frightened the poor little fellow to death. But as soon as the giant tasted the berries he got into good humour, and he asked the page if he could remove the spell of enchantment from him.

"I can," said the page, "and I will if you promise me that you will not try to cross the borders of fairyland."

"I promise that, with all my heart," said the giant. "But hurry on, my little man, for there are pins and needles in my legs."

The page plucked a cowslip, and picking out the five little crimson spots in the cup of it, he flung one to the north, and one to the south, and one to the east, and one to the west, and one up into the sky, and the spell was broken, and the giant's limbs were free. Then Sharvan and the fairy page set off for Dooros Wood, and it was not long until they came within view of the fairy tree. When Sharvan saw the berries glistening in the sun, he gave a shout so loud and strong that the wind of it blew the little fairy back to fairyland.

But he had to return to the wood to tell the giant that he was to stay all day at the foot of the tree ready to do battle

with anyone who might come to steal the berries, and that during the night be was to sleep amongst the branches.

"All right," said the giant, who could scarcely speak, as his mouth was full of berries.

Well, the fame of the fairy-tree spread far and wide, and every day some adventurer came to try if he could carry away some of the berries; but the giant, true to his word, was always on the watch, and not a single day passed on which he did not fight and slay a daring champion, and the giant never received a wound, for fire could not burn him, nor water drown him, nor weapon wound him.

Now, at this time, when Sharvan was keeping watch and ward over the tree, a cruel king was reigning over the lands that looked towards the rising sun. He had slain the rightful king by foul means, and his subjects, loving their murdered sovereign, hated the usurper; but much as they hated him they feared him more, for he was brave and masterful, and he was armed with a helmet and shield which no weapon made by mortal hands could pierce, and he carried always with him two javelins that never missed their mark, and were so fatal that they were called "the shafts of death." The murdered king had two children a boy, whose name was Niall, and a girl, who was called Rosaleen that is, little Kose; but no rose that ever bloomed was half as sweet or fresh or fair as she. Cruel as the tyrant king was, he was afraid of the people to kill the children. He sent the boy adrift on the sea in an open boat, hoping the waves would swallow it; and he got an old witch to cast the spell of deformity over Rosaleen, and under the spell her beauty faded, until at last she became so ugly and wasted that scarcely anyone would speak to her. And, shunned by everyone, she spent her days in the out-houses with the cattle, and every night she cried herself to sleep.

One day, when she was very lonely, a little robin came to pick the crumbs that had fallen about her feet. He appeared so tame that she offered him the bread from her hand, and

when he took it she cried with joy at finding that there was one living thing that did not shun her. After this the robin came every day, and he sang so sweetly for her that she almost forgot her loneliness and misery. But once while the robin was with her the tyrant king's daughter, who was very beautiful, passed with her maids of honour, and, seeing Rosaleen, the princess said:

"Oh, there is that horrid ugly thing."

The maids laughed and giggled, and said they had never seen such a fright.

Poor Rosaleen felt as if her heart would break, and when the princess and her maids were out of sight she almost cried her eyes out. When the robin saw her crying he perched on her shoulder and rubbed his little head against her neck and chirruped softly in her ear, and Rosaleen was comforted, for she felt she had at least one friend in the world, although it was only a little robin. But the robin could do more for her than she could dream of. He heard the remark made by the princess, and he saw Rosaleen's tears, and he knew now why she was shunned by everybody, and why she was so unhappy. And that very evening he flew off to Dooros Wood, and called on a cousin of his and told him all about Rosaleen.

"And you want some of the fairy berries, I suppose," said his cousin, Robin of the Wood.

"I do," said Rosaleen's little friend.

"Ah," said Robin of the Wood, "times have changed since you were here last. The tree is guarded now all the day long by a surly giant. He sleeps in the branches during the night, and he breathes upon them and around them every morning, and his breath is poison to bird and bee. There is only one chance open, and if you try that it may cost you your life."

"Then tell me what it is, for I would give a hundred lives for Rosaleen," said her own little robin.

"Well," said Robin of the Wood, "every day a champion comes to battle with the giant, and the giant, before he begins

the fight, puts a branch of berries in the iron belt that's around his waist, so that when he feels tired or thirsty he can refresh himself, and there is just a bare chance, while he is fighting, of picking one of the berries from the branch; but if his breath fall on you it is certain death."

"I will take the chance," said Rosaleen's robin.

"Very well," said the other. And the two birds flew through the wood until they came within sight of the fairy tree. The giant was lying stretched at the foot of it, eating the berries; but it was not long until a warrior came, who challenged him to battle. The giant jumped up, and plucking a branch from the tree stuck it in his belt, and swinging his iron club above his head strode towards the warrior, and the fight began. The robin perched on a tree behind the giant, and watched and waited for his chance; but it was a long time coming, for the berries were in front of the giant's belt. At last the giant, with one great blow, struck the warrior down, but as he did so he stumbled and fell upon him, and before he had time to recover himself the little robin darted towards him like a flash and picked off one of the berries, and then, as fast as wings could carry him, he flew towards home, and on his way he passed over a troop of warriors on snow-white steeds. All the horsemen except one wore silver helmets and shining mantles of green silk, fastened by brooches of red gold, but the chief, who rode at the head of the troop, wore a golden helmet, and his mantle was of yellow silk, and he looked by far the noblest of them all. When the robin had left the horsemen far behind him he spied Rosaleen sitting outside the palace gates bemoaning her fate. The robin perched upon her shoulder, and almost before she knew he was there he put the berry between her lips, and the taste was so delicious that Rosaleen ate it at once, and that very moment the witch's withering spell passed away from her, and she became as lovely as the flower of beauty. Just then the warriors on the snow-white steeds came up, and the chief with the mantle of

yellow silk and the golden helmet leaped from his horse, and bending his knee before her, said:

"Fairest of all fair maidens, you are surely the daughter of the king of these realms, even though you are without the palace gates, unattended, and wear not royal robes. I am the Prince of the Sunny Valleys."

"Daughter of a king I am," said Rosaleen, "but not of the king who rules these realms."

And saying this she fled, leaving the prince wondering who she could be. The prince then ordered his trumpeters to give notice of his presence outside the palace, and in a few moments the king and all his nobles came out to greet the prince and his warriors, and give them welcome. That night a great feast was spread in the banquet-hall, and the Prince of the Sunny Valleys sat by the king, and beside the prince sat the king's beautiful daughter, and then in due order sat the nobles of the court and the warriors who had come with the prince, and on the wall behind each noble and warrior his shield and helmet were suspended, flashing radiance through the room. During the feast the prince spoke most graciously to the lovely lady at his side, but all the time he was thinking of the unknown beauty he had met outside the palace gates, and his heart longed for another glimpse of her. When the feast was ended, and the jewelled drinking-cups had gone merrily around the table, the bards sang, to the accompaniment of harps, the "Courtship of the Lady Eimer," and as they pictured her radiant beauty outshining that of all her maidens, the prince thought that fair as Lady Eimer was there was one still fairer.

When the feast was ended the king asked the prince what brought him into his realms.

"I come," said the prince, "to look for a bride, for it was foretold to me in my own country that here only I should find the lady who is destined to share my throne, and fame reported that in your kingdom are to be found the loveliest

maidens in all the world, and I can well believe that," added the prince, "after what I have seen today."

When the king's daughter heard this she hung down her head and blushed like a rose, for, of course, she thought the prince was alluding only to herself, as she did not know that he had seen Rosaleen, and she had not heard of the restoration of her beauty.

Before another word could be spoken a great noise and the clang of arms were heard outside the palace. The king and his guests started from their seats and drew their swords, and the bards raised the song of battle; but their voices were stilled and their harps silenced when they saw at the threshold of the banquet hall a battle champion, in whose face they recognised the features of their murdered king.

"'Tis Niall come back to claim his father's throne," said the chief bard. "Long live Niall!"

"Long live Niall!" answered all the others.

The king, white with rage and amazement, turned to the chiefs and nobles of his court, and cried out:

"Is there none loyal enough to drive that intruder from the banquet hall?"

But no one stirred, and no answer was given. Then the king rushed forward alone, but before he could reach the spot where Niall was standing he was seized by a dozen chiefs and at once disarmed.

During this scene the king's daughter had fled frightened; but Rosaleen, attracted by the noise, and hearing her brother's name and the cheers which greeted it, had entered the banquet hall unperceived by anyone. But when her presence was discovered every eye was dazzled with her beauty. Niall looked at her for a second, wondering if the radiant maiden before him could be the little sister he had been separated from for so many years. In another second she was clasped in his arms.

Then the feast was spread again, and Niall told the story

of his adventures; and when the Prince of the Sunny Valley asked for the hand of Rosaleen, Niall told his lovely sister to speak for herself. With downcast eyes and smiling lips she said, "yes," and that very day was the gayest and brightest wedding that ever took place, and Rosaleen became the prince's bride.

In her happiness she did not forget the little robin, who was her friend in sorrow. She took him home with her to Sunny Valleys, and every day she fed him with her own hands, and every day he sang for her the sweetest songs that were ever heard in lady's bower.

VI

The Enchanted Cave

A long, long time ago, Prince Cuglas, master of the hounds to the high King of Erin, set out from Tara to the chase. As he was leaving the palace the light mists were drifting away from the hill-tops, and the rays of the morning sun were falling aslant on the grinan or sunny bower of the Princess Ailinn. Glancing towards it the prince doffed his plumed and jewelled hunting-cap, and the princess answered his salute by a wave of her little hand, that was as white as a wild rose in the hedges in June, and leaning from her bower, she watched the huntsman until his tossing plumes were hidden by the green waving branches of the woods.

The Princess Ailinn was over head and ears in love with Cuglas, and Cuglas was over head and ears in love with the Princess Ailinn, and he believed that never was summer morning half as bright, or as sweet, or as fair as she. The glimpse which he had just caught of her filled his heart with delight, and almost put all thought of hunting out of his head, when suddenly the tuneful cries of the hounds, answered by a hundred echoes from the groves, broke upon his ear.

The dogs had started a dappled deer that bounded away through the forest. The prince, spurring his gallant steed, pushed on in eager pursuit.

On through the forest sped the deer, through soft, green, secret ways and flowery dells, then out from the forest, up heathery hills, and over long stretches of moorland, and across brown rushing streams, sometimes in view of the hounds, sometimes lost to sight, but always ahead of them.

All day long the chase continued, and at last, when the

sun was sinking, the dogs were close upon the panting deer, and the prince believed he was about to secure his game, when the deer suddenly disappeared through the mouth of a cave which opened before him. The dogs followed at his heels, and the prince endeavoured to rein in his steed, but the impetuous animal bore him on, and soon was clattering over the stony floor of the cave in perfect darkness. Cuglass could hear ahead of him the cries of the hounds growing fainter and fainter, as they increased the distance between them and him. Then the cries ceased altogether, and the only sound the prince heard was the noise of his horse's hoofs sounding in the hollow cave. Once more he endeavoured to check his career, but the reins broke in his hands, and in that instant the prince felt the horse had taken a plunge into a gulf, and was sinking down and down, as a stone cast from the summit of a cliff sinks down to the sea. At last the horse struck the ground again, and the prince was almost thrown out of his saddle, but he succeeded in regaining his seat. Then on through the darkness galloped the steed, and when he came into the light the prince's eyes were for some time unable to bear it. But when he got used to the brightness he saw he was galloping over a grassy plain, and in the distance he perceived the hounds rushing towards a wood faintly visible through a luminous summer haze. The prince galloped on, and as he approached the wood he saw coming towards him a comely champion, wearing a shining brown cloak, fastened by a bright bronze spear-like brooch, and bearing a white hazel wand in one hand, and a single-edged sword with a hilt made from the tooth of a sea-horse in the other; and the prince knew by the dress of the champion, and by his wand and sword, that he was a royal herald. As the herald came close to him the prince's steed stopped of his own accord.

