

Tales from Scandinavia

IMAGINATIVE SERIES

SELECTED AUTHORS

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Selected Authors

Libraries of Hope

Tales from Scandinavia

Imaginative Series

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TALES FROM SCANDINAVIA

Selected Authors

Tales from Denmark

The Fir Tree
by Hans Christian Andersen

Far away in the forest, where the warm sun and the fresh air made a sweet resting place, grew a pretty little fir tree. The situation was all that could be desired; and yet the tree was not happy, it wished so much to be like its tall companions, the pines and firs which grew around it.

The sun shone, and the soft air fluttered its leaves, and the little peasant children passed by, prattling merrily; but the fir tree did not heed them.

Sometimes the children would bring a large basket of raspberries or strawberries, wreathed on straws, and seat themselves near the fir tree, and say, "Is it not a pretty little tree?" which made it feel even more unhappy than before.

And yet all this while the tree grew a notch or joint taller every year, for by the number of joints in the stem of a fir tree we can discover its age.

Still, as it grew, it complained: "Oh! how I wish I were as tall as the other trees; then I would spread out my branches on every side, and my crown would overlook the wide world around. I should have the birds building their nests on my boughs, and when the wind blew, I should bow with stately dignity, like my tall companions."

So discontented was the tree, that it took no pleasure in the warm sunshine, the birds, or the rosy clouds that floated over it morning and evening.

Sometimes in winter, when the snow lay white and glittering on the ground, there was a little hare that would come springing along, and jump right over the little tree's head; then how mortified it would feel.

Two winters passed; and when the third arrived, the tree had grown so tall that the hare was obliged to run round it. Yet it remained unsatisfied and would exclaim: "Oh! to grow, to grow; if I could but keep on growing tall and old! There is nothing else worth caring for in the world."

In the autumn the woodcutters came, as usual, and cut down several of the tallest trees; and the young fir, which was now grown to a good, full height, shuddered as the noble trees fell to the earth with a crash.

After the branches were lopped off, the trunks looked so slender and bare that they could scarcely be recognized. Then they were placed, one upon another, upon wagons and drawn by horses out of the forest. Where could they be going? What would become of them? The young fir tree wished very much to know.

So in the spring, when the swallows and the storks came, it asked: "Do you know where those trees were taken? Did you meet them?"

The swallows knew nothing; but the stork, after a little reflection, nodded his head and said: "Yes, I think I do. As I flew from Egypt, I met several new ships, and they had fine masts that smelt like fir. These must have been the trees; and I assure you they were stately; they sailed right gloriously!"

"Oh, how I wish I were tall enough to go on the sea," said the fir tree. "Tell me what is this sea, and what does it look like?"

"It would take too much time to explain—a great deal too much," said the stork, flying quickly away.

"Rejoice in thy youth," said the sunbeam; "rejoice in thy fresh growth and in the young life that is in thee."

And the wind kissed the tree, and the dew watered it with tears, but the fir tree regarded them not.

Christmas time drew near, and many young trees were cut down, some that were even smaller and younger than the fir tree, who enjoyed neither rest nor peace for longing to leave

its forest home. These young trees, which were chosen for their beauty, kept their branches, and they, also, were laid on wagons and drawn by horses far away out of the forest.

"Where are they going?" asked the fir tree. "They are not taller than I am; indeed, one is not so tall. And why do they keep all their branches? Where are they going?"

"We know, we know," sang the sparrows; "we have looked in at the windows of the houses in the town, and we know what is done with them. Oh! you cannot think what honor and glory they receive. They are dressed up in the most splendid manner. We have seen them standing in the middle of a warm room, and adorned with all sorts of beautiful things —honey cakes, gilded apples, playthings, and many hundreds of wax tapers."

"And then," asked the fir tree, trembling in all its branches, "and then what happens?"

"We did not see anymore," said the sparrows; "but this was enough for us."

"I wonder whether anything so brilliant will ever happen to me," thought the fir tree. "It would be better even than crossing the sea. I long for it almost with pain. Oh, when will Christmas be here? I am now as tall and well grown as those which were taken away last year. O that I were now laid on the wagon, or standing in the warm room with all that brightness and splendor around me! Something better and more beautiful is to come after, or the trees would not be so decked out. Yes, what follows will be grander and more splendid. What can it be? I am weary with longing. I scarcely know what it is that I feel."

"Rejoice in our love," said the air and the sunlight. "Enjoy thine own bright life in the fresh air."

But the tree would not rejoice, though it grew taller every day, and winter and summer its dark-green foliage might be seen in the forest, while passers-by would say, "What a beautiful tree!"

A short time before the next Christmas the discontented fir tree was the first to fall. As the ax cut sharply through the stem and divided the pith, the tree fell with a groan to the earth, conscious of pain and faintness and forgetting all its dreams of happiness in sorrow at leaving its home in the forest. It knew that it should never again see its dear old companions the trees, nor the little bushes and many-colored flowers that had grown by its side; perhaps not even the birds. Nor was the journey at all pleasant.

The tree first recovered itself while being unpacked in the courtyard of a house, with several other trees; and it heard a man say: "We only want one, and this is the prettiest. This is beautiful!"

Then came two servants in grand livery and carried the fir tree into a large and beautiful apartment. Pictures hung on the walls, and near the tall tile stove stood great china vases with lions on the lids. There were rocking-chairs, silken sofas, and large tables covered with pictures; and there were books, and playthings that had cost a hundred times a hundred dollars—at least so said the children.

Then the fir tree was placed in a large tub full of sand—but green baize hung all round it so that no one could know it was a tub—and it stood on a very handsome carpet. Oh, how the fir tree trembled! What was going to happen to him now? Some young ladies came, and the servants helped them to adorn the tree.

On one branch they hung little bags cut out of colored paper, and each bag was filled with sweetmeats. From other branches hung gilded apples and walnuts, as if they had grown there; and above and all around were hundreds of red, blue, and white tapers, which were fastened upon the branches. Dolls, exactly like real men and women, were placed under the green leaves—the tree had never seen such things before—and at the very top was fastened a glittering star made of gold tinsel. Oh, it was very beautiful. "This evening," they all

exclaimed, "how bright it will be!"

"O that the evening were come," thought the tree, "and the tapers lighted! Then I shall know what else is going to happen. Will the trees of the forest come to see me? Will the sparrows peep in at the windows, I wonder, as they fly? Shall I grow faster here than in the forest, and shall I keep on all these ornaments during summer and winter?" But guessing was of very little use. His back ached with trying, and this pain is as bad for a slender fir tree as headache is for us.

At last the tapers were lighted, and then what a glistening blaze of splendor the tree presented! It trembled so with joy in all its branches that one of the candles fell among the green leaves and burned some of them. "Help! help!" exclaimed the young ladies; but no harm was done, for they quickly extinguished the fire.

After this the tree tried not to tremble at all, though the fire frightened him, he was so anxious not to hurt any of the beautiful ornaments, even while their brilliancy dazzled him.

And now the folding doors were thrown open, and a troop of children rushed in as if they intended to upset the tree, and were followed more slowly by their elders. For a moment the little ones stood silent with astonishment, and then they shouted for joy till the room rang; and they danced merrily round the tree while one present after another was taken from it.

"What are they doing? What will happen next?" thought the tree. At last the candles burned down to the branches and were put out. Then the children received permission to plunder the tree.

Oh, how they rushed upon it! There was such a riot that the branches cracked, and had it not been fastened with the glistening star to the ceiling, it must have been thrown down.

Then the children danced about with their pretty toys, and no one noticed the tree except the children's maid, who came and peeped among the branches to see if an apple or a

fig had been forgotten.

"A story, a story," cried the children, pulling a little fat man towards the tree.

"Now we shall be in the green shade," said the man as he seated himself under it, "and the tree will have the pleasure of hearing, also; but I shall only relate one story. What shall it be? Ivede-Avede or Humpty Dumpty, who fell downstairs, but soon got up again, and at last married a princess?"

"Ivede-Avede," cried some; "Humpty Dumpty," cried others; and there was a famous uproar. But the fir tree remained quite still and thought to himself: "Shall I have anything to do with all this? Ought I to make a noise, too?" but he had already amused them as much as they wished and they paid no attention to him.

Then the old man told them the story of Humpty Dumpty —how he fell downstairs, and was raised up again, and married a princess. And the children clapped their hands and cried, "Tell another, tell another," for they wanted to hear the story of Ivede-Avede; but this time they had only "Humpty Dumpty." After this the fir tree became quite silent and thoughtful. Never had the birds in the forest told such tales as that of Humpty Dumpty, who fell downstairs, and yet married a princess.

"Ah, yes! so it happens in the world," thought the fir tree. He believed it all, because it was related by such a pleasant man.

"Ah, well!" he thought, "who knows? Perhaps I may fall down, too, and marry a princess;" and he looked forward joyfully to the next evening, expecting to be again decked out with lights and playthings, gold and fruit. "Tomorrow I will not tremble," thought he; "I will enjoy all my splendor, and I shall hear the story of Humpty Dumpty again, and perhaps of Ivede-Avede." And the tree remained quiet and thoughtful all night.

In the morning the servants and the housemaid came in.

"Now," thought the fir tree, "all my splendor is going to begin again." But they dragged him out of the room and upstairs to the garret and threw him on the floor in a dark corner where no daylight shone, and there they left him. "What does this mean?" thought the tree. "What am I to do here? I can hear nothing in a place like this;" and he leaned against the wall and thought and thought.

And he had time enough to think, for days and nights passed and no one came near him; and when at last somebody did come, it was only to push away some large boxes in a corner. So the tree was completely hidden from sight, as if it had never existed.

"It is winter now," thought the tree; "the ground is hard and covered with snow, so that people cannot plant me. I shall be sheltered here, I dare say, until spring comes. How thoughtful and kind everybody is to me! Still, I wish this place were not so dark and so dreadfully lonely, with not even a little hare to look at. How pleasant it was out in the forest while the snow lay on the ground, when the hare would run by, yes, and jump over me, too, although I did not like it then. Oh! it is terribly lonely here."

"Squeak, squeak," said a little mouse, creeping cautiously towards the tree; then came another, and they both sniffed at the fir tree and crept in and out between the branches.

"Oh, it is very cold," said the little mouse. "If it were not we should be very comfortable here, shouldn't we, old fir tree?"

"I am not old," said the fir tree. "There are many who are older than I am."

"Where do you come from?" asked the mice, who were full of curiosity; "and what do you know? Have you seen the most beautiful places in the world, and can you tell us all about them? And have you been in the storeroom, where cheeses lie on the shelf and hams hang from the ceiling? One can run about on tallow candles there; one can go in thin and

come out fat."

"I know nothing of that," said the fir tree, "but I know the wood, where the sun shines and the birds sing." And then the tree told the little mice all about its youth. They had never heard such an account in their lives; and after they had listened to it attentively, they said: "What a number of things you have seen! You must have been very happy."

"Happy!" exclaimed the fir tree; and then, as he reflected on what he had been telling them, he said, "Ah, yes! after all, those were happy days." But when he went on and related all about Christmas Eve, and how he had been dressed up with cakes and lights, the mice said, "How happy you must have been, you old fir tree."

"I am not old at all," replied the tree; "I only came from the forest this winter. I am now checked in my growth."

"What splendid stories you can tell," said the little mice. And the next night four other mice came with them to hear what the tree had to tell. The more he talked the more he remembered, and then he thought to himself: "Yes, those were happy days; but they may come again. Humpty Dumpty fell downstairs, and yet he married the princess. Perhaps I may marry a princess, too." And the fir tree thought of the pretty little birch tree that grew in the forest; a real princess, a beautiful princess, she was to him.

"Who is Humpty Dumpty?" asked the little mice. And then the tree related the whole story; he could remember every single word. And the little mice were so delighted with it that they were ready to jump to the top of the tree. The next night a great many more mice made their appearance, and on Sunday two rats came with them; but the rats said it was not a pretty story at all, and the little mice were very sorry, for it made them also think less of it.

"Do you know only that one story?" asked the rats.

"Only that one," replied the fir tree. "I heard it on the happiest evening in my life; but I did not know I was so happy

at the time."

"We think it is a very miserable story," said the rats. "Don't you know any story about bacon or tallow in the storeroom?"

"No," replied the tree.

"Many thanks to you, then," replied the rats, and they went their ways.

The little mice also kept away after this, and the tree sighed and said: "It was very pleasant when the merry little mice sat round me and listened while I talked. Now that is all past, too. However, I shall consider myself happy when someone comes to take me out of this place."

But would this ever happen? Yes; one morning people came to clear up the garret; the boxes were packed away, and the tree was pulled out of the corner and thrown roughly on the floor; then the servants dragged it out upon the staircase, where the daylight shone.

"Now life is beginning again," said the tree, rejoicing in the sunshine and fresh air. Then it was carried downstairs and taken into the courtyard so quickly that it forgot to think of itself and could only look about, there was so much to be seen.

The court was close to a garden, where everything looked blooming. Fresh and fragrant roses hung over the little palings. The linden trees were in blossom, while swallows flew here and there, crying, "Twit, twit, twit, my mate is coming"; but it was not the fir tree they meant.

"Now I shall live," cried the tree joyfully, spreading out its branches; but alas! they were all withered and yellow, and it lay in a corner among weeds and nettles. The star of gold paper still stuck in the top of the tree and glittered in the sunshine.

Two of the merry children who had danced round the tree at Christmas and had been so happy were playing in the same courtyard. The youngest saw the gilded star and ran and pulled it off the tree. "Look what is sticking to the ugly old fir

tree," said the child, treading on the branches till they crackled under his boots.

And the tree saw all the fresh, bright flowers in the garden and then looked at itself and wished it had remained in the dark corner of the garret. It thought of its fresh youth in the forest, of the merry Christmas evening, and of the little mice who had listened to the story of Humpty Dumpty.

"Past! past!" said the poor tree. "Oh, had I but enjoyed myself while I could have done so! but now it is too late."

Then a lad came and chopped the tree into small pieces, till a large bundle lay in a heap on the ground. The pieces were placed in a fire, and they quickly blazed up brightly, while the tree sighed so deeply that each sigh was like a little pistol shot. Then the children who were at play came and seated themselves in front of the fire, and looked at it and cried, "Pop, pop." But at each "pop," which was a deep sigh, the tree was thinking of a summer day in the forest or of some winter night there when the stars shone brightly, and of Christmas evening, and of Humpty Dumpty—the only story it had ever heard or knew how to relate—till at last it was consumed.

The boys still played in the garden, and the youngest wore on his breast the golden star with which the tree had been adorned during the happiest evening of its existence. Now all was past; the tree's life was past and the story also past—for all stories must come to an end at some time or other.

Little Tuk
by Hans Christian Andersen

Little Tuk! An odd name, to be sure! However, it was not the little boy's real name. His real name was Carl; but when he was so young that he could not speak plainly, he used to call himself Tuk. It would be hard to say why, for it is not at all like "Carl"; but the name does as well as any, if one only knows it.

Little Tuk was left at home to take care of his sister Gustava, who was much younger than himself; and he had also to learn his lesson. Here were two things to be done at the same time, and they did not at all suit each other. The poor boy sat with his sister in his lap, singing to her all the songs he knew, yet giving, now and then, a glance into his geography, which lay open beside him. By tomorrow morning he must know the names of all the towns in Seeland by heart, and be able to tell about them all that could be told.

His mother came at last, and took little Gustava in her arms. Tuk ran quickly to the window and read and read till he had almost read his eyes out—for it was growing dark, and his mother could not afford to buy candles.

"There goes the old washerwoman down the lane," said the mother, as she looked out of the window. "She can hardly drag herself along, poor thing; and now she has to carry that heavy pail from the pump. Be a good boy, little Tuk, and run across to help the poor creature, will you not?" And little Tuk ran quickly and helped to bear the weight of the pail. But when he came back into the room, it was quite dark. Nothing was said about a candle, and it was of no use to wish for one; he must go to his little trundle-bed, which was made of an old

settle.

There he lay, still thinking of the geography lesson, of Seeland, and of all that the master had said. He could not read the book again, as he should by rights have done, for want of a light. So he put the geography-book under his pillow. Somebody had once told him that would help him wonderfully to remember his lesson, but he had never yet found that one could depend upon it.

There he lay and thought and thought, till all at once he felt as though someone were gently sealing his mouth and eyes with a kiss. He slept and yet did not sleep, for he seemed to see the old washerwoman's mild, kind eyes fixed upon him, and to hear her say: "It would be a shame, indeed, for you not to know your lesson tomorrow, little Tuk. You helped me; now I will help you, and our Lord will help us both."

All at once the leaves of the book began to rustle under little Tuk's head, and he heard something crawling about under his pillow.

"Cluck, cluck, cluck!" cried a hen, as she crept towards him. (She came from the town of Kjöge.) "I'm a Kjöge hen," she said. And then she told him how many inhabitants the little town contained, and about the battle that had once been fought there, and how it was now hardly worth mentioning, there were so many greater things.

Scratch, scratch! kribbley crabbley! and now a great wooden bird jumped down upon the bed. It was the popinjay from the shooting ground at Præstö. He had reckoned the number of inhabitants in Præstö, and found that there were as many as he had nails in his body. He was a proud bird. "Thorwaldsen lived in one corner of Præstö, close by me. Am I not a pretty bird, a merry popinjay?"

And now little Tuk no longer lay in bed. All in a moment he was on horseback, and on he went, gallop, gallop! A splendid knight, with a bright helmet and waving plume—a knight of the olden time—held him on his own horse; and on they

rode together, through the wood of the ancient city of Vordingborg, and it was once again a great and busy town. The high towers of the king's castle rose against the sky, and bright lights were seen gleaming through the windows. Within were music and merrymaking. King Waldemar was leading out the noble ladies of his court to dance with him.

Suddenly the morning dawned, the lamps grew pale, the sun rose, the outlines of the buildings faded away, and at last one high tower alone remained to mark the spot where the royal castle had stood. The vast city had shrunk into a poor, mean-looking little town. The schoolboys, coming out of school with their geography-books under their arms, said, "Two thousand inhabitants"; but that was a mere boast, for the town had not nearly so many.

And little Tuk lay in his bed. He knew not whether he had been dreaming or not, but again there was someone close by his side.

"Little Tuk! little Tuk!" cried a voice; it was the voice of a young sailor boy. "I am come to bring you greeting from Korsör. Korsör is a new town, a living town, with steamers and mail coaches. Once people used to call it a low, ugly place, but they do so no longer.

"'I dwell by the seaside,' says Korsör; 'I have broad highroads and pleasure gardens; and I have given birth to a poet, a witty one, too, which is more than all poets are. I once thought of sending a ship all round the world; but I did not do it, though I might as well have done so. I dwell so pleasantly, close by the port; and I am fragrant with perfume, for the loveliest roses bloom round about me, close to my gates.'"

And little Tuk could smell the roses and see them and their fresh green leaves. But in a moment they had vanished; the green leaves spread and thickened—a perfect grove had grown up above the bright waters of the bay, and above the grove rose the two high-pointed towers of a glorious old church. From the side of the grass-grown hill gushed a

fountain in rainbow-hued streams, with a merry, musical voice, and close beside it sat a king, wearing a gold crown upon his long dark hair. This was King Hroar of the springs; and hard by was the town of Roskilde (Hroar's Fountain). And up the hill, on a broad highway, went all the kings and queens of Denmark, wearing golden crowns; hand in hand they passed on into the church, and the deep music of the organ mingled with the clear rippling of the fountain. For nearly all the kings and queens of Denmark lie buried in this beautiful church. And little Tuk saw and heard it all.

"Don't forget the towns," said King Hroar.

Then all vanished; though where it went he knew not. It seemed like turning the leaves of a book.

And now there stood before him an old peasant woman from Sorö, the quiet little town where grass grows in the very market place. Her green linen apron was thrown over her head and back, and the apron was very wet, as if it had been raining heavily.

"And so it has," she said. And she told a great many pretty things from Holberg's comedies, and recited ballads about Waldemar and Absalon; for Holberg had founded an academy in her native town.

All at once she cowered down and rocked her head as if she were a frog about to spring. "Koax!" cried she; "it is wet, it is always wet, and it is as still as the grave in Sorö." She had changed into a frog. "Koax!" and again she was an old woman. "One must dress according to the weather," she said.

"It is wet! it is wet! My native town is like a bottle; one goes in at the cork, and by the cork one must come out. In old times we had the finest of fish; now we have fresh, rosy-cheeked boys at the bottom of the bottle. There they learn wisdom—Greek, Greek, and Hebrew! Koax!"

It sounded exactly as if frogs were croaking, or as if someone were walking over the great swamp with heavy boots. So tiresome was her tone, all on the same note, that little Tuk

fell fast asleep; and a very good thing it was for him.

But even in sleep there came a dream, or whatever else it may be called. His little sister Gustava, with her blue eyes and flaxen ringlets, was grown into a tall, beautiful girl, who, though she had no wings, could fly; and away they now flew over Seeland—over its green woods and blue waters.

"Hark! Do you hear the cock crow, little Tuk? 'Cock-a-doodle-do!' The fowls are flying hither from Kjöge, and you shall have a farmyard, a great, great poultry yard of your own! You shall never suffer hunger or want. The golden goose, the bird of good omen, shall be yours; you shall become a rich and happy man. Your house shall rise up like King Waldemar's towers and be richly decked with statues like those of Thorwaldsen at Præstö.

"Understand me well; your good name shall be borne round the world, like the ship that was to sail from Korsör, and at Roskilde you shall speak and give counsel wisely and well, little Tuk, like King Hroar; and when at last you shall lie in your peaceful grave you shall sleep as quietly—"

"As if I lay sleeping in Sorö," said Tuk, and he woke. It was a bright morning, and he could not remember his dream, but it was not necessary that he should. One has no need to know what one will live to see.

And now he sprang quickly out of bed and sought his book, that had lain under his pillow. He read his lesson and found that he knew the towns perfectly well.

And the old washerwoman put her head in at the door and said, with a friendly nod: "Thank you, my good child, for yesterday's help. May the Lord fulfill your brightest and most beautiful dreams! I know he will."

Little Tuk had forgotten what he had dreamed, but it did not matter. There was One above who knew it all.

The Ugly Duckling
by Hans Christian Andersen

It was so beautiful in the country. It was the summer time. The wheat fields were golden, the oats were green, and the hay stood in great stacks in the green meadows. The stork paraded about among them on his long red legs, chattering away in Egyptian, the language he had learned from his lady mother.

All around the meadows and cornfields grew thick woods, and in the midst of the forest was a deep lake. Yes, it was beautiful, it was delightful in the country.

In a sunny spot stood a pleasant old farmhouse circled all about with deep canals; and from the walls down to the water's edge grew great burdocks, so high that under the tallest of them a little child might stand upright. The spot was as wild as if it had been in the very center of the thick wood.

In this snug retreat sat a duck upon her nest, watching for her young brood to hatch; but the pleasure she had felt at first was almost gone; she had begun to think it a wearisome task, for the little ones were so long coming out of their shells, and she seldom had visitors. The other ducks liked much better to swim about in the canals than to climb the slippery banks and sit under the burdock leaves to have a gossip with her. It was a long time to stay so much by herself.

At length, however, one shell cracked, and soon another, and from each came a living creature that lifted its head and cried "Peep, peep."

"Quack, quack!" said the mother; and then they all tried to say it, too, as well as they could, while they looked all about them on every side at the tall green leaves. Their mother

allowed them to look about as much as they liked, because green is good for the eyes.

"What a great world it is, to be sure," said the little ones, when they found how much more room they had than when they were in the eggshell.

"Is this all the world, do you imagine?" said the mother. "Wait till you have seen the garden. Far beyond that it stretches down to the pastor's field, though I have never ventured to such a distance. Are you all out?" she continued, rising to look. "No, not all; the largest egg lies there yet, I declare. I wonder how long this business is to last. I'm really beginning to be tired of it;" but for all that she sat down again.

"Well, and how are you today?" quacked an old duck who came to pay her a visit.

"There's one egg that takes a deal of hatching. The shell is hard and will not break," said the fond mother, who sat still upon her nest. "But just look at the others. Have I not a pretty family? Are they not the prettiest little ducklings you ever saw? They are the image of their father—the good for naught! He never comes to see me."

"Let me see the egg that will not break," said the old duck. "I've no doubt it's a Guinea fowl's egg. The same thing happened to me once, and a deal of trouble it gave me, for the young ones are afraid of the water. I quacked and clucked, but all to no purpose. Let me take a look at it. Yes, I am right; it's a Guinea fowl, upon my word; so take my advice and leave it where it is. Come to the water and teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit a little while longer," said the mother. "I have sat so long, a day or two more won't matter."

"Very well, please yourself," said the old duck, rising; and she went away.

At last the great egg broke, and the latest bird cried "Peep, peep," as he crept forth from the shell. How big and ugly he was! The mother duck stared at him and did not know what

to think. "Really," she said, "this is an enormous duckling, and it is not at all like any of the others. I wonder if he will turn out to be a Guinea fowl. Well, we shall see when we get to the water—for into the water he must go, even if I have to push him in myself."

On the next day the weather was delightful. The sun shone brightly on the green burdock leaves, and the mother duck took her whole family down to the water and jumped in with a splash. "Quack, quack!" cried she, and one after another the little ducklings jumped in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up again in an instant and swam about quite prettily, with their legs paddling under them as easily as possible; their legs went of their own accord; and the ugly gray-coat was also in the water, swimming with them.

"Oh," said the mother, "that is not a Guinea fowl. See how well he uses his legs, and how erect he holds himself! He is my own child, and he is not so very ugly after all, if you look at him properly. Quack, quack! come with me now. I will take you into grand society and introduce you to the farmyard, but you must keep close to me or you may be trodden upon; and, above all, beware of the cat."

When they reached the farmyard, there was a wretched riot going on; two families were fighting for an eel's head, which, after all, was carried off by the cat. "See, children, that is the way of the world," said the mother duck, whetting her beak, for she would have liked the eel's head herself. "Come, now, use your legs, and let me see how well you can behave. You must bow your heads prettily to that old duck yonder; she is the highest born of them all and has Spanish blood; therefore she is well off. Don't you see she has a red rag tied to her leg, which is something very grand and a great honor for a duck; it shows that everyone is anxious not to lose her, and that she is to be noticed by both man and beast. Come, now, don't turn in your toes; a well-bred duckling spreads his feet wide apart, just like his father and mother, in this way;

now bend your necks and say 'Quack!'"

The ducklings did as they were bade, but the other ducks stared, and said, "Look, here comes another brood—as if there were not enough of us already! And bless me, what a queer-looking object one of them is; we don't want him here"; and then one flew out and bit him in the neck.

"Let him alone," said the mother; "he is not doing any harm."

"Yes, but he is so big and ugly. He's a perfect fright," said the spiteful duck, "and therefore he must be turned out. A little biting will do him good."

"The others are very pretty children," said the old duck with the rag on her leg, "all but that one. I wish his mother could smooth him up a bit; he is really ill-favored."

"That is impossible, your grace," replied the mother. "He is not pretty, but he has a very good disposition and swims as well as the others or even better. I think he will grow up pretty, and perhaps be smaller. He has remained too long in the egg, and therefore his figure is not properly formed;" and then she stroked his neck and smoothed the feathers, saying: "It is a drake, and therefore not of so much consequence. I think he will grow up strong and able to take care of himself."

"The other ducklings are graceful enough," said the old duck. "Now make yourself at home, and if you find an eel's head you can bring it to me."

And so they made themselves comfortable; but the poor duckling who had crept out of his shell last of all and looked so ugly was bitten and pushed and made fun of, not only by the ducks but by all the poultry.

"He is too big," they all said; and the turkey cock, who had been born into the world with spurs and fancied himself really an emperor, puffed himself out like a vessel in full sail and flew at the duckling. He became quite red in the head with passion, so that the poor little thing did not know where to go, and was quite miserable because he was so ugly as to be

laughed at by the whole farmyard.

So it went on from day to day; it got worse and worse. The poor duckling was driven about by everyone; even his brothers and sisters were unkind to him and would say, "Ah, you ugly creature, I wish the cat would get you" and his mother had been heard to say she wished he had never been born. The ducks pecked him, the chickens beat him, and the girl who fed the poultry pushed him with her feet. So at last he ran away, frightening the little birds in the hedge as he flew over the palings. "They are afraid because I am so ugly," he said. So he flew still farther, until he came out on a large moor inhabited by wild ducks. Here he remained the whole night, feeling very sorrowful.

In the morning, when the wild ducks rose in the air, they stared at their new comrade. "What sort of a duck are you?" they all said, coming round him.

He bowed to them and was as polite as he could be, but he did not reply to their question. "You are exceedingly ugly," said the wild ducks; "but that will not matter if you do not want to marry one of our family."

Poor thing! he had no thoughts of marriage; all he wanted was permission to lie among the rushes and drink some of the water on the moor. After he had been on the moor two days, there came two wild geese, or rather goslings, for they had not been out of the egg long, which accounts for their impertinence. "Listen, friend," said one of them to the duckling; "you are so ugly that we like you very well. Will you go with us and become a bird of passage? Not far from here is another moor, in which there are some wild geese, all of them unmarried. It is a chance for you to get a wife. You may make your fortune, ugly as you are."

"Bang, bang," sounded in the air, and the two wild geese fell dead among the rushes, and the water was tinged with blood. "Bang, bang," echoed far and wide in the distance, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the rushes.

The sound continued from every direction, for the sportsmen surrounded the moor, and some were even seated on branches of trees, overlooking the rushes. The blue smoke from the guns rose like clouds over the dark trees, and as it floated away across the water, a number of sporting dogs bounded in among the rushes, which bent beneath them wherever they went. How they terrified the poor duckling! He turned away his head to hide it under his wing, and at the same moment a large, terrible dog passed quite near him. His jaws were open, his tongue hung from his mouth, and his eyes glared fearfully. He thrust his nose close to the duckling, showing his sharp teeth, and then "splash, splash," he went into the water, without touching him.

"Oh," sighed the duckling, "how thankful I am for being so ugly; even a dog will not bite me."

And so he lay quite still, while the shot rattled through the rushes, and gun after gun was fired over him. It was late in the day before all became quiet, but even then the poor young thing did not dare to move. He waited quietly for several hours and then, after looking carefully around him, hastened away from the moor as fast as he could. He ran over field and meadow till a storm arose, and he could hardly struggle against it.

Towards evening he reached a poor little cottage that seemed ready to fall, and only seemed to remain standing because it could not decide on which side to fall first. The storm continued so violent that the duckling could go no farther. He sat down by the cottage, and then he noticed that the door was not quite closed, in consequence of one of the hinges having given way. There was, therefore, a narrow opening near the bottom large enough for him to slip through, which he did very quietly, and got a shelter for the night. Here, in this cottage, lived a woman, a cat, and a hen. The cat, whom his mistress called "My little son," was a great favorite; he could raise his back, and purr, and could even

throw out sparks from his fur if it were stroked the wrong way. The hen had very short legs, so she was called "Chickie Short-legs." She laid good eggs, and her mistress loved her as if she had been her own child. In the morning the strange visitor was discovered; the cat began to purr and the hen to cluck.

"What is that noise about?" said the old woman, looking around the room. But her sight was not very good; therefore when she saw the duckling she thought it must be a fat duck that had strayed from home. "Oh, what a prize!" she exclaimed. "I hope it is not a drake, for then I shall have some ducks' eggs. I must wait and see."

So the duckling was allowed to remain on trial for three weeks; but there were no eggs.

Now the cat was the master of the house, and the hen was the mistress; and they always said, "We and the world," for they believed themselves to be half the world, and by far the better half, too. The duckling thought that others might hold a different opinion on the subject, but the hen would not listen to such doubts.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked. "No." "Then have the goodness to cease talking." "Can you raise your back, or purr, or throw out sparks?" said the cat. "No." "Then you have no right to express an opinion when sensible people are speaking." So the duckling sat in a corner, feeling very low-spirited; but when the sunshine and the fresh air came into the room through the open door, he began to feel such a great longing for a swim that he could not help speaking of it.

"What an absurd idea!" said the hen. "You have nothing else to do; therefore you have foolish fancies. If you could purr or lay eggs, they would pass away."

"But it is so delightful to swim about on the water," said the duckling, "and so refreshing to feel it close over your head while you dive down to the bottom."

"Delightful, indeed! it must be a queer sort of pleasure," said the hen. "Why, you must be crazy! Ask the cat—he is

the cleverest animal I know; ask him how he would like to swim about on the water, or to dive under it, for I will not speak of my own opinion. Ask our mistress, the old woman; there is no one in the world more clever than she is. Do you think she would relish swimming and letting the water close over her head?"

"I see you don't understand me," said the duckling.

"We don't understand you? Who can understand you, I wonder? Do you consider yourself more clever than the cat or the old woman?—I will say nothing of myself. Don't imagine such nonsense, child, and thank your good fortune that you have been so well received here. Are you not in a warm room and in society from which you may learn something? But you are a chatterer, and your company is not very agreeable. Believe me, I speak only for your good. I may tell you unpleasant truths, but that is a proof of my friendship. I advise you, therefore, to lay eggs and learn to purr as quickly as possible."

"I believe I must go out into the world again," said the duckling.

"Yes, do," said the hen. So the duckling left the cottage and soon found water on which it could swim and dive, but he was avoided by all other animals because of his ugly appearance.

Autumn came, and the leaves in the forest turned to orange and gold; then, as winter approached, the wind caught them as they fell and whirled them into the cold air. The clouds, heavy with hail and snowflakes, hung low in the sky, and the raven stood among the reeds, crying, "Croak, croak." It made one shiver with cold to look at him. All this was very sad for the poor little duckling.

One evening, just as the sun was setting amid radiant clouds, there came a large flock of beautiful birds out of the bushes. The duckling had never seen any like them before. They were swans; and they curved their graceful necks, while their soft plumage shone with dazzling whiteness. They

uttered a singular cry as they spread their glorious wings and flew away from those cold regions to warmer countries across the sea. They mounted higher and higher in the air, and the ugly little duckling had a strange sensation as he watched them. He whirled himself in the water like a wheel, stretched out his neck towards them, and uttered a cry so strange that it frightened even himself. Could he ever forget those beautiful, happy birds! And when at last they were out of his sight, he dived under the water and rose again almost beside himself with excitement. He knew not the names of these birds nor where they had flown, but he felt towards them as he had never felt towards any other bird in the world.

He was not envious of these beautiful creatures; it never occurred to him to wish to be as lovely as they. Poor ugly creature, how gladly he would have lived even with the ducks, had they only treated him kindly and given him encouragement.

The winter grew colder and colder; he was obliged to swim about on the water to keep it from freezing, but every night the space on which he swam became smaller and smaller. At length it froze so hard that the ice in the water crackled as he moved, and the duckling had to paddle with his legs as well as he could, to keep the space from closing up. He became exhausted at last and lay still and helpless, frozen fast in the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant who was passing by saw what had happened. He broke the ice in pieces with his wooden shoe and carried the duckling home to his wife. The warmth revived the poor little creature; but when the children wanted to play with him, the duckling thought they would do him some harm, so he started up in terror, fluttered into the milk pan, and splashed the milk about the room. Then the woman clapped her hands, which frightened him still more. He flew first into the butter cask, then into the meal tub and out again. What a condition he was in! The woman

screamed and struck at him with the tongs; the children laughed and screamed and tumbled over each other in their efforts to catch him, but luckily he escaped. The door stood open; the poor creature could just manage to slip out among the bushes and lie down quite exhausted in the newly fallen snow.

It would be very sad were I to relate all the misery and privations which the poor little duckling endured during the hard winter; but when it had passed he found himself lying one morning in a moor, amongst the rushes. He felt the warm sun shining and heard the lark singing and saw that all around was beautiful spring.

Then the young bird felt that his wings were strong, as he flapped them against his sides and rose high into the air. They bore him onwards until, before he well knew how it had happened, he found himself in a large garden. The apple trees were in full blossom, and the fragrant elders bent their long green branches down to the stream, which wound round a smooth lawn. Everything looked beautiful in the freshness of early spring. From a thicket close by came three beautiful white swans, rustling their feathers and swimming lightly over the smooth water. The duckling saw these lovely birds and felt more strangely unhappy than ever.

"I will fly to these royal birds," he exclaimed, "and they will kill me because, ugly as I am, I dare to approach them. But it does not matter; better be killed by them than pecked by the ducks, beaten by the hens, pushed about by the maiden who feeds the poultry, or starved with hunger in the winter."

Then he flew to the water and swam towards the beautiful swans. The moment they espied the stranger they rushed to meet him with outstretched wings.