"You are welcome, Cuglas," said the herald, "and I have been sent by the Princess Crede to greet you and to lead you to her court, where you have been so long expected."



The prince endeavored to reign in his steed,
but the impetuous animal bore him on.

"I know not how this may be," said Cuglas.

"How it has come about I shall tell you as we go along," said the herald. "The Princess Crede is the Queen of the Floating Island. And it chanced, once upon a day, when she was visiting her fairy kinsmen, who dwell in one of the pleasant hills that lie near Tara, she saw you with the high king and princes and nobles of Erin following the chase. And seeing you her heart went out to you, and wishing to bring you to her court, she sent one of her nymphs, in the form of a deer, to lure you on through the cave, which is the entrance to this land."

"I am deeply honoured by the preference shown me by the princess," said Cuglas, "but I may not tarry in her court; for above in Erin there is the Lady Ailinn, the loveliest of all the ladies who grace the royal palace, and before the princess and chiefs of Erin she has promised to be my bride."

"Of that I know not," said the herald; "but a true champion, like you, cannot, I know, refuse to come with me to the court of the Princess Crede."

As the herald had said these words the prince and he were on the verge of the wood, and they entered upon a mossy pathway that broadened out as they advanced until it was as wide as one of the great roads of Erin. Before they had gone very far the prince heard the tinkling of silver bells in the distance, and almost as soon as he heard them he saw coming up towards him a troop of warriors on coal black steeds. All the warriors wore helmets of shining silver, and cloaks of blue silk. And on the horses' breasts were crescents of silver, on which were hung tiny silver bells, shaking out music with the motion of the horses. As the prince approached the champions they lowered their spears, and dividing in two lines the prince and the herald passed between the ranks, and the champions, forming again, followed on behind the prince.

At last they passed through the wood, and they found themselves on a green plain, speckled with flowers, and they

had not gone far when the prince saw coming towards him a hundred champions on snow-white steeds, and around the breasts of the steeds were crescents of gold, from which were hanging little golden bells. The warriors all wore golden helmets, and the shafts of their shining spears were of gold, and golden sandals on their feet, and yellow silken mantles fell down over their shoulders. And when the prince came near them they lowered their lances, and then they turned their horses' heads around and marched before him. And it was not long until above the pleasant jingle of the bells the prince heard the measured strains of music, and he saw coming towards him a band of harpers, dressed in green and gold, and when the harpers had saluted the prince they marched in front of the cavalcade, playing all the time, and it was not long until they came to a stream that ran like a blue riband around the foot of a green hill, on the top of which was a sparkling palace; the stream was crossed by a golden bridge, so narrow that the horsemen had to go two-by-two. The herald asked the prince to halt and to allow all the champions to go before him; and the cavalcade ascended the hill, the sunlight brightly glancing on helmet and on lance, and when it reached the palace the horsemen filed around the walls.

When at length the prince and herald crossed the bridge and began to climb the hill, the prince thought he felt the ground moving under them, and on looking back he could see no sign of the golden bridge, and the blue stream had already become as wide as a great river, and was becoming wider every second.

"You are on the floating island now," said the herald, "and before you is the palace of the Princess Crede."

At that moment the queen came out through the palace door, and the prince was so dazzled by her beauty, that only for the golden bracelet he wore upon his right arm, under the sleeve of his silken tunic, he might almost have forgotten the Princess Ailinn. This bracelet was made by the dwarfs who

dwell in the heart of the Scandinavian Mountains, and was sent with other costly presents by the King of Scandinavia to the King of Erin, and he gave it to the princess, and it was the virtue of this bracelet, that whoever was wearing it could not forget the person who gave it to him, and it could never be loosened from the arm by any art or magic spell; but if the wearer, even for a single moment, liked anyone better than the person who gave it to him, that very moment the bracelet fell off from the arm and could never again be fastened on. And when the princess promised her hand in marriage to the Prince Cuglas, she closed the bracelet on his arm.

The fairy queen knew nothing about the bracelet, and she hoped that before the prince was long in the floating island he would forget all about the princess.

"You are welcome, Cuglass," said the queen, as she held out her hand, and Cuglas, having thanked her for her welcome, they entered the palace together.

"You must be weary after your long journey," said the queen. "My page will lead you to your apartments, where a bath of the cool blue waters of the lake has been made ready for you, and when you have taken your bath the pages will lead you to the banquet hall, where the feast is spread."

At the feast the prince was seated beside the queen, and she talked to him of all the pleasures that were in store for him in fairyland, where pain, and sickness, and sorrow, and old age, are unknown, and where every rosy hour that flies is brighter than the one that has fled before it. And when the feast was ended the queen opened the dance with the prince, and it was not until the moon was high above the floating island that the prince retired to rest.

He was so tired after his journey and the dancing that he fell into a sound sleep. When he awoke the next morning the sun was shining brightly, and he heard outside the palace the jingle of bells and the music of baying hounds, and his heart was stirred by memories of the many pleasant days on which

he had led the chase over the plains and through the green woods of Tara.

He looked out through the window, and he saw all the fairy champions mounted on their steeds ready for the chase, and at their head the fairy queen. And at that moment the pages came to say the queen wished to know if he would join them, and the prince went out and found his steed ready saddled and bridled, and they spent the day hunting in the forest that stretched away for miles behind the palace, and the night in feasting and dancing.

When the prince awoke the following morning he was summoned by the pages to the presence of the queen. The prince found the queen on the lawn outside the palace surrounded by her court.

"We shall go on the lake today, Cuglas," said the queen, and taking his arm she led him along the water's edge, all the courtiers following.

When she was close to the water she waved her wand, and in a second a thousand boats, shining like glass, shot up from beneath the lake and set their bows against the bank. The queen and Cuglas stepped into one, and when they were seated two fairy harpers took their places in the prow. All the other boats were soon thronged by fairies, and then the queen waved her wand again, and an awning of purple silk rose over the boat, and silken awning of various colours over the others, and the royal boat moved off from the bank followed by all the rest, and in every boat sat a harper with a golden harp, and when the queen waved her wand for the third time, the harpers struck the trembling chords, and to the sound of the delightful music the boats glided over the sunlit lake. And on they went until they approached the mouth of a gentle river sliding down between banks clad with trees. Up the river, close to the bank and under the drooping trees, they sailed, and when they came to a bend in the river, from which the lake could be no longer seen, they pushed their prows in

against the bank, and the queen and Cuglas, and all the party, left the boats and went on under the trees until they came to a mossy glade.

Then the queen waved her wand, and silken couches were spread under the trees, and she and Cuglas sat on one apart from the others, and the courtiers took their places in proper order.

And the queen waved her wand again, and wind shook the trees above them, and the most luscious fruit that was ever tasted fell down into their hands; and when the feast was over there was dancing in the glades to the music of the harps, and when they were tired dancing they set out for the boats, and the moon was rising above the trees as they sailed away over the lake, and it was not long until they reached the bank below the fairy palace.

Well, between hunting in the forest, and sailing over the lake, and dancing in the greenwood glade and in the banquet hall, the days passed, but all the time the prince was thinking of the Princess Ailinn, and one moonlit night, when he was lying awake on his couch thinking of her, a shadow was suddenly cast on the floor.

The prince looked towards the window, and what should he see sitting on the sill outside but a little woman tapping the pane with a golden bodkin.

The prince jumped from his couch and opened the window, and the little woman floated on the moonbeams into the room and sat down on the floor.

"You are thinking of the Princess Ailinn," said the little woman.

"I never think of anyone else," said the prince.

"I know that," said the little woman, "and it's because of your love for each other, and because her mother was a friend to me in the days gone by, that I have come here to try and help you; but there is not much time for talking, the night advances. At the bank below a boat awaits you. Step into it

and it will lead you to the mainland, and when you reach it you will find before you a path that will take you to the green fields of Erin and the plains of Tara. I know you will have to face danger. I know not what kind of danger; but whatever it may be do not draw your sword before you tread upon the mainland, for if you do you shall never reach it, and the boat will come back again to the floating island; and now go and may luck go with you;" and saying this the little woman climbed up the moonbeams and disappeared.

The prince left the palace and descended to the lake, and there before him he saw a glistening boat; he stepped into it, and the boat went on and on beneath the moon, and at last he saw the mainland, and he could trace a winding pathway going away from the shore. The sight filled his heart with joy, but suddenly the milk-white moonshine died away, and looking up to the sky he saw the moon turning fiery red, and the waters of the lake, shining like silver a moment before, took a blood-red hue, and a wind arose that stirred the waters, and they leaped up against the little boat, tossing it from side to side. While Cuglas was wondering at the change, he heard a strange, unearthly noise ahead of him, and a bristling monster, lifting its claws above the water, in a moment was beside the boat and stuck one of his claws in the left arm of the prince, and pierced the flesh to the bone. Maddened by the pain the prince drew his sword and chopped off the monster's claw. The monster disappeared beneath the lake, and, as it did so, the colour of the water changed, and the silver moonlight shone down from the sky again, but the boat no longer went on towards the mainland, but sped back towards the floating island, while forth from the island came a fleet of fairy boats to meet it, led by the shallop of the fairy queen. The queen greeted the prince as if she knew not of his attempted flight, and to the music of the harps the fleet returned to the palace.

The next day passed and the night came, and again the

prince was lying on the couch, thinking of the Princess Ailinn, and again he saw the shadow on the floor and heard the tapping against the window.

And when he opened it the little woman slid into the room.

"You failed last night," she said, "but I come to give you another chance. Tomorrow the queen must set out on a visit to her fairy kinsmen, who dwell in the green hill near the plain of Tara; she cannot take you with her, for if your feet once touched the green grass that grows in the fruitful fields of Erin, she could never bring you back again. And so, when you find she has left the palace, go at once into the banquet hall and look behind the throne, and you will see a small door let down into the ground. Pull this up and descend the steps which you will see. Where they lead to I cannot tell. What dangers may be before you I do not know; but this I know, if you accept anything, no matter what it is, from anyone you may meet on your way, you shall not set foot on the soil of Erin."

And having said this the little woman, rising from the floor, floated out through the window.

The prince returned to his couch, and the next morning, as soon as he heard the queen had left the palace, he hastened to the banquet hall. He discovered the door and descended the steps, and he found himself in a gloomy and lonesome valley. Jagged mountains, black as night, rose on either side, and huge rocks seemed ready to topple down upon him at every step. Through broken clouds a watery moon shed a faint, fitful light, that came and went as the clouds, driven by a moaning wind, passed over the valley.