"Kill me," said the poor bird and he bent his head down to the surface of the water and awaited death.

But what did he see in the clear stream below? His own image—no longer a dark-gray bird, ugly and disagreeable to

look at, but a graceful and beautiful swan.

To be born in a duck's nest in a farmyard is of no consequence to a bird if it is hatched from a swan's egg. He now felt glad at having suffered sorrow and trouble, because it enabled him to enjoy so much better all the pleasure and happiness around him; for the great swans swam round the newcomer and stroked his neck with their beaks, as a welcome.

Into the garden presently came some little children and threw bread and cake into the water.

"See," cried the youngest, "there is a new one;" and the rest were delighted, and ran to their father and mother, dancing and clapping their hands and shouting joyously, "There is another swan come; a new one has arrived."

Then they threw more bread and cake into the water and said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all, he is so young and pretty." And the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed and hid his head under his wing, for he did not know what to do, he was so happy—yet he was not at all proud. He had been persecuted and despised for his ugliness, and now he heard them say he was the most beautiful of all the birds. Even the elder tree bent down its boughs into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and bright. Then he rustled his feathers, curved his slender neck, and cried joyfully, from the depths of his heart, "I never dreamed of such happiness as this while I was the despised ugly duckling."

Little Ida's Flowers
by Hans Christian Andersen

"My poor flowers are quite faded!" said little Ida. "Only yesterday evening they were so pretty, and now all the leaves are drooping. Why do they do that?" she asked of the student, who sat on the sofa. He was a great favorite with her, because he used to tell her the prettiest of stories and cut out the most amusing things in paper—hearts with little ladies dancing in them, and high castles with doors which one could open and shut. He was a merry student. "Why do the flowers look so wretched today?" asked she again, showing him a bouquet of faded flowers.

"Do you not know?" replied the student. "The flowers went to a ball last night, and are tired. That's why they hang their heads."

"What an idea," exclaimed little Ida. "Flowers cannot dance!"

"Of course they can dance! When it is dark, and we are all gone to bed, they jump about as merrily as possible. They have a ball almost every night."

"And can their children go to the ball?" asked Ida.

"Oh, yes," said the student; "daisies and lilies of the valley, that are quite little."

"And when is it that the prettiest flowers dance?"

"Have you not been to the large garden outside the town gate, in front of the castle where the king lives in summer—the garden that is so full of lovely flowers? You surely remember the swans which come swimming up when you give them crumbs of bread? Believe me, they have capital balls there."

"I was out there only yesterday with my mother," said Ida,

"but there were no leaves on the trees, and I did not see a single flower. What has become of them? There were so many in the summer."

"They are inside the palace now," replied the student. "As soon as the king and all his court go back to the town, the flowers hasten out of the garden and into the palace, where they have famous times. Oh, if you could but see them! The two most beautiful roses seat themselves on the throne and act king and queen. All the tall red cockscombs stand before them on either side and bow; they are the chamberlains. Then all the pretty flowers come, and there is a great ball. The blue violets represent the naval cadets; they dance with hyacinths and crocuses, who take the part of young ladies. The tulips and the tall tiger lilies are old ladies—dowagers—who see to it that the dancing is well done and that all things go on properly."

"But," asked little Ida, "is there no one there to harm the flowers for daring to dance in the king's castle?"

"No one knows anything about it," replied the student. "Once during the night, perhaps, the old steward of the castle does, to be sure, come in with his great bunch of keys to see that all is right; but the moment the flowers hear the clanking of the keys they stand stock-still or hide themselves behind the long silk window curtains. Then the old steward will say, 'Do I not smell flowers here?' but he can't see them."

"That is very funny," exclaimed little Ida, clapping her hands with glee; "but should not I be able to see the flowers?"

"To be sure you can see them," replied the student. "You have only to remember to peep in at the windows the next time you go to the palace. I did so this very day, and saw a long yellow lily lying on the sofa. She was a court lady."

"Do the flowers in the Botanical Garden go to the ball? Can they go all that long distance?"

"Certainly," said the student; "for the flowers can fly if they please. Have you not seen the beautiful red and yellow

butterflies that look so much like flowers? They are in fact nothing else. They have flown off their stalks high into the air and flapped their little petals just as if they were wings, and thus they came to fly about. As a reward for always behaving well they have leave to fly about in the daytime, too, instead of sitting quietly on their stalks at home, till at last the flower petals have become real wings. That you have seen yourself.

"It may be, though, that the flowers in the Botanical Garden have never been in the king's castle. They may not have heard what frolics take place there every night. But I'll tell you; if, the next time you go to the garden, you whisper to one of the flowers that a great ball is to be given yonder in the castle, the news will spread from flower to flower and they will all fly away. Then should the professor come to his garden there won't be a flower there, and he will not be able to imagine what has become of them."

"But how can one flower tell it to another? for I am sure the flowers cannot speak."

"No; you are right there," returned the student. "They cannot speak, but they can make signs. Have you ever noticed that when the wind blows a little the flowers nod to each other and move all their green leaves? They can make each other understand in this way just as well as we do by talking."

"And does the professor understand their pantomime?" asked Ida.

"Oh, certainly; at least part of it. He came into his garden one morning and saw that a great stinging nettle was making signs with its leaves to a beautiful red carnation. It was saying, 'You are so beautiful, and I love you with all my heart!' But the professor doesn't like that sort of thing, and he rapped the nettle on her leaves, which are her fingers; but she stung him, and since then he has never dared to touch a nettle."

"Ha! ha!" laughed little Ida, "that is very funny."

"How can one put such stuff into a child's head?" said a tiresome councilor, who had come to pay a visit. He did not

like the student and always used to scold when he saw him cutting out the droll pasteboard figures, such as a man hanging on a gibbet and holding a heart in his hand to show that he was a stealer of hearts, or an old witch riding on a broomstick and carrying her husband on the end of her nose. The councilor could not bear such jokes, and he would always say, as now: "How can anyone put such notions into a child's head? They are only foolish fancies."

But to little Ida all that the student had told her was very entertaining, and she kept thinking it over. She was sure now that her pretty yesterday's flowers hung their heads because they were tired, and that they were tired because they had been to the ball. So she took them to the table where stood her toys. Her doll lay sleeping, but Ida said to her, "You must get up, and be content to sleep tonight in the table drawer, for the poor flowers are ill and must have your bed to sleep in; then perhaps they will be well again by tomorrow."

And she at once took the doll out, though the doll looked vexed at giving up her cradle to the flowers.

Ida laid the flowers in the doll's bed and drew the coverlet quite over them, telling them to lie still while she made some tea for them to drink, in order that they might be well next day. And she drew the curtains about the bed, that the sun might not shine into their eyes.

All the evening she thought of nothing but what the student had told her; and when she went to bed herself, she ran to the window where her mother's tulips and hyacinths stood. She whispered to them, "I know very well that you are going to a ball tonight." The flowers pretended not to understand and did not stir so much as a leaf, but that did not prevent Ida from knowing what she knew.

When she was in bed she lay for a long time thinking how delightful it must be to see the flower dance in the king's castle, and said to herself, "I wonder if my flowers have really been there." Then she fell asleep.

In the night she woke. She had been dreaming of the student and the flowers and the councilor, who told her they were making game of her. All was still in the room, the night lamp was burning on the table, and her father and mother were both asleep.

"I wonder if my flowers are still lying in Sophie's bed," she thought to herself. "How I should like to know!" She raised herself a little and looked towards the door, which stood half open; within lay the flowers and all her playthings. She listened, and it seemed to her that she heard someone playing upon the piano, but quite softly, and more sweetly than she had ever heard before.

"Now all the flowers are certainly dancing," thought she. "Oh, how I should like to see them!" but she dared not get up for fear of waking her father and mother. "If they would only come in here!" But the flowers did not come, and the music went on so prettily that she could restrain herself no longer, and she crept out of her little bed, stole softly to the door, and peeped into the room. Oh, what a pretty sight it was!

There was no night lamp in the room, still it was quite bright; the moon shone through the window down upon the floor, and it was almost like daylight. The hyacinths and tulips stood there in two rows. Not one was left on the window, where stood the empty flower pots. On the floor all the flowers danced gracefully, making all the turns, and holding each other by their long green leaves as they twirled around. At the piano sat a large yellow lily, which little Ida remembered to have seen in the summer, for she recollected that the student had said, "How like she is to Miss Laura," and how everyone had laughed at the remark. But now she really thought that the lily was very like the young lady. It had exactly her manner of playing—bending its long yellow face, now to one side and now to the other, and nodding its head to mark the time of the beautiful music.

A tall blue crocus now stepped forward, sprang upon the

table on which lay Ida's playthings, went straight to the doll's cradle, and drew back the curtains. There lay the sick flowers; but they rose at once, greeted the other flowers, and made a sign that they would like to join in the dance. They did not look at all ill now.

Suddenly a heavy noise was heard, as of something falling from the table. Ida glanced that way and saw that it was the rod she had found on her bed on Shrove Tuesday, and that it seemed to wish to belong to the flowers. It was a pretty rod, for a wax figure that looked exactly like the councilor sat upon the head of it.

The rod began to dance, and the wax figure that was riding on it became long and great, like the councilor himself, and began to exclaim, "How can one put such stuff into a child's head?" It was very funny to see, and little Ida could not help laughing, for the rod kept on dancing, and the councilor had to dance too—there was no help for it—whether he remained tall and big or became a little wax figure again. But the other flowers said a good word for him, especially those that had lain in the doll's bed, so that at last the rod left it in peace.

At the same time there was a loud knocking inside the drawer where Sophie, Ida's doll, lay with many other toys. She put out her head and asked in great astonishment: "Is there a ball here? Why has no one told me of it?" She sat down upon the table, expecting some of the flowers to ask her to dance with them; but as they did not, she let herself fall upon the floor so as to make a great noise; and then the flowers all came crowding about to ask if she were hurt, and they were very polite—especially those that had lain in her bed.

She was not at all hurt, and the flowers thanked her for the use of her pretty bed and took her into the middle of the room, where the moon shone, and danced with her, while the other flowers formed a circle around them. So now Sophie was pleased and said they might keep her bed, for she did not

mind sleeping in the drawer the least in the world.

But the flowers replied: "We thank you most heartily for your kindness, but we shall not live long enough to need it; we shall be quite dead by tomorrow. But tell little Ida she is to bury us out in the garden near the canary bird's grave; and then we shall wake again next summer and be even more beautiful than we have been this year."

"Oh, no, you must not die," said Sophie, kissing them as she spoke; and then a great company of flowers came dancing in. Ida could not imagine where they could have come from, unless from the king's garden. Two beautiful roses led the way, wearing golden crowns; then followed wallflowers and pinks, who bowed to all present. They brought a band of music with them. Wild hyacinths and little white snowdrops jingled merry bells. It was a most remarkable orchestra. Following these were an immense number of flowers, all dancing—violets, daisies, lilies of the valley, and others which it was a delight to see.

At last all the happy flowers wished one another good night. Little Ida, too, crept back to bed, to dream of all that she had seen.

When she rose next morning she went at once to her little table to see if her flowers were there. She drew aside the curtains of her little bed; yes, there lay the flowers, but they were much more faded today than yesterday. Sophie too was in the drawer, but she looked very sleepy.

"Do you remember what you were to say to me?" asked Ida of her.

But Sophie looked quite stupid and had not a word to say.

"You are not kind at all," said Ida; "and yet all the flowers let you dance with them."

Then she chose from her playthings a little pasteboard box with birds painted on it, and in it she laid the dead flowers.

"That shall be your pretty casket," said she; "and when

my cousins come to visit me, by and by, they shall help me to bury you in the garden, in order that next summer you may grow again and be still more beautiful."

The two cousins were two merry boys, Gustave and Adolphe. Their father had given them each a new crossbow, which they brought with them to show to Ida. She told them of the poor flowers that were dead and were to be buried in the garden. So the two boys walked in front, with their bows slung across their shoulders, and little Ida followed, carrying the dead flowers in their pretty coffin. A little grave was dug for them in the garden. Ida first kissed the flowers and then laid them in the earth, and Adolphe and Gustave shot with their crossbows over the grave, for they had neither guns nor cannons.

The Steadfast Tin Soldier
by Hans Christian Andersen

There were once five and twenty tin soldiers. They were brothers, for they had all been made out of the same old tin spoon. They all shouldered their bayonets, held themselves upright, and looked straight before them. Their uniforms were very smart-looking—red and blue—and very splendid. The first thing they heard in the world, when the lid was taken off the box in which they lay, was the words "Tin soldiers!" These words were spoken by a little boy, who clapped his hands for joy. The soldiers had been given him because it was his birthday, and now he was putting them out upon the table.

Each was exactly like the rest to a hair, except one who had but one leg. He had been cast last of all, and there had not been quite enough tin to finish him; but he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others upon their two, and it was he whose fortunes became so remarkable.

On the table where the tin soldiers had been set up were several other toys, but the one that attracted most attention was a pretty little paper castle. Through its tiny windows one could see straight into the hall. In front of the castle stood little trees, clustering round a small mirror which was meant to represent a transparent lake. Swans of wax swam upon its surface, and it reflected back their images.

All this was very pretty, but prettiest of all was a little lady who stood at the castle's open door. She too was cut out of paper, but she wore a frock of the clearest gauze and a narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders, like a scarf, and in the middle of the ribbon was placed a shining tinsel rose. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and then

she lifted one leg so high that the Soldier quite lost sight of it. He thought that, like himself, she had but one leg.

"That would be just the wife for me," thought he, "if she were not too grand. But she lives in a castle, while I have only a box, and there are five and twenty of us in that. It would be no place for a lady. Still, I must try to make her acquaintance." A snuffbox happened to be upon the table and he lay down at full length behind it, and here he could easily watch the dainty little lady, who still remained standing on one leg without losing her balance.

When the evening came all the other tin soldiers were put away in their box, and the people in the house went to bed. Now the playthings began to play in their turn. They visited, fought battles, and gave balls. The tin soldiers rattled in the box, for they wished to join the rest, but they could not lift the lid. The nutcrackers turned somersaults, and the pencil jumped about in a most amusing way. There was such a din that the canary woke and began to speak—and in verse, too. The only ones who did not move from their places were the Tin Soldier and the Lady Dancer. She stood on tiptoe with outstretched arms, and he was just as persevering on his one leg; he never once turned away his eyes from her.

Twelve o'clock struck—crash! up sprang the lid of the snuffbox. There was no snuff in it, but a little black goblin. You see it was not a real snuffbox, but a jack-in-the-box.

"Tin Soldier," said the Goblin, "keep thine eyes to thyself. Gaze not at what does not concern thee!"

But the Tin Soldier pretended not to hear.

"Only wait, then, till tomorrow," remarked the Goblin.

Next morning, when the children got up, the Tin Soldier was placed on the window sill, and, whether it was the Goblin or the wind that did it, all at once the window flew open and the Tin Soldier fell head foremost from the third story to the street below. It was a tremendous fall! Over and over he turned in the air, till at last he rested, his cap and bayonet

sticking fast between the paving stones, while his one leg stood upright in the air.

The maidservant and the little boy came down at once to look for him, but, though they nearly trod upon him, they could not manage to find him. If the Soldier had but once called "Here am I!" they might easily enough have heard him, but he did not think it becoming to cry out for help, being in uniform.

It now began to rain; faster and faster fell the drops, until there was a heavy shower; and when it was over, two street boys came by.

"Look you," said one, "there lies a tin soldier. He must come out and sail in a boat."

So they made a boat out of an old newspaper and put the Tin Soldier in the middle of it, and away he sailed down the gutter, while the boys ran along by his side, clapping their hands.

Goodness! how the waves rocked that paper boat, and how fast the stream ran! The Tin Soldier became quite giddy, the boat veered round so quickly; still he moved not a muscle, but looked straight before him and held his bayonet tightly.

All at once the boat passed into a drain, and it became as dark as his own old home in the box. "Where am I going now?" thought he. "Yes, to be sure, it is all that Goblin's doing. Ah! if the little lady were but sailing with me in the boat, I would not care if it were twice as dark."

Just then a great water rat, that lived under the drain, darted suddenly out.

"Have you a passport?" asked the rat. "Where is your passport?"

But the Tin Soldier kept silence and only held his bayonet with a firmer grasp.

The boat sailed on, but the rat followed. Whew! how he gnashed his teeth and cried to the sticks and straws: "Stop him! stop him! He hasn't paid toll! He hasn't shown his

passport!"

But the stream grew stronger and stronger. Already the Tin Soldier could see daylight at the point where the tunnel ended; but at the same time he heard a rushing, roaring noise, at which a bolder man might have trembled. Think! just where the tunnel ended, the drain widened into a great sheet that fell into the mouth of a sewer. It was as perilous a situation for the Soldier as sailing down a mighty waterfall would be for us.

He was now so near it that he could not stop. The boat dashed on, and the Tin Soldier held himself so well that no one might say of him that he so much as winked an eye. Three or four times the boat whirled round and round; it was full of water to the brim and must certainly sink.

The Tin Soldier stood up to his neck in water; deeper and deeper sank the boat, softer and softer grew the paper; and now the water closed over the Soldier's head. He thought of the pretty little dancer whom he should never see again, and in his ears rang the words of the song:

> Wild adventure, mortal danger,
> Be thy portion, valiant stranger.

The paper boat parted in the middle, and the Soldier was about to sink, when he was swallowed by a great fish.

Oh, how dark it was! darker even than in the drain, and so narrow; but the Tin Soldier retained his courage; there he lay at full length, shouldering his bayonet as before.

To and fro swam the fish, turning and twisting and making the strangest movements, till at last he became perfectly still.

Something like a flash of daylight passed through him, and a voice said, "Tin Soldier!" The fish had been caught, taken to market, sold and bought, and taken to the kitchen, where the cook had cut him with a large knife. She seized the

Tin Soldier between her finger and thumb and took him to the room where the family sat, and where all were eager to see the celebrated man who had traveled in the maw of a fish; but the Tin Soldier remained unmoved. He was not at all proud.

They set him upon the table there. But how could so curious a thing happen? The Soldier was in the very same room in which he had been before. He saw the same children, the same toys stood upon the table, and among them the pretty dancing maiden, who still stood upon one leg. She too was steadfast. That touched the Tin Soldier's heart. He could have wept tin tears, but that would not have been proper. He looked at her and she looked at him, but neither spoke a word.

And now one of the little boys took the Tin Soldier and threw him into the stove. He gave no reason for doing so, but no doubt the Goblin in the snuffbox had something to do with it.

The Tin Soldier stood now in a blaze of red light. The heat he felt was terrible, but whether it proceeded from the fire or from the love in his heart, he did not know. He saw that the colors were quite gone from his uniform, but whether that had happened on the journey or had been caused by grief, no one could say. He looked at the little lady, she looked at him, and he felt himself melting; still he stood firm as ever, with his bayonet on his shoulder. Then suddenly the door flew open; the wind caught the Dancer, and she flew straight into the stove to the Tin Soldier, flashed up in a flame, and was gone! The Tin Soldier melted into a lump; and in the ashes the maid found him next day, in the shape of a little tin heart, while of the Dancer nothing remained save the tinsel rose, and that was burned as black as a coal.

Little Thumbelina
by Hans Christian Andersen

There was once a woman who wished very much to have a little child. She went to a fairy and said: "I should so very much like to have a little child. Can you tell me where I can find one?"

"Oh, that can be easily managed," said the fairy. "Here is a barleycorn; it is not exactly of the same sort as those which grow in the farmers' fields, and which the chickens eat. Put it into a flowerpot and see what will happen."

"Thank you," said the woman; and she gave the fairy twelve shillings, which was the price of the barleycorn. Then she went home and planted it, and there grew up a large, handsome flower, somewhat like a tulip in appearance, but with its leaves tightly closed, as if it were still a bud.

"It is a beautiful flower," said the woman, and she kissed the red and golden-colored petals; and as she did so the flower opened, and she could see that it was a real tulip. But within the flower, upon the green velvet stamens, sat a very delicate and graceful little maiden. She was scarcely half as long as a thumb, and they gave her the name of Little Thumb, or Thumbelina, because she was so small.

A walnut shell, elegantly polished, served her for a cradle; her bed was formed of blue violet leaves, with a rose leaf for a counterpane. Here she slept at night, but during the day she amused herself on a table, where the peasant wife had placed a plate full of water.

Round this plate were wreaths of flowers with their stems in the water, and upon it floated a large tulip leaf, which served the little one for a boat. Here she sat and rowed herself

from side to side, with two oars made of white horsehair. It was a very pretty sight. Thumbelina could also sing so softly and sweetly that nothing like her singing had ever before been heard.

One night, while she lay in her pretty bed, a large, ugly, wet toad crept through a broken pane of glass in the window and leaped right upon the table where she lay sleeping under her rose-leaf quilt.

"What a pretty little wife this would make for my son," said the toad, and she took up the walnut shell in which Thumbelina lay asleep, and jumped through the window with it, into the garden.

In the swampy margin of a broad stream in the garden lived the toad with her son. He was uglier even than his mother; and when he saw the pretty little maiden in her elegant bed, he could only cry "Croak, croak, croak."

"Don't speak so loud, or she will wake," said the toad, "and then she might run away, for she is as light as swan's down. We will place her on one of the water-lily leaves out in the stream; it will be like an island to her, she is so light and small, and then she cannot escape; and while she is there we will make haste and prepare the stateroom under the marsh, in which you are to live when you are married."

Far out in the stream grew a number of water lilies with broad green leaves which seemed to float on the top of the water. The largest of these leaves appeared farther off than the rest, and the old toad swam out to it with the walnut shell, in which Thumbelina still lay asleep.

The tiny creature woke very early in the morning and began to cry bitterly when she found where she was, for she could see nothing but water on every side of the large green leaf, and no way of reaching the land.

Meanwhile the old toad was very busy under the marsh, decking her room with rushes and yellow wildflowers, to make it look pretty for her new daughter-in-law. Then she swam

out with her ugly son to the leaf on which she had placed poor Thumbelina. She wanted to bring the pretty bed, that she might put it in the bridal chamber to be ready for her. The old toad bowed low to her in the water and said, "Here is my son; he will be your husband, and you will live happily together in the marsh by the stream."

"Croak, croak, croak," was all her son could say for himself. So the toad took up the elegant little bed and swam away with it, leaving Thumbelina all alone on the green leaf, where she sat and wept. She could not bear to think of living with the old toad and having her ugly son for a husband. The little fishes who swam about in the water beneath had seen the toad and heard what she said, so now they lifted their heads above the water to look at the little maiden.

As soon as they caught sight of her they saw she was very pretty, and it vexed them to think that she must go and live with the ugly toads.

"No, it must never be!" So they gathered together in the water, round the green stalk which held the leaf on which the little maiden stood, and gnawed it away at the root with their teeth. Then the leaf floated down the stream, carrying Thumbelina far away out of reach of land.

Thumbelina sailed past many towns, and the little birds in the bushes saw her and sang, "What a lovely little creature." So the leaf swam away with her farther and farther, till it brought her to other lands. A graceful little white butterfly constantly fluttered round her and at last alighted on the leaf. The little maiden pleased him, and she was glad of it, for now the toad could not possibly reach her, and the country through which she sailed was beautiful, and the sun shone upon the water till it glittered like liquid gold. She took off her girdle and tied one end of it round the butterfly, fastening the other end of the ribbon to the leaf, which now glided on much faster than before, taking Thumbelina with it as she stood.

Presently a large cockchafer flew by. The moment he caught sight of her he seized her round her delicate waist with his claws and flew with her into a tree. The green leaf floated away on the brook, and the butterfly flew with it, for he was fastened to it and could not get away.

Oh, how frightened Thumbelina felt when the cockchafer flew with her to the tree! But especially was she sorry for the beautiful white butterfly which she had fastened to the leaf, for if he could not free himself he would die of hunger. But the cockchafer did not trouble himself at all about the matter. He seated himself by her side, on a large green leaf, gave her some honey from the flowers to eat, and told her she was very pretty, though not in the least like a cockchafer.

After a time all the cockchafers who lived in the tree came to pay Thumbelina a visit. They stared at her, and then the young lady cockchafers turned up their feelers and said, "She has only two legs! how ugly that looks." "She has no feelers," said another. "Her waist is quite slim. Pooh! she is like a human being."

"Oh, she is ugly," said all the lady cockchafers. The cockchafer who had run away with her believed all the others when they said she was ugly. He would have nothing more to say to her, and told her she might go where she liked. Then he flew down with her from the tree and placed her on a daisy, and she wept at the thought that she was so ugly that even the cockchafers would have nothing to say to her. And all the while she was really the loveliest creature that one could imagine, and as tender and delicate as a beautiful rose leaf.

During the whole summer poor little Thumbelina lived quite alone in the wide forest. She wove herself a bed with blades of grass and hung it up under a broad leaf, to protect herself from the rain. She sucked the honey from the flowers for food and drank the dew from their leaves every morning.

So passed away the summer and the autumn, and then came the winter—the long, cold winter. All the birds who

had sung to her so sweetly had flown away, and the trees and the flowers had withered. The large shamrock under the shelter of which she had lived was now rolled together and shriveled up; nothing remained but a yellow, withered stalk. She felt dreadfully cold, for her clothes were torn, and she was herself so frail and delicate that she was nearly frozen to death. It began to snow, too; and the snowflakes, as they fell upon her, were like a whole shovelful falling upon one of us, for we are tall, but she was only an inch high. She wrapped herself in a dry leaf, but it cracked in the middle and could not keep her warm, and she shivered with cold.

Near the wood in which she had been living was a large cornfield, but the corn had been cut a long time; nothing remained but the bare, dry stubble, standing up out of the frozen ground. It was to her like struggling through a large wood.

Oh! how she shivered with the cold. She came at last to the door of a field mouse, who had a little den under the corn stubble. There dwelt the field mouse in warmth and comfort, with a whole roomful of corn, a kitchen, and a beautiful dining room. Poor Thumbelina stood before the door, just like a little beggar girl, and asked for a small piece of barleycorn, for she had been without a morsel to eat for two days.

"You poor little creature," said the field mouse, for she was really a good old mouse, "come into my warm room and dine with me."

She was pleased with Thumbelina, so she said, "You are quite welcome to stay with me all the winter, if you like; but you must keep my rooms clean and neat, and tell me stories, for I shall like to hear them very much." And Thumbelina did all that the field mouse asked her, and found herself very comfortable.

"We shall have a visitor soon," said the field mouse one day; "my neighbor pays me a visit once a week. He is better off than I am; he has large rooms, and wears a beautiful black

velvet coat. If you could only have him for a husband, you would be well provided for indeed. But he is blind, so you must tell him some of your prettiest stories."

Thumbelina did not feel at all interested about this neighbor, for he was a mole. However, he came and paid his visit, dressed in his black velvet coat.

"He is very rich and learned, and his house is twenty times larger than mine," said the field mouse.

He was rich and learned, no doubt, but he always spoke slightingly of the sun and the pretty flowers, because he had never seen them. Thumbelina was obliged to sing to him, "Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home," and many other pretty songs. And the mole fell in love with her because she had so sweet a voice; but he said nothing yet, for he was very prudent and cautious. A short time before, the mole had dug a long passage under the earth, which led from the dwelling of the field mouse to his own, and here she had permission to walk with Thumbelina whenever she liked. But he warned them not to be alarmed at the sight of a dead bird which lay in the passage. It was a perfect bird, with a beak and feathers, and could not have been dead long. It was lying just where the mole had made his passage. The mole took in his mouth a piece of phosphorescent wood, which glittered like fire in the dark. Then he went before them to light them through the long, dark passage. When they came to the spot where the dead bird lay, the mole pushed his broad nose through the ceiling, so that the earth gave way and the daylight shone into the passage.

In the middle of the floor lay a swallow, his beautiful wings pulled close to his sides, his feet and head drawn up under his feathers—the poor bird had evidently died of the cold. It made little Thumbelina very sad to see it, she did so love the little birds; all the summer they had sung and twittered for her so beautifully. But the mole pushed it aside with his crooked legs and said: "He will sing no more now. How miserable

it must be to be born a little bird! I am thankful that none of my children will ever be birds, for they can do nothing but cry 'Tweet, tweet,' and must always die of hunger in the winter."

"Yes, you may well say that, as a clever man!" exclaimed the field mouse. "What is the use of his twittering if, when winter comes, he must either starve or be frozen to death? Still, birds are very high bred."

Thumbelina said nothing, but when the two others had turned their backs upon the bird, she stooped down and stroked aside the soft feathers which covered his head, and kissed the closed eyelids. "Perhaps this was the one who sang to me so sweetly in the summer," she said; "and how much pleasure it gave me, you dear, pretty bird."

The mole now stopped up the hole through which the daylight shone, and then accompanied the ladies home. But during the night Thumbelina could not sleep; so she got out of bed and wove a large, beautiful carpet of hay. She carried it to the dead bird and spread it over him, with some down from the flowers which she had found in the field mouse's room. It was as soft as wool, and she spread some of it on each side of the bird, so that he might lie warmly in the cold earth.

"Farewell, pretty little bird," said she, "farewell. Thank you for your delightful singing during the summer, when all the trees were green and the warm sun shone upon us." Then she laid her head on the bird's breast, but she was alarmed, for it seemed as if something inside the bird went "thump, thump." It was the bird's heart; he was not really dead, only benumbed with the cold, and the warmth had restored him to life. In autumn all the swallows fly away into warm countries; but if one happens to linger, the cold seizes it, and it becomes chilled and falls down as if dead. It remains where it fell, and the cold snow covers it.

Thumbelina trembled very much; she was quite frightened, for the bird was large, a great deal larger than herself (she was only an inch high). But she took courage, laid the

wool more thickly over the poor swallow, and then took a leaf which she had used for her own counterpane and laid it over his head.

The next night she again stole out to see him. He was alive, but very weak; he could only open his eyes for a moment to look at Thumbelina, who stood by, holding a piece of decayed wood in her hand, for she had no other lantern. "Thank you, pretty little maiden," said the sick swallow; "I have been so nicely warmed that I shall soon regain my strength and be able to fly about again in the warm sunshine."

"Oh," said she, "it is cold out of doors now; it snows and freezes. Stay in your warm bed; I will take care of you."

She brought the swallow some water in a flower leaf, and after he had drunk, he told her that he had wounded one of his wings in a thornbush and could not fly as fast as the others, who were soon far away on their journey to warm countries. At last he had fallen to the earth, and could remember nothing more, nor how he came to be where she had found him.

All winter the swallow remained underground, and Thumbelina nursed him with care and love. She did not tell either the mole or the field mouse anything about it, for they did not like swallows. Very soon the springtime came, and the sun warmed the earth. Then the swallow bade farewell to Thumbelina, and she opened the hole in the ceiling which the mole had made. The sun shone in upon them so beautifully that the swallow asked her if she would go with him. She could sit on his back, he said, and he would fly away with her into the green woods. But she knew it would grieve the field mouse if she left her in that manner, so she said, "No, I cannot."

"Farewell, then, farewell, you good, pretty little maiden," said the swallow, and he flew out into the sunshine.

Thumbelina looked after him, and the tears rose in her eyes. She was very fond of the poor swallow.

"Tweet, tweet," sang the bird, as he flew out into the

green woods, and Thumbelina felt very sad. She was not allowed to go out into the warm sunshine. The corn which had been sowed in the field over the house of the field mouse had grown up high into the air and formed a thick wood to Thumbelina, who was only an inch in height.

"You are going to be married, little one," said the field mouse. "My neighbor has asked for you. What good fortune for a poor child like you! Now we will prepare your wedding clothes. They must be woolen and linen. Nothing must be wanting when you are the wife of the mole."

Thumbelina had to turn the spindle, and the field mouse hired four spiders, who were to weave day and night. Every evening the mole visited her and was continually speaking of the time when the summer would be over. Then he would keep his wedding day with Thumbelina; but now the heat of the sun was so great that it burned the earth and made it hard, like stone. As soon as the summer was over the wedding should take place. But Thumbelina was not at all pleased, for she did not like the tiresome mole.

Every morning when the sun rose and every evening when it went down she would creep out at the door, and as the wind blew aside the ears of corn so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how beautiful and bright it seemed out there and wished so much to see her dear friend, the swallow, again. But he never returned, for by this time he had flown far away into the lovely green forest.

When autumn arrived Thumbelina had her outfit quite ready, and the field mouse said to her, "In four weeks the wedding must take place."

Then she wept and said she would not marry the disagreeable mole.

"Nonsense," replied the field mouse. "Now don't be obstinate, or I shall bite you with my white teeth. He is a very handsome mole; the queen herself does not wear more beautiful velvets and furs. His kitchens and cellars are quite full.

You ought to be very thankful for such good fortune."

So the wedding day was fixed, on which the mole was to take her away to live with him, deep under the earth, and never again to see the warm sun, because *he* did not like it. The poor child was very unhappy at the thought of saying farewell to the beautiful sun, and as the field mouse had given her permission to stand at the door, she went to look at it once more.

"Farewell, bright sun," she cried, stretching out her arm towards it; and then she walked a short distance from the house, for the corn had been cut, and only the dry stubble remained in the fields. "Farewell, farewell," she repeated, twining her arm around a little red flower that grew just by her side. "Greet the little swallow from me, if you should see him again."

"Tweet, tweet," sounded over her head suddenly. She looked up, and there was the swallow himself flying close by. As soon as he spied Thumbelina he was delighted. She told him how unwilling she was to marry the ugly mole, and to live always beneath the earth, nevermore to see the bright sun. And as she told him, she wept.

"Cold winter is coming," said the swallow, "and I am going to fly away into warmer countries. Will you go with me? You can sit on my back and fasten yourself on with your sash. Then we can fly away from the ugly mole and his gloomy rooms—far away, over the mountains, into warmer countries, where the sun shines more brightly than here; where it is always summer, and the flowers bloom in greater beauty. Fly now with me, dear little one; you saved my life when I lay frozen in that dark, dreary passage."

"Yes, I will go with you," said Thumbelina; and she seated herself on the bird's back, with her feet on his outstretched wings, and tied her girdle to one of his strongest feathers.

The swallow rose in the air and flew over forest and over sea—high above the highest mountains, covered with eternal

snow. Thumbelina would have been frozen in the cold air, but she crept under the bird's warm feathers, keeping her little head uncovered, so that she might admire the beautiful lands over which they passed. At length they reached the warm countries, where the sun shines brightly and the sky seems so much higher above the earth. Here on the hedges and by the wayside grew purple, green, and white grapes, lemons and oranges hung from trees in the fields, and the air was fragrant with myrtles and orange blossoms. Beautiful children ran along the country lanes, playing with large gay butterflies; and as the swallow flew farther and farther, every place appeared still more lovely.

At last they came to a blue lake, and by the side of it, shaded by trees of the deepest green, stood a palace of dazzling white marble, built in the olden times. Vines clustered round its lofty pillars, and at the top were many swallows' nests, and one of these was the home of the swallow who carried Thumbelina.

"This is my house," said the swallow; "but it would not do for you to live there—you would not be comfortable. You must choose for yourself one of those lovely flowers, and I will put you down upon it, and then you shall have everything that you can wish to make you happy."

"That will be delightful," she said, and clapped her little hands for joy.

A large marble pillar lay on the ground, which, in falling, had been broken into three pieces. Between these pieces grew the most beautiful large white flowers, so the swallow flew down with Thumbelina and placed her on one of the broad leaves. But how surprised she was to see in the middle of the flower a tiny little man, as white and transparent as if he had been made of crystal! He had a gold crown on his head, and delicate wings at his shoulders, and was not much larger than was she herself. He was the angel of the flower, for a tiny man and a tiny woman dwell in every flower, and this was the king

of them all.

"Oh, how beautiful he is!" whispered Thumbelina to the swallow.

The little prince was at first quite frightened at the bird, who was like a giant compared to such a delicate little creature as himself; but when he saw Thumbelina he was delighted and thought her the prettiest little maiden he had ever seen. He took the gold crown from his head and placed it on hers, and asked her name and if she would be his wife and queen over all the flowers.

This certainly was a very different sort of husband from the son of the toad, or the mole with his black velvet and fur, so she said Yes to the handsome prince. Then all the flowers opened, and out of each came a little lady or a tiny lord, all so pretty it was quite a pleasure to look at them. Each of them brought Thumbelina a present; but the best gift was a pair of beautiful wings, which had belonged to a large white fly, and they fastened them to Thumbelina's shoulders, so that she might fly from flower to flower.