Cuglas, nothing daunted, pushed on boldly until a bank of cloud shut out completely the struggling moon, and closing over the valley covered it like a pall, leaving him in perfect darkness. At the same moment the moaning wind died away, and with it died away all sound. The darkness and the death-

like silence sent an icy chill to the heart of Cuglas. He held his hand close to his eyes, but he saw it not. He shouted that he might hear the sound of his own voice, but he heard it not. He stamped his foot on the rocky ground, but no sound was returned to him. He rattled his sword in its brazen scabbard, but it gave no answer back to him. His heart grew colder and colder, when suddenly the cloud above him was rent in a dozen places, and lightning flashed through the valley, and the thunder rolled over the echoing mountains. In the lurid glare of the lightning Cuglas saw a hundred ghostly forms sweeping towards him, uttering as they came nearer and nearer shrieks so terrible that the silence of death could more easily be borne. Cuglas turned to escape, but they hemmed him round, and pressed their clammy hands upon his face.

With a yell of horror he drew his sword and slashed about him, and that very moment the forms vanished, the thunder ceased, the dark cloud passed, and the sun shone out as bright as on a summer day, and then Cuglas knew the forms he had seen were those of the wild people of the glen.

With renewed courage he pursued his way through the valley, and after three or four windings it took him out upon a sandy desert. He had no sooner set foot upon the desert than he heard behind him a crashing sound louder than thunder. He looked around, and he saw that the walls of mountain through which he had just passed had fallen into the valley, and filled it up so that he could no longer tell where it had been.

The sun was beating fiercely on the desert, and the sands were almost as hot as burning cinders; and as Cuglas advanced over them his body became dried up, and his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and when his thirst was at its height a fountain of sparkling water sprang up in the burning plain a few paces in front of him; but when he came up quite close to it and stretched out his parched hands to cool them in the limped waters, the fountain vanished as suddenly as it

appeared. With great pain, and almost choking with heat and thirst, he struggled on, and again the fountain sprang up in front of him and moved before him, almost within his reach. At last he came to the end of the desert, and he saw a green hill up which a pathway climbed; but as he came to the foot of the hill, there, sitting right in his way, was a beautiful fairy holding out towards him a crystal cup, over the rim of which flowed water as clear as crystal. Unable to resist the temptation, the prince seized the cold, bright goblet, and drank the water. When he did so his thirst vanished, but the fairy, and the green hill, and the burning desert disappeared, and he was standing in the forest behind the palace of the fairy queen.

That evening the queen returned, and at the feast she talked as gaily to the prince as if she knew not of his attempt to leave the Floating Island, and the prince spoke as gaily as he could to her, although in his heart there was sadness when he remembered that if he had only dashed away the crystal cup, he would be at that moment in the royal banquet hall of Tara, sitting beside the Princess Ailinn.

And he thought the feast would never end; but it was over at last, and the prince returned to his apartments. And that night, as he lay on his couch, he kept his eyes fixed upon the window; but hours passed, and there was no sign of anyone. At long last, and when he had given up all hope of seeing her, he heard a tapping at the window, and he got up and opened it, and the little woman came in.

"You failed again today," said she "failed just at the very moment when you were about to step on the green hills of Erin. I can give you only one chance more. It will be your last. The queen will go hunting in the morning. Join the hunt, and when you are separated from the rest of the party in the wood throw your reins upon your horse's neck and he will lead you to the edge of the lake. Then cast this golden bodkin into the lake in the direction of the mainland, and a golden bridge will be thrown across, over which you can pass safely to the fields

of Erin; but take care and do not draw your sword, for if you do your steed will bear you back again to the Floating Island, and here you must remain forever." Then handing the bodkin to the prince, and saying good-bye, the little woman disappeared.

The next morning the queen and the prince and all the court went out to hunt, and a fleet white deer started out before them, and the royal party pressed after him in pursuit. The prince's steed outstripped the others, and when he was alone the prince flung the reins upon his horse's neck, and before long he came to the edge of the lake.

Then the prince cast the bodkin on to the water, and a golden bridge was thrown across to the mainland, and the horse galloped on to it, and when the prince was more than half-way he saw riding towards him a champion wearing a silver helmet, and carrying on his left arm a silver shield, and holding in his right hand a gleaming sword. As he came nearer he struck his shield with his sword and challenged the prince to battle. The prince's sword almost leaped out of its scabbard at the martial sound, and, like a true knight of Tara, he dashed against his foe, and swinging his sword above his head, with one blow he clove the silver helmet, and the strange warrior reeled from his horse and fell upon the golden bridge. The prince, content with this achievement, spurred his horse to pass the fallen champion, but the horse refused to stir, and the bridge broke in two almost at his feet, and the part of it between him and the mainland disappeared beneath the lake, carrying with it the horse and the body of the champion, and before the prince could recover from his surprise, his steed wheeled round and was galloping back, and when he reached the land he rushed through the forest, and the prince was not able to pull him up until he came to the palace door.

All that night the prince lay awake on his couch with his eyes fixed upon the window, but no shadow fell upon the floor, and there was no tapping at the pane, and with a heavy

heart he joined the hunting party in the morning. And day followed day, and his heart was sadder and sadder, and found no pleasure in the joys and delights of fairyland. And when all in the palace were at rest he used to roam through the forest, always thinking of the Princess Ailinn, and hoping against hope that the little woman would come again to him, but at last he began to despair of ever seeing her. It chanced one night he rambled so far that he found himself on the verge of the lake, at the very spot from which the golden bridge had been thrown across the waters, and as he gazed wistfully upon them a boat shot up and came swiftly to the bank, and who should he see sitting in the stern but the little woman.

"Ah, Cuglas, Cuglas," she said, "I gave you three chances, and you failed in all of them."

"I should have borne the pain inflicted by the monster's claw," said Cuglas. "I should have borne the thirst on the sandy desert, and dashed the crystal cup untasted from the fairy's hand; but I could never have faced the nobles and chiefs of Erin if I had refused to meet the challenge of the battle champion on the golden bridge."

"And you would have been no true knight of Erin, and you would not have been worthy of the wee girl who loves you, the bonny Princess Ailinn, if you had refused to meet it," said the little woman; "but for all that you can never return to the fair hills of Erin. But cheer up, Cuglas, there are mossy ways and forest paths and nestling bowers in fairyland. Lonely they are, I know, in your eyes now," said the little woman; "but maybe," she added, with a laugh as musical as the ripple on a streamlet when summer is in the air, "maybe you won't always think them so lonely."

"You think I'll forget Ailinn for the fairy queen," said Cuglas, with a sigh.

"I don't think anything of the kind," said she.

"Then what do you mean?" said the prince.

"Oh, I mean what I mean," said the little woman. "But I

can't stop here all night talking to you: and, indeed, it is in your bed you ought to be yourself. So now good night; and I have no more to say, except that perhaps, if you happen to be here this night week at this very hour, when the moon will be on the waters, you will see.

"But no matter what you will see," said she; "I must be off."

And before the prince could say another word the boat sped away from the bank, and he was alone. He went back to the palace, and he fell asleep that night only to dream of the Princess Ailinn.

As for the princess, she was pining away in the palace of Tara, the colour had fled from her cheeks, and her eyes, which had been once so bright they would have lighted darkness like a star, lost nearly all their lustre, and the king's leeches could do nothing for her, and at last they gave up all hope, and the king and queen of Erin and the ladies of the court watched her couch by night and by day sadly waiting for her last hour.

At length one day, when the sun was shining brightly over Tara's plain, and its light, softened by the intervening curtains, was falling in the sick chamber, the royal watchers noticed a sweet change coming over the face of the princess; the bloom of love and youth were flushing on her cheeks, and from her eyes shone out the old, soft, tender light, and they began to hope she was about to be restored to them, when suddenly the room was in darkness as if the night had swept across the sky, and blotted out the sun. Then they heard the sound of fairy music, and over the couch where the princess lay they beheld a gleam of golden light, but only for a moment; and again there was perfect darkness, and the fairy music ceased. Then, as suddenly as it came the darkness vanished, the softened sunlight once more filled the chamber, and rested upon the couch; but the couch was empty, and the royal watchers, looking at each other, said in whispers: "The

fairies have carried away the Princess Ailinn to fairyland."

Well, that very day the prince roamed by himself through the forest, counting the hours until the day would fade in the sky and the moon come climbing up, and at last, when it was shining full above the waters, he went down to the verge of the lake, and he looked out over the gleaming surface watching for the vision promised by the little woman. But he could see nothing, and was about to turn away when he heard the faint sound of fairy music. He listened and listened, and the sound came nearer and clearer, and away in the distance, like drops of glistening water breaking the level of the lake, he saw a fleet of fairy boats, and he thought it was the fairy queen sailing in the moonlight. And it was the fairy queen, and soon he was able to recognise the royal shallop leading the others, and as it came close to the bank he saw the little woman sitting in the prow between the little harpers, and at the stern was the fairy queen, and by her side the lady of his heart, the Princess Ailinn. In a second the boat was against the bank, and the princess in his arms. And he kissed her again and again.

"And have you never a kiss for me," said the little woman, tapping his hand with the little gold bodkin.

"A kiss and a dozen," said Cuglas, as he caught the little fairy up in his arms.

"Oh, fie, Cuglas," said the queen.

"Oh, the princess isn't one bit jealous," said the little woman. "Are you, Ailinn?"

"Indeed I am not," said Ailinn.

"And you should not be," said the fairy queen, "for never lady yet had truer knight than Cuglas. I loved him, and I love him dearly. I lured him here hoping that in the delights of fairyland he might forget you. It was all in vain. I know now that there is one thing no fairy power above or below the stars, or beneath the waters, can ever subdue, and that is love. And here together forever shall you and Cuglas dwell, where old

age shall never come upon you, and where pain or sorrow or sickness are unknown."

And Cuglas never returned to the fair hills of Erin, and ages passed away since the morning he followed the hounds into the fatal cave, but his story was remembered by the firesides, and sometimes, even yet, the herdboy watching his cattle in the fields hears the tuneful cry of hounds, and follows it till it leads him to a darksome cave, and as fearfully he listens to the sound becoming fainter and fainter he hears the clatter of hoofs over the stony floor, and to this day the cave bears the name of the prince who entered it never to return.*

* Uaimh Belaigh Conglais, the cave of the road of Cuglas now Baltinglass in the county Wicklow.

VII

The Huntsman's Son

A long, long time ago there lived in a little hut on the borders of a great forest a huntsman and his wife and son. From his earliest years the boy, whose name was Fergus, used to hunt with his father in the forest, and he grew up strong and active, sure and swift-footed as a deer, and as free and fearless as the wind. He was tall and handsome; as supple as a mountain ash, his lips were as red as its berries; his eyes were as blue as the skies in spring; and his hair fell down over his shoulders like a shower of gold. His heart was as light as a bird's, and no bird was fonder of green woods and waving branches. He had lived since his birth in the hut in the forest, and had never wished to leave it, until one winter night a wandering minstrel sought shelter there, and paid for his night's lodging with songs of love and battle. Ever since that night Fergus pined for another life. He no longer found joy in the music of the hounds or in the cries of the huntsmen in forest glades. He yearned for the chance of battle, and the clang of shields, and the fierce shouts of fighting warriors, and he spent all his spare hours practising on the harp and learning the use of arms, for in those days the bravest warriors were also bards. In this way the spring and summer and autumn passed; and when the winter came again it chanced that on a stormy night, when thunder was rattling through the forest, smiting the huge oaks and hurling them crashing to the earth, Fergus lay awake thinking of his present lot, and

wondering what the future might have in store for him. The lightning was playing around the hut, and every now and then a flash brightened up the interior.

After a peal, louder than any which had preceded it, Fergus heard three loud knocks at the door. He called out to his parents that someone was knocking.

"If that is so," said his father, "open at once; this is no night to keep a poor wanderer outside our door."

Fergus did as he was bidden, and as he opened the door a flash of lightning showed him, standing at the threshold, a little wizened old man with a small harp under his arm.

"Come in, and welcome," said Fergus, and the little man stepped into the room.

"It is a wild night, neighbours," said he.

"It is, indeed, a wild night," said the huntsman and his wife, who had got up and dressed themselves; "and sorry we are we have no better shelter or better tare to offer you, but we give you the best we have."

"A king cannot do more than his best," said the little man.

The huntsman's wife lit the fire, and soon the pine logs flashed up into a blaze, and made the hut bright and warm. She then brought forth a peggin of milk and a cake of barley-bread.

"You must be hungry, sir," she said.

"Hungry I am," said he; "but I wouldn't ask for better fare than this if I were in the king's palace."

"Thank you kindly, sir," said she, "and I hope you will eat enough, and that it will do you good."

"And while you are eating your supper," said the huntsman, "I'll make you a bed of fresh rushes."

"Don't put yourself to that trouble," said the little man. "When I have done my supper I'll lie down here by the fire, if it is pleasing to you, and I'll sleep like a top until morning. And now go back to your beds and leave me to myself, and maybe some time when you won't be expecting it I'll do a

good turn for your kindness to the poor wayfarer."

"Oh, it's no kindness at all," said the huntsman's wife. "It would be a queer thing if an Irish cabin would not give shelter and welcome in a wild night like this. So good night, now, and we hope you will sleep well."

"Good night," said the little man, "and may you and yours never sup sorrow until your dying day."

The huntsman and his wife and Fergus then went back to their beds, and the little man, having finished his supper, curled himself up by the fire, and was soon fast asleep.

About an hour after a loud clap of thunder awakened Fergus, and before it had died away he heard three knocks at the door. He aroused his parents and told them.

"Get up at once," said his mother, "this is no night to keep a stranger outside our door."

Fergus rose and opened the door, and a flash of lightning showed him a little old woman, with a shuttle in her hand, standing outside.

"Come in, and welcome," said he, and the little old woman stepped into the room.

"Blessings be on them who give welcome to a wanderer on a wild night like this," said the old woman.

"And who wouldn't give welcome on a night like this?" said the huntsman's wife, coming forward with a peggin of milk and a barley cake in her hand, "and sorry we are we have not better fare to offer you."

"Enough is as good as a feast," said the little woman, "and now go back to your beds and leave me to myself."

"Not till I shake down a bed of rushes for you," said the huntsman's wife.

"Don't mind the rushes," said the little woman; "go back to your beds. I'll sleep here by the fire."

The huntsman's wife went to bed, and the little old woman, having eaten her supper, lay down by the fire, and was soon fast asleep.

About an hour later another clap of thunder startled Fergus. Again he heard three knocks at the door. He roused his parents, but he did not wait for orders from them. He opened the door, and a flash of lightning showed him outside the threshold a low-sized, shaggy, wild-looking horse. And Fergus knew it was the Pooka, the wild horse of the mountains. Bold as Fergus was, his heart beat quickly as he saw fire issuing from the Pooka's nostrils. But, banishing fear, he cried out:

"Come in, and welcome."

"Welcome you are," said the huntsman, "and sorry we are that we have not better shelter or fare to offer you."

"I couldn't wish a better welcome," said the Pooka, as he came over near the fire and sat down on his haunches.

"Maybe you would like a little bit of this, Master Pooka," said the huntsman's wife, as she offered him a barley cake.

"I never tasted anything sweeter in my life," said the Pooka, crunching it between his teeth, "and now if you can give me a sup of milk, I'll want for nothing."

The huntsman's wife brought him a peggin of milk. When he had drunk it, "Now," says the Pooka, "go back to your beds, and I'll curl myself up by the fire and sleep like a top till morning."

And soon everybody in the hut was fast asleep.

When the morning came the storm had gone, and the sun was shining through the windows of the hut. At the song of the lark Fergus got up, and no one in the world was ever more surprised than he when he saw no sign of the little old man, or the little old woman, or the wild horse of the mountains. His parents were also surprised, and they all thought that they must have been dreaming until they saw the empty peggins around the fire and some pieces of broken bread; and they did not know what to think of it all.

From that day forward the desire grew stronger in the heart of Fergus for a change of life; and one day he told his

parents that he was resolved to seek his fortune. He said he wished to, be a soldier, and that he would set out for the king's palace, and try to join the ranks of the Feni.

About a week afterwards he took leave of his parents, and having received their blessing he struck out for the road that led to the palace of the High King of Erin. He arrived there just at the time when the great captain of the Fenian host was recruiting his battalions, which had been thinned in recent battle.

The manly figure of Fergus, his gallant bearing, and handsome face, all told in his favour. But before he could be received into the Fenian ranks he had to prove that he could play the harp like a bard, that he could contend with staff and shield against nine Fenian warriors, that he could run with plaited hair through the tangled forest without loosening a single hair, and that in his course he could jump over trees as high as his head, and stoop under trees as low as his knee, and that he could run so lightly that the rotten twigg should not break under his feet. Fergus proved equal to all the tests, thanks to the wandering minstrel who taught him the use of the harp, to his own brave heart, and to his forest training. He was enrolled in the second battalion of the Feni, and before long he was its bravest and ablest champion.

At that very time it happened that the niece of the High King of Erin was staying with the king and queen in their palace at Tara. The princess was the loveliest lady in all the land. She was as proud as she was beautiful. The princes and chieftains of Erin in vain sought her hand in marriage. From Alba and Spain, and the far-off isles of Greece, kings came to woo her. From the northern lands came vikings in stately galleys with brazen prows, whose oarsmen tore the white foam from the emerald seas as they swept towards the Irish coasts. But the lady had vowed she would wed with no one except a battle champion who could excel in music the chief bard of the High King of Erin; who could outstrip on his steed in the

great race of Tara the white steed of the plains; and who could give her as a wedding robe a garment of all the colours of the rainbow, so finely spun that when folded up it would fit in the palm of her small white hand. To fulfil these three conditions was impossible for all her suitors, and it seemed as if the loveliest lady of the land should go unmarried to her grave.

It chanced that once, on a day when the Fenian battalions were engaged in a hurling-match, Fergus beheld the lady watching the match from her sunny bower. He no sooner saw her than he fell over head and ears in love with her, and he thought of her by night, and he thought of her by day, and believing that his love was hopeless, he often wished he had never left his forest-home.

The great fair of Tara was coming on, and all the Feni were busy from morning till night practising feats of arms and games, in order to take part in the contests to be held during the fair. And Fergus, knowing that the princess would be present, determined to do his best to win the prizes which were to be contended for before the ladies' eyes.

The fair began on the 1st of August, but for a whole week before the five great roads of Erin were thronged with people of all sorts. Princes and warriors on their steeds, battle champions in their chariots, harpers in hundreds, smiths with gleaming spears and shields and harness for battle steeds and chariots; troops of men and boys leading racehorses; jewellers with gold drinking-horns, and brooches, and pins, and ear-rings, and costly gems of all kinds, and chess-boards of silver and gold, and golden and silver chessmen in bags of woven brass; dyers with their many-coloured fabrics; bands of jugglers; drovers goading on herds of cattle; shepherds driving their sheep; huntsmen with spoils of the chase; dwellers in the lakes or by the fish-abounding rivers with salmon and speckled trout; and countless numbers of peasants on horseback and on foot, all wending their way to the great meeting-place by the mound, which a thousand years before

had been raised over the grave of the great queen. For there the fair was to be held.

On the opening day the High King, attended by the four kings of Erin, set out from the palace, and with them went the queen and the ladies of the court in sparkling chariots. The princess rode in the chariot with the high queen, under an awning made of the wings of birds, to protect them from the rays of the sun. Following the queen were the court ladies in other chariots, under awnings of purple or of yellow silk. Then came the brehons, the great judges of the land, and the chief bards of the high court of Tara, and the Druids, crowned with oak leaves, and carrying wands of divination in their hands.

When the royal party reached the ground it took its place in enclosures right up against the monumental mound. The High King sat with the four kings of Erin, all wearing their golden helmets, for they wore their diadems in battle only. In an enclosure next the king's sat the queen and the princess and all the ladies of the court. At either side of the royal pavilions were others for the dames and ladies and nobles and chiefs of different degrees, forming part of a circle on the plain, and the stands and benches for the people were so arranged as to complete the circle, and in the round green space within it, so that all might hear and see, the contests were to take place.

At a signal from the king, who was greeted with a thunderous cheer, the heralds rode round the circle, and having struck their sounding shields three times with their swords, they made a solemn proclamation of peace. Then was sung by all the assembled bards, to the accompaniment of their harps, the chant in honour of the mighty dead. When this was ended, again the heralds struck their shields, and the contests began. The first contest was the contest of spear-throwing between the champions of the seven battalions of the Feni. When the seven champions took their places in front of the royal enclosure, everyone, even the proud princess, was

struck by the manly beauty and noble bearing of Fergus.

The champions poised their spears, and at a stroke from the heralds upon their shields the seven spears sped flashing through the air. They all struck the ground, shafts up, and it was seen that two were standing side by side in advance of the rest, one belonged to Fergus, the other to the great chief, Oscar. The contest for the prize then lay between Oscar and Fergus, and when they stood in front of the king, holding their spears aloft, every heart was throbbing with excitement. Once more the heralds struck their shields, and, swifter than the lightning's flash, forth went the spears, and when Fergus's spear was seen shivering in the ground a full length ahead of the great chief Oscar's, the air was shaken by a wild cheer that was heard far beyond the plains of Tara. And as Fergus approached the high king to receive the prize the cheers were renewed. But Fergus thought more of the winsome glance of the princess than he did of the prize or the sounding cheers. And Princess Maureen was almost sorry for her vow, for her heart was touched by the beauty of the Fenian champion.

Other contests followed, and the day passed, and the night fell, and while the Fenian warriors were revelling in their camps the heart of Fergus, victor as he was, was sad and low. He escaped from his companions, and stole away to his native forest, for

"When the heart is sick and sorest
There is balsam in the forest
There is balsam in the forest
For its pain."

And as he lay under the spreading branches, watching the stars glancing through the leaves, and listening to the slumb'rous murmur of the waters, a strange peace came over him.

But in the camp which he had left, and in the vast

multitude on the plains of Tara, there was stir and revelry, and babbling speculation as to the contest of tomorrow the contest which was to decide whether the chief bard of Erin was to hold his own against all comers, or yield the palm. For rumour said that a great Skald had come from the northern lands to compete with the Irish bard.