Then there was much rejoicing, and the little swallow, who sat above them in his nest, was asked to sing a wedding song, which he did as well as he could; but in his heart he felt sad, for he was very fond of Thumbelina and would have liked never to part from her again.

"You must not be called Thumbelina anymore," said the spirit of the flowers to her. "It is an ugly name, and you are so very lovely. We will call you Maia."

"Farewell, farewell," said the swallow, with a heavy heart, as he left the warm countries, to fly back into Denmark. There he had a nest over the window of a house in which dwelt the writer of fairy tales. The swallow sang "Tweet, tweet," and from his song came the whole story.

Sunshine Stories
by Hans Christian Andersen

"I am going to tell a story," said the Wind.

"I beg your pardon," said the Rain, "but now it is my turn. Have you not been howling round the corner this long time, as hard as ever you could?"

"Is this the gratitude you owe me?" said the Wind; "I, who in honor of you turn inside out—yes, even break—all the umbrellas, when the people won't have anything to do with you."

"I will speak myself," said the Sunshine. "Silence!" and the Sunshine said it with such glory and majesty that the weary Wind fell prostrate, and the Rain, beating against him, shook him, as she said:

"We won't stand it! She is always breaking through—is Madame Sunshine. Let us not listen to her; what she has to say is not worth hearing." And still the Sunshine began to talk, and this is what she said:

"A beautiful swan flew over the rolling, tossing waves of the ocean. Every one of its feathers shone like gold; and one feather drifted down to the great merchant vessel that, with sails all set, was sailing away.

"The feather fell upon the light curly hair of a young man, whose business it was to care for the goods in the ship—the supercargo he was called. The feather of the bird of fortune touched his forehead, became a pen in his hand, and brought him such luck that he soon became a wealthy merchant, rich enough to have bought for himself spurs of gold—rich enough to change a golden plate into a nobleman's shield, on which," said the Sunshine, "I shone."

"The swan flew farther, away and away, over the sunny green meadow, where the little shepherd boy, only seven years old, had lain down in the shade of the old tree, the only one there was in sight.

"In its flight the swan kissed one of the leaves of the tree, and falling into the boy's hand, it was changed to three leaves—to ten—to a whole book; yes, and in the book he read about all the wonders of nature, about his native language, about faith and knowledge. At night he laid the book under his pillow, that he might not forget what he had been reading.

"The wonderful book led him also to the schoolroom, and thence everywhere, in search of knowledge. I have read his name among the names of learned men," said the Sunshine.

"The swan flew into the quiet, lonely forest, and rested awhile on the deep, dark lake where the lilies grow, where the wild apples are to be found on the shore, where the cuckoo and the wild pigeon have their homes.

"In the wood was a poor woman gathering firewood—branches and dry sticks that had fallen. She bore them on her back in a bundle, and in her arms she held her little child. She too saw the golden swan, the bird of fortune, as it rose from among the reeds on the shore. What was it that glittered so? A golden egg that was still quite warm. She laid it in her bosom, and the warmth remained. Surely there was life in the egg! She heard the gentle pecking inside the shell, but she thought it was her own heart that was beating.

"At home in her poor cottage she took out the egg. 'Tick! tick!' it said, as if it had been a gold watch, but it was not; it was an egg—a real, living egg.

"The egg cracked and opened, and a dear little baby swan, all feathered as with the purest gold, pushed out its tiny head. Around its neck were four rings, and as this woman had four boys—three at home, and this little one that was with her in the lonely wood—she understood at once that there was one for each boy. Just as she had taken them the little gold bird

took flight.

"She kissed each ring, then made each of the children kiss one of the rings, laid it next the child's heart awhile, then put it on his finger. I saw it all," said the Sunshine, "and I saw what happened afterward.

"One of the boys, while playing by a ditch, took a lump of clay in his hand, then turned and twisted it till it took shape and was like Jason, who went in search of the Golden Fleece and found it.

"The second boy ran out upon the meadow, where stood the flowers—flowers of all imaginable colors. He gathered a handful and squeezed them so tightly that the juice flew into his eyes, and some of it wet the ring upon his hand. It cribbled and crawled in his brain and in his hands, and after many a day and many a year, people in the great city talked of the famous painter that he was.

"The third child held the ring in his teeth, and so tightly that it gave forth sound—the echo of a song in the depth of his heart. Then thoughts and feelings rose in beautiful sounds—rose like singing swans—plunged, too, like swans, into the deep, deep sea. He became a great musical composer, a master, of whom every country has the right to say, 'He was mine, for he was the world's.'

"And the fourth little one—yes, he was the 'ugly duck' of the family. They said he had the pip and must eat pepper and butter like a sick chicken, and that was what was given him; but of me he got a warm, sunny kiss," said the Sunshine. "He had ten kisses for one. He was a poet and was first kissed, then buffeted all his life through.

"But he held what no one could take from him—the ring of fortune from Dame Fortune's golden swan. His thoughts took wing and flew up and away like singing butterflies—emblems of an immortal life."

"That was a dreadfully long story," said the Wind.

"And so stupid and tiresome," said the Rain. "Blow upon

me, please, that I may revive a little."

And while the Wind blew, the Sunshine said: "The swan of fortune flew over the lovely bay where the fishermen had set their nets. The very poorest one among them was wishing to marry—and marry he did.

"To him the swan brought a piece of amber. Amber draws things toward itself, and this piece drew hearts to the house where the fisherman lived with his bride. Amber is the most wonderful of incense, and there came a soft perfume, as from a holy place, a sweet breath from beautiful nature, that God has made. And the fisherman and his wife were happy and grateful in their peaceful home, content even in their poverty. And so their life became a real Sunshine Story."

"I think we had better stop now," said the Wind. "I am dreadfully bored. The Sunshine has talked long enough."

"I think so, too," said the Rain.

And what do we others who have heard the story say?

We say, "Now the story's done."

The Little Match Girl
by Hans Christian Andersen

It was dreadfully cold; it was snowing fast, and was almost dark, as evening came on—the last evening of the year. In the cold and the darkness, there went along the street a poor little girl, bareheaded and with naked feet. When she left home she had slippers on, it is true; but they were much too large for her feet—slippers that her mother had used till then, and the poor little girl lost them in running across the street when two carriages were passing terribly fast. When she looked for them, one was not to be found, and a boy seized the other and ran away with it, saying he would use it for a cradle someday, when he had children of his own.

So on the little girl went with her bare feet, that were red and blue with cold. In an old apron that she wore were bundles of matches, and she carried a bundle also in her hand. No one had bought so much as a bunch all the long day, and no one had given her even a penny.

Poor little girl! Shivering with cold and hunger she crept along, a perfect picture of misery.

The snowflakes fell on her long flaxen hair, which hung in pretty curls about her throat; but she thought not of her beauty nor of the cold. Lights gleamed in every window, and there came to her the savory smell of roast goose, for it was New Year's Eve. And it was this of which she thought.

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat cowering down. She had drawn under her her little feet, but still she grew colder and colder; yet she dared not go home, for she had sold no matches and could not bring a penny of money. Her father would certainly

beat her; and, besides, it was cold enough at home, for they had only the house-roof above them, and though the largest holes had been stopped with straw and rags, there were left many through which the cold wind could whistle.

And now her little hands were nearly frozen with cold. Alas! a single match might do her good if she might only draw it from the bundle, rub it against the wall, and warm her fingers by it. So at last she drew one out. Whisht! How it blazed and burned! It gave out a warm, bright flame like a little candle, as she held her hands over it. A wonderful little light it was. It really seemed to the little girl as if she sat before a great iron stove with polished brass feet and brass shovel and tongs. So blessedly it burned that the little maiden stretched out her feet to warm them also. How comfortable she was! But lo! the flame went out, the stove vanished, and nothing remained but the little burned match in her hand.

She rubbed another match against the wall. It burned brightly, and where the light fell upon the wall it became transparent like a veil, so that she could see through it into the room. A snow-white cloth was spread upon the table, on which was a beautiful china dinner-service, while a roast goose, stuffed with apples and prunes, steamed famously and sent forth a most savory smell. And what was more delightful still, and wonderful, the goose jumped from the dish, with knife and fork still in its breast, and waddled along the floor straight to the little girl.

But the match went out then, and nothing was left to her but the thick, damp wall.

She lighted another match. And now she was under a most beautiful Christmas tree, larger and far more prettily trimmed than the one she had seen through the glass doors at the rich merchant's. Hundreds of wax tapers were burning on the green branches, and gay figures, such as she had seen in shop windows, looked down upon her. The child stretched out her hands to them; then the match went out.

Still the lights of the Christmas tree rose higher and higher. She saw them now as stars in heaven, and one of them fell, forming a long trail of fire.

"Now someone is dying," murmured the child softly; for her grandmother, the only person who had loved her, and who was now dead, had told her that whenever a star falls a soul mounts up to God.

She struck yet another match against the wall, and again it was light; and in the brightness there appeared before her the dear old grandmother, bright and radiant, yet sweet and mild, and happy as she had never looked on earth.

"Oh, grandmother," cried the child, "take me with you. I know you will go away when the match burns out. You, too, will vanish, like the warm stove, the splendid New Year's feast, the beautiful Christmas tree." And lest her grandmother should disappear, she rubbed the whole bundle of matches against the wall.

And the matches burned with such a brilliant light that it became brighter than noonday. Her grandmother had never looked so grand and beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms, and both flew together, joyously and gloriously, mounting higher and higher, far above the earth; and for them there was neither hunger, nor cold, nor care—they were with God.

But in the corner, at the dawn of day, sat the poor girl, leaning against the wall, with red cheeks and smiling mouth —frozen to death on the last evening of the old year. Stiff and cold she sat, with the matches, one bundle of which was burned.

"She wanted to warm herself, poor little thing," people said. No one imagined what sweet visions she had had, or how gloriously she had gone with her grandmother to enter upon the joys of a new year.

The Snow Queen
by Hans Christian Andersen

Story the First:
Which Describes a Looking-Glass and Its Broken Fragments

You must attend to the beginning of this story, for when we get to the end we shall know more than we now do about a very wicked hobgoblin; he was one of the most mischievous of all sprites, for he was a real demon.

One day when he was in a merry mood he made a looking-glass which had the power of making everything good or beautiful that was reflected in it shrink almost to nothing, while everything that was worthless and bad was magnified so as to look ten times worse than it really was.

The most lovely landscapes appeared like boiled spinach, and all the people became hideous and looked as if they stood on their heads and had no bodies. Their countenances were so distorted that no one could recognize them, and even one freckle on the face appeared to spread over the whole of the nose and mouth. The demon said this was very amusing. When a good or holy thought passed through the mind of anyone a wrinkle was seen in the mirror, and then how the demon laughed at his cunning invention.

All who went to the demon's school—for he kept a school—talked everywhere of the wonders they had seen, and declared that people could now, for the first time, see what the world and its inhabitants were really like. They carried the glass about everywhere, till at last there was not a land nor a people who had not been looked at through this distorted

mirror.

They wanted even to fly with it up to heaven to see the angels, but the higher they flew the more slippery the glass became, and they could scarcely hold it. At last it slipped from their hands, fell to the earth, and was broken into millions of pieces.

But now the looking-glass caused more unhappiness than ever, for some of the fragments were not so large as a grain of sand, and they flew about the world into every country. And when one of these tiny atoms flew into a person's eye it stuck there, unknown to himself, and from that moment he viewed everything the wrong way, and could see only the worst side of what he looked at, for even the smallest fragment retained the same power which had belonged to the whole mirror.

Some few persons even got a splinter of the looking-glass in their hearts, and this was terrible, for their hearts became cold and hard like a lump of ice. A few of the pieces were so large that they could be used as windowpanes; it would have been a sad thing indeed to look at our friends through them. Other pieces were made into spectacles, and this was dreadful, for those who wore them could see nothing either rightly or justly. At all this the wicked demon laughed till his sides shook, to see the mischief he had done. There are still a number of these little fragments of glass floating about in the air, and now you shall hear what happened with one of them.

Second Story:
A Little Boy and a Little Girl

In a large town full of houses and people there is not room for everybody to have even a little garden. Most people are obliged to content themselves with a few flowers in flowerpots.

In one of these large towns lived two poor children who had a garden somewhat larger and better than a few

flowerpots. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other almost as much as if they had been. Their parents lived opposite each other in two garrets where the roofs of neighboring houses nearly joined each other, and the water pipe ran between them. In each roof was a little window, so that anyone could step across the gutter from one window to the other.

The parents of each of these children had a large wooden box in which they cultivated kitchen vegetables for their own use, and in each box was a little rosebush which grew luxuriantly.

After a while the parents decided to place these two boxes across the water pipe, so that they reached from one window to the other and looked like two banks of flowers. Sweet peas drooped over the boxes, and the rosebushes shot forth long branches, which were trained about the windows and clustered together almost like a triumphal arch of leaves and flowers.

The boxes were very high, and the children knew they must not climb upon them without permission; but they often had leave to step out and sit upon their little stools under the rosebushes or play quietly together.

In winter all this pleasure came to an end, for the windows were sometimes quite frozen over. But they would warm copper pennies on the stove and hold the warm pennies against the frozen pane; then there would soon be a little round hole through which they could peep, and the soft, bright eyes of the little boy and girl would sparkle through the hole at each window as they looked at each other. Their names were Kay and Gerda. In summer they could be together with one jump from the window, but in winter they had to go up and down the long staircase and out through the snow before they could meet.

"See! there are the white bees swarming," said Kay's old grandmother one day when it was snowing.

"Have they a queen bee?" asked the little boy, for he knew that the real bees always had a queen.

"To be sure they have," said the grandmother. "She is flying there where the swarm is thickest. She is the largest of them all and never remains on the earth, but flies up to the dark clouds. Often at midnight she flies through the streets of the town and breathes with her frosty breath upon the windows; then the ice freezes on the panes into wonderful forms that look like flowers and castles."

"Yes, I have seen them," said both the children; and they knew it must be true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"Only let her come," said the boy. "I'll put her on the warm stove, and then she'll melt."

The grandmother smoothed his hair and told him more stories.

That same evening when little Kay was at home, half undressed, he climbed upon a chair by the window and peeped out through the little round hole. A few flakes of snow were falling, and one of them, rather larger than the rest, alighted on the edge of one of the flower boxes. Strange to say, this snowflake grew larger and larger till at last it took the form of a woman dressed in garments of white gauze, which looked like millions of starry snowflakes linked together. She was fair and beautiful, but made of ice—glittering, dazzling ice. Still, she was alive, and her eyes sparkled like bright stars, though there was neither peace nor rest in them. She nodded toward the window and waved her hand. The little boy was frightened and sprang from the chair, and at the same moment it seemed as if a large bird flew by the window.

On the following day there was a clear frost, and very soon came the spring. The sun shone; the young green leaves burst forth; the swallows built their nests; windows were opened, and the children sat once more in the garden on the roof, high above all the other rooms.

How beautifully the roses blossomed this summer! The little girl had learned a hymn in which roses were spoken of. She thought of their own roses, and she sang the hymn to the little boy, and he sang, too:

"Roses bloom and fade away;
The Christ-child shall abide alway.
Blessed are we his face to see
And ever little children be."

Then the little ones held each other by the hand, and kissed the roses, and looked at the bright sunshine, and spoke to it as if the Christ-child were really there. Those were glorious summer days. How beautiful and fresh it was out among the rosebushes, which seemed as if they would never leave off blooming.

One day Kay and Gerda sat looking at a book of pictures of animals and birds. Just then, as the clock in the church tower struck twelve, Kay said, "Oh, something has struck my heart!" and soon after, "There is certainly something in my eye."

The little girl put her arm round his neck and looked into his eye, but she could see nothing.

"I believe it is gone," he said. But it was not gone; it was one of those bits of the looking-glass—that magic mirror of which we have spoken—the ugly glass which made everything great and good appear small and ugly, while all that was wicked and bad became more visible, and every little fault could be plainly seen. Poor little Kay had also received a small splinter in his heart, which very quickly turned to a lump of ice. He felt no more pain, but the glass was there still. "Why do you cry?" said he at last. "It makes you look ugly. There is nothing the matter with me now. Oh, fie!" he cried suddenly; "that rose is worm-eaten, and this one is quite crooked. After all, they are ugly roses, just like the box in which they stand."

And then he kicked the boxes with his foot and pulled off the two roses.

"Why, Kay, what are you doing?" cried the little girl; and then when he saw how grieved she was he tore off another rose and jumped through his own window, away from sweet little Gerda.

When afterward she brought out the picture book he said, "It is only fit for babies in long clothes," and when grandmother told stories he would interrupt her with "but"; or sometimes when he could manage it he would get behind her chair, put on a pair of spectacles, and imitate her very cleverly to make the people laugh. By and by he began to mimic the speech and gait of persons in the street. All that was peculiar or disagreeable in a person he would imitate directly, and people said, "That boy will be very clever; he has a remarkable genius." But it was the piece of glass in his eye and the coldness in his heart that made him act like this. He would even tease little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart.

His games too were quite different; they were not so childlike. One winter's day, when it snowed, he brought out a burning glass, then, holding out the skirt of his blue coat, let the snowflakes fall upon it.

"Look in this glass, Gerda," said he, and she saw how every flake of snow was magnified and looked like a beautiful flower or a glittering star.

"Is it not clever," said Kay, "and much more interesting than looking at real flowers? There is not a single fault in it. The snowflakes are quite perfect till they begin to melt."

Soon after, Kay made his appearance in large, thick gloves and with his sledge at his back. He called upstairs to Gerda, "I've got leave to go into the great square, where the other boys play and ride." And away he went.

In the great square the boldest among the boys would often tie their sledges to the wagons of the country people and so get a ride. This was capital. But while they were all amusing

themselves, and Kay with them, a great sledge came by; it was painted white, and in it sat someone wrapped in a rough white fur and wearing a white cap. The sledge drove twice round the square, and Kay fastened his own little sledge to it, so that when it went away he went with it. It went faster and faster right through the next street, and the person who drove turned round and nodded pleasantly to Kay as if they were well acquainted with each other; but whenever Kay wished to loosen his little sledge the driver turned and nodded as if to signify that he was to stay, so Kay sat still, and they drove out through the town gate.

Then the snow began to fall so heavily that the little boy could not see a hand's breadth before him, but still they drove on. He suddenly loosened the cord so that the large sledge might go on without him, but it was of no use; his little carriage held fast, and away they went like the wind. Then he called out loudly, but nobody heard him, while the snow beat upon him, and the sledge flew onward. Every now and then it gave a jump, as if they were going over hedges and ditches. The boy was frightened and tried to say a prayer, but he could remember nothing but the multiplication table.

The snowflakes became larger and larger, till they appeared like great white birds. All at once they sprang on one side, the great sledge stopped, and the person who had driven it rose up. The fur and the cap, which were made entirely of snow, fell off, and he saw a lady, tall and white; it was the Snow Queen.

"We have driven well," said she; "but why do you tremble so? Here, creep into my warm fur." Then she seated him beside her in the sledge, and as she wrapped the fur about him, he felt as if he were sinking into a snowdrift.

"Are you still cold?" she asked, as she kissed him on the forehead. The kiss was colder than ice; it went quite through to his heart, which was almost a lump of ice already. He felt as if he were going to die, but only for a moment—he soon

seemed quite well and did not notice the cold all around him.

"My sledge! Don't forget my sledge," was his first thought, and then he looked and saw that it was bound fast to one of the white birds which flew behind him. The Snow Queen kissed little Kay again, and by this time he had forgotten little Gerda, his grandmother, and all at home.

"Now you must have no more kisses," she said, "or I should kiss you to death."

Kay looked at her. She was so beautiful, he could not imagine a more lovely face; she did not now seem to be made of ice as when he had seen her through his window and she had nodded to him.

In his eyes she was perfect, and he did not feel at all afraid. He told her he could do mental arithmetic as far as fractions, and that he knew the number of square miles and the number of inhabitants in the country. She smiled, and it occurred to him that she thought he did not yet know so very much.

He looked around the vast expanse as she flew higher and higher with him upon a black cloud, while the storm blew and howled as if it were singing songs of olden time. They flew over woods and lakes, over sea and land; below them roared the wild wind; wolves howled, and the snow crackled; over them flew the black, screaming crows, and above all shone the moon, clear and bright—and so Kay passed through the long, long winter's night, and by day he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

Third Story:
The Enchanted Flower Garden

But how fared little Gerda in Kay's absence?

What had become of him no one knew, nor could anyone give the slightest information, excepting the boys, who said that he had tied his sledge to another very large one, which had driven through the street and out at the town gate. No

one knew where it went. Many tears were shed for him, and little Gerda wept bitterly for a long time. She said she knew he must be dead, that he was drowned in the river which flowed close by the school. The long winter days were very dreary. But at last spring came with warm sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone," said little Gerda.

"I don't believe it," said the sunshine.

"He is dead and gone," she said to the sparrows.

"We don't believe it," they replied, and at last little Gerda began to doubt it herself.

"I will put on my new red shoes," she said one morning, "those that Kay has never seen, and then I will go down to the river and ask for him."

It was quite early when she kissed her old grandmother, who was still asleep; then she put on her red shoes and went, quite alone, out of the town gate, toward the river.

"Is it true that you have taken my little playmate away from me?" she said to the river. "I will give you my red shoes if you will give him back to me."

And it seemed as if the waves nodded to her in a strange manner. Then she took off her red shoes, which she liked better than anything else, and threw them both into the river, but they fell near the bank, and the little waves carried them back to land just as if the river would not take from her what she loved best, because it could not give her back little Kay.

But she thought the shoes had not been thrown out far enough. Then she crept into a boat that lay among the reeds, and threw the shoes again from the farther end of the boat into the water; but it was not fastened, and her movement sent it gliding away from the land. When she saw this she hastened to reach the end of the boat, but before she could do so it was more than a yard from the bank and drifting away faster than ever.

Little Gerda was very much frightened. She began to cry, but no one heard her except the sparrows, and they could not

carry her to land, but they flew along by the shore and sang as if to comfort her: "Here we are! Here we are!"

The boat floated with the stream, and little Gerda sat quite still with only her stockings on her feet; the red shoes floated after her, but she could not reach them because the boat kept so much in advance.

The banks on either side of the river were very pretty. There were beautiful flowers, old trees, sloping fields in which cows and sheep were grazing, but not a human being to be seen.

"Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay," thought Gerda, and then she became more cheerful, and raised her head and looked at the beautiful green banks; and so the boat sailed on for hours. At length she came to a large cherry orchard, in which stood a small house with strange red and blue windows. It had also a thatched roof, and outside were two wooden soldiers that presented arms to her as she sailed past. Gerda called out to them, for she thought they were alive; but of course they did not answer, and as the boat drifted nearer to the shore she saw what they really were.

Then Gerda called still louder, and there came a very old woman out of the house, leaning on a crutch. She wore a large hat to shade her from the sun, and on it were painted all sorts of pretty flowers.

"You poor little child," said the old woman, "how did you manage to come this long, long distance into the wide world on such a rapid, rolling stream?" And then the old woman walked into the water, seized the boat with her crutch, drew it to land, and lifted little Gerda out. And Gerda was glad to feel herself again on dry ground, although she was rather afraid of the strange old woman.

"Come and tell me who you are," said she, "and how you came here."

Then Gerda told her everything, while the old woman shook her head and said, "Hem-hem"; and when Gerda had

finished she asked the old woman if she had not seen little Kay. She told her he had not passed that way, but he very likely would come. She told Gerda not to be sorrowful, but to taste the cherries and look at the flowers; they were better than any picture book, for each of them could tell a story. Then she took Gerda by the hand, and led her into the little house, and closed the door. The windows were very high, and as the panes were red, blue, and yellow, the daylight shone through them in all sorts of singular colors. On the table stood some beautiful cherries, and Gerda had permission to eat as many as she would. While she was eating them the old woman combed out her long flaxen ringlets with a golden comb, and the glossy curls hung down on each side of the little round, pleasant face, which looked fresh and blooming as a rose.

"I have long been wishing for a dear little maiden like you," said the old woman, "and now you must stay with me and see how happily we shall live together." And while she went on combing little Gerda's hair the child thought less and less about her adopted brother Kay, for the old woman was an enchantress, although she was not a wicked witch; she conjured only a little for her own amusement, and, now, because she wanted to keep Gerda. Therefore she went into the garden and stretched out her crutch toward all the rose trees, beautiful though they were, and they immediately sank into the dark earth, so that no one could tell where they had once stood. The old woman was afraid that if little Gerda saw roses, she would think of those at home and then remember little Kay and run away.

Then she took Gerda into the flower garden. How fragrant and beautiful it was! Every flower that could be thought of, for every season of the year, was here in full bloom; no picture book could have more beautiful colors. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun went down behind the tall cherry trees; then she slept in an elegant bed, with red silk pillows embroidered with colored violets, and she dreamed as

pleasantly as a queen on her wedding day.

The next day, and for many days after, Gerda played with the flowers in the warm sunshine. She knew every flower, and yet, although there were so many of them, it seemed as if one were missing, but what it was she could not tell. One day, however, as she sat looking at the old woman's hat with the painted flowers on it, she saw that the prettiest of them all was a rose. The old woman had forgotten to take it from her hat when she made all the roses sink into the earth. But it is difficult to keep the thoughts together in everything, and one little mistake upsets all our arrangements.

"What! are there no roses here?" cried Gerda, and she ran out into the garden and examined all the beds, and searched and searched. There was not one to be found. Then she sat down and wept, and her tears fell just on the place where one of the rose trees had sunk down. The warm tears moistened the earth, and the rose tree sprouted up at once, as blooming as when it had sunk; and Gerda embraced it, and kissed the roses, and thought of the beautiful roses at home, and, with them, of little Kay.

"Oh, how I have been detained!" said the little maiden. "I wanted to seek for little Kay. Do you know where he is?" she asked the roses; "do you think he is dead?"

And the roses answered: "No, he is not dead. We have been in the ground, where all the dead lie, but Kay is not there."

"Thank you," said little Gerda, and then she went to the other flowers and looked into their little cups and asked, "Do you know where little Kay is?" But each flower as it stood in the sunshine dreamed only of its own little fairy tale or history. Not one knew anything of Kay. Gerda heard many stories from the flowers, as she asked them one after another about him.

And then she ran to the other end of the garden. The door was fastened, but she pressed against the rusty latch, and

it gave way. The door sprang open, and little Gerda ran out with bare feet into the wide world. She looked back three times, but no one seemed to be following her. At last she could run no longer, so she sat down to rest on a great stone, and when she looked around she saw that the summer was over and autumn very far advanced. She had known nothing of this in the beautiful garden where the sun shone and the flowers grew all the year round.

"Oh, how I have wasted my time!" said little Gerda. "It is autumn; I must not rest any longer," and she rose to go on. But her little feet were wounded and sore, and everything around her looked cold and bleak. The long willow leaves were quite yellow, the dewdrops fell like water, leaf after leaf dropped from the trees; the sloe thorn alone still bore fruit, but the sloes were sour and set the teeth on edge. Oh, how dark and weary the whole world appeared!

Fourth Story:
The Prince and Princess

Gerda was obliged to rest again, and just opposite the place where she sat she saw a great crow come hopping toward her across the snow. He stood looking at her for some time, and then he wagged his head and said, "Caw, caw, good day, good day." He pronounced the words as plainly as he could, because he meant to be kind to the little girl, and then he asked her where she was going all alone in the wide world.

The word "alone" Gerda understood very well and felt how much it expressed. So she told the crow the whole story of her life and adventures and asked him if he had seen little Kay.

The crow nodded his head very gravely and said, "Perhaps I have—it may be."

"No! Do you really think you have?" cried little Gerda, and she kissed the crow and hugged him almost to death, with

joy.

"Gently, gently," said the crow. "I believe I know. I think it may be little Kay; but he has certainly forgotten you by this time, for the princess."

"Does he live with a princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes, listen," replied the crow; "but it is so difficult to speak your language. If you understand the crows' language, then I can explain it better. Do you?"

"No, I have never learned it," said Gerda, "but my grandmother understands it, and used to speak it to me. I wish I had learned it."

"It does not matter," answered the crow. "I will explain as well as I can, although it will be very badly done"; and he told her what he had heard.

"In this kingdom where we now are," said he, "there lives a princess who is so wonderfully clever that she has read all the newspapers in the world—and forgotten them too, although she is so clever.

"A short time ago, as she was sitting on her throne, which people say is not such an agreeable seat as is often supposed, she began to sing a song which commences with these words:

Why should I not be married?

'Why not, indeed?' said she, and so she determined to marry if she could find a husband who knew what to say when he was spoken to, and not one who could only look grand, for that was so tiresome. She assembled all her court ladies at the beat of the drum, and when they heard of her intentions they were very much pleased.

"'We are so glad to hear of it,' said they. 'We were talking about it ourselves the other day.'

"You may believe that every word I tell you is true," said the crow, "for I have a tame sweetheart who hops freely about the palace, and she told me all this."

Of course his sweetheart was a crow, for "birds of a feather flock together," and one crow always chooses another crow.

"Newspapers were published immediately with a border of hearts and the initials of the princess among them. They gave notice that every young man who was handsome was free to visit the castle and speak with the princess, and those who could reply loud enough to be heard when spoken to were to make themselves quite at home at the palace, and the one who spoke best would be chosen as a husband for the princess.

"Yes, yes, you may believe me. It is all as true as I sit here," said the crow.

"The people came in crowds. There was a great deal of crushing and running about, but no one succeeded either on the first or the second day. They could all speak very well while they were outside in the streets, but when they entered the palace gates and saw the guards in silver uniforms and the footmen in their golden livery on the staircase and the great halls lighted up, they became quite confused. And when they stood before the throne on which the princess sat they could do nothing but repeat the last words she had said, and she had no particular wish to hear her own words over again. It was just as if they had all taken something to make them sleepy while they were in the palace, for they did not recover themselves nor speak till they got back again into the street. There was a long procession of them, reaching from the town gate to the palace.

"I went myself to see them," said the crow. "They were hungry and thirsty, for at the palace they did not even get a glass of water. Some of the wisest had taken a few slices of bread and butter with them, but they did not share it with their neighbors; they thought if the others went in to the princess looking hungry, there would be a better chance for themselves."

"But Kay! tell me about little Kay!" said Gerda. "Was he among the crowd?"

"Stop a bit; we are just coming to him. It was on the third day that there came marching cheerfully along to the palace a little personage without horses or carriage, his eyes sparkling like yours. He had beautiful long hair, but his clothes were very poor."

"That was Kay," said Gerda, joyfully. "Oh, then I have found him!" and she clapped her hands.

"He had a little knapsack on his back," added the crow.

"No, it must have been his sledge," said Gerda, "for he went away with it."

"It may have been so," said the crow; "I did not look at it very closely. But I know from my tame sweetheart that he passed through the palace gates, saw the guards in their silver uniform and the servants in their liveries of gold on the stairs, but was not in the least embarrassed.

"'It must be very tiresome to stand on the stairs,' he said. 'I prefer to go in.'

"The rooms were blazing with light; councilors and ambassadors walked about with bare feet, carrying golden vessels; it was enough to make anyone feel serious. His boots creaked loudly as he walked, and yet he was not at all uneasy."

"It must be Kay," said Gerda; "I know he had new boots on. I heard them creak in grandmother's room."

"They really did creak," said the crow, "yet he went boldly up to the princess herself, who was sitting on a pearl as large as a spinning wheel. And all the ladies of the court were present with their maids and all the cavaliers with their servants, and each of the maids had another maid to wait upon her, and the cavaliers' servants had their own servants as well as each a page. They all stood in circles round the princess, and the nearer they stood to the door the prouder they looked. The servants' pages, who always wore slippers, could hardly be looked at, they held themselves up so proudly by the door."

"It must be quite awful," said little Gerda; "but did Kay win the princess?"

"If I had not been a crow," said he, "I would have married her myself, although I am engaged. He spoke as well as I do when I speak the crows' language. I heard this from my tame sweetheart. He was quite free and agreeable and said he had not come to woo the princess, but to hear her wisdom. And he was as pleased with her as she was with him."

"Oh, certainly that was Kay," said Gerda; "he was so clever; he could work mental arithmetic and fractions. Oh, will you take me to the palace?"

"It is very easy to ask that," replied the crow, "but how are we to manage it? However, I will speak about it to my tame sweetheart and ask her advice, for, I must tell you, it will be very difficult to gain permission for a little girl like you to enter the palace."

"Oh, yes, but I shall gain permission easily," said Gerda, "for when Kay hears that I am here he will come out and fetch me in immediately."

"Wait for me here by the palings," said the crow, wagging his head as he flew away.

It was late in the evening before the crow returned. "Caw, caw!" he said; "she sends you greeting, and here is a little roll which she took from the kitchen for you. There is plenty of bread there, and she thinks you must be hungry. It is not possible for you to enter the palace by the front entrance. The guards in silver uniform and the servants in gold livery would not allow it. But do not cry; we will manage to get you in. My sweetheart knows a little back staircase that leads to the sleeping apartments, and she knows where to find the key."

Then they went into the garden, through the great avenue, where the leaves were falling one after another, and they could see the lights in the palace being put out in the same manner. And the crow led little Gerda to a back door which stood ajar. Oh! how her heart beat with anxiety and longing; it was as if she were going to do something wrong, and yet she only wanted to know where little Kay was.

"It must be he," she thought, "with those clear eyes and that long hair."

She could fancy she saw him smiling at her as he used to at home when they sat among the roses. He would certainly be glad to see her, and to hear what a long distance she had come for his sake, and to know how sorry they had all been at home because he did not come back. Oh, what joy and yet what fear she felt!

They were now on the stairs, and in a small closet at the top a lamp was burning. In the middle of the floor stood the tame crow, turning her head from side to side and gazing at Gerda, who curtsied as her grandmother had taught her to do.

"My betrothed has spoken so very highly of you, my little lady," said the tame crow. "Your story is very touching. If you will take the lamp, I will walk before you. We will go straight along this way; then we shall meet no one."

"I feel as if somebody were behind us," said Gerda, as something rushed by her like a shadow on the wall; and then it seemed to her that horses with flying manes and thin legs, hunters, ladies and gentlemen on horseback, glided by her like shadows.

"They are only dreams," said the crow; "they are coming to carry the thoughts of the great people out hunting. All the better, for if their thoughts are out hunting, we shall be able to look at them in their beds more safely. I hope that when you rise to honor and favor you will show a grateful heart."

"You may be quite sure of that," said the crow from the forest.

They now came into the first hall, the walls of which were hung with rose-colored satin embroidered with artificial flowers. Here the dreams again flitted by them, but so quickly that Gerda could not distinguish the royal persons. Each hall appeared more splendid than the last. It was enough to bewilder one. At length they reached a bedroom. The ceiling

was like a great palm tree, with glass leaves of the most costly crystal, and over the center of the floor two beds, each resembling a lily, hung from a stem of gold. One, in which the princess lay, was white; the other was red. And in this Gerda had to seek for little Kay.

She pushed one of the red leaves aside and saw a little brown neck. Oh, that must be Kay! She called his name loudly and held the lamp over him. The dreams rushed back into the room on horseback. He woke and turned his head round—it was not little Kay! The prince was only like him; still he was young and pretty. Out of her white-lily bed peeped the princess, and asked what was the matter. Little Gerda wept and told her story, and all that the crows had done to help her.

"You poor child," said the prince and princess; then they praised the crows, and said they were not angry with them for what they had done, but that it must not happen again, and that this time they should be rewarded.

"Would you like to have your freedom?" asked the princess, "or would you prefer to be raised to the position of court crows, with all that is left in the kitchen for yourselves?"

Then both the crows bowed and begged to have a fixed appointment; for they thought of their old age, and it would be so comfortable, they said, to feel that they had made provision for it.

And then the prince got out of his bed and gave it up to Gerda—he could not do more—and she lay down. She folded her little hands and thought, "How good everybody is to me, both men and animals"; then she closed her eyes and fell into a sweet sleep. All the dreams came flying back again to her, looking like angels now, and one of them drew a little sledge, on which sat Kay, who nodded to her. But all this was only a dream. It vanished as soon as she awoke.

The following day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet and invited to stay at the palace for a few days

and enjoy herself; but she only begged for a pair of boots and a little carriage and a horse to draw it, so that she might go out into the wide world to seek for Kay.

And she obtained not only boots but a muff, and was neatly dressed; and when she was ready to go, there at the door she found a coach made of pure gold with the coat of arms of the prince and princess shining upon it like a star, and the coachman, footman, and outriders all wearing golden crowns upon their heads. The prince and princess themselves helped her into the coach and wished her success.

The forest crow, who was now married, accompanied her for the first three miles; he sat by Gerda's side, as he could not bear riding backwards. The tame crow stood in the doorway flapping her wings. She could not go with them, because she had been suffering from headache ever since the new appointment, no doubt from overeating. The coach was well stored with sweet cakes, and under the seat were fruit and gingerbread nuts.

"Farewell, farewell," cried the prince and princess, and little Gerda wept, and the crow wept; and then, after a few miles, the crow also said farewell, and this parting was even more sad. However he flew to a tree and stood flapping his black wings as long as he could see the coach, which glittered like a sunbeam.

Fifth Story:
The Little Robber Girl

The coach drove on through a thick forest, where it lighted up the way like a torch and dazzled the eyes of some robbers, who could not bear to let it pass them unmolested.

"It is gold! it is gold!" cried they, rushing forward and seizing the horses. Then they struck dead the little jockeys, the coachman, and the footman, and pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is plump and pretty. She has been fed with the kernels of nuts," said the old robber woman, who had a long beard, and eyebrows that hung over her eyes. "She is as good as a fatted lamb; how nice she will taste!" and as she said this she drew forth a shining knife, that glittered horribly. "Oh!" screamed the old woman at the same moment, for her own daughter, who held her back, had bitten her in the ear. "You naughty girl," said the mother, and now she had not time to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me," said the little robber girl. "She shall give me her muff and her pretty dress, and sleep with me in my bed." And then she bit her mother again, and all the robbers laughed.

"I will have a ride in the coach," said the little robber girl, and she would have her own way, for she was self-willed and obstinate.

She and Gerda seated themselves in the coach and drove away over stumps and stones, into the depths of the forest. The little robber girl was about the same size as Gerda, but stronger; she had broader shoulders and a darker skin; her eyes were quite black, and she had a mournful look. She clasped little Gerda round the waist and said:

"They shall not kill you as long as you don't make me vexed with you. I suppose you are a princess."

"No," said Gerda; and then she told her all her history and how fond she was of little Kay.

The robber girl looked earnestly at her, nodded her head slightly, and said, "They shan't kill you even if I do get angry with you, for I will do it myself." And then she wiped Gerda's eyes and put her own hands into the beautiful muff, which was so soft and warm.

The coach stopped in the courtyard of a robber's castle, the walls of which were full of cracks from top to bottom. Ravens and crows flew in and out of the holes and crevices, while great bulldogs, each of which looked as if it could

swallow a man, were jumping about; but they were not allowed to bark.

In the large old smoky hall a bright fire was burning on the stone floor. There was no chimney, so the smoke went up to the ceiling and found a way out for itself. Soup was boiling in a large cauldron, and hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit.

"You shall sleep with me and all my little animals tonight," said the robber girl after they had had something to eat and drink. So she took Gerda to a corner of the hall where some straw and carpets were laid down. Above them, on laths and perches, were more than a hundred pigeons that all seemed to be asleep, although they moved slightly when the two little girls came near them. "These all belong to me," said the robber girl, and she seized the nearest to her, held it by the feet, and shook it till it flapped its wings. "Kiss it," cried she, flapping it in Gerda's face.

"There sit the wood pigeons," continued she, pointing to a number of laths and a cage which had been fixed into the walls, near one of the openings. "Both rascals would fly away directly, if they were not closely locked up. And here is my old sweetheart 'Ba,'" and she dragged out a reindeer by the horn; he wore a bright copper ring round his neck and was tethered to the spot. "We are obliged to hold him tight too, else he would run away from us also. I tickle his neck every evening with my sharp knife, which frightens him very much." And the robber girl drew a long knife from a chink in the wall and let it slide gently over the reindeer's neck. The poor animal began to kick, and the little robber girl laughed and pulled down Gerda into bed with her.

"Will you have that knife with you while you are asleep?" asked Gerda, looking at it in great fright.

"I always sleep with the knife by me," said the robber girl. "No one knows what may happen. But now tell me again all about little Kay, and why you went out into the world."

Then Gerda repeated her story over again, while the wood pigeons in the cage over her cooed, and the other pigeons slept. The little robber girl put one arm across Gerda's neck, and held the knife in the other, and was soon fast asleep and snoring. But Gerda could not close her eyes at all; she knew not whether she was to live or to die. The robbers sat round the fire, singing and drinking. It was a terrible sight for a little girl to witness.

Then the wood pigeons said: "Coo, coo, we have seen little Kay. A white fowl carried his sledge, and he sat in the carriage of the Snow Queen, which drove through the wood while we were lying in our nest. She blew upon us, and all the young ones died, excepting us two. Coo, coo."

"What are you saying up there?" cried Gerda. "Where was the Snow Queen going? Do you know anything about it?"

"She was most likely traveling to Lapland, where there is always snow and ice. Ask the reindeer that is fastened up there with a rope."

"Yes, there is always snow and ice," said the reindeer, "and it is a glorious place; you can leap and run about freely on the sparkling icy plains. The Snow Queen has her summer tent there, but her strong castle is at the North Pole, on an island called Spitzbergen."

"O Kay, little Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"Lie still," said the robber girl, "or you shall feel my knife."

In the morning Gerda told her all that the wood pigeons had said, and the little robber girl looked quite serious, and nodded her head and said: "That is all talk, that is all talk. Do you know where Lapland is?" she asked the reindeer.

"Who should know better than I do?" said the animal, while his eyes sparkled. "I was born and brought up there and used to run about the snow-covered plains."

"Now listen," said the robber girl; "all our men are gone away; only mother is here, and here she will stay; but at noon she always drinks out of a great bottle, and afterwards sleeps

for a little while; and then I'll do something for you." She jumped out of bed, clasped her mother round the neck, and pulled her by the beard, crying, "My own little nanny goat, good morning!" And her mother pinched her nose till it was quite red; yet she did it all for love.

When the mother had gone to sleep the little robber maiden went to the reindeer and said: "I should like very much to tickle your neck a few times more with my knife, for it makes you look so funny, but never mind—I will untie your cord and set you free, so that you may run away to Lapland; but you must make good use of your legs and carry this little maiden to the castle of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. You have heard what she told me, for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening."

The reindeer jumped for joy, and the little robber girl lifted Gerda on his back and had the forethought to tie her on and even to give her her own little cushion to sit upon.

"Here are your fur boots for you," said she, "for it will be very cold; but I must keep the muff, it is so pretty. However, you shall not be frozen for the want of it; here are my mother's large warm mittens; they will reach up to your elbows. Let me put them on. There, now your hands look just like my mother's."

But Gerda wept for joy.

"I don't like to see you fret," said the little robber girl. "You ought to look quite happy now. And here are two loaves and a ham, so that you need not starve."

These were fastened upon the reindeer, and then the little robber maiden opened the door, coaxed in all the great dogs, cut the string with which the reindeer was fastened, with her sharp knife, and said, "Now run, but mind you take good care of the little girl." And Gerda stretched out her hand, with the great mitten on it, toward the little robber girl and said "Farewell," and away flew the reindeer over stumps and stones, through the great forest, over marshes and plains, as quickly

as he could. The wolves howled and the ravens screamed, while up in the sky quivered red lights like flames of fire. "There are my old northern lights," said the reindeer; "see how they flash!" And he ran on day and night still faster and faster, but the loaves and the ham were all eaten by the time they reached Lapland.

Sixth Story: The Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman

They stopped at a little hut; it was very mean looking. The roof sloped nearly down to the ground, and the door was so low that the family had to creep in on their hands and knees when they went in and out. There was no one at home but an old Lapland woman who was dressing fish by the light of a train-oil lamp.

The reindeer told her all about Gerda's story after having first told his own, which seemed to him the most important. But Gerda was so pinched with the cold that she could not speak.

"Oh, you poor things," said the Lapland woman, "you have a long way to go yet. You must travel more than a hundred miles farther, to Finland. The Snow Queen lives there now, and she burns Bengal lights every evening. I will write a few words on a dried stockfish, for I have no paper, and you can take it from me to the Finland woman who lives there. She can give you better information than I can."

So when Gerda was warmed and had taken something to eat and drink, the woman wrote a few words on the dried fish and told Gerda to take great care of it. Then she tied her again on the back of the reindeer, and he sprang high into the air and set off at full speed. Flash, flash, went the beautiful blue northern lights the whole night long.

And at length they reached Finland and knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman's hut, for it had no door above

the ground. They crept in, but it was so terribly hot inside that the woman wore scarcely any clothes. She was small and very dirty looking. She loosened little Gerda's dress and took off the fur boots and the mittens, or Gerda would have been unable to bear the heat; and then she placed a piece of ice on the reindeer's head and read what was written on the dried fish. After she had read it three times she knew it by heart, so she popped the fish into the soup saucepan, as she knew it was good to eat, and she never wasted anything.

The reindeer told his own story first and then little Gerda's, and the Finlander twinkled with her clever eyes, but said nothing.

"You are so clever," said the reindeer; "I know you can tie all the winds of the world with a piece of twine. If a sailor unties one knot, he has a fair wind; when he unties the second, it blows hard; but if the third and fourth are loosened, then comes a storm which will root up whole forests. Cannot you give this little maiden something which will make her as strong as twelve men, to overcome the Snow Queen?"

"The power of twelve men!" said the Finland woman. "That would be of very little use." But she went to a shelf and took down and unrolled a large skin on which were inscribed wonderful characters, and she read till the perspiration ran down from her forehead.

But the reindeer begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked at the Finland woman with such tender, tearful eyes, that her own eyes began to twinkle again. She drew the reindeer into a corner and whispered to him while she laid a fresh piece of ice on his head: "Little Kay is really with the Snow Queen, but he finds everything there so much to his taste and his liking that he believes it is the finest place in the world; and this is because he has a piece of broken glass in his heart and a little splinter of glass in his eye. These must be taken out, or he will never be a human being again, and the Snow Queen will retain her power over him."

"But can you not give little Gerda something to help her to conquer this power?"

"I can give her no greater power than she has already," said the woman; "don't you see how strong that is? how men and animals are obliged to serve her, and how well she has gotten through the world, barefooted as she is? She cannot receive any power from me greater than she now has, which consists in her own purity and innocence of heart. If she cannot herself obtain access to the Snow Queen and remove the glass fragments from little Kay, we can do nothing to help her. Two miles from here the Snow Queen's garden begins. You can carry the little girl so far, and set her down by the large bush which stands in the snow, covered with red berries. Do not stay gossiping, but come back here as quickly as you can." Then the Finland woman lifted little Gerda upon the reindeer, and he ran away with her as quickly as he could.

"Oh, I have forgotten my boots and my mittens," cried little Gerda, as soon as she felt the cutting cold; but the reindeer dared not stop, so he ran on till he reached the bush with the red berries. Here he set Gerda down, and he kissed her, and the great bright tears trickled over the animal's cheeks; then he left her and ran back as fast as he could.

There stood poor Gerda, without shoes, without gloves, in the midst of cold, dreary, ice-bound Finland. She ran forward as quickly as she could, when a whole regiment of snowflakes came round her. They did not, however, fall from the sky, which was quite clear and glittered with the northern lights. The snowflakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came to her the larger they appeared. Gerda remembered how large and beautiful they looked through the burning glass. But these were really larger and much more terrible, for they were alive and were the guards of the Snow Queen and had the strangest shapes. Some were like great porcupines, others like twisted serpents with their heads stretching out, and some few were like little fat bears with their hair bristled;

but all were dazzlingly white, and all were living snowflakes.

Little Gerda repeated the Lord's Prayer, and the cold was so great that she could see her own breath come out of her mouth like steam, as she uttered the words. The steam appeared to increase as she continued her prayer, till it took the shape of little angels, who grew larger the moment they touched the earth. They all wore helmets on their heads and carried spears and shields. Their number continued to increase more and more, and by the time Gerda had finished her prayers a whole legion stood round her. They thrust their spears into the terrible snowflakes so that they shivered into a hundred pieces, and little Gerda could go forward with courage and safety. The angels stroked her hands and feet, so that she felt the cold less as she hastened on to the Snow Queen's castle.

But now we must see what Kay is doing. In truth he thought not of little Gerda, and least of all that she could be standing at the front of the palace.

Seventh Story: Of The Palace of the Snow Queen and What Happened There at Last

The walls of the palace were formed of drifted snow, and the windows and doors of cutting winds. There were more than a hundred rooms in it, all as if they had been formed of snow blown together. The largest of them extended for several miles. They were all lighted up by the vivid light of the aurora, and were so large and empty, so icy cold and glittering!

There were no amusements here; not even a little bear's ball, when the storm might have been the music, and the bears could have danced on their hind legs and shown their good manners. There were no pleasant games of snapdragon, or touch, nor even a gossip over the tea table for the young-

lady foxes. Empty, vast, and cold were the halls of the Snow Queen.

The flickering flames of the northern lights could be plainly seen, whether they rose high or low in the heavens, from every part of the castle. In the midst of this empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake, broken on its surface into a thousand forms; each piece resembled another, because each was in itself perfect as a work of art, and in the center of this lake sat the Snow Queen when she was at home. She called the lake "The Mirror of Reason," and said that it was the best, and indeed the only one, in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue with cold—indeed, almost black—but he did not feel it; for the Snow Queen had kissed away the icy shiverings, and his heart was already a lump of ice. He dragged some sharp, flat pieces of ice to and fro and placed them together in all kinds of positions, as if he wished to make something out of them—just as we try to form various figures with little tablets of wood, which we call a "Chinese puzzle." Kay's figures were very artistic; it was the icy game of reason at which he played, and in his eyes the figures were very remarkable and of the highest importance; this opinion was owing to the splinter of glass still sticking in his eye. He composed many complete figures, forming different words, but there was one word he never could manage to form, although he wished it very much. It was the word "Eternity."

The Snow Queen had said to him, "When you can find out this, you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world and a new pair of skates." But he could not accomplish it.

"Now I must hasten away to warmer countries," said the Snow Queen. "I will go and look into the black craters of the tops of the burning mountains, Etna and Vesuvius, as they are called. I shall make them look white, which will be good for them and for the lemons and the grapes." And away flew the Snow Queen, leaving little Kay quite alone in the great hall

which was so many miles in length. He sat and looked at his pieces of ice and was thinking so deeply and sat so still that anyone might have supposed he was frozen.

Just at this moment it happened that little Gerda came through the great door of the castle. Cutting winds were raging around her, but she offered up a prayer, and the winds sank down as if they were going to sleep. On she went till she came to the large, empty hall and caught sight of Kay. She knew him directly; she flew to him and threw her arms around his neck and held him fast while she exclaimed, "Kay, dear little Kay, I have found you at last!"

But he sat quite still, stiff and cold.

Then little Gerda wept hot tears, which fell on his breast, and penetrated into his heart, and thawed the lump of ice, and washed away the little piece of glass which had stuck there. Then he looked at her, and she sang:

> "Roses bloom and fade away,
> But we the Christ-child see alway."

Then Kay burst into tears. He wept so that the splinter of glass swam out of his eye. Then he recognized Gerda and said joyfully, "Gerda, dear little Gerda, where have you been all this time, and where have I been?" And he looked all around him and said, "How cold it is, and how large and empty it all looks," and he clung to Gerda, and she laughed and wept for joy.

It was so pleasing to see them that even the pieces of ice danced, and when they were tired and went to lie down they formed themselves into the letters of the word which the Snow Queen had said he must find out before he could be his own master and have the whole world and a pair of new skates.

Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they became blooming; and she kissed his eyes till they shone like her own; she kissed his

hands and feet, and he became quite healthy and cheerful. The Snow Queen might come home now when she pleased, for there stood his certainty of freedom, in the word she wanted, written in shining letters of ice.

Then they took each other by the hand and went forth from the great palace of ice. They spoke of the grandmother and of the roses on the roof, and as they went on the winds were at rest, and the sun burst forth. When they arrived at the bush with red berries, there stood the reindeer waiting for them, and he had brought another young reindeer with him, whose udders were full, and the children drank her warm milk and kissed her on the mouth.

They carried Kay and Gerda first to the Finland woman, where they warmed themselves thoroughly in the hot room and had directions about their journey home. Next they went to the Lapland woman, who had made some new clothes for them and put their sleighs in order. Both the reindeer ran by their side and followed them as far as the boundaries of the country, where the first green leaves were budding. And here they took leave of the two reindeer and the Lapland woman, and all said farewell.

Then birds began to twitter, and the forest too was full of green young leaves, and out of it came a beautiful horse, which Gerda remembered, for it was one which had drawn the golden coach. A young girl was riding upon it, with a shining red cap on her head and pistols in her belt. It was the little robber maiden, who had got tired of staying at home; she was going first to the north, and if that did not suit her, she meant to try some other part of the world. She knew Gerda directly, and Gerda remembered her; it was a joyful meeting.

"You are a fine fellow to go gadding about in this way," said she to little Kay. "I should like to know whether you deserve that anyone should go to the end of the world to find you."

But Gerda patted her cheeks and asked after the prince

and princess.

"They are gone to foreign countries," said the robber girl.

"And the crow?" asked Gerda.

"Oh, the crow is dead," she replied. "His tame sweetheart is now a widow and wears a bit of black worsted round her leg. She mourns very pitifully, but it is all stuff. But now tell me how you managed to get him back."

Then Gerda and Kay told her all about it.

"Snip, snap, snurre! it's all right at last," said the robber girl.

She took both their hands and promised that if ever she should pass through the town, she would call and pay them a visit. And then she rode away into the wide world.

But Gerda and Kay went hand in hand toward home, and as they advanced, spring appeared more lovely with its green verdure and its beautiful flowers. Very soon they recognized the large town where they lived, and the tall steeples of the churches in which the sweet bells were ringing a merry peal, as they entered it and found their way to their grandmother's door.

They went upstairs into the little room, where all looked just as it used to do. The old clock was going "Tick, tick," and the hands pointed to the time of day, but as they passed through the door into the room they perceived that they were both grown up and become a man and woman. The roses out on the roof were in full bloom and peeped in at the window, and there stood the little chairs on which they had sat when children, and Kay and Gerda seated themselves each on their own chair and held each other by the hand, while the cold, empty grandeur of the Snow Queen's palace vanished from their memories like a painful dream.

The grandmother sat in God's bright sunshine, and she read aloud from the Bible, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes and all at

once understood the words of the old song:

> Roses bloom and fade away,
> But we the Christ-child see alway.

And they both sat there, grown up, yet children at heart, and it was summer—warm, beautiful summer.

The Flax
by Hans Christian Andersen

The flax was in full bloom; it had pretty little blue flowers, as delicate as the wings of a moth. The sun shone on it and the showers watered it; and this was as good for the flax as it is for little children to be washed and then kissed by their mothers. They look much prettier for it, and so did the flax.

"People say that I look exceedingly well," said the flax, "and that I am so fine and long that I shall make a beautiful piece of linen. How fortunate I am! It makes me so happy to know that something can be made of me. How the sunshine cheers me, and how sweet and refreshing is the rain! My happiness overpowers me; no one in the world can feel happier than I."

"Ah, yes, no doubt," said the fern, "but you do not know the world yet as well as I do, for my sticks are knotty"; and then it sang quite mournfully:

"Snip, snap, snurre,
Basse lurre.
The song is ended."

"No, it is not ended," said the flax. "Tomorrow the sun will shine or the rain descend. I feel that I am growing. I feel that I am in full blossom. I am the happiest of all creatures, for I may someday come to something."

Well, one day some people came, who took hold of the flax and pulled it up by the roots, which was very painful. Then it was laid in water, as if it were to be drowned, and after that placed near a fire, as if it were to be roasted. All this was

very shocking.

"We cannot expect to be happy always," said the flax. "By experiencing evil as well as good we become wise." And certainly there was plenty of evil in store for the flax. It was steeped, and roasted, and broken, and combed; indeed, it scarcely knew what was done to it. At last it was put on the spinning wheel. "Whir, whir," went the wheel, so quickly that the flax could not collect its thoughts.

"Well, I have been very happy," it thought in the midst of its pain, "and must be contented with the past." And contented it remained, till it was put on the loom and became a beautiful piece of white linen. All the flax, even to the last stalk, was used in making this one piece.

"Well, this is quite wonderful," said the flax. "I could not have believed that I should be so favored by fortune. The fern was not wrong when it sang,

> 'Snip, snap, snurre,
> Basse lurre.'

But the song is not ended yet, I am sure; it is only just beginning. How wonderful it is that, after all I have suffered, I am made something of at last! I am the luckiest person in the world—so strong and fine. And how white and long I am! This is far better than being a mere plant and bearing flowers. Then I had no attention, nor any water unless it rained; now I am watched and cared for. Every morning the maid turns me over, and I have a shower bath from the watering-pot every evening. Yes, and the clergyman's wife noticed me and said I was the best piece of linen in the whole parish. I cannot be happier than I am now."

After some time the linen was taken into the house, and there cut with the scissors and torn into pieces and then pricked with needles. This certainly was not pleasant, but at last it was made into twelve garments of the kind that

everybody wears. "See now, then," said the flax, "I have become something of importance. This was my destiny; it is quite a blessing. Now I shall be of some use in the world, as everyone ought to be; it is the only way to be happy. I am now divided into twelve pieces, and yet the whole dozen is all one and the same. It is most extraordinary good fortune."

Years passed away, and at last the linen was so worn it could scarcely hold together. "It must end very soon," said the pieces to each other. "We would gladly have held together a little longer, but it is useless to expect impossibilities." And at length they fell into rags and tatters and thought it was all over with them, for they were torn to shreds and steeped in water and made into a pulp and dried, and they knew not what besides, till all at once they found themselves beautiful white paper. "Well, now, this is a surprise—a glorious surprise too," said the paper. "Now I am finer than ever, and who can tell what fine things I may have written upon me? This is wonderful luck!" And so it was, for the most beautiful stories and poetry were written upon it, and only once was there a blot, which was remarkable good fortune. Then people heard the stories and poetry read, and it made them wiser and better; for all that was written had a good and sensible meaning, and a great blessing was contained in it.

"I never imagined anything like this when I was only a little blue flower growing in the fields," said the paper. "How could I know that I should ever be the means of bringing knowledge and joy to men? I cannot understand it myself, and yet it is really so. Heaven knows that I have done nothing myself but what I was obliged to do with my weak powers for my own preservation; and yet I have been promoted from one joy and honor to another. Each time I think that the song is ended, and then something higher and better begins for me. I suppose now I shall be sent out to journey about the world, so that people may read me. It cannot be otherwise, for I have more splendid thoughts written upon me than I had pretty

flowers in olden times. I am happier than ever."

But the paper did not go on its travels. It was sent to the printer, and all the words written upon it were set up in type to make a book—or rather many hundreds of books—for many more persons could derive pleasure and profit from a printed book than from the written paper; and if the paper had been sent about the world, it would have been worn out before it had half finished its journey.

"Yes, this is certainly the wisest plan," said the written paper; "I really did not think of this. I shall remain at home and be held in honor like some old grandfather, as I really am to all these new books. They will do some good. I could not have wandered about as they can, yet he who wrote all this has looked at me as every word flowed from his pen upon my surface. I am the most honored of all."

Then the paper was tied in a bundle with other papers and thrown into a tub that stood in the washhouse.

"After work, it is well to rest," said the paper, "and a very good opportunity to collect one's thoughts. Now I am able, for the first time, to learn what is in me; and to know one's self is true progress. What will be done with me now, I wonder? No doubt I shall still go forward. I have always progressed hitherto, I know quite well."

Now it happened one day that all the paper in the tub was taken out and laid on the hearth to be burned. People said it could not be sold at the shop, to wrap up butter and sugar, because it had been written upon. The children in the house stood round the hearth to watch the blaze, for paper always flamed up so prettily, and afterwards, among the ashes, there were so many red sparks to be seen running one after the other, here and there, as quick as the wind. They called it seeing the children come out of school, and the last spark, they said, was the schoolmaster. They would often think the last spark had come, and one would cry, "There goes the schoolmaster," but the next moment another spark would

appear, bright and beautiful. How they wanted to know where all the sparks went to! Perhaps they will find out someday.

The whole bundle of paper had been placed on the fire and was soon burning. "Ugh!" cried the paper as it burst into a bright flame; "ugh!" It was certainly not very pleasant to be burned. But when the whole was wrapped in flames, the sparks mounted up into the air, higher than the flax had ever been able to raise its little blue flowers, and they glistened as the white linen never could have glistened. All the written letters became quite red in a moment, and all the words and thoughts turned to fire.

"Now I am mounting straight up to the sun," said a voice in the flames; and it was as if a thousand voices echoed the words as the flames darted up through the chimney and went out at the top. Then a number of tiny beings, as many as the flowers on the flax had been, and invisible to mortal eyes, floated above the children. They were even lighter and more delicate than the blue flowers from which they were born; and as the flames died out and nothing remained of the paper but black ashes, these little beings danced upon it, and wherever they touched it, bright red sparks appeared.

"The children are all out of school, and the schoolmaster was the last of all," said the children. It was good fun, and they sang over the dead ashes:

"Snip, snap, snurre,
Basse lurre.
The song is ended."

But the little invisible beings said, "The song is never ended; the most beautiful is yet to come."

But the children could neither hear nor understand this; nor should they, for children must not know everything.

The Pea Blossom
by Hans Christian Andersen

There were once five peas in one shell; they were green, and the shell was green, and so they believed that the whole world must be green also, which was a very natural conclusion.

The shell grew, and the peas grew; and as they grew they arranged themselves all in a row. The sun shone without and warmed the shell, and the rain made it clear and transparent; it looked mild and agreeable in broad daylight and dark at night, just as it should. And the peas, as they sat there, grew bigger and bigger, and more thoughtful as they mused, for they felt there must be something for them to do.

"Are we to sit here forever?" asked one. "Shall we not become hard, waiting here so long? It seems to me there must be something outside; I feel sure of it."

Weeks passed by; the peas became yellow, and the shell became yellow.

"All the world is turning yellow, I suppose," said they—and perhaps they were right.

Suddenly they felt a pull at the shell. It was torn off and held in human hands; then it was slipped into the pocket of a jacket, together with other full pods.

"Now we shall soon be let out," said one, and that was just what they all wanted.

"I should like to know which of us will travel farthest," said the smallest of the five; "and we shall soon see."

"What is to happen will happen," said the largest pea.

"Crack!" went the shell, and the five peas rolled out into the bright sunshine. There they lay in a child's hand. A little

boy was holding them tightly. He said they were fine peas for his pea-shooter, and immediately he put one in and shot it out.

"Now I am flying out into the wide world," said the pea. "Catch me if you can." And he was gone in a moment.

"I intend to fly straight to the sun," said the second. "That is a shell that will suit me exactly, for it lets itself be seen." And away he went.

"We will go to sleep wherever we find ourselves," said the next two; "we shall still be rolling onwards." And they did fall to the floor and roll about, but they got into the pea-shooter for all that. "We will go farthest of any," said they.

"What is to happen will happen," exclaimed the last one, as he was shot out of the pea-shooter. Up he flew against an old board under a garret window and fell into a little crevice which was almost filled with moss and soft earth. The moss closed itself about him, and there he lay—a captive indeed, but not unnoticed by God.

"What is to happen will happen," said he to himself.

Within the little garret lived a poor woman, who went out to clean stoves, chop wood into small pieces, and do other hard work, for she was both strong and industrious. Yet she remained always poor, and at home in the garret lay her only daughter, not quite grown up and very delicate and weak. For a whole year she had kept her bed, and it seemed as if she could neither die nor get well.

"She is going to her little sister," said the woman. "I had only the two children, and it was not an easy thing to support them; but the good God provided for one of them by taking her home to himself. The other was left to me, but I suppose they are not to be separated, and my sick girl will soon go to her sister in heaven."

All day long the sick girl lay quietly and patiently, while her mother went out to earn money.

Spring came, and early one morning the sun shone

through the little window and threw his rays mildly and pleasantly over the floor of the room. Just as the mother was going to her work, the sick girl fixed her gaze on the lowest pane of the window. "Mother," she exclaimed, "what can that little green thing be that peeps in at the window? It is moving in the wind."

The mother stepped to the window and half opened it. "Oh!" she said, "there is actually a little pea that has taken root and is putting out its green leaves. How could it have got into this crack? Well, now, here is a little garden for you to amuse yourself with." So the bed of the sick girl was drawn nearer to the window, that she might see the budding plant; and the mother went forth to her work.

"Mother, I believe I shall get well," said the sick child in the evening. "The sun has shone in here so bright and warm today, and the little pea is growing so fast, that I feel better, too, and think I shall get up and go out into the warm sunshine again."

"God grant it!" said the mother, but she did not believe it would be so. She took a little stick and propped up the green plant which had given her daughter such pleasure, so that it might not be broken by the winds. She tied the piece of string to the window-sill and to the upper part of the frame, so that the pea tendrils might have something to twine round. And the plant shot up so fast that one could almost see it grow from day to day.

"A flower is really coming," said the mother one morning. At last she was beginning to let herself hope that her little sick daughter might indeed recover. She remembered that for some time the child had spoken more cheerfully, and that during the last few days she had raised herself in bed in the morning to look with sparkling eyes at her little garden which contained but a single pea plant.

A week later the invalid sat up by the open window a whole hour, feeling quite happy in the warm sunshine, while

outside grew the little plant, and on it a pink pea blossom in full bloom. The little maiden bent down and gently kissed the delicate leaves. This day was like a festival to her.

"Our heavenly Father himself has planted that pea and made it grow and flourish, to bring joy to you and hope to me, my blessed child," said the happy mother, and she smiled at the flower as if it had been an angel from God.

But what became of the other peas? Why, the one who flew out into the wide world and said, "Catch me if you can," fell into a gutter on the roof of a house and ended his travels in the crop of a pigeon. The two lazy ones were carried quite as far and were of some use, for they also were eaten by pigeons; but the fourth, who wanted to reach the sun, fell into a sink and lay there in the dirty water for days and weeks, till he had swelled to a great size.

"I am getting beautifully fat," said the pea; "I expect I shall burst at last; no pea could do more than that, I think. I am the most remarkable of all the five that were in the shell." And the sink agreed with the pea.

But the young girl, with sparkling eyes and the rosy hue of health upon her cheeks, stood at the open garret window and, folding her thin hands over the pea blossom, thanked God for what He had done.

The Wild Swans
by Hans Christian Andersen

Far away, in the land to which the swallows fly when it is winter, dwelt a king who had eleven sons, and one daughter, named Eliza.

The eleven brothers were princes, and each went to school with a star on his breast and a sword by his side. They wrote with diamond pencils on golden slates and learned their lessons so quickly and read so easily that everyone knew they were princes. Their sister Eliza sat on a little stool of plate-glass and had a book full of pictures, which had cost as much as half a kingdom.

Happy, indeed, were these children; but they were not long to remain so, for their father, the king, married a queen who did not love the children, and who proved to be a wicked sorceress.

The queen began to show her unkindness the very first day. While the great festivities were taking place in the palace, the children played at receiving company; but the queen, instead of sending them the cakes and apples that were left from the feast, as was customary, gave them some sand in a teacup and told them to pretend it was something good. The next week she sent the little Eliza into the country to a peasant and his wife. Then she told the king so many untrue things about the young princes that he gave himself no more trouble about them.

"Go out into the world and look after yourselves," said the queen. "Fly like great birds without a voice." But she could not make it so bad for them as she would have liked, for they were turned into eleven beautiful wild swans.

With a strange cry, they flew through the windows of the palace, over the park, to the forest beyond. It was yet early morning when they passed the peasant's cottage where their sister lay asleep in her room. They hovered over the roof, twisting their long necks and flapping their wings, but no one heard them or saw them, so they at last flew away, high up in the clouds, and over the wide world they sped till they came to a thick, dark wood, which stretched far away to the sea-shore.

Poor little Eliza was alone in the peasant's room playing with a green leaf, for she had no other playthings. She pierced a hole in the leaf, and when she looked through it at the sun she seemed to see her brothers' clear eyes, and when the warm sun shone on her cheeks she thought of all the kisses they had given her.

One day passed just like another. Sometimes the winds rustled through the leaves of the rosebush and whispered to the roses, "Who can be more beautiful than you?" And the roses would shake their heads and say, "Eliza is." And when the old woman sat at the cottage door on Sunday and read her hymn book, the wind would flutter the leaves and say to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" And then the hymn book would answer, "Eliza." And the roses and the hymn book told the truth.

When she was fifteen she returned home, but because she was so beautiful the witch-queen became full of spite and hatred toward her. Willingly would she have turned her into a swan like her brothers, but she did not dare to do so for fear of the king.

Early one morning the queen went into the bathroom; it was built of marble and had soft cushions trimmed with the most beautiful tapestry. She took three toads with her, and kissed them, saying to the first, "When Eliza comes to bathe seat yourself upon her head, that she may become as stupid as you are." To the second toad she said, "Place yourself on her

forehead, that she may become as ugly as you are, and that her friends may not know her." "Rest on her heart," she whispered to the third; "then she will have evil inclinations and suffer because of them." So she put the toads into the clear water, which at once turned green. She next called Eliza and helped her undress and get into the bath.

As Eliza dipped her head under the water one of the toads sat on her hair, a second on her forehead, and a third on her breast. But she did not seem to notice them, and when she rose from the water there were three red poppies floating upon it. Had not the creatures been venomous or had they not been kissed by the witch, they would have become red roses. At all events they became flowers, because they had rested on Eliza's head and on her heart. She was too good and too innocent for sorcery to have any power over her.

When the wicked queen saw this, she rubbed Eliza's face with walnut juice, so that she was quite brown; then she tangled her beautiful hair and smeared it with disgusting ointment until it was quite impossible to recognize her.

The king was shocked, and declared she was not his daughter. No one but the watchdog and the swallows knew her, and they were only poor animals and could say nothing. Then poor Eliza wept and thought of her eleven brothers who were far away. Sorrowfully she stole from the palace and walked the whole day over fields and moors, till she came to the great forest. She knew not in what direction to go, but she was so unhappy and longed so for her brothers, who, like herself, had been driven out into the world, that she was determined to seek them.

She had been in the wood only a short time when night came on and she quite lost the path; so she laid herself down on the soft moss, offered up her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the stump of a tree. All nature was silent, and the soft, mild air fanned her forehead. The light of hundreds of glowworms shone amidst the grass and the moss like

green fire, and if she touched a twig with her hand, ever so lightly, the brilliant insects fell down around her like shooting stars.

All night long she dreamed of her brothers. She thought they were all children again, playing together. She saw them writing with their diamond pencils on golden slates, while she looked at the beautiful picture book which had cost half a kingdom. They were not writing lines and letters, as they used to do, but descriptions of the noble deeds they had performed and of all that they had discovered and seen. In the picture book, too, everything was living. The birds sang, and the people came out of the book and spoke to Eliza and her brothers; but as the leaves were turned over they darted back again to their places, that all might be in order.

When she awoke, the sun was high in the heavens. She could not see it, for the lofty trees spread their branches thickly overhead, but its gleams here and there shone through the leaves like a gauzy golden mist. There was a sweet fragrance from the fresh verdure, and the birds came near and almost perched on her shoulders. She heard water rippling from a number of springs, all flowing into a lake with golden sands. Bushes grew thickly round the lake, and at one spot, where an opening had been made by a deer, Eliza went down to the water.

The lake was so clear that had not the wind rustled the branches of the trees and the bushes so that they moved, they would have seemed painted in the depths of the lake; for every leaf, whether in the shade or in the sunshine, was reflected in the water.

When Eliza saw her own face she was quite terrified at finding it so brown and ugly, but after she had wet her little hand and rubbed her eyes and forehead, the white skin gleamed forth once more; and when she had undressed and dipped herself in the fresh water, a more beautiful king's daughter could not have been found anywhere in the wide

world.

As soon as she had dressed herself again and braided her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring and drank some water out of the hollow of her hand. Then she wandered far into the forest, not knowing whither she went. She thought of her brothers and of her father and mother and felt sure that God would not forsake her. It is God who makes the wild apples grow in the wood to satisfy the hungry, and He now showed her one of these trees, which was so loaded with fruit that the boughs bent beneath the weight. Here she ate her noonday meal, and then placing props under the boughs, she went into the gloomiest depths of the forest.

It was so still that she could hear the sound of her own footsteps, as well as the rustling of every withered leaf which she crushed under her feet. Not a bird was to be seen, not a sunbeam could penetrate the large, dark boughs of the trees. The lofty trunks stood so close together that when she looked before her it seemed as if she were enclosed within trelliswork. Here was such solitude as she had never known before!

The night was very dark. Not a glowworm was glittering in the moss. Sorrowfully Eliza laid herself down to sleep. After a while it seemed to her as if the branches of the trees parted over her head and the mild eyes of angels looked down upon her from heaven.