At last, over the Fenian camp, and over the great plain and the multitude that thronged it, sleep fell, clothing them with a silence as deep as that which dwelt in the forest, where, dreaming of the princess, Fergus lay. He awoke at the first notes of the birds, but though he felt he ought to go back to his companions and be witness of the contest which might determine whether the princess was to be another's bride, his great love and his utter despair of winning her so oppressed him that he lay as motionless as a broken reed. He scarcely heard the music of the birds, and paid no heed to the murmur of the brook rushing by his feet. The crackling of branches near him barely disturbed him, but when a shadow fell across his eyes he looked up gloomily, and saw, or thought he saw, someone standing before him. He started up, and who should he see but the little wizened old man who found shelter in his father's hut on the stormy night.

"This is a nice place for a battle champion to be. This is a nice place for you to be on the day which is to decide who will be the successful suitor of the princess."

"What is it to me," said Fergus, "who is to win her since I cannot."

"I told you," said the little man, "the night you opened the door for me, that the time might come when I might be able to do a good turn for you and yours. The time has come. Take this harp, and my luck go with you, and in the contest of the bards today you'll reap the reward of the kindness you did when you opened your door to the poor old wayfarer in the midnight storm."

The little man handed his harp to Fergus and disappeared



He started up, and who should he see
but a little wizened old man.

as swiftly as the wind that passes through the leaves.

Fergus, concealing the harp under his silken cloak, reached the camp before his comrades had aroused themselves from sleep.

At length the hour arrived when the great contest was to take place.

The king gave the signal, and as the chief bard of Erin was seen ascending the mound in front of the royal enclosures he was greeted with a roar of cheers, but at the first note of his harp silence like that of night fell on the mighty gathering.

As he moved his fingers softly over the strings every heart was hushed, filled with a sense of balmy rest. The lark soaring and singing above his head paused mute and motionless in the still air, and no sound was heard over the spacious plain save the dreamy music. Then the bard struck another key, and a gentle sorrow possessed the hearts of his hearers, and unbidden tears gathered to their eyes. Then, with bolder hand, he swept his fingers across his lyre, and all hearts were moved to joy and pleasant laughter, and eyes that had been dimmed by tears sparkled as brightly as running waters dancing in the sun. When the last notes had died away a cheer arose, loud as the voice of the storm in the glen when the live thunder is revelling on the mountain tops. As soon as the bard had descended the mound the Skald from the northern lands took his place, greeted by cries of welcome from a hundred thousand throats. He touched his harp, and in the perfect silence was heard the strains of the mermaid's song, and through it the pleasant ripple of summer waters on the pebbly beach. Then the theme was changed, and on the air was borne the measured sweep of countless oars and the swish of waters around the prows of contending galleys, and the breezy voices of the sailors and the sea-bird's cry. Then his theme was changed to the mirth and laughter of the banquet-hall, the clang of meeting drinking-horns, and songs of battle. When the last strain ended, from the mighty host a

great shout went up, loud as the roar of winter billows breaking in the hollows of the shore; and men knew not whom to declare the victor, the chief bard of Erin or the Skald of the northern lands.

In the height of the debate the cry arose that another competitor had ascended the mound, and there standing in view of all was Fergus, the huntsman's son. All eyes were fastened upon him, but no one looked so eagerly as the princess.

He touched his harp with gentle fingers, and a sound low and soft as a faint summer breeze passing through forest trees stole out, and then was heard the rustle of birds through the branches, and the dreamy murmur of waters lost in deepest woods, and all the fairy echoes whispering when the leaves are motionless in the noonday heat; then followed notes cool and soft as the drip of summer showers on the parched grass, and then the song of the blackbird, sounding as clearly as it sounds in long silent spaces of the evening, and then in one sweet jocund burst the multitudinous voices that hail the breaking of the morn. And the lark, singing and soaring above the minstrel, sank mute and motionless upon his shoulder, and from all the leafy woods the birds came thronging out and formed a fluttering canopy above his head.

When the bard ceased playing no shout arose from the mighty multitude, for the strains of his harp, long after its chords were stilled, held their hearts spell-bound.

And when he had passed away from the mound of contest all knew there was no need to declare the victor. And all were glad the comely Fenian champion had maintained the supremacy of the bards of Erin. But there was one heart sad, the heart of the princess; and now she wished more than ever that she had never made her hateful vow.

Other contests went on, but Fergus took no interest in them; and once more he stole away to the forest glade. His heart was sorrowful, for he thought of the great race of the

morning, and he knew that he could not hope to compete with the rider of the white steed of the plains. And as he lay beneath the spreading branches during the whole night long his thoughts were not of the victory he had won, but of the princess, who was as far away from him as ever. He passed the night without sleep, and when the morning came he rose and walked aimlessly through the woods.

A deer starting from a thicket reminded him of the happy days of his boyhood, and once more the wish came back to him that he had never left his forest home. As his eyes followed the deer wistfully, suddenly he started in amazement. The deer vanished from view, and in his stead was the wild horse of the mountains.

"I told you I'd do you a good turn," said the Pooka, "for the kindness you and yours did me on that wild winter's night. The day is passing. You have no time to lose. The white steed of the plains is coming to the starting-post. Jump on my back, and remember, 'Faint heart never won fair lady.'"

In half a second Fergus was bestride the Pooka, whose coat of shaggy hair became at once as glossy as silk, and just at the very moment when the king was about to declare there was no steed to compete with the white steed of the plains, the Pooka with Fergus upon his back, galloped up in front of the royal enclosure. When the people saw the champion a thunderous shout rose up that startled the birds in the skies, and sent them flying to the groves.

And in the ladies' enclosure was a rustle of many-coloured scarves waving in the air. At the striking of the shields the contending steeds rushed from the post with the swiftness of a swallow's flight. But before the white steed of the plains had gone half-way round, Fergus and the wild horse of the mountains had passed the winning post, greeted by such cheers as had never before been heard on the plains of Tara.

Fergus heard the cheers, but scarcely heeded them, for his

heart went out through his eyes that fastened on the princess, and a wild hope stirred him that his glance was not ungrateful to the loveliest lady of the land.

And the princess was sad and sorry for her vow, for she believed that it was beyond the power of Fergus to bring her a robe of all the colours of the rainbow, so subtly woven as to fit in the palm of her soft, white hand.

That night also Fergus went to the forest, not too sad, because there was a vague hope in his heart that had never been there before. He lay down under the branches, with his feet towards the rustling waters, and the smiles of the princess gilded his slumbers, as the rays of the rising sun gild the glades of the forest; and when the morning came he was scarcely surprised when before him appeared the little old woman with the shuttle he had welcomed on the winter's night.

"You think you have won her already," said the little woman. "And so you have, too; her heart is all your own, and I'm half inclined to think that my trouble will be thrown away, for if you had never a wedding robe to give her, she'd rather have you this minute than all the kings of Erin, or than all the other princes and kings and chieftains in the whole world. But you and your father and mother were kind to me on a wild winter's night, and I'd never see your mother's son without a wedding robe fit for the greatest princess that ever set nations to battle for her beauty. So go and pluck me a handful of wild forest flowers, and I'll weave out of them a wedding robe with all the colours of the rainbow, and one that will be as sweet and as fragrant as the ripe, red lips of the princess herself."

Fergus, with joyous heart, culled the flowers, and brought them to the little old woman.

In the twinkling of an eye she wove with her little shuttle a wedding robe, with all the colours of the rainbow, as light as the fairy dew, as soft as the hand of the princess, as fragrant as her little red mouth, and so small that it would pass through the eye of a needle.

"Go now, Fergus," said she, "and may luck go with you; but, in the days of your greatness and of the glory which will come to you when you are wedded to the princess, be as kind, and have as open a heart and as open a door for the poor as you had when you were only a poor huntsman's son."

Fergus took the robe and went towards Tara. It was the last day of the fair, and all the contests were over, and the bards were about to chant the farewell strains to the memory of the great queen. But before the chief bard could ascend the mound, Fergus, attended by a troop of Fenian warriors on their steeds, galloped into the enclosure, and rode up in front of the queen's pavilion. Holding up the glancing and many-coloured robe, he said:

"Queen and King of Erin! I claim the princess for my bride. You, king, have decided that I have won the prize in the contest of the bards; that I have won the prize in the race against the white steed of the plains; it is for the princess to say if the robe which I give her will fit in the hollow of her small white hand."

"Yes," said the king. "You are victor in the contests; let the princess declare if you have fulfilled the last condition."

The princess took the robe from Fergus, closed her fingers over it, so that no vestige of it was seen.

"Yes, king!" said she, "he has fulfilled the last condition; but before ever he had fulfilled a single one of them, my heart went out to the comely champion of the Feni. I was willing then, I am ready now, to become the bride of the huntsman's son."

NOTES

I
The Birds of the Mystic Lake

The incident of the birds coming to the mystic lake is taken from "The Voyage of Maildun," a translation of which is given in Joyce's Old Celtic Romances. The operations of the birds were witnessed by Maildun and his companions, who, in the course of their wanderings, had arrived at the Isle of the Mystic Lake. One of Maildun's companions, Diuran, on seeing the wonder, said to the others: "Let us bathe in the lake, and we shall obtain a renewal of our youth like the birds."

But they said: "Not so, for the bird has left the poison of his old age and decay in the water."

Diuran, however, plunged in, and swam about for some time; after which he took a little of the water and mixed it in his mouth, and in the end he swallowed a small quantity. He then came out perfectly sound and whole, and remained so ever after as long as he lived. But none of the others ventured in.

The return of the birds in the character of the cormorants of the western seas and guardians of the lake does not occur in the old tale. The oldest copy of the voyage is in the book of "The Dun Cow" (about the year 1100). O'Curry says the voyage was undertaken about the year 700. It was made by Maildun in search of pirates who had slain his father. The story is full of fancy.

II
The House in the Lake

In the Irish annals lake dwellings, which were formerly common in Ireland, are called crannogs, from crann, a tree, either because of the timber framework of which the island was formed or of the wooden huts erected thereon.

Some wannogs appear to have been veritable islands, the only means of communication with the land being canoes. Remains of these have been frequently found near the dwelling, in some instances alongside the landing stage, as if sunk at their moorings.

"Favourite sites for crannogs were marshes, small loughs surrounded by woods and large sheets of water. As providing good fishing grounds the entrance to or exit of a stream from a lake was eagerly selected." "Lake Dwellings of Ireland,"

Col. Wood Martin, M.R.I.A.

III
Brian's Water-dress

Brian, Ur, and Urcar, the three sons of Turenn, were Dedanaan chiefs. They slew Kian, the father of Luga of the Long Arms, who was grandson of Balor of the Evil Eye. Luga imposed an extraordinary eric fine on the sons of Turenn, part of which was "the cooking-spit of the women of Fincara." For a quarter of a year Brian and his brothers sailed hither and thither over the wide ocean, landing on many shores, seeking tidings of the Island of Fincara. At last they met a very old man, who told them that the island lay deep down in the waters, having been sunk beneath the waves by a spell in times long past.