In the morning, when she awoke, she knew not whether this had really been so or whether she had dreamed it. She continued her wandering, but she had not gone far when she met an old woman who had berries in her basket and who gave her a few to eat. Eliza asked her if she had not seen eleven princes riding through the forest.

"No," replied the old woman, "but I saw yesterday eleven swans with gold crowns on their heads, swimming in the river close by." Then she led Eliza a little distance to a sloping bank, at the foot of which ran a little river. The trees on its banks stretched their long leafy branches across the water toward

each other, and where they did not meet naturally the roots had torn themselves away from the ground, so that the branches might mingle their foliage as they hung over the water.

Eliza bade the old woman farewell and walked by the flowing river till she reached the shore of the open sea. And there, before her eyes, lay the glorious ocean, but not a sail appeared on its surface; not even a boat could be seen. How was she to go farther? She noticed how the countless pebbles on the shore had been smoothed and rounded by the action of the water. Glass, iron, stones, everything that lay there mingled together, had been shaped by the same power until they were as smooth as her own delicate hand.

"The water rolls on without weariness," she said, "till all that is hard becomes smooth; so will I be unwearied in my task. Thanks for your lesson, bright rolling waves; my heart tells me you will one day lead me to my dear brothers."

On the foam-covered seaweeds lay eleven white swan feathers, which she gathered and carried with her. Drops of water lay upon them; whether they were dewdrops or tears no one could say. It was lonely on the seashore, but she did not know it, for the ever-moving sea showed more changes in a few hours than the most varying lake could produce in a whole year. When a black, heavy cloud arose, it was as if the sea said, "I can look dark and angry too"; and then the wind blew, and the waves turned to white foam as they rolled. When the wind slept and the clouds glowed with the red sunset, the sea looked like a rose leaf. Sometimes it became green and sometimes white. But, however quietly it lay, the waves were always restless on the shore and rose and fell like the breast of a sleeping child.

When the sun was about to set, Eliza saw eleven white swans, with golden crowns on their heads, flying toward the land, one behind the other, like a long white ribbon. She went down the slope from the shore and hid herself behind the

bushes. The swans alighted quite close to her, flapping their great white wings. As soon as the sun had disappeared under the water, the feathers of the swans fell off and eleven beautiful princes, Eliza's brothers, stood near her.

She uttered a loud cry, for, although they were very much changed, she knew them immediately. She sprang into their arms and called them each by name. Very happy the princes were to see their little sister again; they knew her, although she had grown so tall and beautiful. They laughed and wept and told each other how cruelly they had been treated by their stepmother.

"We brothers," said the eldest, "fly about as wild swans while the sun is in the sky, but as soon as it sinks behind the hills we recover our human shape. Therefore we must always be near a resting place before sunset; for if we were flying toward the clouds when we recovered our human form, we should sink deep into the sea.

"We do not dwell here, but in a land just as fair that lies far across the ocean; the way is long, and there is no island upon which we can pass the night—nothing but a little rock rising out of the sea, upon which, even crowded together, we can scarcely stand with safety. If the sea is rough, the foam dashes over us; yet we thank God for this rock. We have passed whole nights upon it, or we should never have reached our beloved fatherland, for our flight across the sea occupies two of the longest days in the year.

"We have permission to visit our home once every year and to remain eleven days. Then we fly across the forest to look once more at the palace where our father dwells and where we were born, and at the church beneath whose shade our mother lies buried. The very trees and bushes here seem related to us. The wild horses leap over the plains as we have seen them in our childhood. The charcoal burners sing the old songs to which we have danced as children. This is our fatherland, to which we are drawn by loving ties; and here we

have found you, our dear little sister. Two days longer we can remain here, and then we must fly away to a beautiful land which is not our home. How can we take you with us? We have neither ship nor boat."

"How can I break this spell?" asked the sister. And they talked about it nearly the whole night, slumbering only a few hours.

Eliza was awakened by the rustling of the wings of swans soaring above her. Her brothers were again changed to swans. They flew in circles, wider and wider, till they were far away; but one of them, the youngest, remained behind and laid his head in his sister's lap, while she stroked his wings. They remained together the whole day.

Towards evening the rest came back, and as the sun went down they resumed their natural forms. "Tomorrow," said one, "we shall fly away, not to return again till a whole year has passed. But we cannot leave you here. Have you courage to go with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you through the wood, and will not all our wings be strong enough to bear you over the sea?"

"Yes, take me with you," said Eliza. They spent the whole night in weaving a large, strong net of the pliant willow and rushes. On this Eliza laid herself down to sleep, and when the sun rose and her brothers again became wild swans, they took up the net with their beaks, and flew up to the clouds with their dear sister, who still slept. When the sunbeams fell on her face, one of the swans soared over her head so that his broad wings might shade her.

They were far from the land when Eliza awoke. She thought she must still be dreaming, it seemed so strange to feel herself being carried high in the air over the sea. By her side lay a branch full of beautiful ripe berries and a bundle of sweet-tasting roots; the youngest of her brothers had gathered them and placed them there. She smiled her thanks to him; she knew it was the same one that was hovering over her to

shade her with his wings. They were now so high that a large ship beneath them looked like a white sea gull skimming the waves. A great cloud floating behind them appeared like a vast mountain, and upon it Eliza saw her own shadow and those of the eleven swans, like gigantic flying things. Altogether it formed a more beautiful picture than she had ever before seen; but as the sun rose higher and the clouds were left behind, the picture vanished.

Onward the whole day they flew through the air like winged arrows, yet more slowly than usual, for they had their sister to carry. The weather grew threatening, and Eliza watched the sinking sun with great anxiety, for the little rock in the ocean was not yet in sight. It seemed to her as if the swans were exerting themselves to the utmost. Alas! she was the cause of their not advancing more quickly. When the sun set they would change to men, fall into the sea, and be drowned.

Then she offered a prayer from her inmost heart, but still no rock appeared. Dark clouds came nearer, the gusts of wind told of the coming storm, while from a thick, heavy mass of clouds the lightning burst forth, flash after flash. The sun had reached the edge of the sea, when the swans darted down so swiftly that Eliza's heart trembled; she believed they were falling, but they again soared onward.

Presently, and by this time the sun was half hidden by the waves, she caught sight of the rock just below them. It did not look larger than a seal's head thrust out of the water. The sun sank so rapidly that at the moment their feet touched the rock it shone only like a star, and at last disappeared like the dying spark in a piece of burnt paper. Her brothers stood close around her with arms linked together, for there was not the smallest space to spare. The sea dashed against the rock and covered them with spray. The heavens were lighted up with continual flashes, and thunder rolled from the clouds. But the sister and brothers stood holding each other's hands, and

singing hymns.

In the early dawn the air became calm and still, and at sunrise the swans flew away from the rock, bearing their sister with them. The sea was still rough, and from their great height the white foam on the dark-green waves looked like millions of swans swimming on the water. As the sun rose higher, Eliza saw before her, floating in the air, a range of mountains with shining masses of ice on their summits. In the center rose a castle that seemed a mile long, with rows of columns rising one above another, while around it palm trees waved and flowers as large as mill wheels bloomed. She asked if this was the land to which they were hastening. The swans shook their heads, for what she beheld were the beautiful, ever-changing cloud-palaces of the Fata Morgana, into which no mortal can enter.

Eliza was still gazing at the scene, when mountains, forests, and castles melted away, and twenty stately churches rose in their stead, with high towers and pointed Gothic windows. She even fancied she could hear the tones of the organ, but it was the music of the murmuring sea. As they drew nearer to the churches, these too were changed and became a fleet of ships, which seemed to be sailing beneath her; but when she looked again she saw only a sea mist gliding over the ocean.

One scene melted into another, until at last she saw the real land to which they were bound, with its blue mountains, its cedar forests, and its cities and palaces. Long before the sun went down she was sitting on a rock in front of a large cave, the floor of which was overgrown with delicate green creeping plants, like an embroidered carpet.

"Now we shall expect to hear what you dream of tonight," said the youngest brother, as he showed his sister her bedroom.

"Heaven grant that I may dream how to release you!" she replied. And this thought took such hold upon her mind that

she prayed earnestly to God for help, and even in her sleep she continued to pray. Then it seemed to her that she was flying high in the air toward the cloudy palace of the Fata Morgana, and that a fairy came out to meet her, radiant and beautiful, yet much like the old woman who had given her berries in the wood, and who had told her of the swans with golden crowns on their heads.

"Your brothers can be released," said she, "if you only have courage and perseverance. Water is softer than your own delicate hands, and yet it polishes and shapes stones. But it feels no pain such as your fingers will feel; it has no soul and cannot suffer such agony and torment as you will have to endure. Do you see the stinging nettle which I hold in my hand? Quantities of the same sort grow round the cave in which you sleep, but only these, and those that grow on the graves of a churchyard, will be of any use to you. These you must gather, even while they burn blisters on your hands. Break them to pieces with your hands and feet, and they will become flax, from which you must spin and weave eleven coats with long sleeves; if these are then thrown over the eleven swans, the spell will be broken. But remember well, that from the moment you commence your task until it is finished, even though it occupy years of your life, you must not speak. The first word you utter will pierce the hearts of your brothers like a deadly dagger. Their lives hang upon your tongue. Remember all that I have told you."

And as she finished speaking, she touched Eliza's hand lightly with the nettle, and a pain as of burning fire awoke her.

It was broad daylight, and near her lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell on her knees and offered thanks to God. Then she went forth from the cave to begin work with her delicate hands. She groped in amongst the ugly nettles, which burned great blisters on her hands and arms, but she determined to bear the pain gladly if she could only release her dear brothers. So she bruised the nettles with

her bare feet and spun the flax.

At sunset her brothers returned, and were much frightened when she did not speak. They believed her to be under the spell of some new sorcery, but when they saw her hands they understood what she was doing in their behalf. The youngest brother wept, and where his tears touched her the pain ceased and the burning blisters vanished. Eliza kept to her work all night, for she could not rest till she had released her brothers. During the whole of the following day, while her brothers were absent, she sat in solitude, but never before had the time flown so quickly.

One coat was already finished and she had begun the second, when she heard a huntsman's horn and was struck with fear. As the sound came nearer and nearer, she also heard dogs barking, and fled with terror into the cave. She hastily bound together the nettles she had gathered, and sat upon them. In a moment there came bounding toward her out of the ravine a great dog, and then another and another; they ran back and forth barking furiously, until in a few minutes all the huntsmen stood before the cave. The handsomest of them was the king of the country, who, when he saw the beautiful maiden, advanced toward her, saying, "How did you come here, my sweet child?"

Eliza shook her head. She dared not speak, for it would cost her brothers their deliverance and their lives. And she hid her hands under her apron, so that the king might not see how she was suffering.

"Come with me," he said; "here you cannot remain. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in silk and velvet, I will place a golden crown on your head, and you shall rule and make your home in my richest castle." Then he lifted her onto his horse. She wept and wrung her hands, but the king said: "I wish only your happiness. A time will come when you will thank me for this."

He galloped away over the mountains, holding her before

him on his horse, and the hunters followed behind them. As the sun went down they approached a fair, royal city, with churches and cupolas. On arriving at the castle, the king led her into marble halls, where large fountains played and where the walls and the ceilings were covered with rich paintings. But she had no eyes for all these glorious sights; she could only mourn and weep. Patiently she allowed the women to array her in royal robes, to weave pearls in her hair, and to draw soft gloves over her blistered fingers. As she stood arrayed in her rich dress, she looked so dazzlingly beautiful that the court bowed low in her presence.

Then the king declared his intention of making her his bride, but the archbishop shook his head and whispered that the fair young maiden was only a witch, who had blinded the king's eyes and ensnared his heart. The king would not listen to him, however, and ordered the music to sound, the daintiest dishes to be served, and the loveliest maidens to dance before them.

Afterwards he led her through fragrant gardens and lofty halls, but not a smile appeared on her lips or sparkled in her eyes. She looked the very picture of grief. Then the king opened the door of a little chamber in which she was to sleep. It was adorned with rich green tapestry and resembled the cave in which he had found her. On the floor lay the bundle of flax which she had spun from the nettles, and under the ceiling hung the coat she had made. These things had been brought away from the cave as curiosities, by one of the huntsmen.

"Here you can dream yourself back again in the old home in the cave," said the king; "here is the work with which you employed yourself. It will amuse you now, in the midst of all this splendor, to think of that time."

When Eliza saw all these things which lay so near her heart, a smile played around her mouth, and the crimson blood rushed to her cheeks. The thought of her brothers and

their release made her so joyful that she kissed the king's hand. Then he pressed her to his heart.

Very soon the joyous church bells announced the marriage feast; the beautiful dumb girl of the woods was to be made queen of the country. A single word would cost her brothers their lives, but she loved the kind, handsome king, who did everything to make her happy, more and more each day; she loved him with her whole heart, and her eyes beamed with the love she dared not speak. Oh! if she could only confide in him and tell him of her grief. But dumb she must remain till her task was finished.

Therefore at night she crept away into her little chamber which had been decked out to look like the cave and quickly wove one coat after another. But when she began the seventh, she found she had no more flax. She knew that the nettles she wanted to use grew in the churchyard and that she must pluck them herself. How should she get out there? "Oh, what is the pain in my fingers to the torment which my heart endures?" thought she. "I must venture; I shall not be denied help from heaven."

Then with a trembling heart, as if she were about to perform a wicked deed, Eliza crept into the garden in the broad moonlight, and passed through the narrow walks and the deserted streets till she reached the churchyard. She prayed silently, gathered the burning nettles, and carried them home with her to the castle.

One person only had seen her, and that was the archbishop—he was awake while others slept. Now he felt sure that his suspicions were correct; all was not right with the queen; she was a witch and had bewitched the king and all the people. Secretly he told the king what he had seen and what he feared, and as the hard words came from his tongue, the carved images of the saints shook their heads as if they would say, "It is not so; Eliza is innocent."

But the archbishop interpreted it in another way; he

believed that they witnessed against her and were shaking their heads at her wickedness. Two tears rolled down the king's cheeks. He went home with doubt in his heart, and at night pretended to sleep. But no real sleep came to his eyes, for every night he saw Eliza get up and disappear from her chamber. Day by day his brow became darker, and Eliza saw it, and although she did not understand the reason, it alarmed her and made her heart tremble for her brothers. Her hot tears glittered like pearls on the regal velvet and diamonds, while all who saw her were wishing they could be queen.

In the meantime she had almost finished her task; only one of her brothers' coats was wanting, but she had no flax left and not a single nettle. Once more only, and for the last time, must she venture to the churchyard and pluck a few handfuls. She went, and the king and the archbishop followed her. The king turned away his head and said, "The people must condemn her." Quickly she was condemned to suffer death by fire.

Away from the gorgeous regal halls she was led to a dark, dreary cell, where the wind whistled through the iron bars. Instead of the velvet and silk dresses, they gave her the ten coats which she had woven, to cover her, and the bundle of nettles for a pillow. But they could have given her nothing that would have pleased her more. She continued her task with joy and prayed for help, while the street boys sang jeering songs about her and not a soul comforted her with a kind word.

Toward evening she heard at the grating the flutter of a swan's wing; it was her youngest brother. He had found his sister, and she sobbed for joy, although she knew that probably this was the last night she had to live. Still, she had hope, for her task was almost finished and her brothers were come.

Then the archbishop arrived, to be with her during her last hours as he had promised the king. She shook her head and begged him, by looks and gestures, not to stay; for in this

night she knew she must finish her task, otherwise all her pain and tears and sleepless nights would have been suffered in vain. The archbishop withdrew, uttering bitter words against her, but she knew that she was innocent and diligently continued her work.

Little mice ran about the floor, dragging the nettles to her feet, to help as much as they could; and a thrush, sitting outside the grating of the window, sang to her the whole night long as sweetly as possible, to keep up her spirits.

It was still twilight, and at least an hour before sunrise, when the eleven brothers stood at the castle gate and demanded to be brought before the king. They were told it could not be; it was yet night; the king slept and could not be disturbed. They threatened, they entreated, until the guard appeared, and even the king himself, inquiring what all the noise meant. At this moment the sun rose, and the eleven brothers were seen no more, but eleven wild swans flew away over the castle.

Now all the people came streaming forth from the gates of the city to see the witch burned. An old horse drew the cart on which she sat. They had dressed her in a garment of coarse sackcloth. Her lovely hair hung loose on her shoulders, her cheeks were deadly pale, her lips moved silently while her fingers still worked at the green flax. Even on the way to death she would not give up her task. The ten finished coats lay at her feet; she was working hard at the eleventh, while the mob jeered her and said: "See the witch; how she mutters! She has no hymn book in her hand; she sits there with her ugly sorcery. Let us tear it into a thousand pieces."

They pressed toward her, and doubtless would have destroyed the coats had not, at that moment, eleven wild swans flown over her and alighted on the cart. They flapped their large wings, and the crowd drew back in alarm.

"It is a sign from Heaven that she is innocent," whispered many of them; but they did not venture to say it aloud.

As the executioner seized her by the hand to lift her out of the cart, she hastily threw the eleven coats over the eleven swans, and they immediately became eleven handsome princes; but the youngest had a swan's wing instead of an arm, for she had not been able to finish the last sleeve of the coat.

"Now I may speak," she exclaimed. "I am innocent."

Then the people, who saw what had happened, bowed to her as before a saint; but she sank unconscious in her brothers' arms, overcome with suspense, anguish, and pain.

"Yes, she is innocent," said the eldest brother, and related all that had taken place. While he spoke, there rose in the air a fragrance as from millions of roses. Every piece of fagot in the pile made to burn her had taken root, and threw out branches until the whole appeared like a thick hedge, large and high, covered with roses; while above all bloomed a white, shining flower that glittered like a star. This flower the king plucked, and when he placed it in Eliza's bosom she awoke from her swoon with peace and happiness in her heart. Then all the church bells rang of themselves, and the birds came in great flocks. And a marriage procession, such as no king had ever before seen, returned to the castle.

The Last Dream of the Old Oak
by Hans Christian Andersen

In the forest, high up on the steep shore and not far from the open seacoast, stood a very old oak tree. It was just three hundred and sixty-five years old, but that long time was to the tree as the same number of days might be to us. We wake by day and sleep by night, and then we have our dreams. It is different with the tree; it is obliged to keep awake through three seasons of the year and does not get any sleep till winter comes. Winter is its time for rest—its night after the long day of spring, summer, and autumn.

During many a warm summer, the Ephemeras, which are flies that exist for only a day, had fluttered about the old oak, enjoyed life, and felt happy. And if, for a moment, one of the tiny creatures rested on the large, fresh leaves, the tree would always say: "Poor little creature! your whole life consists of but a single day. How very short! It must be quite melancholy."

"Melancholy! what do you mean?" the little creature would always reply. "Why do you say that? Everything around me is so wonderfully bright and warm and beautiful that it makes me joyous."

"But only for one day, and then it is all over."

"Over!" repeated the fly; "what is the meaning of 'all over'? Are you 'all over' too?"

"No, I shall very likely live for thousands of your days, and my day is whole seasons long; indeed, it is so long that you could never reckon it up."

"No? then I don't understand you. You may have thousands of my days, but I have thousands of moments in which

I can be merry and happy. Does all the beauty of the world cease when you die?"

"No," replied the tree; "it will certainly last much longer, infinitely longer than I can think of."

"Well, then," said the little fly, "we have the same time to live, only we reckon differently." And the little creature danced and floated in the air, rejoicing in its delicate wings of gauze and velvet, rejoicing in the balmy breezes laden with the fragrance from the clover fields and wild roses, elder blossoms and honeysuckle, and from the garden hedges of wild thyme, primroses, and mint. The perfume of all these was so strong that it almost intoxicated the little fly. The long and beautiful day had been so full of joy and sweet delights, that, when the sun sank, the fly felt tired of all its happiness and enjoyment. Its wings could sustain it no longer, and gently and slowly it glided down to the soft, waving blades of grass, nodded its little head as well as it could, and slept peacefully and sweetly. The fly was dead.

"Poor little Ephemera!" said the oak; "what a short life!" And so on every summer day the dance was repeated, the same questions were asked and the same answers given, and there was the same peaceful falling asleep at sunset. This continued through many generations of Ephemeras, and all of them felt merry and happy.

The oak remained awake through the morning of spring, the noon of summer, and the evening of autumn; its time of rest, its night, drew near—its winter was coming. Here fell a leaf and there fell a leaf. Already the storms were singing: "Good night, good night. We will rock you and lull you. Go to sleep, go to sleep. We will sing you to sleep, and shake you to sleep, and it will do your old twigs good; they will even crackle with pleasure. Sleep sweetly, sleep sweetly, it is your three hundred and sixty-fifth night. You are still very young in the world. Sleep sweetly; the clouds will drop snow upon you, which will be your coverlid, warm and sheltering to your

feet. Sweet sleep to you, and pleasant dreams."

And there stood the oak, stripped of all its leaves, left to rest during the whole of a long winter, and to dream many dreams of events that had happened, just as men dream.

The great tree had once been small; indeed, in its cradle it had been an acorn. According to human reckoning, it was now in the fourth century of its existence. It was the largest and best tree in the forest. Its summit towered above all the other trees and could be seen far out at sea, so that it served as a landmark to the sailors. It had no idea how many eyes looked eagerly for it. In its topmost branches the wood pigeon built her nest, and the cuckoo sang his well-known song, the familiar notes echoing among the boughs; and in autumn, when the leaves looked like beaten copper plates, the birds of passage came and rested on the branches before beginning their flight across the sea.

But now that it was winter, the tree stood leafless, so that everyone could see how crooked and bent were the branches that sprang forth from the trunk. Crows and rooks came by turns and sat on them, and talked of the hard times that were beginning, and how difficult it was in winter to obtain a living.

It was just at the holy Christmas time that the tree dreamed a dream. The tree had doubtless a feeling that the festive time had arrived, and in its dream fancied it heard the bells of the churches ringing. And yet it seemed to be a beautiful summer's day, mild and warm. The tree's mighty summit was crowned with spreading, fresh green foliage; the sunbeams played among its leaves and branches, and the air was full of fragrance from herb and blossom; painted butterflies chased each other; the summer flies danced around it as if the world had been created merely that they might dance and be merry. All that had happened to the tree during all the years of its life seemed to pass before it as if in a festive pageant.

It saw the knights of olden times and noble ladies ride

through the wood on their gallant steeds, with plumes waving in their hats and with falcons on their wrists, while the hunting horn sounded and the dogs barked. It saw hostile warriors, in colored dress and glittering armor, with spear and halberd, pitching their tents and again taking them down; the watch-fires blazed, and men sang and slept under the hospitable shelter of the tree. It saw lovers meet in quiet happiness near it in the moonshine, and carve the initials of their names in the grayish-green bark of its trunk.

Once, but long years had passed since then, guitars and Æolian harps had been hung on its boughs by merry travelers; now they seemed to hang there again, and their marvelous notes sounded again. The wood pigeons cooed as if to express the feelings of the tree, and the cuckoo called out to tell it how many summer days it had yet to live.

Then it appeared to it that new life was thrilling through every fiber of root and stem and leaf, rising even to its highest branches. The tree felt itself stretching and spreading out, while through the root beneath the earth ran the warm vigor of life. As it grew higher and still higher and its strength increased, the topmost boughs became broader and fuller; and in proportion to its growth its self-satisfaction increased, and there came a joyous longing to grow higher and higher—to reach even to the warm, bright sun itself.

Already had its topmost branches pierced the clouds, which floated beneath them like troops of birds of passage or large white swans; every leaf seemed gifted with sight, as if it possessed eyes to see. The stars became visible in broad daylight, large and sparkling, like clear and gentle eyes. They brought to the tree's memory the light that it had seen in the eyes of a child and in the eyes of lovers who had once met beneath the branches of the old oak.

These were wonderful and happy moments for the old oak, full of peace and joy; and yet amidst all this happiness, the tree felt a yearning desire that all the other trees, bushes,

herbs, and flowers beneath it might also be able to rise higher, to see all this splendor and experience the same happiness. The grand, majestic oak could not be quite happy in its enjoyment until all the rest, both great and small, could share it. And this feeling of yearning trembled through every branch, through every leaf, as warmly and fervently as through a human heart.

The summit of the tree waved to and fro and bent downwards, as if in its silent longing it sought something. Then there came to it the fragrance of thyme and the more powerful scent of honeysuckle and violets, and the tree fancied it heard the note of the cuckoo.

At length its longing was satisfied. Up through the clouds came the green summits of the forest trees, and the oak watched them rising higher and higher. Bush and herb shot upward, and some even tore themselves up by the roots to rise more quickly. The quickest of all was the birch tree. Like a lightning flash the slender stem shot upwards in a zigzag line, the branches spreading round it like green gauze and banners. Every native of the wood, even to the brown and feathery rushes, grew with the rest, while the birds ascended with the melody of song. On a blade of grass that fluttered in the air like a long green ribbon sat a grasshopper cleaning its wings with its legs. May beetles hummed, bees murmured, birds sang—each in its own way; the air was filled with the sounds of song and gladness.

"But where is the little blue flower that grows by the water, and the purple bellflower, and the daisy?" asked the oak. "I want them all."

"Here we are; here we are," came the reply in words and in song.

"But the beautiful thyme of last summer, where is that? And where are the lilies of the valley which last year covered the earth with their bloom, and the wild apple tree with its fragrant blossoms, and all the glory of the wood, which has

flourished year after year? And where is even what may have but just been born?"

"We are here; we are here," sounded voices high up in the air, as if they had flown there beforehand.

"Why, this is beautiful, too beautiful to be believed," cried the oak in a joyful tone. "I have them all here, both great and small; not one has been forgotten. Can such happiness be imagined? It seems almost impossible."

"In heaven with the Eternal God it can be imagined, for all things are possible," sounded the reply through the air.

And the old tree, as it still grew upwards and onwards, felt that its roots were loosening themselves from the earth.

"It is right so; it is best," said the tree. "No fetters hold me now. I can fly up to the very highest point in light and glory. And all I love are with me, both small and great. All—all are here."

Such was the dream of the old oak at the holy Christmas time. And while it dreamed, a mighty storm came rushing over land and sea. The sea rolled in great billows toward the shore. A cracking and crushing was heard in the tree. Its roots were torn from the ground, just at the moment when in its dream it was being loosened from the earth. It fell; its three hundred and sixty-five years were ended like the single day of the Ephemera.

On the morning of Christmas Day, when the sun rose, the storm had ceased. From all the churches sounded the festive bells, and from every hearth, even of the smallest hut, rose the smoke into the blue sky, like the smoke from the festive thank-offerings on the Druids' altars. The sea gradually became calm, and on board a great ship that had withstood the tempest during the night, all the flags were displayed as a token of joy and festivity.

"The tree is down! the old oak—our landmark on the coast!" exclaimed the sailors. "It must have fallen in the storm of last night. Who can replace it? Alas! no one." This was the

old tree's funeral oration, brief but well said.

There it lay stretched on the snow-covered shore, and over it sounded the notes of a song from the ship—a song of Christmas joy, of the redemption of the soul of man, and of eternal life through Christ.

> Sing aloud on this happy morn,
> All is fulfilled, for Christ is born;
> With songs of joy let us loudly sing,
> "Hallelujahs to Christ our King."

Thus sounded the Christmas carol, and everyone on board the ship felt his thoughts elevated through the song and the prayer, even as the old tree had felt lifted up in its last beautiful dream on that Christmas morn.

The Snow Man
by Hans Christian Andersen

It is so delightfully cold that it makes my whole body crackle," said the Snow Man. "This is just the kind of wind to blow life into one. How that great red thing up there is staring at me!" He meant the sun, which was just setting. "It shall not make me wink. I shall manage to keep the pieces."

He had two triangular pieces of tile in his head instead of eyes, and his mouth, being made of an old broken rake, was therefore furnished with teeth. He had been brought into existence amid the joyous shouts of boys, the jingling of sleigh bells, and the slashing of whips.

The sun went down, and the full moon rose, large, round, and clear, shining in the deep blue.

"There it comes again, from the other side," said the Snow Man, who supposed the sun was showing itself once more. "Ah, I have cured it of staring. Now it may hang up there and shine, so that I may see myself. If I only knew how to manage to move away from this place—I should so like to move! If I could, I would slide along yonder on the ice, as I have seen the boys do; but I don't understand how. I don't even know how to run."

"Away, away!" barked the old yard dog. He was quite hoarse and could not pronounce "Bow-wow" properly. He had once been an indoor dog and lain by the fire, and he had been hoarse ever since. "The sun will make you run some day. I saw it, last winter, make your predecessor run, and his predecessor before him. Away, away! They all have to go."

"I don't understand you, comrade," said the Snow Man. "Is that thing up yonder to teach me to run? I saw it running

itself, a little while ago, and now it has come creeping up from the other side."

"You know nothing at all," replied the yard dog. "But then, you've only lately been patched up. What you see yonder is the moon, and what you saw before was the sun. It will come again tomorrow and most likely teach you to run down into the ditch by the well, for I think the weather is going to change. I can feel such pricks and stabs in my left leg that I am sure there is going to be a change."

"I don't understand him," said the Snow Man to himself, "but I have a feeling that he is talking of something very disagreeable. The thing that stared so hard just now, which he calls the sun, is not my friend; I can feel that too."

"Away, away!" barked the yard dog, and then he turned round three times and crept into his kennel to sleep.

There really was a change in the weather. Toward morning a thick fog covered the whole country and a keen wind arose, so that the cold seemed to freeze one's bones. But when the sun rose, a splendid sight was to be seen. Trees and bushes were covered with hoarfrost and looked like a forest of white coral, while on every twig glittered frozen dewdrops. The many delicate forms, concealed in summer by luxuriant foliage, were now clearly defined and looked like glittering lacework. A white radiance glistened from every twig. The birches, waving in the wind, looked as full of life as in summer and as wondrously beautiful. Where the sun shone, everything glittered and sparkled as if diamond dust had been strewn about; and the snowy carpet of the earth seemed covered with diamonds from which gleamed countless lights, whiter even than the snow itself.

"This is really beautiful," said a girl who had come into the garden with a young friend; and they both stood still near the Snow Man, contemplating the glittering scene. "Summer cannot show a more beautiful sight," she exclaimed, while her eyes sparkled.

"And we can't have such a fellow as this in the summertime," replied the young man, pointing to the Snow Man. "He is capital."

The girl laughed and nodded at the Snow Man, then tripped away over the snow with her friend. The snow creaked and crackled beneath her feet, as if she had been treading on starch.

"Who are those two?" asked the Snow Man of the yard dog. "You have been here longer than I; do you know them?"

"Of course I know them," replied the yard dog; "the girl has stroked my back many times, and the young man has often given me a bone of meat. I never bite those two."

"But what are they?" asked the Snow Man.

"They are lovers," he replied. "They will go and live in the same kennel, by and by, and gnaw at the same bone. Away, away!"

"Are they the same kind of beings as you and I?" asked the Snow Man.

"Well, they belong to the master," retorted the yard dog. "Certainly people know very little who were only born yesterday. I can see that in you. I have age and experience. I know everyone here in the house, and I know there was once a time when I did not lie out here in the cold, fastened to a chain. Away, away!"

"The cold is delightful," said the Snow Man. "But do tell me, tell me; only you must not clank your chain so, for it jars within me when you do that."

"Away, away!" barked the yard dog. "I'll tell you: they said I was a pretty little fellow, once; then I used to lie in a velvet-covered chair, up at the master's house, and sit in the mistress's lap; they used to kiss my nose, and wipe my paws with an embroidered handkerchief, and I was called 'Ami, dear Ami, sweet Ami.' But after a while I grew too big for them, and they sent me away to the housekeeper's room; so I came to live on the lower story. You can look into the room from

where you stand, and see where I was once master—for I was, indeed, master to the housekeeper. It was a much smaller room than those upstairs, but I was more comfortable, for I was not continually being taken hold of and pulled about by the children, as I had been. I received quite as good food and even better. I had my own cushion, and there was a stove—it is the finest thing in the world at this season of the year. I used to go under the stove and lie down. Ah, I still dream of that stove. Away, away!"

"Does a stove look beautiful?" asked the Snow Man. "Is it at all like me?"

"It is just the opposite of you," said the dog. "It's as black as a crow and has a long neck and a brass knob; it eats firewood, and that makes fire spurt out of its mouth. One has to keep on one side or under it, to be comfortable. You can see it through the window from where you stand."

Then the Snow Man looked, and saw a bright polished thing with a brass knob, and fire gleaming from the lower part of it. The sight of this gave the Snow Man a strange sensation; it was very odd, he knew not what it meant, and he could not account for it. But there are people who are not men of snow who understand what the feeling is. "And why did you leave her?" asked the Snow Man, for it seemed to him that the stove must be of the female sex. "How could you give up such a comfortable place?"

"I was obliged to," replied the yard dog. "They turned me out of doors and chained me up here. I had bitten the youngest of my master's sons in the leg, because he kicked away the bone I was gnawing. 'Bone for bone,' I thought. But they were very angry, and since that time I have been fastened to a chain and have lost my voice. Don't you hear how hoarse I am? Away, away! I can't talk like other dogs anymore. Away, away! That was the end of it all."

But the Snow Man was no longer listening. He was looking into the housekeeper's room on the lower story, where the

stove, which was about the same size as the Snow Man himself, stood on its four iron legs. "What a strange crackling I feel within me," he said. "Shall I ever get in there? It is an innocent wish, and innocent wishes are sure to be fulfilled. I must go in there and lean against her, even if I have to break the window."

"You must never go in there," said the yard dog, "for if you approach the stove, you will melt away, away."

"I might as well go," said the Snow Man, "for I think I am breaking up as it is."

During the whole day the Snow Man stood looking in through the window, and in the twilight hour the room became still more inviting, for from the stove came a gentle glow, not like the sun or the moon; it was only the kind of radiance that can come from a stove when it has been well fed. When the door of the stove was opened, the flames darted out of its mouth—as is customary with all stoves—and the light of the flames fell with a ruddy gleam directly on the face and breast of the Snow Man. "I can endure it no longer," said he. "How beautiful it looks when it stretches out its tongue!"

The night was long, but it did not appear so to the Snow Man, who stood there enjoying his own reflections and crackling with the cold. In the morning the window-panes of the housekeeper's room were covered with ice. They were the most beautiful ice flowers any Snow Man could desire, but they concealed the stove. These window-panes would not thaw, and he could see nothing of the stove, which he pictured to himself as if it had been a beautiful human being. The snow crackled and the wind whistled around him; it was just the kind of frosty weather a Snow Man ought to enjoy thoroughly. But he did not enjoy it. How, indeed, could he enjoy anything when he was so stove-sick?

"That is a terrible disease for a Snow Man to have," said the yard dog. "I have suffered from it myself, but I got over it.

Away, away!" he barked, and then added, "The weather is going to change."

The weather did change. It began to thaw, and as the warmth increased, the Snow Man decreased. He said nothing and made no complaint, which is a sure sign.

One morning he broke and sank down altogether; and behold! where he had stood, something that looked like a broomstick remained sticking up in the ground. It was the pole round which the boys had built him.

"Ah, now I understand why he had such a great longing for the stove," said the yard dog. "Why, there's the shovel that is used for cleaning out the stove, fastened to the pole. The Snow Man had a stove scraper in his body; that was what moved him so. But it is all over now. Away, away!"

And soon the winter passed. "Away, away!" barked the hoarse yard dog, but the girls in the house sang:

"Come from your fragrant home, green thyme;
Stretch your soft branches, willow tree;
The months are bringing the sweet spring-time,
When the lark in the sky sings joyfully.
Come, gentle sun, while the cuckoo sings,
And I'll mock his note in my wanderings."

And nobody thought anymore of the Snow Man.

The Little Mermaid
by Hans Christian Andersen

Far out in the ocean, where the water is as blue as the prettiest cornflower and as clear as crystal, it is very, very deep; so deep, indeed, that no cable could sound it, and many church steeples, piled one upon another, would not reach from the ground beneath to the surface of the water above. There dwell the Sea King and his subjects.

We must not imagine that there is nothing at the bottom of the sea but bare yellow sand. No, indeed, for on this sand grow the strangest flowers and plants, the leaves and stems of which are so pliant that the slightest agitation of the water causes them to stir as if they had life. Fishes, both large and small, glide between the branches as birds fly among the trees here upon land.

In the deepest spot of all stands the castle of the Sea King. Its walls are built of coral, and the long Gothic windows are of the clearest amber. The roof is formed of shells that open and close as the water flows over them. Their appearance is very beautiful, for in each lies a glittering pearl which would be fit for the diadem of a queen.