Then Brian put on his water-dress, with his helmet of transparent crystal on his head, telling his brothers to wait his return. He leaped over the side of the ship, and sank at once

out of sight. He walked about for a fortnight down in the green salt sea, seeking for the Island of Fincara, and at last he found it.

His brothers waited for him in the same spot the whole time, and when he came not they began to fear he would return no more. At last they were about to leave the place, when they saw the glitter of his crystal helmet deep down in the water, and immediately after he came to the surface with the cooking-spit in his hand. "Old Celtic Romances" (Joyce), p. 87.

IV
The Palace of the Little Cat

The description of the rows of jewels ranged round the wall of the palace of the Little Cat is taken from "The Voyage of Maildun." See Note I.

V
Liban the Mermaid

Liban was the daughter of Ecca, son of Mario, King of Munster. Ecca, having conquered the lordship of the half of Ulster, settled down with his people in the plain of the Grey Copse, which is now covered by the waters of Lough Necca, now Lough Neagh. A magic well had sprung up in the plain, and not being properly looked after by the woman in charge of it, its waters burst forth over the plain, drowning Ecca and nearly all his family. Liban, although swept away like the others, was not drowned. She lived for a whole year, with her lap-dog, in a chamber beneath the lake, and God protected her from the water. At the end of that time she was weary, and when she saw the speckled salmon swimming and playing all round her, she prayed to be changed into a salmon that she might swim with the others through the green, salt sea.

Her prayer was granted; she took the shape of a salmon, except her face and breast, which did not change. And her lap-dog was changed into an otter, and attended her afterwards whithersoever she went as long as she lived in the sea.

It is nearly eight hundred years ago since the story was transcribed from some old authority into the Book of the Dun Cow, the oldest manuscript of Gaelic literature we possess. Joyce's "Old Celtic Romances," p. 97.

VI
The Fairy Tree of Dooros

The forest of Dooros was in the district of Hy Fiera of the Moy (now the barony of Tireragh, in Sligo).

On a certain occasion the Dedanns, returning from a hurling match with the Feni, passed through the forest, carrying with them for food during the journey crimson nuts, and arbutus apples, and scarlet quicken-berries, which they had brought from the Land of Promise. One of the quicken-berries dropped on the earth, and the Dedanns passed on not heeding.

From this berry a great quicken-tree sprang up, which had the virtues of the quicken-trees that grow in fairyland. Its berries had the taste of honey, and those who ate of them felt a cheerful glow, as if they had drunk of wine or old mead, and if a man were even a hundred years old he returned to the age of thirty as soon as he had eaten three of them.

The Dedanns having heard of this tree, and not wishing that anyone should eat of the berries but themselves, sent a giant of their own people to guard it, namely, Sharvan the Surly, of Lochlann. "The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grania," "Old Celtic Romances," p. 313 (Joyce).

VII
Prince Cuglas

In the list of the historic tales mentioned in the Book of Leinster, and which is given in O'Curry's appendix to his Lectures on the MSS. Materials of Ancient Irish History," "The Cave of the Road of Cuglas" finds place. O'Curry has the following note:

"Cuglas was the son of Donn Desa, King of Leinster, and master of the hounds to the monarch Conaire Mor. Having one day followed the chase from Tara to this road, the chase suddenly disappeared in a cave, into which he followed, and was never seen after. Hence the cave was called Uaimh Bealach Conglais, or the cave of the road of Cuglas (now Baltinglass, in the County of Wicklow). It is about this cave, nevertheless, that so many of our pretended Irish antiquarians have written so much nonsense in connection with some imaginary pagan worship to which they gravely assure the world, on entymological authority, the spot was devoted. The authority for the legend of Cuglas is the Dinnoean Chus on the place Bealach Conglais (Book of Lecain). The full tale has not come down to us."

VIII
The Herald

"Here comes a single champion towards us, Cuchulain" said Laegh (Cuchulain's charioteer). "What sort of a champion is he?" said Cuchulain. "A brown-haired, broad faced, beautiful youth; a splendid brown cloak on him; a bright bronze spear-like brooch fastening his cloak. A full and well-fitting shirt to his skin. Two firm shoes between his two feet and the ground. A hand-staff of white hazel in one hand of his; a single-edged sword with a sea-horse hilt in his other hand." "Good, my lad," said Cuchulain; "these are the tokens

of a herald." Description of the herald MacRoath in the story of the Tain bo Chuaillgne. O' Curry's "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish," Vol. II., p. 301.

IX
Golden Bells

In O'Curry's "Lectures on the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish" are several dazzling descriptions of calvacades taken from the old tales. Silver and golden bells are frequently mentioned as part of the horse furniture.

X
The Wild People of the Glen

"And then he put on his helmet of battle and of combat and of fighting, from every recess and from every angle of which issued the shout as it were of an hundred warriors; because it was alike that woman of the valley (de bananaig), and hobgoblins (bacanaig), and wild people of the glen (geinti glindi), and demons of the air (demna a coir), shouted in front of it, and in rear of it and over it, and around it, wherever he went, at the spurting of blood, and of heroes upon it."

Description of Cuchulain's helmet in the story of The Tain bo Chuailgne. "O'Curry's Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish," Vol. II., p. 301.

XI
The Fair of Tara

"The great fairs anciently held in Ireland were not like their modern representatives, mere markets, but were assemblies of the people to celebrate funeral games, and other religious rites; during pagan times to hold parliaments, promulgate laws, listen to the recitation of tales and poems, engage

in or witness contests in feats of arms, horse-racing, and other popular games. They were analagous in many ways to the Olympian and other celebrated games of ancient Greece.

These assemblies were regulated by a strict by-law, a breach of which was punishable by death. Women were especially protected, a certain place being set apart for their exclusive use, as a place was set apart at one side of the lists of mediaeval tournaments for the Queen of Beauty and the other ladies.

At the opening of the assembly there was always a solemn proclamation of peace, and the king who held the fair awarded prizes to the most successful poets, musicians, and professors and masters of every art." See Dr. Sullivan's "Introduction to O'Curry's Lectures."

XII
The Contest of the Bards

"The three musical feats of the Daghda, a celebrated Dedanann chief and Druid, were the Suantraighe, which from its deep murmuring caused sleep. The Goltraighe, which from its meltive plaintiveness caused weeping, and the Goltraighe, which from its merriment caused laughter.

"Bose, the great Norse harper, could give on his harp the Gyarslager, or stroke of the sea gods, which produced mermaids' music." O'Curry's Lectures.

Celtic Folk and Fairy Tales

by Joseph Jacobs

I

Connla and the Fairy Maiden



onnla of the Fiery Hair was son of Conn of the Hundred Fights. One day as he stood by the side of his father on the height of Usna, he saw a maiden clad in strange attire towards him coming.

"Whence comest thou, maiden?" said Connla.

"I come from the Plains of the Ever Living," she said, "there where is neither death nor sin. There we keep holiday alway, nor need we help from any in our joy. And in all our pleasure we have no strife. And because we have our homes in the round green hills, men call us the Hill Folk."

The king and all with him wondered much to hear a voice when they saw no one. For save Connla alone, none saw the Fairy Maiden.

"To whom art thou talking, my son?" said Conn the king.

Then the maiden answered, "Connla speaks to a young, fair maid, whom neither death nor old age awaits. I love Connla, and now I call him away to the Plain of Pleasure, Moy Mell, where Boadag is king for aye, nor has there been sorrow or complaint in that land since he held the kingship. Oh, come with me, Connla of the Fiery Hair, ruddy as the dawn, with thy tawny skin. A fairy crown awaits thee to grace thy comely face and royal form. Come, and never shall thy

comeliness fade, nor thy youth, till the last awful day of judgment."

The king in fear at what the maiden said, which he heard though he could not see her, called aloud to his Druid, Coran by name.

"O Coran of the many spells," he said, "and of the cunning magic, I call upon thy aid. A task is upon me too great for all my skill and wit, greater than any laid upon me since I seized the kingship. A maiden unseen has met us, and by her power would take from me my dear, my comely son. If thou help not, he will be taken from thy king by woman's wiles and witchery."

Then Coran the Druid stood forth and chanted his spells towards the spot where the maiden's voice had been heard. And none heard her voice again, nor could Connla see her longer. Only as she vanished before the Druid's mighty spell, she threw an apple to Connla.

For a whole month from that day Connla would take nothing, either to eat or to drink, save only from that apple. But as he ate it grew again and always kept whole. And all the while there grew within him a mighty yearning and longing after the maiden he had seen.

But when the last day of the month of waiting came, Connla stood by the side of the king his father on the Plain of Arcomin, and again he saw the maiden come towards him, and again she spoke to him.

"'Tis a glorious place, forsooth, that Connla holds among shortlived mortals awaiting the day of death. But now the folk of life, the ever-living ones, beg and bid thee come to Moy Mell, the Plain of Pleasure, for they have learnt to know thee, seeing thee in thy home among thy dear ones."

When Conn the king heard the maiden's voice he called to his men aloud and said:

"Summon swift my Druid Coran, for I see she has again this day the power of speech."

Then the maiden said: "O mighty Conn, Fighter of a Hundred Fights, the Druid's power is little loved; it has little honour in the mighty land, peopled with so many of the upright. When the Law comes, it will do away with the Druid's magic spells that issue from the lips of the false black demon."

Then Conn the king observed that since the coming of the maiden Connla his son spoke to none that spake to him. So Conn of the Hundred Fights said to him, "Is it to thy mind what the woman says, my son?"

"'Tis hard upon me," said Connla; "I love my own folk above all things; but yet a longing seizes me for the maiden."

When the maiden heard this, she answered and said: "The ocean is not so strong as the waves of thy longing. Come with me in my curragh, the gleaming, straight-gliding crystal canoe. Soon can we reach Boadag's realm. I see the bright sun sink, yet far as it is, we can reach it before dark. There is, too, another land worthy of thy journey, a land joyous to all that seek it. Only wives and maidens dwell there. If thou wilt, we can seek it and live there alone together in joy."

When the maiden ceased to speak, Connla of the Fiery Hair rushed away from his kinsmen and sprang into the curragh, the gleaming, straight-gliding crystal canoe. And then they all, king and court, saw it glide away over the bright sea towards the setting sun, away and away, till eye could see it no longer. So Connla and the Fairy Maiden went forth on the sea, and were no more seen, nor did any know whither they came.



Connla and the Fairy maiden

II

Guleesh



here was once a boy in the County Mayo; Guleesh was his name. There was the finest rath a little way off from the gable of the house, and he was often in the habit of seating himself on the fine grass bank that was running round it. One night he stood, half leaning against the gable of the house, and looking up into the sky, and watching the beautiful white moon over his head. After he had been standing that way for a couple of hours, he said to himself: "My bitter grief that I am not gone away out of this place altogether. I'd sooner be any place in the world than here. Och, it's well for you, white moon," says he, "that's turning round, turning round, as you please yourself, and no man can put you back. I wish I was the same as you."

Hardly was the word out of his mouth when he heard a great noise coming like the sound of many people running together, and talking, and laughing, and making sport, and the sound went by him like a whirl of wind, and he was listening to it going into the rath. "Musha, by my soul," says he, "but ye're merry enough, and I'll follow ye."