The Sea King had been a widower for many years, and his aged mother kept house for him. She was a very sensible woman, but exceedingly proud of her high birth, and on that account wore twelve oysters on her tail, while others of high rank were only allowed to wear six.

She was, however, deserving of very great praise, especially for her care of the little sea princesses, her six granddaughters. They were beautiful children, but the youngest was the prettiest of them all. Her skin was as clear and

delicate as a rose leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest sea; but, like all the others, she had no feet and her body ended in a fish's tail. All day long they played in the great halls of the castle or among the living flowers that grew out of the walls. The large amber windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows; only the fishes swam up to the princesses, ate out of their hands, and allowed themselves to be stroked.

Outside the castle there was a beautiful garden, in which grew bright-red and dark-blue flowers, and blossoms like flames of fire; the fruit glittered like gold, and the leaves and stems waved to and fro continually. The earth itself was the finest sand, but blue as the flame of burning sulphur. Over everything lay a peculiar blue radiance, as if the blue sky were everywhere, above and below, instead of the dark depths of the sea. In calm weather the sun could be seen, looking like a reddish-purple flower with light streaming from the calyx.

Each of the young princesses had a little plot of ground in the garden, where she might dig and plant as she pleased. One arranged her flower bed in the form of a whale; another preferred to make hers like the figure of a little mermaid; while the youngest child made hers round, like the sun, and in it grew flowers as red as his rays at sunset.

She was a strange child, quiet and thoughtful. While her sisters showed delight at the wonderful things which they obtained from the wrecks of vessels, she cared only for her pretty flowers, red like the sun, and a beautiful marble statue. It was the representation of a handsome boy, carved out of pure white stone, which had fallen to the bottom of the sea from a wreck.

She planted by the statue a rose-colored weeping willow. It grew rapidly and soon hung its fresh branches over the statue, almost down to the blue sands. The shadows had the color of violet and waved to and fro like the branches, so that it seemed as if the crown of the tree and the root were at play,

trying to kiss each other.

Nothing gave her so much pleasure as to hear about the world above the sea. She made her old grandmother tell her all she knew of the ships and of the towns, the people and the animals. To her it seemed most wonderful and beautiful to hear that the flowers of the land had fragrance, while those below the sea had none; that the trees of the forest were green; and that the fishes among the trees could sing so sweetly that it was a pleasure to listen to them. Her grandmother called the birds fishes, or the little mermaid would not have understood what was meant, for she had never seen birds.

"When you have reached your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you will have permission to rise up out of the sea and sit on the rocks in the moonlight, while the great ships go sailing by. Then you will see both forests and towns."

In the following year, one of the sisters would be fifteen, but as each was a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before her turn came to rise up from the bottom of the ocean to see the earth as we do. However, each promised to tell the others what she saw on her first visit and what she thought was most beautiful. Their grandmother could not tell them enough—there were so many things about which they wanted to know.

None of them longed so much for her turn to come as the youngest—she who had the longest time to wait and who was so quiet and thoughtful. Many nights she stood by the open window, looking up through the dark blue water and watching the fish as they splashed about with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars shining faintly, but through the water they looked larger than they do to our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed between her and them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship full of human beings who never imagined that a pretty little mermaid was standing beneath them, holding

out her white hands towards the keel of their ship.

At length the eldest was fifteen and was allowed to rise to the surface of the ocean.

When she returned she had hundreds of things to talk about. But the finest thing, she said, was to lie on a sand bank in the quiet moonlit sea, near the shore, gazing at the lights of the near-by town, that twinkled like hundreds of stars, and listening to the sounds of music, the noise of carriages, the voices of human beings, and the merry pealing of the bells in the church steeples. Because she could not go near all these wonderful things, she longed for them all the more.

Oh, how eagerly did the youngest sister listen to all these descriptions! And afterwards, when she stood at the open window looking up through the dark-blue water, she thought of the great city, with all its bustle and noise, and even fancied she could hear the sound of the church bells down in the depths of the sea.

In another year the second sister received permission to rise to the surface of the water and to swim about where she pleased. She rose just as the sun was setting, and this, she said, was the most beautiful sight of all. The whole sky looked like gold, and violet and rose-colored clouds, which she could not describe, drifted across it. And more swiftly than the clouds, flew a large flock of wild swans toward the setting sun, like a long white veil across the sea. She also swam towards the sun, but it sank into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the clouds and from the sea.

The third sister's turn followed, and she was the boldest of them all, for she swam up a broad river that emptied into the sea. On the banks she saw green hills covered with beautiful vines, and palaces and castles peeping out from amid the proud trees of the forest. She heard birds singing and felt the rays of the sun so strongly that she was obliged often to dive under the water to cool her burning face. In a narrow creek she found a large group of little human children, almost

naked, sporting about in the water. She wanted to play with them, but they fled in a great fright; and then a little black animal—it was a dog, but she did not know it, for she had never seen one before—came to the water and barked at her so furiously that she became frightened and rushed back to the open sea. But she said she should never forget the beautiful forest, the green hills, and the pretty children who could swim in the water although they had no tails.

The fourth sister was more timid. She remained in the midst of the sea, but said it was quite as beautiful there as nearer the land. She could see many miles around her, and the sky above looked like a bell of glass. She had seen the ships, but at such a great distance that they looked like sea gulls. The dolphins sported in the waves, and the great whales spouted water from their nostrils till it seemed as if a hundred fountains were playing in every direction.

The fifth sister's birthday occurred in the winter, so when her turn came she saw what the others had not seen the first time they went up. The sea looked quite green, and large icebergs were floating about, each like a pearl, she said, but larger and loftier than the churches built by men. They were of the most singular shapes and glittered like diamonds. She had seated herself on one of the largest and let the wind play with her long hair. She noticed that all the ships sailed past very rapidly, steering as far away as they could, as if they were afraid of the iceberg. Towards evening, as the sun went down, dark clouds covered the sky, the thunder rolled, and the flashes of lightning glowed red on the icebergs as they were tossed about by the heaving sea. On all the ships the sails were reefed with fear and trembling, while she sat on the floating iceberg, calmly watching the lightning as it darted its forked flashes into the sea.

Each of the sisters, when first she had permission to rise to the surface, was delighted with the new and beautiful sights. Now that they were grown-up girls and could go when

they pleased, they had become quite indifferent about it. They soon wished themselves back again, and after a month had passed they said it was much more beautiful down below and pleasanter to be at home.

Yet often, in the evening hours, the five sisters would twine their arms about each other and rise to the surface together. Their voices were more charming than that of any human being, and before the approach of a storm, when they feared that a ship might be lost, they swam before the vessel, singing enchanting songs of the delights to be found in the depths of the sea and begging the voyagers not to fear if they sank to the bottom. But the sailors could not understand the song and thought it was the sighing of the storm. These things were never beautiful to them, for if the ship sank, the men were drowned and their dead bodies alone reached the palace of the Sea King.

When the sisters rose, arm in arm, through the water, their youngest sister would stand quite alone, looking after them, ready to cry—only, since mermaids have no tears, she suffered more acutely.

"Oh, were I but fifteen years old!" said she. "I know that I shall love the world up there, and all the people who live in it."

At last she reached her fifteenth year.

"Well, now you are grown up," said the old dowager, her grandmother. "Come, and let me adorn you like your sisters." And she placed in her hair a wreath of white lilies, of which every flower leaf was half a pearl. Then the old lady ordered eight great oysters to attach themselves to the tail of the princess to show her high rank.

"But they hurt me so," said the little mermaid.

"Yes, I know; pride must suffer pain," replied the old lady.

Oh, how gladly she would have shaken off all this grandeur and laid aside the heavy wreath! The red flowers in her own garden would have suited her much better. But she could

not change herself, so she said farewell and rose as lightly as a bubble to the surface of the water.

The sun had just set when she raised her head above the waves. The clouds were tinted with crimson and gold, and through the glimmering twilight beamed the evening star in all its beauty. The sea was calm, and the air mild and fresh. A large ship with three masts lay becalmed on the water; only one sail was set, for not a breeze stirred, and the sailors sat idle on deck or amidst the rigging. There was music and song on board, and as darkness came on, a hundred colored lanterns were lighted, as if the flags of all nations waved in the air.

The little mermaid swam close to the cabin windows, and now and then, as the waves lifted her up, she could look in through glass window-panes and see a number of gayly dressed people.

Among them, and the most beautiful of all, was a young prince with large, black eyes. He was sixteen years of age, and his birthday was being celebrated with great display. The sailors were dancing on deck, and when the prince came out of the cabin, more than a hundred rockets rose in the air, making it as bright as day. The little mermaid was so startled that she dived under water, and when she again stretched out her head, it looked as if all the stars of heaven were falling around her.

She had never seen such fireworks before. Great suns spurted fire about, splendid fireflies flew into the blue air, and everything was reflected in the clear, calm sea beneath. The ship itself was so brightly illuminated that all the people, and even the smallest rope, could be distinctly seen. How handsome the young prince looked, as he pressed the hands of all his guests and smiled at them, while the music resounded through the clear night air!

It was very late, yet the little mermaid could not take her eyes from the ship or from the beautiful prince. The colored

lanterns had been extinguished, no more rockets rose in the air, and the cannon had ceased firing; but the sea became restless, and a moaning, grumbling sound could be heard beneath the waves. Still the little mermaid remained by the cabin window, rocking up and down on the water, so that she could look within. After a while the sails were quickly set, and the ship went on her way. But soon the waves rose higher, heavy clouds darkened the sky, and lightning appeared in the distance. A dreadful storm was approaching. Once more the sails were furled, and the great ship pursued her flying course over the raging sea. The waves rose mountain high, as if they would overtop the mast, but the ship dived like a swan between them, then rose again on their lofty, foaming crests. To the little mermaid this was pleasant sport; but not so to the sailors. At length the ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks gave way under the lashing of the sea, as the waves broke over the deck; the mainmast snapped asunder like a reed, and as the ship lay over on her side, the water rushed in.

The little mermaid now perceived that the crew were in danger; even she was obliged to be careful, to avoid the beams and planks of the wreck which lay scattered on the water. At one moment it was pitch dark so that she could not see a single object, but when a flash of lightning came it revealed the whole scene; she could see everyone who had been on board except the prince. When the ship parted, she had seen him sink into the deep waves, and she was glad, for she thought he would now be with her. Then she remembered that human beings could not live in the water, so that when he got down to her father's palace he would certainly be quite dead.

No, he must not die! So she swam about among the beams and planks which strewed the surface of the sea, forgetting that they could crush her to pieces. Diving deep under the dark waters, rising and falling with the waves, she at length managed to reach the young prince, who was fast losing the

power to swim in that stormy sea. His limbs were failing him, his beautiful eyes were closed, and he would have died had not the little mermaid come to his assistance. She held his head above the water and let the waves carry them where they would.

In the morning the storm had ceased, but of the ship not a single fragment could be seen. The sun came up red and shining out of the water, and its beams brought back the hue of health to the prince's cheeks, but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his high, smooth forehead and stroked back his wet hair. He seemed to her like the marble statue in her little garden, so she kissed him again and wished that he might live.

Presently they came in sight of land, and she saw lofty blue mountains on which the white snow rested as if a flock of swans were lying upon them. Beautiful green forests were near the shore, and close by stood a large building, whether a church or a convent she could not tell. Orange and citron trees grew in the garden, and before the door stood lofty palms. The sea here formed a little bay, in which the water lay quiet and still, but very deep. She swam with the handsome prince to the beach, which was covered with fine white sand, and there she laid him in the warm sunshine, taking care to raise his head higher than his body. Then bells sounded in the large white building, and some young girls came into the garden. The little mermaid swam out farther from the shore and hid herself among some high rocks that rose out of the water. Covering her head and neck with the foam of the sea, she watched there to see what would become of the poor prince.

It was not long before she saw a young girl approach the spot where the prince lay. She seemed frightened at first, but only for a moment; then she brought a number of people, and the mermaid saw that the prince came to life again and smiled upon those who stood about him. But to her he sent no smile;

he knew not that she had saved him. This made her very sorrowful, and when he was led away into the great building, she dived down into the water and returned to her father's castle.

She had always been silent and thoughtful, and now she was more so than ever. Her sisters asked her what she had seen during her first visit to the surface of the water, but she could tell them nothing. Many an evening and morning did she rise to the place where she had left the prince. She saw the fruits in the garden ripen and watched them gathered; she watched the snow on the mountain tops melt away; but never did she see the prince, and therefore she always returned home more sorrowful than before.

It was her only comfort to sit in her own little garden and fling her arm around the beautiful marble statue, which was like the prince. She gave up tending her flowers, and they grew in wild confusion over the paths, twining their long leaves and stems round the branches of the trees so that the whole place became dark and gloomy.

At length she could bear it no longer and told one of her sisters all about it. Then the others heard the secret, and very soon it became known to several mermaids, one of whom had an intimate friend who happened to know about the prince. She had also seen the festival on board ship, and she told them where the prince came from and where his palace stood.

"Come, little sister," said the other princesses. Then they entwined their arms and rose together to the surface of the water, near the spot where they knew the prince's palace stood. It was built of bright-yellow, shining stone and had long flights of marble steps, one of which reached quite down to the sea. Splendid gilded cupolas rose over the roof, and between the pillars that surrounded the whole building stood lifelike statues of marble. Through the clear crystal of the lofty windows could be seen noble rooms, with costly silk curtains and hangings of tapestry and walls covered with beautiful

paintings. In the center of the largest salon a fountain threw its sparkling jets high up into the glass cupola of the ceiling, through which the sun shone in upon the water and upon the beautiful plants that grew in the basin of the fountain.

Now that the little mermaid knew where the prince lived, she spent many an evening and many a night on the water near the palace. She would swim much nearer the shore than any of the others had ventured, and once she went up the narrow channel under the marble balcony, which threw a broad shadow on the water. Here she sat and watched the young prince, who thought himself alone in the bright moonlight.

She often saw him evenings, sailing in a beautiful boat on which music sounded and flags waved. She peeped out from among the green rushes, and if the wind caught her long silvery-white veil, those who saw it believed it to be a swan, spreading out its wings.

Many a night, too, when the fishermen set their nets by the light of their torches, she heard them relate many good things about the young prince. And this made her glad that she had saved his life when he was tossed about half dead on the waves. She remembered how his head had rested on her bosom and how heartily she had kissed him, but he knew nothing of all this and could not even dream of her.

She grew more and more to like human beings and wished more and more to be able to wander about with those whose world seemed to be so much larger than her own. They could fly over the sea in ships and mount the high hills which were far above the clouds; and the lands they possessed, their woods and their fields, stretched far away beyond the reach of her sight. There was so much that she wished to know! but her sisters were unable to answer all her questions. She then went to her old grandmother, who knew all about the upper world, which she rightly called "the lands above the sea."

"If human beings are not drowned," asked the little

mermaid, "can they live forever? Do they never die, as we do here in the sea?"

"Yes," replied the old lady, "they must also die, and their term of life is even shorter than ours. We sometimes live for three hundred years, but when we cease to exist here, we become only foam on the surface of the water and have not even a grave among those we love. We have not immortal souls, we shall never live again; like the green seaweed when once it has been cut off, we can never flourish more. Human beings, on the contrary, have souls which live forever, even after the body has been turned to dust. They rise up through the clear, pure air, beyond the glittering stars. As we rise out of the water and behold all the land of the earth, so do they rise to unknown and glorious regions which we shall never see."

"Why have not we immortal souls?" asked the little mermaid, mournfully. "I would gladly give all the hundreds of years that I have to live, to be a human being only for one day and to have the hope of knowing the happiness of that glorious world above the stars."

"You must not think that," said the old woman. "We believe that we are much happier and much better off than human beings."

"So I shall die," said the little mermaid, "and as the foam of the sea I shall be driven about, never again to hear the music of the waves or to see the pretty flowers or the red sun? Is there anything I can do to win an immortal soul?"

"No," said the old woman; "unless a man should love you so much that you were more to him than his father or his mother, and if all his thoughts and all his love were fixed upon you, and the priest placed his right hand in yours, and he promised to be true to you here and hereafter—then his soul would glide into your body, and you would obtain a share in the future happiness of mankind. He would give to you a soul and retain his own as well; but this can never happen. Your

fish's tail, which among us is considered so beautiful, on earth is thought to be quite ugly. They do not know any better, and they think it necessary, in order to be handsome, to have two stout props, which they call legs."

Then the little mermaid sighed and looked sorrowfully at her fish's tail. "Let us be happy," said the old lady, "and dart and spring about during the three hundred years that we have to live, which is really quite long enough. After that we can rest ourselves all the better. This evening we are going to have a court ball."

It was one of those splendid sights which we can never see on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the large ballroom were of thick but transparent crystal. Many hundreds of colossal shells—some of a deep red, others of a grass green—with blue fire in them, stood in rows on each side. These lighted up the whole salon, and shone through the walls so that the sea was also illuminated. Innumerable fishes, great and small, swam past the crystal walls; on some of them the scales glowed with a purple brilliance, and on others shone like silver and gold. Through the halls flowed a broad stream, and in it danced the mermen and the mermaids to the music of their own sweet singing.

No one on earth has such lovely voices as they, but the little mermaid sang more sweetly than all. The whole court applauded her with hands and tails, and for a moment her heart felt quite gay, for she knew she had the sweetest voice either on earth or in the sea. But soon she thought again of the world above her; she could not forget the charming prince, nor her sorrow that she had not an immortal soul like his. She crept away silently out of her father's palace, and while everything within was gladness and song, she sat in her own little garden, sorrowful and alone. Then she heard the bugle sounding through the water and thought: "He is certainly sailing above, he in whom my wishes center and in whose hands I should like to place the happiness of my life. I

will venture all for him and to win an immortal soul. While my sisters are dancing in my father's palace I will go to the sea witch, of whom I have always been so much afraid; she can give me counsel and help."

Then the little mermaid went out from her garden and took the road to the foaming whirlpools, behind which the sorceress lived. She had never been that way before. Neither flowers nor grass grew there; nothing but bare, gray, sandy ground stretched out to the whirlpool, where the water, like foaming mill wheels, seized everything that came within its reach and cast it into the fathomless deep. Through the midst of these crushing whirlpools the little mermaid was obliged to pass before she could reach the dominions of the sea witch. Then, for a long distance, the road lay across a stretch of warm, bubbling mire, called by the witch her turf moor.

Beyond this was the witch's house, which stood in the center of a strange forest, where all the trees and flowers were polypi, half animals and half plants. They looked like serpents with a hundred heads, growing out of the ground. The branches were long, slimy arms, with fingers like flexible worms, moving limb after limb from the root to the top. All that could be reached in the sea they seized upon and held fast, so that it never escaped from their clutches.

The little mermaid was so alarmed at what she saw that she stood still and her heart beat with fear. She came very near turning back, but she thought of the prince and of the human soul for which she longed, and her courage returned. She fastened her long, flowing hair round her head, so that the polypi should not lay hold of it. She crossed her hands on her bosom, and then darted forward as a fish shoots through the water, between the supple arms and fingers of the ugly polypi, which were stretched out on each side of her. She saw that they all held in their grasp something they had seized with their numerous little arms, which were as strong as iron bands. Tightly grasped in their clinging arms were white

skeletons of human beings who had perished at sea and had sunk down into the deep waters; skeletons of land animals; and oars, rudders, and chests, of ships. There was even a little mermaid whom they had caught and strangled, and this seemed the most shocking of all to the little princess.

She now came to a space of marshy ground in the wood, where large, fat water snakes were rolling in the mire and showing their ugly, drab-colored bodies. In the midst of this spot stood a house, built of the bones of shipwrecked human beings. There sat the sea witch, allowing a toad to eat from her mouth just as people sometimes feed a canary with pieces of sugar. She called the ugly water snakes her little chickens and allowed them to crawl all over her bosom.

"I know what you want," said the sea witch. "It is very stupid of you, but you shall have your way, though it will bring you to sorrow, my pretty princess. You want to get rid of your fish's tail and to have two supports instead, like human beings on earth, so that the young prince may fall in love with you and so that you may have an immortal soul." And then the witch laughed so loud and so disgustingly that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground and lay there wriggling.

"You are but just in time," said the witch, "for after sunrise tomorrow I should not be able to help you till the end of another year. I will prepare a draft for you, with which you must swim to land tomorrow before sunrise; seat yourself there and drink it. Your tail will then disappear, and shrink up into what men call legs.

"You will feel great pain, as if a sword were passing through you. But all who see you will say that you are the prettiest little human being they ever saw. You will still have the same floating gracefulness of movement, and no dancer will ever tread so lightly. Every step you take, however, will be as if you were treading upon sharp knives and as if the blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I will help you."

"Yes, I will," said the little princess in a trembling voice,

as she thought of the prince and the immortal soul.

"But think again," said the witch, "for when once your shape has become like a human being, you can no more be a mermaid. You will never return through the water to your sisters or to your father's palace again. And if you do not win the love of the prince, so that he is willing to forget his father and mother for your sake and to love you with his whole soul and allow the priest to join your hands that you may be man and wife, then you will never have an immortal soul. The first morning after he marries another, your heart will break and you will become foam on the crest of the waves."

"I will do it," said the little mermaid, and she became pale as death.

"But I must be paid, also," said the witch, "and it is not a trifle that I ask. You have the sweetest voice of any who dwell here in the depths of the sea, and you believe that you will be able to charm the prince with it. But this voice you must give to me. The best thing you possess will I have as the price of my costly draft, which must be mixed with my own blood so that it may be as sharp as a two-edged sword."

"But if you take away my voice," said the little mermaid, "what is left for me?"

"Your beautiful form, your graceful walk, and your expressive eyes. Surely with these you can enchain a man's heart. Well, have you lost your courage? Put out your little tongue, that I may cut it off as my payment; then you shall have the powerful draft."

"It shall be," said the little mermaid.

Then the witch placed her caldron on the fire, to prepare the magic draft.

"Cleanliness is a good thing," said she, scouring the vessel with snakes which she had tied together in a large knot. Then she pricked herself in the breast and let the black blood drop into the caldron. The steam that rose twisted itself into such horrible shapes that no one could look at them without fear.

Every moment the witch threw a new ingredient into the vessel, and when it began to boil, the sound was like the weeping of a crocodile. When at last the magic draft was ready, it looked like the clearest water.

"There it is for you," said the witch. Then she cut off the mermaid's tongue, so that she would never again speak or sing. "If the polypi should seize you as you return through the wood," said the witch, "throw over them a few drops of the potion, and their fingers will be torn into a thousand pieces." But the little mermaid had no occasion to do this, for the polypi sprang back in terror when they caught sight of the glittering draft, which shone in her hand like a twinkling star.

So she passed quickly through the wood and the marsh and between the rushing whirlpools. She saw that in her father's palace the torches in the ballroom were extinguished and that all within were asleep. But she did not venture to go in to them, for now that she was dumb and going to leave them forever she felt as if her heart would break. She stole into the garden, took a flower from the flower bed of each of her sisters, kissed her hand towards the palace a thousand times, and then rose up through the dark-blue waters.

The sun had not risen when she came in sight of the prince's palace and approached the beautiful marble steps, but the moon shone clear and bright. Then the little mermaid drank the magic draft, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her delicate body. She fell into a swoon and lay like one dead. When the sun rose and shone over the sea, she recovered and felt a sharp pain, but before her stood the handsome young prince.

He fixed his coal-black eyes upon her so earnestly that she cast down her own and then became aware that her fish's tail was gone and that she had as pretty a pair of white legs and tiny feet as any little maiden could have. But she had no clothes, so she wrapped herself in her long, thick hair. The prince asked her who she was and whence she came. She

looked at him mildly and sorrowfully with her deep blue eyes, but could not speak. He took her by the hand and led her to the palace.

Every step she took was as the witch had said it would be; she felt as if she were treading upon the points of needles or sharp knives. She bore it willingly, however, and moved at the prince's side as lightly as a bubble, so that he and all who saw her wondered at her graceful, swaying movements. She was very soon arrayed in costly robes of silk and muslin and was the most beautiful creature in the palace; but she was dumb and could neither speak nor sing.

Beautiful female slaves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward and sang before the prince and his royal parents. One sang better than all the others, and the prince clapped his hands and smiled at her. This was a great sorrow to the little mermaid, for she knew how much more sweetly she herself once could sing, and she thought, "Oh, if he could only know that I have given away my voice forever, to be with him!"

The slaves next performed some pretty fairy-like dances, to the sound of beautiful music. Then the little mermaid raised her lovely white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, glided over the floor, and danced as no one yet had been able to dance. At each moment her beauty was more revealed, and her expressive eyes appealed more directly to the heart than the songs of the slaves. Everyone was enchanted, especially the prince, who called her his little foundling. She danced again quite readily, to please him, though each time her foot touched the floor it seemed as if she trod on sharp knives.

The prince said she should remain with him always, and she was given permission to sleep at his door, on a velvet cushion. He had a page's dress made for her, that she might accompany him on horseback. They rode together through the sweet-scented woods, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the little birds sang among the fresh leaves. She climbed with him to the tops of high mountains,

and although her tender feet bled so that even her steps were marked, she only smiled, and followed him till they could see the clouds beneath them like a flock of birds flying to distant lands. While at the prince's palace, and when all the household were asleep, she would go and sit on the broad marble steps, for it eased her burning feet to bathe them in the cold sea water. It was then that she thought of all those below in the deep.

Once during the night her sisters came up arm in arm, singing sorrowfully as they floated on the water. She beckoned to them, and they recognized her and told her how she had grieved them; after that, they came to the same place every night. Once she saw in the distance her old grandmother, who had not been to the surface of the sea for many years, and the old Sea King, her father, with his crown on his head. They stretched out their hands towards her, but did not venture so near the land as her sisters had.

As the days passed she loved the prince more dearly, and he loved her as one would love a little child. The thought never came to him to make her his wife. Yet unless he married her, she could not receive an immortal soul, and on the morning after his marriage with another, she would dissolve into the foam of the sea.

"Do you not love me the best of them all?" the eyes of the little mermaid seemed to say when he took her in his arms and kissed her fair forehead.

"Yes, you are dear to me," said the prince, "for you have the best heart and you are the most devoted to me. You are like a young maiden whom I once saw, but whom I shall never meet again. I was in a ship that was wrecked, and the waves cast me ashore near a holy temple where several young maidens performed the service. The youngest of them found me on the shore and saved my life. I saw her but twice, and she is the only one in the world whom I could love. But you are like her, and you have almost driven her image from my mind. She

belongs to the holy temple, and good fortune has sent you to me in her stead. We will never part.

"Ah, he knows not that it was I who saved his life," thought the little mermaid. "I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands; I sat beneath the foam and watched till the human beings came to help him. I saw the pretty maiden that he loves better than he loves me." The mermaid sighed deeply, but she could not weep. "He says the maiden belongs to the holy temple, therefore she will never return to the world—they will meet no more. I am by his side and see him every day. I will take care of him, and love him, and give up my life for his sake."

Very soon it was said that the prince was to marry and that the beautiful daughter of a neighboring king would be his wife, for a fine ship was being fitted out. Although the prince gave out that he intended merely to pay a visit to the king, it was generally supposed that he went to court the princess. A great company were to go with him. The little mermaid smiled and shook her head. She knew the prince's thoughts better than any of the others.

"I must travel," he had said to her; "I must see this beautiful princess. My parents desire it, but they will not oblige me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her, because she is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you resemble. If I were forced to choose a bride, I would choose you, my dumb foundling, with those expressive eyes." Then he kissed her rosy mouth, played with her long, waving hair, and laid his head on her heart, while she dreamed of human happiness and an immortal soul.

"You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child, are you?" he said, as they stood on the deck of the noble ship which was to carry them to the country of the neighboring king. Then he told her of storm and of calm, of strange fishes in the deep beneath them, and of what the divers had seen there. She smiled at his descriptions, for she knew better than anyone

what wonders were at the bottom of the sea.

In the moonlight night, when all on board were asleep except the man at the helm, she sat on deck, gazing down through the clear water. She thought she could distinguish her father's castle, and upon it her aged grandmother, with the silver crown on her head, looking through the rushing tide at the keel of the vessel. Then her sisters came up on the waves and gazed at her mournfully, wringing their white hands. She beckoned to them, and smiled, and wanted to tell them how happy and well off she was. But the cabin boy approached, and when her sisters dived down, he thought what he saw was only the foam of the sea.

The next morning the ship sailed into the harbor of a beautiful town belonging to the king whom the prince was going to visit. The church bells were ringing, and from the high towers sounded a flourish of trumpets. Soldiers, with flying colors and glittering bayonets, lined the roads through which they passed. Every day was a festival, balls and entertainments following one another. But the princess had not yet appeared. People said that she had been brought up and educated in a religious house, where she was learning every royal virtue.

At last she came. Then the little mermaid, who was anxious to see whether she was really beautiful, was obliged to admit that she had never seen a more perfect vision of beauty. Her skin was delicately fair, and beneath her long, dark eyelashes her laughing blue eyes shone with truth and purity.

"It was you," said the prince, "who saved my life when I lay as if dead on the beach," and he folded his blushing bride in his arms.

"Oh, I am too happy!" said he to the little mermaid; "my fondest hopes are now fulfilled. You will rejoice at my happiness, for your devotion to me is great and sincere."

The little mermaid kissed his hand and felt as if her heart were already broken. His wedding morning would bring death

to her, and she would change into the foam of the sea.

All the church bells rang, and the heralds rode through the town proclaiming the betrothal. Perfumed oil was burned in costly silver lamps on every altar. The priests waved the censers, while the bride and the bridegroom joined their hands and received the blessing of the bishop. The little mermaid, dressed in silk and gold, held up the bride's train; but her ears heard nothing of the festive music, and her eyes saw not the holy ceremony. She thought of the night of death which was coming to her, and of all she had lost in the world.

On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board the ship. Cannons were roaring, flags waving, and in the center of the ship a costly tent of purple and gold had been erected. It contained elegant sleeping couches for the bridal pair during the night. The ship, under a favorable wind, with swelling sails, glided away smoothly and lightly over the calm sea.

When it grew dark, a number of colored lamps were lighted and the sailors danced merrily on the deck. The little mermaid could not help thinking of her first rising out of the sea, when she had seen similar joyful festivities, so she too joined in the dance, poised herself in the air as a swallow when he pursues his prey, and all present cheered her wonderingly. She had never danced so gracefully before. Her tender feet felt as if cut with sharp knives, but she cared not for the pain; a sharper pang had pierced her heart.

She knew this was the last evening she should ever see the prince for whom she had forsaken her kindred and her home. She had given up her beautiful voice and suffered unheard-of pain daily for him, while he knew nothing of it. This was the last evening that she should breathe the same air with him or gaze on the starry sky and the deep sea. An eternal night, without a thought or a dream, awaited her. She had no soul, and now could never win one.

All was joy and gaiety on the ship until long after

midnight. She smiled and danced with the rest, while the thought of death was in her heart. The prince kissed his beautiful bride and she played with his raven hair till they went arm in arm to rest in the sumptuous tent. Then all became still on board the ship, and only the pilot, who stood at the helm, was awake. The little mermaid leaned her white arms on the edge of the vessel and looked towards the east for the first blush of morning—for that first ray of the dawn which was to be her death. She saw her sisters rising out of the flood. They were as pale as she, but their beautiful hair no longer waved in the wind; it had been cut off.

"We have given our hair to the witch," said they, "to obtain help for you, that you may not die tonight. She has given us a knife; see, it is very sharp. Before the sun rises you must plunge it into the heart of the prince. When the warm blood falls upon your feet they will grow together again into a fish's tail, and you will once more be a mermaid and can return to us to live out your three hundred years before you are changed into the salt sea foam. Haste, then; either he or you must die before sunrise. Our old grandmother mourns so for you that her white hair is falling, as ours fell under the witch's scissors. Kill the prince, and come back. Hasten! Do you not see the first red streaks in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise, and you must die."

Then they sighed deeply and mournfully, and sank beneath the waves.

The little mermaid drew back the crimson curtain of the tent and beheld the fair bride, whose head was resting on the prince's breast. She bent down and kissed his noble brow, then looked at the sky, on which the rosy dawn grew brighter and brighter. She glanced at the sharp knife and again fixed her eyes on the prince, who whispered the name of his bride in his dreams.

She was in his thoughts, and the knife trembled in the hand of the little mermaid—but she flung it far from her into

the waves. The water turned red where it fell, and the drops that spurted up looked like blood. She cast one more lingering, half-fainting glance at the prince, then threw herself from the ship into the sea and felt her body dissolving into foam.

The sun rose above the waves, and his warm rays fell on the cold foam of the little mermaid, who did not feel as if she were dying. She saw the bright sun, and hundreds of transparent, beautiful creatures floating around her—she could see through them the white sails of the ships and the red clouds in the sky. Their speech was melodious, but could not be heard by mortal ears—just as their bodies could not be seen by mortal eyes. The little mermaid perceived that she had a body like theirs and that she continued to rise higher and higher out of the foam. "Where am I?" asked she, and her voice sounded ethereal, like the voices of those who were with her. No earthly music could imitate it.

"Among the daughters of the air," answered one of them. "A mermaid has not an immortal soul, nor can she obtain one unless she wins the love of a human being. On the will of another hangs her eternal destiny. But the daughters of the air, although they do not possess an immortal soul, can, by their good deeds, procure one for themselves. We fly to warm countries and cool the sultry air that destroys mankind with the pestilence. We carry the perfume of the flowers to spread health and restoration.

"After we have striven for three hundred years to do all the good in our power, we receive an immortal soul and take part in the happiness of mankind. You, poor little mermaid, have tried with your whole heart to do as we are doing. You have suffered and endured, and raised yourself to the spirit world by your good deeds, and now, by striving for three hundred years in the same way, you may obtain an immortal soul."

The little mermaid lifted her glorified eyes toward the sun and, for the first time, felt them filling with tears.

On the ship in which she had left the prince there were life and noise, and she saw him and his beautiful bride searching for her. Sorrowfully they gazed at the pearly foam, as if they knew she had thrown herself into the waves. Unseen she kissed the forehead of the bride and fanned the prince, and then mounted with the other children of the air to a rosy cloud that floated above.

"After three hundred years, thus shall we float into the kingdom of heaven," said she. "And we may even get there sooner," whispered one of her companions. "Unseen we can enter the houses of men where there are children, and for every day on which we find a good child that is the joy of his parents and deserves their love, our time of probation is shortened. The child does not know, when we fly through the room, that we smile with joy at his good conduct—for we can count one year less of our three hundred years. But when we see a naughty or a wicked child we shed tears of sorrow, and for every tear a day is added to our time of trial."

The Pen and the Inkstand
by Hans Christian Andersen

In a poet's room, where his inkstand stood on the table, the remark was once made: "It is wonderful what can be brought out of an inkstand. What will come next? It is indeed wonderful."

"Yes, certainly," said the inkstand to the pen and to the other articles that stood on the table; "that's what I always say. It is wonderful and extraordinary what a number of things come out of me. It's quite incredible, and I really never know what is coming next when that man dips his pen into me. One drop out of me is enough for half a page of paper—and what cannot half a page contain?

"From me all the works of the poet are produced—all those imaginary characters whom people fancy they have known or met, and all the deep feeling, the humor, and the vivid pictures of nature. I myself don't understand how it is, for I am not acquainted with nature, but it is certainly in me. From me have gone forth to the world those wonderful descriptions of charming maidens, and of brave knights on prancing steeds; of the halt and the blind—and I know not what more, for I assure you I never think of these things."

"There you are right," said the pen, "for you don't think at all. If you did, you would see that you can only provide the means. You give the fluid, that I may place upon the paper what dwells in me and what I wish to bring to light. It is the pen that writes. No man doubts that; and indeed most people understand as much about poetry as an old inkstand."

"You have had very little experience," replied the inkstand. "You have hardly been in service a week and are

already half worn out. Do you imagine you are a poet? You are only a servant, and before you came I had many like you, some of the goose family and others of English manufacture. I know a quill pen as well as I know a steel one. I have had both sorts in my service, and I shall have many more as long as *he* comes—the man who performs the mechanical part—and writes down what he obtains from me. I should like to know what will be the next thing he gets out of me."

"Inkpot!" retorted the pen, contemptuously.

Late in the evening the poet returned home from a concert, where he had been quite enchanted by the admirable performance of a famous violin player.

The player had produced from his instrument a richness of tone that sometimes sounded like tinkling water drops or rolling pearls, sometimes like the birds twittering in chorus, and then again, rising and swelling like the wind through the fir trees. The poet felt as if his own heart were weeping, but in tones of melody, like the sound of a woman's voice. These sounds seemed to come not only from the strings but from every part of the instrument. It was a wonderful performance and a difficult piece, and yet the bow seemed to glide across the strings so easily that one would think anyone could do it. The violin and the bow seemed independent of their master who guided them. It was as if soul and spirit had been breathed into the instrument. And the audience forgot the performer in the beautiful sounds he produced.

Not so the poet; he remembered him and wrote down his thoughts on the subject: "How foolish it would be for the violin and the bow to boast of their performance, and yet we men often commit that folly. The poet, the artist, the man of science in his laboratory, the general—we all do it, and yet we are only the instruments which the Almighty uses. To Him alone the honor is due. We have nothing in ourselves of which we should be proud." Yes, this is what the poet wrote. He wrote it in the form of a parable and called it "The Master

and the Instruments."

"That is what you get, madam," said the pen to the inkstand when the two were alone again. "Did you hear him read aloud what I had written down?"

"Yes, what I gave you to write," retorted the inkstand. "That was a cut at you, because of your conceit. To think that you could not understand that you were being quizzed! I gave you a cut from within me. Surely I must know my own satire."

"Ink pitcher!" cried the pen.

"Writing stick!" retorted the inkstand. And each of them felt satisfied that he had given a good answer. It is pleasing to be convinced that you have settled a matter by your reply; it is something to make you sleep well. And they both slept well over it.

But the poet did not sleep. Thoughts rose within him, like the tones of the violin, falling like pearls or rushing like the strong wind through the forest. He understood his own heart in these thoughts; they were as a ray from the mind of the Great Master of all minds.

"To Him be all the honor."

The Teapot
by Hans Christian Andersen

There was once a proud teapot; it was proud of being porcelain, proud of its long spout, proud of its broad handle. It had something before and behind—the spout before and the handle behind—and that was what it talked about. But it did not talk of its lid, which was cracked and riveted; these were defects, and one does not talk of one's defects, for there are plenty of others to do that. The cups, the cream pot, and the sugar bowl, the whole tea service, would think much oftener of the lid's imperfections—and talk about them—than of the sound handle and the remarkable spout. The teapot knew it.

"I know you," it said within itself. "I know, too, my imperfection, and I am well aware that in that very thing is seen my humility, my modesty. Imperfections we all have, but we also have compensations. The cups have a handle, the sugar bowl a lid; I have both, and one thing besides, in front, which they can never have. I have a spout, and that makes me the queen of the tea table. I spread abroad a blessing on thirsting mankind, for in me the Chinese leaves are brewed in the boiling, tasteless water."

All this said the teapot in its fresh young life. It stood on the table that was spread for tea; it was lifted by a very delicate hand, but the delicate hand was awkward. The teapot fell, the spout snapped off, and the handle snapped off. The lid was no worse to speak of; the worst had been spoken of that.

The teapot lay in a swoon on the floor, while the boiling water ran out of it. It was a horrid shame, but the worst was that everybody jeered at it; they jeered at the teapot and not

at the awkward hand.

"I never shall forget that experience," said the teapot, when it afterward talked of its life. "I was called an invalid, and placed in a corner, and the next day was given to a woman who begged for victuals. I fell into poverty, and stood dumb both outside and in. But then, just as I was, began my better life. One can be one thing and still become quite another.

"Earth was placed in me. For a teapot, this is the same as being buried, but in the earth was placed a flower bulb. Who placed it there, who gave it, I know not; but given it was, and it became a compensation for the Chinese leaves and the boiling water, a compensation for the broken handle and spout.

"And the bulb lay in the earth, the bulb lay in me; it became my heart, my living heart, such as I had never before possessed. There was life in me, power and might. The heart pulsed, and the bulb put forth sprouts; it was the springing up of thoughts and feelings which burst forth into flower.

"I saw it, I bore it, I forgot myself in its delight. Blessed is it to forget oneself in another. The flower gave me no thanks; it did not think of me. It was admired and praised, and I was glad at that. How happy it must have been! One day I heard someone say that the flower deserved a better pot. I was thumped hard on my back, which was a great affliction, and the flower was put into a better pot. I was thrown out into the yard, where I lie as an old potsherd. But I have the memory, and that I can never lose."

What the Goodman Does Is Always Right
by Hans Christian Andersen

I will tell you a story that was told to me when I was a little boy. Every time I think of this story it seems to me more and more charming; for it is with stories as it is with many people —they become better as they grow older.

I have no doubt that you have been in the country and seen a very old farmhouse, with thatched roof, and mosses and small plants growing wild upon it. There is a stork's nest on the ridge of the gable, for we cannot do without the stork. The walls of the house are sloping, and the windows are low, and only one of the latter is made to open. The baking oven sticks out of the wall like a great knob. An elder tree hangs over the palings, and beneath its branches, at the foot of the paling, is a pool of water in which a few ducks are sporting. There is a yard dog, too, that barks at all comers.

Just such a farmhouse as this stood in a country lane, and in it dwelt an old couple, a peasant and his wife. Small as their possessions were, they had one thing they could not do without, and that was a horse, which contrived to live upon the grass found by the side of the highroad. The old peasant rode into the town upon this horse, and his neighbors often borrowed it of him and paid for the loan of it by rendering some service to the old couple. Yet after a time the old people thought it would be as well to sell the horse or exchange it for something which might be more useful to them. But what should this *something* be?

"You will know best, old man," said the wife. "It is fair day today; so ride into town and get rid of the horse for money or make a good exchange. Whichever you do will please me; so

ride to the fair."

She fastened his neckerchief for him, for she could do that better than he could and she could also tie it very prettily in a double bow. She also smoothed his hat round and round with the palm of her hand and gave him a kiss. Then he rode away upon the horse that was to be sold, or bartered for something else. Yes, the goodman knew what he was about. The sun shone with great heat, and not a cloud was to be seen in the sky. The road was very dusty, for many people, all going to the fair, were driving, riding, or walking upon it. There was no shelter anywhere from the hot sun. Among the crowd a man came trudging along, driving a cow to the fair. The cow was as beautiful a creature as any cow could be.

"She gives good milk, I am certain," said the peasant to himself. "That would be a very good exchange: the cow for the horse. Halloo there! you with the cow," he said. "I tell you what, I dare say a horse is of more value than a cow; but I don't care for that. A cow will be more useful to me, so if you like we'll exchange."

"To be sure I will," said the man.

Accordingly the exchange was made. When the matter was settled the peasant might have turned back, for he had done the business he came to do. But having made up his mind to go to the fair, he determined to do so, if only to have a look at it. So on he went to the town with his cow. Leading the animal, he strode on sturdily, and, after a short time, overtook a man who was driving a sheep. It was a good fat sheep, with a fine fleece on its back.

"I should like to have that fellow," said the peasant to himself. "There is plenty of grass for him by our palings, and in the winter we could keep him in the room with us. Perhaps it would be more profitable to have a sheep than a cow. Shall I exchange?"

The man with the sheep was quite ready, and the bargain was quickly made. And then our peasant continued his way

on the highroad with his sheep. Soon after this, he overtook another man, who had come into the road from a field, and was carrying a large goose under his arm.

"What a heavy creature you have there!" said the peasant. "It has plenty of feathers and plenty of fat, and would look well tied to a string, or paddling in the water at our place. That would be very useful to my old woman; she could make all sorts of profit out of it. How often she has said, 'If we only had a goose!' Now here is an opportunity, and, if possible, I will get it for her. Shall we exchange? I will give you my sheep for your goose, and thanks into the bargain."

The other had not the least objection, and accordingly the exchange was made, and our peasant became possessor of the goose. By this time he had arrived very near the town. The crowd on the highroad had been gradually increasing, and there was quite a rush of men and cattle. The cattle walked on the path and by the palings, and at the turnpike gate they even walked into the toll keeper's potato field, where one fowl was strutting about with a string tied to its leg, lest it should take fright at the crowd and run away and get lost. The tail feathers of this fowl were very short, and it winked with both its eyes, and looked very cunning as it said, "Cluck, cluck." What were the thoughts of the fowl as it said this I cannot tell you, but as soon as our good man saw it, he thought, "Why, that's the finest fowl I ever saw in my life; it's finer than our parson's brood hen, upon my word. I should like to have that fowl. Fowls can always pick up a few grains that lie about, and almost keep themselves. I think it would be a good exchange if I could get it for my goose. Shall we exchange?" he asked the toll keeper.

"Exchange?" repeated the man. "Well, it would not be a bad thing."

So they made an exchange; the toll keeper at the turnpike gate kept the goose, and the peasant carried off the fowl. Now he really had done a great deal of business on his way to the

fair, and he was hot and tired. He wanted something to eat, and a glass of ale to refresh himself; so he turned his steps to an inn. He was just about to enter, when the ostler came out, and they met at the door. The ostler was carrying a sack. "What have you in that sack?" asked the peasant.

"Rotten apples," answered the ostler; "a whole sackful of them. They will do to feed the pigs with."

"Why, that will be terrible waste," the peasant replied. "I should like to take them home to my old woman. Last year the old apple tree by the grassplot bore only one apple, and we kept it in the cupboard till it was quite withered and rotten. It was property, my old woman said. Here she would see a great deal of property—a whole sackful. I should like to show them to her."

"What will you give me for the sackful?" asked the ostler.

"What will I give? Well, I will give you my fowl in exchange."

So he gave up the fowl and received the apples, which he carried into the inn parlor. He leaned the sack carefully against the stove, and then went to the table. But the stove was hot, and he had not thought of that. Many guests were present—horse-dealers, cattle-drovers, and two Englishmen. The Englishmen were so rich that their pockets bulged and seemed ready to burst; and they could bet too, as you shall hear. Hiss—s—s, hiss—s—s. What could that be by the stove? The apples were beginning to roast. "What is that?" asked one.

"Why, do you know—" said our peasant, and then he told them the whole story of the horse, which he had exchanged for a cow, and all the rest of it, down to the apples.

"Well, your old woman will give it to you when you get home," said one of the Englishmen. "Won't there be a noise?"

"What! Give me what?" said the peasant. "Why, she will kiss me, and say, 'What the goodman does is always right.'"

"Let us lay a wager on it," said the Englishman. "We'll

wager you a ton of coined gold, a hundred pounds to the hundredweight."

"No, a bushel will be enough," replied the peasant. "I can only set a bushel of apples against it, and I'll throw myself and my old woman into the bargain. That will pile up the measure, I fancy."

"Done! taken!" and so the bet was made.

Then the landlord's coach came to the door, and the two Englishmen and the peasant got in, and away they drove. Soon they had stopped at the peasant's hut. "Good evening, old woman."

"Good evening, old man."

"I've made the exchange."

"Ah, well, you understand what you're about," said the woman. Then she embraced him, and paid no attention to the strangers, nor did she notice the sack.

"I got a cow in exchange for the horse."

"Oh, how delightful!" said she. "Now we shall have plenty of milk, and butter, and cheese on the table. That was a capital exchange."

"Yes, but I changed the cow for a sheep."

"Ah, better still!" cried the wife. "You always think of everything; we have just enough pasture for a sheep. Ewe's milk and cheese, woolen jackets and stockings! The cow could not give all these, and her hairs only fall off. How you think of everything!"

"But I changed away the sheep for a goose."

"Then we shall have roast goose to eat this year. You dear old man, you are always thinking of something to please me. This is delightful. We can let the goose walk about with a string tied to her leg, so that she will get fatter still before we roast her."

"But I gave away the goose for a fowl."

"A fowl! Well, that was a good exchange," replied the woman. "The fowl will lay eggs and hatch them, and we shall

have chickens. We shall soon have a poultry yard. Oh, this is just what I was wishing for!"

"Yes, but I exchanged the fowl for a sack of shriveled apples."

"What! I must really give you a kiss for that!" exclaimed the wife. "My dear, good husband, now I'll tell you something. Do you know, almost as soon as you left me this morning, I began thinking of what I could give you nice for supper this evening, and then I thought of fried eggs and bacon, with sweet herbs. I had eggs and bacon but lacked the herbs, so I went over to the schoolmaster's. I knew they had plenty of herbs, but the schoolmistress is very mean, although she can smile so sweetly. I begged her to lend me a handful of herbs. 'Lend!' she exclaimed, 'I have nothing to lend. I could not even lend you a shriveled apple, my dear woman.' But now I can lend her ten, or a whole sackful, for which I'm very glad. It makes me laugh to think of it." Then she gave him a hearty kiss.

"Well, I like all this," said both the Englishmen; "always going down the hill and yet always merry. It's worth the money to see it." So they paid a hundredweight of gold to the peasant who, whatever he did, was not scolded but kissed.

Yes, it always pays best when the wife sees and maintains that her husband knows best and that whatever he does is right.

This is a story which I heard when I was a child. And now you have heard it, too, and know that "What the goodman does is always right."

The Real Princess
by Hans Christian Andersen

There was once a prince who wanted to marry a princess. But she must be a real princess, mind you. So he traveled all round the world, seeking such a one, but everywhere something was in the way. Not that there was any lack of princesses, but he could not seem to make out whether they were real princesses; there was always something not quite satisfactory. Therefore, home he came again, quite out of spirits, for he wished so much to marry a real princess.

One evening a terrible storm came on. It thundered and lightened, and the rain poured down; indeed, it was quite fearful. In the midst of it there came a knock at the town gate, and the old king went out to open it.

It was a princess who stood outside. But O dear, what a state she was in from the rain and bad weather! The water dropped from her hair and clothes, it ran in at the tips of her shoes and out at the heels; yet she insisted she was a real princess.

"Very well," thought the old queen; "that we shall presently see." She said nothing, but went into the bedchamber and took off all the bedding, then laid a pea on the sacking of the bedstead. Having done this, she took twenty mattresses and laid them upon the pea and placed twenty eider-down beds on top of the mattresses.

The princess lay upon this bed all the night. In the morning she was asked how she had slept.

"Oh, most miserably!" she said. "I scarcely closed my eyes the whole night through. I cannot think what there could have been in the bed. I lay upon something so hard that I am

quite black and blue all over. It is dreadful!"

It was now quite evident that she was a real princess, since through twenty mattresses and twenty eider-down beds she had felt the pea. None but a real princess could have such delicate feeling.

So the prince took her for his wife, for he knew that in her he had found a true princess. And the pea was preserved in the cabinet of curiosities, where it is still to be seen unless someone has stolen it.

And this, mind you, is a real story.

The Emperor's New Clothes
by Hans Christian Andersen

Many years ago there was an emperor who was so fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on them. He did not give himself any concern about his army; he cared nothing about the theater or for driving about in the woods, except for the sake of showing himself off in new clothes. He had a costume for every hour in the day, and just as they say of a king or emperor, "He is in his council chamber," they said of him, "The emperor is in his dressing room."

Life was merry and gay in the town where the emperor lived, and numbers of strangers came to it every day. Among them there came one day two rascals, who gave themselves out as weavers and said that they knew how to weave the most exquisite stuff imaginable. Not only were the colors and patterns uncommonly beautiful, but the clothes that were made of the stuff had the peculiar property of becoming invisible to every person who was unfit for the office he held or who was exceptionally stupid.

"Those must be valuable clothes," thought the emperor. "By wearing them I should be able to discover which of the men in my empire are not fit for their posts. I should distinguish wise men from fools. Yes, I must order some of the stuff to be woven for me directly." And he paid the swindlers a handsome sum of money in advance, as they required.

As for them, they put up two looms and pretended to be weaving, though there was nothing whatever on their shuttles. They called for a quantity of the finest silks and of the purest gold thread, all of which went into their own bags, while they worked at their empty looms till late into the night.

"I should like to know how those weavers are getting on with the stuff," thought the emperor. But he felt a little queer when he reflected that those who were stupid or unfit for their office would not be able to see the material. He believed, indeed, that he had nothing to fear for himself, but still he thought it better to send someone else first, to see how the work was coming on. All the people in the town had heard of the peculiar property of the stuff, and everyone was curious to see how stupid his neighbor might be.

"I will send my faithful old prime minister to the weavers," thought the emperor. "He will be best capable of judging of this stuff, for he is a man of sense and nobody is more fit for his office than he."

So the worthy old minister went into the room where the two swindlers sat working the empty looms. "Heaven save us!" thought the old man, opening his eyes wide. "Why, I can't see anything at all!" But he took care not to say so aloud.

Both the rogues begged him to step a little nearer and asked him if he did not think the patterns very pretty and the coloring fine. They pointed to the empty loom as they did so, and the poor old minister kept staring as hard as he could—but without being able to see anything on it, for of course there was nothing there to see.

"Heaven save us!" thought the old man. "Is it possible that I am a fool? I have never thought it, and nobody must know it. Is it true that I am not fit for my office? It will never do for me to say that I cannot see the stuffs."

"Well, sir, do you say nothing about the cloth?" asked the one who was pretending to go on with his work.

"Oh, it is most elegant, most beautiful!" said the dazed old man, as he peered again through his spectacles. "What a fine pattern, and what fine colors! I will certainly tell the emperor how pleased I am with the stuff."

"We are glad of that," said both the weavers; and then they named the colors and pointed out the special features of

the pattern. To all of this the minister paid great attention, so that he might be able to repeat it to the emperor when he went back to him.

And now the cheats called for more money, more silk, and more gold thread, to be able to proceed with the weaving, but they put it all into their own pockets, and not a thread went into the stuff, though they went on as before, weaving at the empty looms.

After a little time the emperor sent another honest statesman to see how the weaving was progressing, and if the stuff would soon be ready. The same thing happened with him as with the minister. He gazed and gazed, but as there was nothing but empty looms, he could see nothing else.

"Is not this an exquisite piece of stuff?" asked the weavers, pointing to one of the looms and explaining the beautiful pattern and the colors which were not there to be seen.

"I am not stupid, I know I am not!" thought the man, "so it must be that I am not fit for my good office. It is very strange, but I must not let it be noticed." So he praised the cloth he did not see and assured the weavers of his delight in the lovely colors and the exquisite pattern. "It is perfectly charming," he reported to the emperor.

Everybody in the town was talking of the splendid cloth. The emperor thought he should like to see it himself while it was still on the loom. With a company of carefully selected men, among whom were the two worthy officials who had been there before, he went to visit the crafty impostors, who were working as hard as ever at the empty looms.

"Is it not magnificent?" said both the honest statesmen. "See, your Majesty, what splendid colors, and what a pattern!" And they pointed to the looms, for they believed that others, no doubt, could see what they did not.

"What!" thought the emperor. "I see nothing at all. This is terrible! Am I a fool? Am I not fit to be emperor? Why nothing more dreadful could happen to me!"

"Oh, it is very pretty! it has my highest approval," the emperor said aloud. He nodded with satisfaction as he gazed at the empty looms, for he would not betray that he could see nothing.

His whole suite gazed and gazed, each seeing no more than the others; but, like the emperor, they all exclaimed, "Oh, it is beautiful!" They even suggested to the emperor that he wear the splendid new clothes for the first time on the occasion of a great procession which was soon to take place.

"Splendid! Gorgeous! Magnificent!" went from mouth to mouth. All were equally delighted with the weavers' workmanship. The emperor gave each of the impostors an order of knighthood to be worn in their buttonholes, and the title Gentleman Weaver of the Imperial Court.

Before the day on which the procession was to take place, the weavers sat up the whole night, burning sixteen candles, so that people might see how anxious they were to get the emperor's new clothes ready. They pretended to take the stuff from the loom, they cut it out in the air with huge scissors, and they stitched away with needles which had no thread in them. At last they said, "Now the clothes are finished."

The emperor came to them himself with his grandest courtiers, and each of the rogues lifted his arm as if he held something, saying, "See! here are the trousers! here is the coat! here is the cloak," and so on. "It is as light as a spider's web. One would almost feel as if one had nothing on, but that is the beauty of it!"

"Yes," said all the courtiers, but they saw nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"Will your Majesty be graciously pleased to take off your clothes so that we may put on the new clothes here, before the great mirror?"

The emperor took off his clothes, and the rogues pretended to put on first one garment and then another of the new ones they had pretended to make. They pretended to

fasten something round his waist and to tie on something. This they said was the train, and the emperor turned round and round before the mirror.

"How well his Majesty looks in the new clothes! How becoming they are!" cried all the courtiers in turn. "That is a splendid costume!"

"The canopy that is to be carried over your Majesty in the procession is waiting outside," said the master of ceremonies.

"Well, I am ready," replied the emperor. "Don't the clothes look well?" and he turned round and round again before the mirror, to appear as if he were admiring his new costume.

The chamberlains, who were to carry the train, stooped and put their hands near the floor as if they were lifting it; then they pretended to be holding something in the air. They would not let it be noticed that they could see and feel nothing.

So the emperor went along in the procession, under the splendid canopy, and everyone in the streets said: "How beautiful the emperor's new clothes are! What a splendid train! And how well they fit!"

No one wanted to let it appear that he could see nothing, for that would prove him not fit for his post. None of the emperor's clothes had been so great a success before.

"But he has nothing on!" said a little child.

"Just listen to the innocent," said its father; and one person whispered to another what the child had said. "He has nothing on; a child says he has nothing on!"

"But he has nothing on," cried all the people. The emperor was startled by this, for he had a suspicion that they were right. But he thought, "I must face this out to the end and go on with the procession." So he held himself more stiffly than ever, and the chamberlains held up the train that was not there at all.

The Nightingale
by Hans Christian Andersen

In China, as you know, the Emperor is a Chinaman, and all the people around him are Chinamen too. It is many years since the story I am going to tell you happened, but that is all the more reason for telling it, lest it should be forgotten. The emperor's palace was the most beautiful thing in the world; it was made entirely of the finest porcelain, very costly, but at the same time so fragile that it could only be touched with the very greatest care. There were the most extraordinary flowers to be seen in the garden; the most beautiful ones had little silver bells tied to them, which tinkled perpetually, so that one should not pass the flowers without looking at them. Every little detail in the garden had been most carefully thought out, and it was so big, that even the gardener himself did not know where it ended. If one went on walking, one came to beautiful woods with lofty trees and deep lakes. The wood extended to the sea, which was deep and blue, deep enough for large ships to sail up right under the branches of the trees. Among these trees lived a nightingale, which sang so deliciously, that even the poor fisherman, who had plenty of other things to do, lay still to listen to it, when he was out at night drawing in his nets. 'Heavens, how beautiful it is!' he said, but then he had to attend to his business and forgot it. The next night when he heard it again he would again exclaim, 'Heavens, how beautiful it is!'

Travellers came to the emperor's capital, from every country in the world; they admired everything very much, especially the palace and the gardens, but when they heard the nightingale they all said, 'This is better than anything!'

When they got home they described it, and the learned ones wrote many books about the town, the palace and the garden; but nobody forgot the nightingale, it was always put above everything else. Those among them who were poets wrote the most beautiful poems, all about the nightingale in the woods by the deep blue sea. These books went all over the world, and in course of time some of them reached the emperor. He sat in his golden chair reading and reading, and nodding his head, well pleased to hear such beautiful descriptions of the town, the palace and the garden. 'But the nightingale is the best of all,' he read.

'What is this?' said the emperor. 'The nightingale? Why, I know nothing about it. Is there such a bird in my kingdom, and in my own garden into the bargain, and I have never heard of it? Imagine my having to discover this from a book?'

Then he called his gentleman-in-waiting, who was so grand that when anyone of a lower rank dared to speak to him, or to ask him a question, he would only answer 'P,' which means nothing at all.

'There is said to be a very wonderful bird called a nightingale here,' said the emperor. 'They say that it is better than anything else in all my great kingdom! Why have I never been told anything about it?'

'I have never heard it mentioned,' said the gentleman-in-waiting. 'It has never been presented at court.'

'I wish it to appear here this evening to sing to me,' said the emperor. 'The whole world knows what I am possessed of, and I know nothing about it!'

'I have never heard it mentioned before,' said the gentleman-in-waiting. 'I will seek it, and I will find it!' But where was it to be found? The gentleman-in-waiting ran upstairs and downstairs and in and out of all the rooms and corridors. No one of all those he met had ever heard anything about the nightingale; so the gentleman-in-waiting ran back to the emperor, and said that it must be a myth, invented by

the writers of the books. 'Your imperial majesty must not believe everything that is written; books are often mere inventtions, even if they do not belong to what we call the black art!'

'But the book in which I read it is sent to me by the powerful Emperor of Japan, so it can't be untrue. I will hear this nightingale; I insist upon its being here tonight. I extend my most gracious protection to it, and if it is not forthcoming, I will have the whole court trampled upon after supper!'

'Tsing-pe!' said the gentleman-in-waiting, and away he ran again, up and down all the stairs, in and out of all the rooms and corridors; half the court ran with him, for they none of them wished to be trampled on. There was much questioning about this nightingale, which was known to all the outside world, but to no one at court. At last they found a poor little maid in the kitchen. She said, 'Oh heavens, the nightingale? I know it very well. Yes, indeed it can sing. Every evening I am allowed to take broken meat to my poor sick mother: she lives down by the shore. On my way back, when I am tired, I rest awhile in the wood, and then I hear the nightingale. Its song brings the tears into my eyes; I feel as if my mother were kissing me!'

'Little kitchen-maid,' said the gentleman-in-waiting, 'I will procure you a permanent position in the kitchen, and permission to see the emperor dining, if you will take us to the nightingale. It is commanded to appear at court tonight.'

Then they all went out into the wood where the nightingale usually sang. Half the court was there. As they were going along at their best pace a cow began to bellow.

'Oh!' said a young courtier, 'there we have it. What wonderful power for such a little creature; I have certainly heard it before.'

'No, those are the cows bellowing; we are a long way yet from the place.' Then the frogs began to croak in the marsh.

'Beautiful!' said the Chinese chaplain, 'it is just like the

tinkling of church bells.'

'No, those are the frogs!' said the little kitchen-maid. 'But I think we shall soon hear it now!'

Then the nightingale began to sing.

'There it is!' said the little girl. 'Listen, listen, there it sits!' and she pointed to a little grey bird up among the branches.

'Is it possible?' said the gentleman-in-waiting. 'I should never have thought it was like that. How common it looks! Seeing so many grand people must have frightened all its colours away.'

'Little nightingale!' called the kitchen-maid quite loud, 'our gracious emperor wishes you to sing to him!'

'With the greatest of pleasure!' said the nightingale, warbling away in the most delightful fashion.

'It is just like crystal bells,' said the gentleman-in-waiting. 'Look at its little throat, how active it is. It is extraordinary that we have never heard it before! I am sure it will be a great success at court!'

'Shall I sing again to the emperor?' said the nightingale, who thought he was present.

'My precious little nightingale,' said the gentleman-in-waiting, 'I have the honour to command your attendance at a court festival tonight, where you will charm his gracious majesty the emperor with your fascinating singing.'

'It sounds best among the trees,' said the nightingale, but it went with them willingly when it heard that the emperor wished it.

The palace had been brightened up for the occasion. The walls and the floors, which were all of china, shone by the light of many thousand golden lamps. The most beautiful flowers, all of the tinkling kind, were arranged in the corridors; there was hurrying to and fro, and a great draught, but this was just what made the bells ring; one's ears were full of the tinkling. In the middle of the large reception-room where the emperor sat a golden rod had been fixed, on which the

nightingale was to perch. The whole court was assembled, and the little kitchen-maid had been permitted to stand behind the door, as she now had the actual title of cook. They were all dressed in their best; everybody's eyes were turned towards the little grey bird at which the emperor was nodding. The nightingale sang delightfully, and the tears came into the emperor's eyes, nay, they rolled down his cheeks; and then the nightingale sang more beautifully than ever, its notes touched all hearts. The emperor was charmed, and said the nightingale should have his gold slipper to wear round its neck. But the nightingale declined with thanks; it had already been sufficiently rewarded.

'I have seen tears in the eyes of the emperor; that is my richest reward. The tears of an emperor have a wonderful power! God knows I am sufficiently recompensed!' and then it again burst into its sweet heavenly song.

'That is the most delightful coquetting I have ever seen!' said the ladies, and they took some water into their mouths to try and make the same gurgling when anyone spoke to them, thinking so to equal the nightingale. Even the lackeys and the chambermaids announced that they were satisfied, and that is saying a great deal; they are always the most difficult people to please. Yes, indeed, the nightingale had made a sensation. It was to stay at court now, and to have its own cage, as well as liberty to walk out twice a day, and once in the night. It always had twelve footmen, with each one holding a ribbon which was tied round its leg. There was not much pleasure in an outing of that sort.

The whole town talked about the marvellous bird, and if two people met, one said to the other 'Night,' and the other answered 'Gale,' and then they sighed, perfectly understanding each other. Eleven cheesemongers' children were called after it, but they had not got a voice among them.

One day a large parcel came for the emperor; outside was written the word 'Nightingale.'

'Here we have another new book about this celebrated bird,' said the emperor. But it was no book; it was a little work of art in a box, an artificial nightingale, exactly like the living one, but it was studded all over with diamonds, rubies and sapphires.

When the bird was wound up it could sing one of the songs the real one sang, and it wagged its tail, which glittered with silver and gold. A ribbon was tied round its neck on which was written, 'The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is very poor compared to the Emperor of China's.'

Everybody said, 'Oh, how beautiful!' And the person who brought the artificial bird immediately received the title of Imperial Nightingale-Carrier in Chief.

'Now, they must sing together; what a duet that will be.'

Then they had to sing together, but they did not get on very well, for the real nightingale sang in its own way, and the artificial one could only sing waltzes.

'There is no fault in that,' said the music-master; 'it is perfectly in time and correct in every way!'

Then the artificial bird had to sing alone. It was just as great a success as the real one, and then it was so much prettier to look at; it glittered like bracelets and breast-pins.

It sang the same tune three and thirty times over, and yet it was not tired; people would willingly have heard it from the beginning again, but the emperor said that the real one must have a turn now—but where was it? No one had noticed that it had flown out of the open window, back to its own green woods.

'But what is the meaning of this?' said the emperor.

All the courtiers railed at it, and said it was a most ungrateful bird.

'We have got the best bird though,' said they, and then the artificial bird had to sing again, and this was the thirty-fourth time that they heard the same tune, but they did not know it thoroughly even yet, because it was so difficult.

The music-master praised the bird tremendously, and insisted that it was much better than the real nightingale, not only as regarded the outside with all the diamonds, but the inside too.

'Because you see, my ladies and gentlemen, and the emperor before all, in the real nightingale you never know what you will hear, but in the artificial one everything is decided beforehand! So it is, and so it must remain, it can't be otherwise. You can account for things, you can open it and show the human ingenuity in arranging the waltzes, how they go, and how one note follows upon another!'

'Those are exactly my opinions,' they all said, and the music-master got leave to show the bird to the public next Sunday. They were also to hear it sing, said the emperor. So they heard it, and all became as enthusiastic over it as if they had drunk themselves merry on tea, because that is a thoroughly Chinese habit.

Then they all said 'Oh,' and stuck their forefingers in the air and nodded their heads; but the poor fishermen who had heard the real nightingale said, 'It sounds very nice, and it is very like the real one, but there is something wanting, we don't know what.' The real nightingale was banished from the kingdom.

The artificial bird had its place on a silken cushion, close to the emperor's bed: all the presents it had received of gold and precious jewels were scattered round it. Its title had risen to be 'Chief Imperial Singer of the Bed-Chamber,' in rank number one, on the left side; for the emperor reckoned that side the important one, where the heart was seated. And even an emperor's heart is on the left side. The music-master wrote five-and-twenty volumes about the artificial bird; the treatise was very long and written in all the most difficult Chinese characters. Everybody said they had read and understood it, for otherwise they would have been reckoned stupid, and then their bodies would have been trampled upon.

Things went on in this way for a whole year. The emperor, the court, and all the other Chinamen knew every little gurgle in the song of the artificial bird by heart; but they liked it all the better for this, and they could all join in the song themselves. Even the street boys sang 'zizizi' and 'cluck, cluck, cluck,' and the emperor sang it too.

But one evening when the bird was singing its best, and the emperor was lying in bed listening to it, something gave way inside the bird with a 'whizz.' Then a spring burst, 'whirr' went all the wheels, and the music stopped. The emperor jumped out of bed and sent for his private physicians, but what good could they do? Then they sent for the watchmaker, and after a good deal of talk and examination he got the works to go again somehow; but he said it would have to be saved as much as possible, because it was so worn out, and he could not renew the works so as to be sure of the tune. This was a great blow! They only dared to let the artificial bird sing once a year, and hardly that; but then the music-master made a little speech, using all the most difficult words. He said it was just as good as ever, and his saying it made it so.

Five years now passed, and then a great grief came upon the nation, for they were all very fond of their emperor, and he was ill and could not live, it was said. A new emperor was already chosen, and people stood about in the street, and asked the gentleman-in-waiting how their emperor was going on.

'P,' answered he, shaking his head.

The emperor lay pale and cold in his gorgeous bed, the courtiers thought he was dead, and they all went off to pay their respects to their new emperor. The lackeys ran off to talk matters over, and the chambermaids gave a great coffee-party. Cloth had been laid down in all the rooms and corridors so as to deaden the sound of footsteps, so it was very, very quiet. But the emperor was not dead yet. He lay stiff and pale in the gorgeous bed with its velvet hangings and heavy golden

tassels. There was an open window high above him, and the moon streamed in upon the emperor, and the artificial bird beside him.

The poor emperor could hardly breathe, he seemed to have a weight on his chest, he opened his eyes, and then he saw that it was Death sitting upon his chest, wearing his golden crown. In one hand he held the emperor's golden sword, and in the other his imperial banner. Round about, from among the folds of the velvet hangings peered many curious faces: some were hideous, others gentle and pleasant. They were all the emperor's good and bad deeds, which now looked him in the face when Death was weighing him down.

'Do you remember that?' whispered one after the other; 'Do you remember this?' and they told him so many things that the perspiration poured down his face.

'I never knew that,' said the emperor. 'Music, music, sound the great Chinese drums!' he cried, 'that I may not hear what they are saying.' But they went on and on, and Death sat nodding his head, just like a Chinaman, at everything that was said.

'Music, music!' shrieked the emperor. 'You precious little golden bird, sing, sing! I have loaded you with precious stones, and even hung my own golden slipper round your neck; sing, I tell you, sing!'

But the bird stood silent; there was nobody to wind it up, so of course it could not go. Death continued to fix the great empty sockets of his eyes upon him, and all was silent, so terribly silent.

Suddenly, close to the window, there was a burst of lovely song; it was the living nightingale, perched on a branch outside. It had heard of the emperor's need, and had come to bring comfort and hope to him. As it sang the faces round became fainter and fainter, and the blood coursed with fresh vigour in the emperor's veins and through his feeble limbs. Even Death himself listened to the song and said, 'Go on,

little nightingale, go on!'

'Yes, if you give me the gorgeous golden sword; yes, if you give me the imperial banner; yes, if you give me the emperor's crown.'

And Death gave back each of these treasures for a song, and the nightingale went on singing. It sang about the quiet churchyard, when the roses bloom, where the elder flower scents the air, and where the fresh grass is ever moistened anew by the tears of the mourner. This song brought to Death a longing for his own garden, and, like a cold grey mist, he passed out of the window.

'Thanks, thanks!' said the emperor; 'you heavenly little bird, I know you! I banished you from my kingdom, and yet you have charmed the evil visions away from my bed by your song, and even Death away from my heart! How can I ever repay you?'

'You have rewarded me,' said the nightingale. 'I brought the tears to your eyes, the very first time I ever sang to you, and I shall never forget it! Those are the jewels which gladden the heart of a singer;—but sleep now, and wake up fresh and strong! I will sing to you!'

Then it sang again, and the emperor fell into a sweet refreshing sleep. The sun shone in at his window, when he woke refreshed and well; none of his attendants had yet come back to him, for they thought he was dead, but the nightingale still sat there singing.

'You must always stay with me!' said the emperor. 'You shall only sing when you like, and I will break the artificial bird into a thousand pieces!'

'Don't do that!' said the nightingale, 'it did all the good it could! keep it as you have always done! I can't build my nest and live in this palace, but let me come whenever I like, then I will sit on the branch in the evening, and sing to you. I will sing to cheer you and to make you thoughtful too; I will sing to you of the happy ones, and of those that suffer too. I will

sing about the good and the evil, which are kept hidden from you. The little singing bird flies far and wide, to the poor fisherman, and the peasant's home, to numbers who are far from you and your court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet there is an odour of sanctity round the crown too!—I will come, and I will sing to you!—But you must promise me one thing!—

'Everything!' said the emperor, who stood there in his imperial robes which he had just put on, and he held the sword heavy with gold upon his heart.