What was in it but the fairy host, though he did not know at first that it was they who were in it, but he followed them into the rath. It's there he heard the *fulparnee*, and

the *folpornee*, the *rap-lay-hoota*, and the *roolya-boolya*, that they had there, and every man of them crying out as loud as he could: "My horse, and bridle, and saddle! My horse, and bridle, and saddle!"

"By my hand," said Guleesh, "my boy, that's not bad. I'll imitate ye," and he cried out as well as they: "My horse, and bridle, and saddle! My horse, and bridle, and saddle!" And on the moment there was a fine horse with a bridle of gold, and a saddle of silver, standing before him. He leaped up on it, and the moment he was on its back he saw clearly that the rath was full of horses, and of little people going riding on them.

Said a man of them to him: "Are you coming with us to-night, Guleesh?"

"I am surely," said Guleesh.

"If you are, come along," said the little man, and out they went all together, riding like the wind, faster than the fastest horse ever you saw a-hunting, and faster than the fox and the hounds at his tail.

The cold winter's wind that was before them, they overtook her, and the cold winter's wind that was behind them, she did not overtake them. And stop nor stay of that full race, did they make none, until they came to the brink of the sea.

Then every one of them said: "Hie over cap! Hie over cap!" and that moment they were up in the air, and before Guleesh had time to remember where he was they were down on dry land again, and were going like the wind. At last they stood still, and a man of them said to Guleesh: "Guleesh, do you know where you are now?"

"Not a know," says Guleesh.

"You're in France, Guleesh," said he. "The daughter of the king of France is to be married to-night, the handsomest woman that the sun ever saw, and we must do our best to bring her with us, if we're only able to carry her off; and you must come with us that we may be able to put the young girl

up behind you on the horse, when we'll be bringing her away, for it's not lawful for us to put her sitting behind ourselves. But you're flesh and blood, and she can take a good grip of you, so that she won't fall off the horse. Are you satisfied, Guleesh, and will you do what we're telling you?"

"Why shouldn't I be satisfied?" said Guleesh. "I'm satisfied, surely, and anything that ye will tell me to do I'll do it without doubt."

They got off their horses there, and a man of them said a word that Guleesh did not understand, and on the moment they were lifted up, and Guleesh found himself and his companions in the palace. There was a great feast going on there, and there was not a nobleman or a gentleman in the kingdom but was gathered there, dressed in silk and satin, and gold and silver, and the night was as bright as the day with all the lamps and candles that were lit, and Guleesh had to shut his two eyes at the brightness. When he opened them again and looked from him he thought he never saw anything as fine as all he saw there. There were a hundred tables spread out, and their full of meat and drink on each table of them, flesh-meat, and cakes and sweetmeats, and wine and ale, and every drink that ever a man saw. The musicians were at the two ends of the hall, and they were playing the sweetest music that ever a man's ear heard, and there were young women and fine youths in the middle of the hall, dancing and turning, and going round so quickly and so lightly, that it put a *soorawn* in Guleesh's head to be looking at them. There were more there playing tricks, and more making fun and laughing, for such a feast as there was that day had not been in France for twenty years, because the old king had no children alive but only the one daughter, and she was to be married to the son of another king that night. Three days the feast was going on, and the third night she was to be married, and that was the night that Guleesh and the sheehogues came, hoping, if they could, to carry off with them the king's young daughter.

Guleesh and his companions were standing together at the head of the hall, where there was a fine altar dressed up, and two bishops behind it waiting to marry the girl, as soon as the right time should come. Now nobody could see the sheehogues, for they said a word as they came in, that made them all invisible, as if they had not been in it at all.

"Tell me which of them is the king's daughter," said Guleesh, when he was becoming a little used to the noise and the light.

"Don't you see her there away from you?" said the little man that he was talking to.

Guleesh looked where the little man was pointing with his finger, and there he saw the loveliest woman that was, he thought, upon the ridge of the world. The rose and the lily were fighting together in her face, and one could not tell which of them got the victory. Her arms and hands were like the lime, her mouth as red as a strawberry when it is ripe, her foot was as small and as light as another one's hand, her form was smooth and slender, and her hair was falling down from her head in buckles of gold. Her garments and dress were woven with gold and silver, and the bright stone that was in the ring on her hand was as shining as the sun.

Guleesh was nearly blinded with all the loveliness and beauty that was on her; but when he looked again, he saw that she was crying, and that there was the trace of tears in her eyes. "It can't be," said Guleesh, "that there's grief on her, when everybody round her is so full of sport and merriment."

"Musha, then, she is grieved," said the little man; "for it's against her own will she's marrying, and she has no love for the husband she is to marry. The king was going to give her to him three years ago, when she was only fifteen, but she said she was too young, and requested him to leave her as she was yet. The king gave her a year's grace, and when that year was up he gave her another year's grace, and then another; but a week or a day he would not give her longer, and she is

eighteen years old to-night, and it's time for her to marry; but, indeed," says he, and he crooked his mouth in an ugly way—"indeed, it's no king's son she'll marry, if I can help it."

Guleesh pitied the handsome young lady greatly when he heard that, and he was heart-broken to think that it would be necessary for her to marry a man she did not like, or what was worse, to take a nasty sheehogue for a husband. However, he did not say a word, though he could not help giving many a curse to the ill-luck that was laid out for himself, to be helping the people that were to snatch her away from her home and from her father.

He began thinking, then, what it was he ought to do to save her, but he could think of nothing. "Oh! if I could only give her some help and relief," said he, "I wouldn't care whether I were alive or dead; but I see nothing that I can do for her."

He was looking on when the king's son came up to her and asked her for a kiss, but she turned her head away from him. Guleesh had double pity for her then, when he saw the lad taking her by the soft white hand, and drawing her out to dance. They went round in the dance near where Guleesh was, and he could plainly see that there were tears in her eyes.

When the dancing was over, the old king, her father, and her mother the queen, came up and said that this was the right time to marry her, that the bishop was ready, and it was time to put the wedding-ring on her and give her to her husband.

The king took the youth by the hand, and the queen took her daughter, and they went up together to the altar, with the lords and great people following them.

When they came near the altar, and were no more than about four yards from it, the little sheehogue stretched out his foot before the girl, and she fell. Before she was able to rise again he threw something that was in his hand upon her, said a couple of words, and upon the moment the maiden was



gone from amongst them. Nobody could see her, for that word made her invisible. The little man*een* seized her and raised her up behind Guleesh, and the king nor no one else saw them, but out with them through the hall till they came to the door.

Oro! dear Mary! it's there the pity was, and the trouble, and the crying, and the wonder, and the searching, and the *rookawn*, when that lady disappeared from their eyes, and without their seeing what did it. Out of the door of the palace they went, without being stopped or hindered, for nobody saw them, and, "My horse, my bridle, and saddle!" says every man of them. "My horse, my bridle, and saddle!" says Guleesh; and on the moment the horse was standing ready caparisoned before him. "Now, jump up, Guleesh," said the little man, "and put the lady behind you, and we will be going; the morning is not far off from us now."

Guleesh raised her up on the horse's back, and leaped up himself before her, and, "Rise, horse," said he; and his horse, and the other horses with him, went in a full race until they came to the sea.

"Hie over cap!" said every man of them.

"Hie over cap!" said Guleesh; and on the moment the

horse rose under him, and cut a leap in the clouds, and came down in Erin.

They did not stop there, but went of a race to the place where was Guleesh's house and the rath. And when they came as far as that, Guleesh turned and caught the young girl in his two arms, and leaped off the horse.

"I call and cross you to myself, in the name of God!" said he; and on the spot, before the word was out of his mouth, the horse fell down, and what was in it but the beam of a plough, of which they had made a horse; and every other horse they had, it was that way they made it. Some of them were riding on an old besom, and some on a broken stick, and more on a *bohalawn* or a hemlock-stalk.

The good people called out together when they heard what Guleesh said:

"O Guleesh, you clown, you thief, that no good may happen you! Why did you play that trick on us?"

But they had no power at all to carry off the girl, after Guleesh had consecrated her to himself.

"O Guleesh, isn't that a nice turn you did us, and we so kind to you? What good have we now out of our journey to France? Never mind yet, you clown, but you'll pay us another time for this. Believe us, you'll repent it."

"He'll have no good to get out of the young girl," said the little man that was talking to him in the palace before that, and as he said the word he moved over to her and struck her a slap on the side of the head. "Now," says he, "she'll be without talk any more; now, Guleesh, what good will she be to you when she'll be dumb? It's time for us to go—but you'll remember us, Guleesh!"

When he said that he stretched out his two hands, and before Guleesh was able to give an answer, he and the rest of them were gone into the rath out of his sight, and he saw them no more.

He turned to the young woman and said to her: "Thanks

be to God, they're gone. Would you not sooner stay with me than with them?" She gave him no answer. "There's trouble and grief on her yet," said Guleesh in his own mind, and he spoke to her again: "I am afraid that you must spend this night in my father's house, lady, and if there is anything that I can do for you, tell me, and I'll be your servant."

The beautiful girl remained silent, but there were tears in her eyes, and her face was white and red after each other.

"Lady," said Guleesh, "tell me what you would like me to do now. I never belonged at all to that lot of sheehogues who carried you away with them. I am the son of an honest farmer, and I went with them without knowing it. If I'll be able to send you back to your father I'll do it, and I pray you make any use of me now that you may wish."

He looked into her face, and saw the mouth moving as if she were going to speak, but there came no word from it.

"It cannot be," said Guleesh, "that you are dumb. Did I not hear you speaking to the king's son in the palace to-night? Or has that devil made you really dumb, when he struck his nasty hand on your jaw?"

The girl raised her white smooth hand, and laid her finger on her tongue, to show him that she had lost her voice and power of speech, and the tears ran out of her two eyes like streams, and Guleesh's own eyes were not dry, for as rough as he was on the outside he had a soft heart, and could not stand the sight of the young girl, and she in that unhappy plight.

He began thinking with himself what he ought to do, and he did not like to bring her home with himself to his father's house, for he knew well that they would not believe him, that he had been in France and brought back with him the king of France's daughter, and he was afraid they might make a mock of the young lady or insult her.

As he was doubting what he ought to do, and hesitating, he chanced to remember the priest. "Glory be to God," said he, "I know now what I'll do; I'll bring her to the priest's

house, and he won't refuse me to keep the lady and care for her." He turned to the lady again and told her that he was loth to take her to his father's house, but that there was an excellent priest very friendly to himself, who would take good care of her, if she wished to remain in his house; but that if there was any other place she would rather go, he said he would bring her to it.

She bent her head, to show him she was obliged, and gave him to understand that she was ready to follow him to any place he was going. "We will go to the priest's house, then," said he; "he is under an obligation to me, and will do anything I ask him."

They went together accordingly to the priest's house, and the sun was just rising when they came to the door. Guleesh beat it hard, and as early as it was the priest was up, and opened the door himself. He wondered when he saw Guleesh and the girl, for he was certain that it was coming wanting to be married they were.

"Guleesh, Guleesh, isn't it the nice boy you are that you can't wait till ten o'clock or till twelve, but that you must be coming to me at this hour, looking for marriage, you and your sweetheart? You ought to know that I can't marry you at such a time, or, at all events, can't marry you lawfully. But ubbubboo!" said he, suddenly, as he looked again at the young girl, "in the name of God, who have you here? Who is she, or how did you get her?"

"Father," said Guleesh, "you can marry me, or anybody else, if you wish; but it's not looking for marriage I came to you now, but to ask you, if you please, to give a lodging in your house to this young lady."

The priest looked at him as though he had ten heads on him; but without putting any other question to him, he desired him to come in, himself and the maiden, and when they came in, he shut the door, brought them into the parlour, and put them sitting.

"Now, Guleesh," said he, "tell me truly who is this young lady, and whether you're out of your senses really, or are only making a joke of me."

"I'm not telling a word of lie, nor making a joke of you," said Guleesh; "but it was from the palace of the king of France I carried off this lady, and she is the daughter of the king of France."

He began his story then, and told the whole to the priest, and the priest was so much surprised that he could not help calling out at times, or clapping his hands together.

When Guleesh said from what he saw he thought the girl was not satisfied with the marriage that was going to take place in the palace before he and the sheehogues broke it up, there came a red blush into the girl's cheek, and he was more certain than ever that she had sooner be as she was—badly off as she was—than be the married wife of the man she hated. When Guleesh said that he would be very thankful to the priest if he would keep her in his own house, the kind man said he would do that as long as Guleesh pleased, but that he did not know what they ought to do with her, because they had no means of sending her back to her father again.

Guleesh answered that he was uneasy about the same thing, and that he saw nothing to do but to keep quiet until they should find some opportunity of doing something better. They made it up then between themselves that the priest should let on that it was his brother's daughter he had, who was come on a visit to him from another county, and that he should tell everybody that she was dumb, and do his best to keep every one away from her. They told the young girl what it was they intended to do, and she showed by her eyes that she was obliged to them.

Guleesh went home then, and when his people asked him where he had been, he said that he had been asleep at the foot of the ditch, and had passed the night there.

There was great wonderment on the priest's neighbours

at the girl who came so suddenly to his house without any one knowing where she was from, or what business she had there. Some of the people said that everything was not as it ought to be, and others, that Guleesh was not like the same man that was in it before, and that it was a great story, how he was drawing every day to the priest's house, and that the priest had a wish and a respect for him, a thing they could not clear up at all.

That was true for them, indeed, for it was seldom the day went by but Guleesh would go to the priest's house, and have a talk with him, and as often as he would come he used to hope to find the young lady well again, and with leave to speak; but, alas! she remained dumb and silent, without relief or cure. Since she had no other means of talking, she carried on a sort of conversation between herself and himself, by moving her hand and fingers, winking her eyes, opening and shutting her mouth, laughing or smiling, and a thousand other signs, so that it was not long until they understood each other very well. Guleesh was always thinking how he should send her back to her father; but there was no one to go with her, and he himself did not know what road to go, for he had never been out of his own country before the night he brought her away with him. Nor had the priest any better knowledge than he; but when Guleesh asked him, he wrote three or four letters to the king of France, and gave them to buyers and sellers of wares, who used to be going from place to place across the sea; but they all went astray, and never a one came to the king's hand.

This was the way they were for many months, and Guleesh was falling deeper and deeper in love with her every day, and it was plain to himself and the priest that she liked him. The boy feared greatly at last, lest the king should really hear where his daughter was, and take her back from himself, and he besought the priest to write no more, but to leave the matter to God.

So they passed the time for a year, until there came a day when Guleesh was lying by himself on the grass, on the last day of the last month in autumn, and he was thinking over again in his own mind of everything that happened to him from the day that he went with the sheehogues across the sea. He remembered then, suddenly, that it was one November night that he was standing at the gable of the house, when the whirlwind came, and the sheehogues in it, and he said to himself: "We have November night again to-day, and I'll stand in the same place I was last year, until I see if the good people come again. Perhaps I might see or hear something that would be useful to me, and might bring back her talk again to Mary"—that was the name himself and the priest called the king's daughter, for neither of them knew her right name. He told his intention to the priest, and the priest gave him his blessing.

Guleesh accordingly went to the old rath when the night was darkening, and he stood with his bent elbow leaning on a grey old flag, waiting till the middle of the night should come. The moon rose slowly, and it was like a knob of fire behind him; and there was a white fog which was raised up over the fields of grass and all damp places, through the coolness of the night after a great heat in the day. The night was calm as is a lake when there is not a breath of wind to move a wave on it, and there was no sound to be heard but the *cronawn* of the insects that would go by from time to time, or the hoarse sudden scream of the wild-geese, as they passed from lake to lake, half a mile up in the air over his head; or the sharp whistle of the golden and green plover, rising and lying, lying and rising, as they do on a calm night. There were a thousand thousand bright stars shining over his head, and there was a little frost out, which left the grass under his foot white and crisp.

He stood there for an hour, for two hours, for three hours, and the frost increased greatly, so that he heard the breaking

of the *traneens* under his foot as often as he moved. He was thinking, in his own mind, at last, that the sheehogues would not come that night, and that it was as good for him to return back again, when he heard a sound far away from him, coming towards him, and he recognised what it was at the first moment. The sound increased, and at first it was like the beating of waves on a stony shore, and then it was like the falling of a great waterfall, and at last it was like a loud storm in the tops of the trees, and then the whirlwind burst into the rath of one rout, and the sheehogues were in it.

It all went by him so suddenly that he lost his breath with it, but he came to himself on the spot, and put an ear on himself, listening to what they would say.

Scarcely had they gathered into the rath till they all began shouting, and screaming, and talking amongst themselves; and then each one of them cried out: "My horse, and bridle, and saddle! My horse, and bridle, and saddle!" and Guleesh took courage, and called out as loudly as any of them: "My horse, and bridle, and saddle! My horse, and bridle, and saddle!" But before the word was well out of his mouth, another man cried out: "Ora! Guleesh, my boy, are you here with us again? How are you getting on with your woman? There's no use in your calling for your horse to-night. I'll go bail you won't play such a trick on us again. It was a good trick you played on us last year."

"It was," said another man; "he won't do it again."

"Isn't he a prime lad, the same lad! to take a woman with him that never said as much to him as, 'How do you do?' since this time last year!" says the third man.

"Perhaps he likes to be looking at her," said another voice.

"And if the *omadawn* only knew that there's an herb growing up by his own door, and if he were to boil it and give it to her, she'd be well," said another voice.

"That's true for you."

"He is an *omadawn*."

"Don't bother your head with him; we'll be going."

"We'll leave the *bodach* as he is."

And with that they rose up into the air, and out with them with one *roolya-boolya* the way they came; and they left poor Guleesh standing where they found him, and the two eyes going out of his head, looking after them and wondering.



He did not stand long till he returned back, and he thinking in his own mind on all he saw and heard, and wondering whether there was really an herb at his own door that would bring back the talk to the king's daughter. "It can't be," says he to himself, "that they would tell it to me, if there was any virtue in it; but perhaps the sheehogue didn't observe himself

when he let the word slip out of his mouth. I'll search well as soon as the sun rises, whether there's any plant growing beside the house except thistles and dockings."

He went home, and as tired as he was he did not sleep a wink until the sun rose on the morrow. He got up then, and it was the first thing he did to go out and search well through the grass round about the house, trying could he get any herb that he did not recognise. And, indeed, he was not long searching till he observed a large strange herb that was growing up just by the gable of the house.

He went over to it, and observed it closely, and saw that there were seven little branches coming out of the stalk, and seven leaves growing on every brancheen of them; and that there was a white sap in the leaves. "It's very wonderful," said he to himself, "that I never noticed this herb before. If there's any virtue in an herb at all, it ought to be in such a strange one as this."

He drew out his knife, cut the plant, and carried it into his own house; stripped the leaves off it and cut up the stalk; and there came a thick, white juice out of it, as there comes out of the sow-thistle when it is bruised, except that the juice was more like oil.

He put it in a little pot and a little water in it, and laid it on the fire until the water was boiling, and then he took a cup, filled it half up with the juice, and put it to his own mouth. It came into his head then that perhaps it was poison that was in it, and that the good people were only tempting him that he might kill himself with that trick, or put the girl to death without meaning it. He put down the cup again, raised a couple of drops on the top of his finger, and put it to his mouth. It was not bitter, and, indeed, had a sweet, agreeable taste. He grew bolder then, and drank the full of a thimble of it, and then as much again, and he never stopped till he had half the cup drunk. He fell asleep after that, and did not wake till it was night, and there was great hunger and



great thirst on him.

He had to wait, then, till the day rose; but he determined, as soon as he should wake in the morning, that he would go to the king's daughter and give her a drink of the juice of the herb.

As soon as he got up in the morning, he went over to the priest's house with the drink in his hand, and he never felt himself so bold and valiant, and spirited and light, as he was that day, and he was quite certain that it was the drink he drank which made him so hearty.

When he came to the house, he found the priest and the young lady within, and they were wondering greatly why he had not visited them for two days.

He told them all his news, and said that he was certain that there was great power in that herb, and that it would do the lady no hurt, for he tried it himself and got good from it, and then he made her taste it, for he vowed and swore that there was no harm in it.

Guleesh handed her the cup, and she drank half of it, and then fell back on her bed and a heavy sleep came on her, and she never woke out of that sleep till the day on the morrow.

Guleesh and the priest sat up the entire night with her, waiting till she should awake, and they between hope and unhope, between expectation of saving her and fear of hurting her.

She awoke at last when the sun had gone half its way through the heavens. She rubbed her eyes and looked like a person who did not know where she was. She was like one astonished when she saw Guleesh and the priest in the same room with her, and she sat up doing her best to collect her thoughts.

The two men were in great anxiety waiting to see would she speak, or would she not speak, and when they remained silent for a couple of minutes, the priest said to her: "Did you sleep well, Mary?"

And she answered him: "I slept, thank you."

No sooner did Guleesh hear her talking than he put a shout of joy out of him, and ran over to her and fell on his two knees, and said: "A thousand thanks to God, who has given you back the talk; lady of my heart, speak again to me."

The lady answered him that she understood it was he who boiled that drink for her, and gave it to her; that she was obliged to him from her heart for all the kindness he showed her since the day she first came to Ireland, and that he might be certain that she never would forget it.

Guleesh was ready to die with satisfaction and delight. Then they brought her food, and she ate with a good appetite, and was merry and joyous, and never left off talking with the

priest while she was eating.

After that Guleesh went home to his house, and stretched himself on the bed and fell asleep again, for the force of the herb was not all spent, and he passed another day and a night sleeping. When he woke up he went back to the priest's house, and found that the young lady was in the same state, and that she was asleep almost since the time that he left the house.

He went into her chamber with the priest, and they remained watching beside her till she awoke the second time, and she had her talk as well as ever, and Guleesh was greatly rejoiced. The priest put food on the table again and they ate together, and Guleesh used after that to come to the house from day to day, and the friendship that was between him and the king's daughter increased, because she had no one to speak to except Guleesh and the priest, and she liked Guleesh best.

So they married one another, and that was the fine wedding they had, and if I were to be there then, I would not be here now; but I heard it from a bird*een* that there was neither cark nor care, sickness nor sorrow, mishap nor misfortune on them till the hour of their death, and may the same be with me, and with us all!



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