'One thing I ask you! Tell no one that you have a little bird who tells you everything; it will be better so!'

Then the nightingale flew away. The attendants came in to see after their dead emperor, and there he stood, bidding them 'Good morning!'

The Patient Woman[1]

Once upon a time there was a king whom his people loved greatly. For many years they had been much worried because he would not decide to marry, and that as a result he had no heir to his throne. His subjects often asked him to take a queen, so that the kingdom might remain in the hands of his family. At last he said that he would take a wife; but he must be given a free choice, and they must promise and swear that they would honor his wife as queen, whether he chose a girl of the people, or one of the high nobility. And all of them swore that they would honor and love her, though her birth be never so humble.

The king had a gate-keeper, and he an only daughter. Her mother was dead, and she lived with her father, kept house for him and was the joy and comfort of his life. One day the gate-keeper was told that the king was about to ride out and might, perhaps, pay him a visit, so that he had better be prepared and put his best foot foremost. When the daughter heard this she asked her father whether she might not go out and look at the royal coach; she could be fetching a pail of water, and that would serve as an excuse.

When the king arrived, he had the coach stopped outside just as she was coming along with her pail of water, and he

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[1] "The Patient Woman" (Grundtvig, II, No. 310, p. 167), also from Seeland, is none other than Boccaccio's "Griselda." The Italian novella was widely circulated in the North; and passed from Germany to Denmark, from Denmark to Sweden, finally reaching Iceland. The incident which has the disowned queen, upon her return to her aged father, find the flax in the spindle, just as she had left it, and makes her — after the passing of fateful years — take up the unfinished thread she had begun to spin as a young girl and complete her work, is familiar.

went in to the old gate-keeper, and told him that he wished to marry his daughter. The gate-keeper refused to have anything to do with it. He said it was the worst thing that the king could wish; for he would not be happy in such a marriage, and neither would his daughter, and he earnestly begged him to change his mind. But this the king would not do. He had brought along rich clothes for the young girl, which she had to put on; she was bathed with the water she had fetched in her pail, was adorned with jewels, and driven back to the palace with the king.

When they reached the palace, the king told her she should be his lawful wife; but that she must promise him that she would never cry, and would never show temper, no matter what unpleasantness might be her portion; and this she promised.

They were married and at the end of a year the queen was blessed with a son. When her subjects heard the news their happiness exceeded all bounds, and they streamed to the palace to show their joy with cries and cheers. But the king came to his queen and said to her: "I have something to tell you. The people are enraged and object to your little son's inheriting the kingdom, because he is of such humble birth; they insist that he be killed."

The queen replied: "Now you see what my father said, and what I said was true; yet we cannot alter it now." Whereupon a servant came in and demanded the child of her. She was alone, and she only begged him to kill the infant as quickly as possible; yet she showed no sign of sorrow, for she had promised never to show any but a cheerful face.

In the following year she was blessed with a little daughter, and hoped that she might be allowed to keep her. Her subjects were just as pleased at the arrival of the princess as they had been at that of the prince. But the king went in and said that the people had demanded that this child, too, be killed; and just as before a servant appeared to take the child

away. She said: "Yes, it must be!" and only asked him to slay it quickly, so that it would not suffer.

Thereafter she lived and reigned as queen for fourteen years. Then one day the king came to her and said his subjects now demanded that he should choose another queen, one of noble birth, so that he might have a high-born son to succeed him on the throne; that it did not suit them that a woman of low degree should be their queen; and that she would have to go back home to her father. She told the king that she had long expected this; that since he had not been willing that her children should live, she could easily understand that he did not wish to keep her either, and that she would gladly return to her father.

So she went home to her father, the old gate-keeper, who was very glad to have her again, and they joyfully celebrated their meeting. There stood her spindle with the flax in it, just as she had left it, and she sat down and spun the yarn to an end.

One day as she sat at home spinning, the king sent word that she was to come to the palace and suggest which dishes should be served at his wedding banquet. She did not want to go, but she had to, nevertheless. So she went to the palace, and gave her orders; and as she ordered so they did. On the day that the wedding was to take place, the king sent her a new gown, and had her informed that she was to come to the palace to see the wedding. And so she had to go through it against her wish. She put on her new gown and went to the palace, and there she had to stand at the king's left hand, while at his right stood a beautiful maiden, whom she thought must be the bride. But when it came time for the king to take the bride's hand, he took her hand instead, and she was remarried to him; and then he told her that the maiden whom she had thought to be the new bride, was her own daughter. Then her son also came in, and she learned that these were her children, whom she had long thought dead.

For many years she had suffered great grief; yet in order to be true to her promise, she had kept her sorrow to herself. The king was well aware of this, for he knew her too well to think she was indifferent to the fate of her children. But since she had never shown her grief, he now honored her above measure, and her joy was now as great as her sorrow had been before. So she lived very happily with her husband for a number of years, loved and honored by the people — she and the king as well.

Tales from Sweden

Jolly Calle

Once upon a time there was a boy called Jolly Calle who was always as happy as happy could be. He was a poor boy and quite alone in the world, for he had lost both his father and mother. If anyone pitied him on account of this misfortune he would answer:

"Well, at any rate I had a father and mother once, and I remember them both quite well. I remember being whipped by my father, and my mother wiping away my tears and kissing me. I am quite sure they are both in heaven now, for all the loving care they gave me here on earth, and I ought not to wish my parents back again out of heaven, ought I? Just think of those who can't remember ever having set eyes on their parents! You may be sorry for *them* if you like!" And then Calle would laugh.

When it rained Calle was always in the best of spirits.

"There is nothing so merry as the rain," he would say. "Look at all the funny little drops sparkling and hopping about, and one gets so nice and wet all over too!"

In stormy weather he would laugh, and let the wind catch him in the back and send him flying along the road.

"I say, what fun!" he would say. "Now I am travelling by train for nothing!" But when the sun shone Jolly Calle would smile quietly.

"Ah, the Lord be praised for his glorious sunshine!" he would say. "Is it not too lovely for anything to feel just as if a bit of blue sky and sunshine had crept into your heart?"

Jolly Calle had never been taught any trade, for his parents had never been able to afford it; neither could he play on any instrument, and as for learning, he had none at all. He

did not want to starve, still less to beg, so he took an old shoe-brush and polished up his shoes, for he was determined to go out into the world to try his fortune; and when he saw how his shoes shone it occurred to him that there were indeed many pairs of shoes in the world which might require brushing, so he stuffed his brush into his pocket and went forth along the high road which led out into the wide world.

When he had gone a little way he came to a field where the waving corn was already standing high.

It was so lovely to look upon that Calle turned aside into a narrow path, which ran like a ribbon through the corn-field, and as he went along he drew an ear of wheat between his fingers and sang:

> "Just look upon my corn-fields, see! for me there'll be no lack;
> In winter time such piles of loaves will make the oven crack."

"What are you shouting, you noisy fellow?" called out a gruff voice behind him. It was the farmer who owned the field. "Your corn-field, indeed," he said angrily. "It is I who have ploughed and sown, and it is I who will reap the corn, and grind the flour, and eat the bread, not a crumb of which shall you taste!"

"I am not talking of bread, I am talking of the corn-field," said Jolly Calle, taking off his cap to the harsh old man; "and I still think, for the present at any rate, the corn-field belongs to me. You have had the trouble of ploughing and sowing it, and I am much obliged to you, for now I can dance right through it and see waves chase each other over the rippling corn, and that doesn't cost a farthing." And so saying he ran off.

After walking all day he came towards evening to a big town, upon entering which he stationed himself at a street

corner with his shoe-brush and waited to see if any of the passers-by would ask him to brush the dust off their shoes, but they all seemed to have much too much to think of, and went hastily by without so much as turning their heads.

"Perhaps in this case it would be just as well to give them a gentle reminder," thought he; and as a soldier happened to pass just at that very moment, Jolly Calle spat upon his brush and said in a tone as if the colonel himself were commanding:

"Shoes brushed?"

The soldier halted on the spot and let Calle polish his top-boots.

Then a little damsel came tripping along, so neat and trim.

"What a nice little pair of feet!" said Calle softly behind her back. "The only pity is they should go about in such dirty shoes." Thereupon the little damsel turned round, stretched out her foot, and let Calle black her shoes.

Next a scholar came walking by who seemed neither to hear nor see.

"So the gentleman would like his shoes brushed?" said Calle, and fell upon his knees right in front of the learned man's legs, and in the same absent-minded way as he had been walking before the scholar now as absent-mindedly stood still and let Calle brush his boots.

Thus Calle had a word for everyone who passed by, and as he received a trifle from all those whose boots he brushed he soon had his pocket full of pence.

Then he brushed his own shoes once more till they shone like a black-a-moor's skin; as they were the only elegance he possessed he thought he might afford himself that little piece of vanity. Then he set his red cap jauntily on one side and went on to see something of the town which pleased him mightily; there were so many magnificent buildings and fine mansions, but there was one mansion more beautiful than all the rest.

It stood with its pillars and statues and stately staircases in the middle of a rose garden and was surrounded by a railing with gilded lance-heads running all around the top.

"My eye!" said Jolly Calle, as he stood grasping the railings and looking in upon the stately mansion. "This is something like! This house of mine is certainly far and away the finest in the whole town."

"What is this nonsense you are talking?" asked a haughty footman, who was standing stiff as a marionette at the entrance. "Your house, indeed! This mansion belongs to the richest man in the town, Master Nabob. It cost a hundred thousand pounds just as it stands."

"That was a mighty deal of money," said Calle, scratching his ear. "If Master Nabob has had such a lot of expense on my account I am really greatly obliged to him. Give him my compliments and tell him I am extremely pleased."

"You are certainly a little queer in the head," said the lackey. "Master Nabob built this mansion for his honour's own gracious satisfaction and pleasure. He has, I assure you, never even heard of you, or done anything whatever just to please *you.*"

"That maybe," answered Calle, "but all the same he has had all the trouble and all the expense, whereas I have nothing but the pleasure of seeing how fine and elegant it all is. I suppose we may be allowed to *look* at the house at any rate."

But the lackey did not reply, he turned on his heel and walked away with a dignified air.

After standing awhile, gazing in at the palace and sniffing up the scent of the roses, Jolly Calle went on further till he came at last to a big market-place where vendors of fruit and vegetables were selling their wares.

Here all was life and bustle. A big fountain was playing in the middle of the square, and all around it the market people had set up their stalls in long rows and spread their awnings,

for the sun was burning hot.

Here there were baskets full of the finest pears and apples and whole barrows full of yellow plums and ripe peaches. Big purple grapes lay upon green leaves between golden melons and red cherries, and alongside the fruit were masses of sweet-scented flowers, roses and clove pinks, mignonette and stocks.

Jolly Calle expanded his nostrils and opened his mouth wide to take in as much as ever he could of all these delicious scents, and then buying a handful of plums he leaned against a stall to eat them. Whilst he stood there he watched the customers coming and going between the stalls.

These were mostly dames and damsels of high degree followed by their serving-women carrying the baskets. They would stand now at this stall now at that, picking and choosing and filling their baskets with all the things they liked best.

Beside Calle stood a number of other lads, who like him had also bought fruit and were busy eating, taking stock meanwhile of all the pretty maids who tripped along to make their bargains.

Suddenly Calle heard them whisper: "Here she comes, here she comes." And out from amongst the stalls stepped the most beautiful damsel.

She was dressed in a red silk petticoat and a green velvet bodice embroidered with silver. On her head she wore a black veil, and in her hand she carried a large fan covered with silver spangles, with which she kept fanning herself. But if her clothes were beautiful, she herself was more beautiful still, and she stepped along like a queen, smiling and nodding in every direction.

"What do you say to her?" asked the lad standing beside Calle, giving him a poke in the ribs. "Have you ever seen anyone so beautiful before? We call her the crown jewel, for she has not her match anywhere. But such poor fellows as you or I will never have so much as the honour of tying her shoe

laces!"

"We shall see," thought Calle, and just as the lovely lady was passing close beside him he fell on his knees and called out:

"My lady, my lady! there is dust on your shoes!" And before she could answer he had whipped out his brush and had begun to polish one of her shoes. She lifted the hem of her skirt a little and put forward first one foot and then the other, and when she saw how bright and shining her shoes were she smiled graciously and patted Calle on the shoulder.

"You are a treasure of a lad," she said. "See how nice and bright you have made my shoes!" And then she passed on.

"Did you see?" said Calle, turning to the boy at his side; "I not only tied her shoe laces, but I even polished her shoes, and she patted me on the shoulder into the bargain and called me a treasure of a lad."

"Oh, well!" said the other, "it is true you have knelt in the dirt at her feet, but you need not think you will sit beside her as her bridegroom; *that* you will never do."

"Nor do I want to either," said Calle. "Do you think that she who wears silver brocade and has the eyes of the whole town upon her would be an easy customer to deal with? No, indeed! such a crown jewel I have no wish to possess. But I grant you, beautiful she is to look at and no mistake! Her eyelashes threw quite a shadow across my hands, and never have I seen such beautiful eyebrows or such white teeth; why, they looked sound enough to bite off the head of a nail!" And so saying Calle walked off.

When he had been a day or two in the town he had a mind to go on further into the world, so he started off along the highway. After a time he came to an inn. Here he went in and asked for a bowl of curds and whey, for he was thirsty after his long tramp.

He was given a seat near the door, and whilst he sat and waited for the curds he looked about him.

Outside on the high road stood six wagons drawn by oxen, and over the wagons were spread leather coverings, beneath which were rows and rows of sacks.

"Whom do all those wagons belong to?" Jolly Calle asked the boy who set down the curds before him.

"They belong to Master Nabob," answered the boy; and "Master Nabob himself is sitting over there in the best seat, eating fruit soup out of a silver bowl." Calle looked up towards the upper end of the room, and there sure enough sat Master Nabob himself.

He wore white breeches trimmed with gold braid and a red frock-coat covered with ever so many orders and medals which he had received for well, nobody knew exactly why he had received them! He was eating prunes as large as mice and drinking sweet wine, but he looked as if he were swallowing the most bitter physic. His complexion was pale green, his cheeks sunken, and you would have thought by the look in his eyes that he had just been told something most disagreeable.

Meanwhile Jolly Calle sat shovelling the curds into his mouth with a wooden spoon, and with every mouthful he swallowed he patted his stomach and said:

"Well, that *was* wonderful, that *was* wonderful!"

Then Master Nabob looked up from his fruit soup and asked: "What is wonderful?"

"Only this, your honour, that never in all my life has anything tasted so sour or so good as these curds and whey here."

"Would you not prefer my fruit soup with prunes?" asked Nabob.

"Dear me, no!" answered Calle; "for if you eat something very sour you can always be ready for something sweet afterwards, but if you eat something very sweet, then you might feel you have had too much of a good thing."

"You are no fool," said Nabob.

When they had finished eating and had risen from the

table they each gave something to the boy who had waited on them. Nabob gave him a very small coin and Jolly Calle one somewhat bigger.

"H'm, you are a rich fellow, you are," said Nabob, glaring at Calle.

"No, indeed, but after those sour curds I couldn't stand the sight of such a sour look as the one you've just had from the serving-boy," answered Calle.

After dinner they both sat in the garden of the inn. Master Nabob ordered out for himself any number of bottles with good drinks, and black coffee and tobacco, and then he stretched his legs in their white gold-braided breeches upon a chair in front of him and prepared to enjoy life. But one drink was too strong, another was too weak, and the coffee too had a poor flavour, which made Master Nabob turn green in the face with annoyance. Neither was the tobacco to his liking; in short, nothing pleased him, and he kept calling to the serving-men and ordering them about till they flew like frightened hens backwards and forwards between the box hedges.

Jolly Calle had seated himself in an arbour, where the white jasmine was in full flower, and a lime-tree afforded him welcome shade. He ordered a mug of ale, lighted his short pipe, and sat with his elbows on the table looking up through the leaves of the trees at the blue summer sky, and he felt so merry and jolly that he began to laugh aloud. When Master Nabob heard him laughing from where he sat surrounded by all his bottles, he sent a lad to Calle to ask him if he was sitting there laughing at him, for if so, he was not going to put up with *that*.

"My compliments to Master Nabob!" answered Calle, "and tell him I don't think he is at all amusing."

After a while Calle began to laugh again, for the sunshine was so bright and the sky so blue he simply could not help himself.

"What in the name of fortune is the fellow laughing at?"

yelled Nabob. "Go and ask him why he is laughing; it plagues me."

When the serving-lad came again with Master Nabob's message, Calle replied:

"My compliments to Master Nabob, and tell him I am not laughing at anything." With this answer the rich man had to be content; but in a short space Calle completely forgot his sour neighbour and began again to chuckle and chuckle till he was simply bubbling over with laughter.

"I can't stand this," shouted Nabob, "I won't stand this! Go and tell that fellow he annoys me. Tell him he shall have a thaler from me if he will only stop laughing."

Now when the lad brought this message Jolly Calle became really angry. He flung the thaler down till it rang upon the table.

"If I cannot sit here in peace I shall not stay. I shall take myself off, and that without more ado. The high road at any rate is free to everyone." And so saying he strode out of the garden.

It was a warm day, and after he had walked on some distance he heard a great rumbling of wheels on the high road behind him. It was Master Nabob coming along in his gilded coach, and followed by his six ox-wagons laden with all his money.

When Nabob caught sight of Calle he beckoned to him, and calling to his coachman to stop he asked Calle if he would care to drive with him.

No, indeed! Calle did not care at all. On such a beautiful day he much preferred to walk along the road-side and sniff the scent of the new-mown hay in the meadows and listen to the larks singing than sit in a stuffy coach with an old man who smelt of dinner and wine. And this he said right out, whereupon Master Nabob smiled a sour smile. Then all at once a new notion came into Nabob's head. He began to scold and abuse the coachman for not stopping quickly enough,

although the carriage was going already at a funeral pace. Then he opened the door of the coach very carefully, and after he had been helped out by his footman he asked Calle in a really polite tone if he would allow him to accompany him a short way along the road and let him have the honour of leaning on his arm.

"With all my heart," answered Calle, who could not for the life of him understand what this all meant.

Nabob gave his coachman orders to drive on and wait for him at the edge of the wood, and then he walked on along the road, leaning on his gold-topped mahogany walking stick, with his arm through Calle's.

"My dear friend," began Nabob, "I have a great desire to make your further acquaintance."

"Oh, by all means," answered Calle, "that is easily done."

Nabob fixed his green eyes upon him. "A strange thing!" he muttered; "A strange thing! I have never in my life seen anyone like you."

"That's very odd," answered Calle. "I always thought there were thirteen to the dozen of my sort."

"H'm!" said Nabob. "I saw you first when I was sitting behind my green silk curtains, and you were standing at the gate looking in at my mansion. You were not a bit envious, I remember!"

"Why should I be," answered Calle. "You have all the trouble and the expense of the house, and I have nothing but the pleasure of looking at it, so it is easy to understand which of us is the happier."

"I had fruit soup with prunes while you ate curds with a wooden spoon," continued Nabob, "and you would not change places with me."

"No, truly, seeing you did not relish it," replied Calle, "I had no need to envy you."

"And there I sat surrounded by all those bottles of mine," said Nabob, his voice trembling, "yellow bottles, red bottles,

green bottles, strong black coffee and big cigars, and I could not endure to hear you laugh. As you sat there with your mug of ale and your clay pipe, under the lime tree, I felt envious for the first time in my life, so envious that it gave me quite a pain in my chest.

"You see, Calle I presume I may call you Calle? you see I have everything in the world that a man can desire, and yet I am never happy. I have a house and gardens, woods and broad acres, servants and horses, and a great pile of gold, yet it feels as empty inside me as in an old sack. When I travel I must always take my gold with me. I drive in a gilded coach with six ox-wagons full of money behind me, but when I hear the rumbling of all those wagons it irritates me so I feel positively ill. I can procure all that man can buy for money, and up to now I thought money could buy everything. But when you who are so poor would not stop laughing for a whole thaler, well, then indeed a strange feeling came over me and I began to think, Is there really something one cannot buy for money?"

"Can you buy sunshine for money?" asked Calle. "Can you buy health for money? Can you buy good temper for money?"

"That's it, that's it!" burst out Nabob, showing all his shaky old teeth. "Good temper! that's what you possess, and it is just that which I must and will have a. share of, at all costs."

"And what will you give me for it?" asked Calle laughing.

"You shall have a hundred thalers a thousand thalers! You shall have one of my ox-wagons full of gold!"

"That is not enough," said Calle. "You are offering poor pay."

"Let us say three wagons then," said Nabob, with a sigh, "three ox-wagons full of money for a little bit of good temper."

"Poor pay, poor pay!" answered Calle.

"Then take four! five!" groaned Nabob; "I must have your good temper, cost what it may."

They had now reached the edge of the wood, where the gilded coach and the ox-wagons loaded with money stood waiting.

"Calle, my good fellow!" said Nabob, "you shall have all my six ox-wagons, my gilded coach, and those rogues of a coachman and footman into the bargain all, all shall be yours, if only, my dear lad, you will let me have your good temper!"

"No, I cannot," said Calle, "I really cannot. To turn sick at the sight of God's good gifts, to feel pain in your inside at the rumbling of your wagons full of treasure no, that I could not stand at any price! But see how dusty your fine patent-leather shoes have got from walking along the high road! Put your foot on a stone and I will brush them for you."

So Nabob put up first one foot and then the other upon a stone, and Calle brushed his shoes till they shone.

"What have I to pay?" said Nabob, feeling for his purse with a trembling hand.

"Oh, nothing! nothing at all!" answered Calle. "Rich folk cannot afford to pay for such trifles."

"Just tell me one thing before you go," begged Nabob. His yellow face had become still yellower. "Tell me this one thing, my dear Calle. Why are you so happy?"

"Why am I so happy?" Calle repeated with a laugh. "Why, just because I am alive you see!" And so saying he hopped over the stile, waved his red cap, and disappeared, hidden like a strawberry in the wood.

But Nabob remained standing beside his ox-wagons, with his purse still open in his hand.

"He has gone," he said blankly. "Just imagine, he has actually gone!"

The Queen's Necklace

Once upon a time there lived an old king whom you could not very well call good, in fact, if the sad truth must be told, he was very disagreeable and horrid. He had been obstinate and tyrannical all his life, and as you know, this sort of thing gets worse rather than better as the years go by, and now he had become in his old age a regular curmudgeon. He was so surly and bad-tempered that his knights and squires never dared laugh or jest when the king was anywhere near, and as for his immediate attendants, they always stood stock-still and as stiff as pokers with their eyes glued on the royal throne.

Occasionally it might chance perhaps that the king would be in a good temper, and then he would hammer on the table with his knife and fork and say, "Hey, ho! let's be jolly," and then all the knights and squires would try to make jokes, but at the slightest word which displeased the king, he would look furious, roll his eyes about, and comb his beard with his fingers, and then they knew what they were in for!

No, indeed, it was anything but a jolly life at that king's court!

In the years gone by the king had had a queen-wife and several small princes besides, but both queen and princes had died some say from sheer terror of the king.

Now in his old age the king had a fancy for marrying again, for he thought he was having such a very dull time of it, and he cast his eye over his many kingdoms to spy out a suitable wife for himself.

In this way his eye fell upon the daughter of one of his vassal-kings, quite a young princess who was called "Blanzeflor." "She is as fair as a sunny day, as mild as a dove,

and as meek as a lamb, and she is only seventeen years old too! She will suit me admirably," said the king. He never considered for a moment whether he himself, who was as ugly as sin, as old as the hills, and as savage as a watch-dog, was so specially suited to the young princess. This never occurred to him at all. For was he not the great liege lord of kings who held dominion over many lands, and she but the little daughter of an insignificant kinglet? She might well courtsy to the ground to express her gratitude for the unheard-of honour of becoming the old king's wife.

But when her father came to her and said:

"Blanzeflor, our sovereign lord the king would have you for his queen," she wept and said she would rather sit upon a stone and spin goats'-wool, than sit as queen at *that* king's side.

But when her father said she must realise that if she refused the king he would come and hang both her father and mother and all the family upon a tree like so many bunches of onions, then the princess bowed her head and said, "Then I will marry him."

So they clad her in silk and in gold, and set a crown upon her head and combed her long golden hair over her shoulders, then they lifted her upon a white palfrey and rode forth with her to the king, and thus the wedding took place.

On the wedding day the king hung a necklace of pearls around her neck.

"I threaded them myself on this silken cord," said the king. "These are pearls of the East and there are three hundred and sixty-five of them, the smallest being a little crooked; and I warn you," he added, "to take great care of them, for on the day you lose the necklace, I warrant you will not care to look me in the eyes"; and the king began to roll his eyes so horribly that the young queen felt cold shivers all down her spine. Thus Blanzeflor became queen, and a gentle and submissive wife she was to her lord and master the king.

In the mornings the king ate porridge and cream in bed, and the queen carried it to him in a golden bowl and fed him like a baby, for such was his command. Every evening the king and queen would play chess, and then the queen always had to let the king win, otherwise he would get bad-tempered and this gave him a pain in his royal inside, which was of course very annoying.

And there the beautiful young Blanzeflor would sit with her cheek resting on her hand, and look thoughtfully over the pieces as if wondering how she could most speedily win, when she was really thinking how she might most speedily lose, for then the king would be in a good temper and rub his hands and say, "Ah, you little women-folk, you have no more sense than geese!" and then he would explain to her at great length how easily she might have won if she had but thought a little.

But the very worst was at meal-time, for the king was so proud he would not let anyone sit at table with the queen and himself. The king and queen were marshalled into the banqueting hall to the sound of kettle-drum and trumpet, with the whole court following in procession; but when they reached the table it was always laid for two only. Here the king and queen sat upon their thrones, and the courtiers stood along the walls in long rows with their heads all turned towards the royal thrones. When the king and queen drank out of their golden goblets, the trumpets sounded a fanfare, and were the king only to sneeze or cough, the whole court would make obeisance and shout, "God bless your Majesty." Now and again the king would take it into his head to tell a story. He had difficulty in remembering what he wanted to say, and besides this he had no teeth, so that it was most troublesome to understand him, but he insisted upon everyone laughing at his tales, and if the court forgot to do so the king would shout, "But you are not laughing!"

"Oh, yes, we are laughing, we are laughing. Ha! Ha! Ha!" the whole court would answer, and burst into loud laughter,

which had no more sound in it than the clatter of heels upon a wooden staircase. It was indeed a doubtful pleasure.

But the young queen would sit with downcast eyes, scarcely daring to swallow a morsel, so greatly did she tremble with fear lest something should displease the king, for then he became quite terrible. The only pleasure the court had was to stand and stare at Blanzeflor, for she glowed with a beauty more bright and radiant than all the torch-lights in the banqueting hall, and when she bowed and smiled it warmed the heart like the sun in summer.

Now, dreadful stories came to the queen's ears of how the king would fling people into prison for the smallest offence, or wring their necks like chickens, but alas! what could she do in the matter! She herself sat like a prisoner in the royal castle, and never was she allowed to go out alone on foot, but only on horseback followed by a royal retinue.

It happened one day, however, that the queen was in church there at least the king could not prevent her from going and as she knelt in prayer before the high altar, she noticed how poorly and meanly God's holy altar was adorned.

Then the queen wept bitterly and said to herself: "I drink out of golden goblets, and silver torches are lighted on my table, but upon God's altar the candlesticks are of pewter and the velvet cloth which covers the Lord's table is all faded and patched. I cannot bear to see it." And thereupon she slowly and quietly unclasped her necklace, drew off seven of the largest pearls and laid them upon the altar.

That evening she had her hair combed back and fastened in a knot upon her neck, so that the king might not see that the pearls were missing. Before, she had worn her hair on the top of her head.

"What is the meaning of this?" said the king, slightly raising the queen's braids.

"It means that I am queen," she answered, and smiled. "Maids wear crowns of plaited hair, but a queen who wears a

golden crown wears her hair down upon her shoulders. Is it displeasing to my lord?" But the king only laughed, and said she was more beautiful than ever.

Now it happened one night that the queen lay awake. She could not sleep because she thought she heard strange sounds of sighing and sobbing out in the night; these sounds were really all the prayers and lamentations of the poor, which hovered about the castle walls, and beat against the window panes, but never could find their way in.

It all sounded so piteous and heartrending that the queen wept upon her silken pillow. "Here I lie upon my bed of satin," she sighed, "whilst outside, perhaps little children go barefooted in the snow. I cannot bear to think of it." Outside lay snow and ice and it was biting cold, and the queen saw how the glistering ice-flowers grew upon the window-panes. But with the dawn the faint uncertain sounds of distress grew louder and louder. There was a sound of twittering and chirping, and now she saw how one little half-frozen bird after another flew up and tapped upon the window-pane with its beak, in search of a chance grain of corn.

"Alas, alas!" sighed the queen, "I eat roast venison out of a golden dish and drink mulled wine, and there outside the poor little birds starve to death in the cold. I cannot bear to think of it"; and the next day she begged leave of the king to collect the crumbs after meals and to place them in a basket outside her window for the birds.

Well of course the king thought it was asking a good deal, but as the queen never begged for anything for herself, and the crumbs were after all of not much use for anything else, he allowed her to take them, and from that day the queen always sat and rolled bread between her white fingers during meals, and crumbled one little piece after another into little bits, whilst she chatted and jested with the king, so that he might not pay any heed to what she was doing, and when she rose from the table she would sign to her page, and then he

would brush all the crumbs into a small basket, which was hung outside the queen's chamber window, and at sunrise she was always awakened by the chirping of the small hungry birds when they came to empty her basket.

Now it happened one morning, when the queen took in the basket to have it refilled, that she thought she saw a large snowflake lying at the bottom, but it was really a little piece of paper which had been folded round a small stone and thrown up at the window, and on it was written a suffering creature's tale of misery.

"The queen who takes pity upon the starving birds of the air," it said, "will surely take pity upon the starving children upon earth"; and the queen read it over and over again, whilst her tears fell like rain in spring. Never had she dreamed there could be so much suffering and distress in the world.

This was a poor lonely mother with quite a number of small children, who were starving in the forest, which the queen could see far away in the distance.

But how could she help them? The king would only allow her to ride out through the streets of the city accompanied by a lordly retinue to greet her faithful subjects, and it was strictly forbidden for anyone to speak to royalty!

They all saw how beautiful the queen was, and they bowed their heads before her as to their sovereign, but no one knew how good she was, nor how her heart bled for them, beneath the white ermine.

And when she appeared before her people with a sad face and tearful eyes, they thought she was either angry or unhappy, but they did not know she was only weeping because she was unable to do even the smallest thing to help those in sorrow or misfortune.

The queen thought and thought how she could help the poor mother, who had begged along with the birds at her chamber window.

But at last she hit upon a plan.

The king had given the queen a page, who was as young and beautiful as herself. He carried her long velvet train embroidered with golden crowns, he filled her goblet with wine, and lit the torch which was to light her upon her way through the dark passages within the castle, and he slept on a bear skin outside her door with his drawn sword beside him to protect her from all harm.

His eyes were always fixed upon the queen's face to read there her smallest desire or command, and his greatest reward was when she smiled and thanked him. Now when the page came to carry the train of her sky-blue velvet gown, the queen bent down as if to adjust it, and at the same time she slipped a little piece of paper into the page's hand. In it she had placed one of the pearls from off her necklace, and had written down where she wished him to carry it.

If the queen had asked him to jump from the roof of the castle into the castle moat itself, he would not have hesitated for a moment. How easy it was then for him to carry out this command of hers!

Away he flew as swiftly as a swallow, and when he took up the queen's train again that evening, he placed his hands upon his breast and bowed in silence, but the queen could read in his face that her errand had well sped.

From that day prayers and petitions simply rained down upon the queen's window-sill.

It was not only the little birds that came begging to her basket, but all who were groaning under poverty or distress.

When the queen lay awake at night, she could hear it simply hail with small stones, which were being thrown up with petitions to her window. Once it happened even that a stone broke a window-pane, but the queen only thought the frost had cracked it.

In the morning the queen would search her basket and read her people's prayers, and weep many a salt tear over their sore distress and misery.

She would have liked to empty the whole castle and give its gorgeous treasures to the poor and unhappy, but the king never gave her so much as a farthing piece to give away. What could she do but take the pearls from her necklace? And so with trembling hands she drew off one pearl after another.

It was always her page who had to go upon her errands of mercy, and when he came gaily along, clad in his sovereign's favourite sky-blue colour, with three small plumes waving in his cap, the poor and starving folk would smile and say, "Look! where the queen's carrier pigeon comes flying, there is always something in his beak!"

But the necklace grew smaller and smaller every day as you may well imagine; and, that the king might not notice this, the queen let more and more of her golden hair hang down over her neck and face, and drew all the pearls forward upon her breast that the king shouldn't see how many were missing behind and at the sides, and soon only a thin string of pearls was left. These she must indeed keep! But there only wanted a fresh appeal more touching than the rest for one more pearl to slip from the necklace, and finally one morning there was not a single pearl left.

How could she now hide this from the king? However, she did what she could and combed her golden hair down over her forehead, hiding both her cheeks and crossing the ends over her breast, fastened them together with a white rose.

But the king was not in a good temper at dinner that day.

"What are all these tricks you are playing with your hair?" he asked. "Every day you hide more and more of your face, and today I can only just see the tip of your nose as you sit beside me. Away with those bands of hair and let me see you properly"; and so saying he flung back the queen's long hair over her shoulders, and then he saw that the necklace was missing!

"Where is the necklace?" he shrieked. His voice sounded like a hoarse old crow's. "Where is the necklace?"

The queen looked confused.

"Oh, I have not got it on today," she said. But the king had her eight tire-women and her eight ladies-in-waiting called up, and they had to search over and over through all the queen's drawers and presses, till they were as red as cranberries, but the necklace was not to be found.

"Have you lost the necklace?" roared the king. His voice sounded now like a bull bellowing.

"No!" said the queen, timidly.

"Have you given it away?" shouted the king. "To whom have you given it?"

Then the queen dropped her eyelids and said nothing.

"To whom have you given it?" the king shouted again, but the queen never answered a single word.

"Very well, madam, you can be as silent as you like, but I tell you I shall rest neither day nor night until I find the fellow to whom you have given the necklace, and be he the first man in my kingdom he shall die the death"; and with this the king rose so abruptly that his throne toppled over, and then with great bluster and fuss he marched out of the banqueting hall.

He had the queen thrown into prison; there she was to remain until the necklace was found.

Now you can imagine what a hurly-burly there was after this. The king in front, with six attendants at his heels, searched the whole castle from garret to cellar.

Every single room belonging to every knight and lady-in-waiting was searched, and the king with his own royal hand turned everything out of all their drawers and closets, and tossed cloaks and velvet trains, silken hose and plumed caps in every direction.

All the halls and corridors were strewn with garments, which the king had unearthed. In the open windows even, hung veils and surcoats, tunics and trunk-hose, so that the castle looked more like a rag-shop than a royal palace. But still the necklace was not to be found.

Now it so happened that the queen's page, who was the son of a noble knight, had lately received a court-dress as a gift from his father.

The old knight lived far away beyond the sea, but he had sent this gala suit to his young son by a travelling merchant, whose ship touched at the port where the old knight lived.

The old knight was very proud of the fact that his son was the queen's page; and when he learned that sky-blue was the queen's favourite colour, and that she liked to wear a necklace of pearls, he had his son's suit made of sky-blue velvet in honour of the queen, and on the front of the vest he had the queen's name embroidered in white pearls with many a turn and flourish.

This costly dress had not been worn hitherto by the page, in fact he had not even seen it.

It lay still unpacked in a corner of his room in the box in which it had but lately arrived.

But as the king was now searching the whole palace, he came of course to the page's room, too.

He flung all the clothes and jewels out of the drawers and presses, and then suddenly his eye fell upon the little box in the corner.

He kicked the lock to pieces, and opened the box, and there was the gorgeous sky-blue velvet suit, tunic and hose, bonnet and cloak and all, and the vest with the queen's name embroidered in white pearls.

The pearls were precisely like those in the queen's necklace, and the king fell on his knees at once, and began to count them with trembling fingers.

And what do you think happened? There were just exactly three hundred and sixty-five pearls, and one of them was a little crooked. "What do I see, what do I see," hissed the king. His voice seemed to have died away; it sounded just like a snake hissing in the grass.

"Here are the queen's pearls, I know them as well as I

know my own eyes, for has not every one of them passed through my fingers? Here they all are even to the little crooked one, which I held in my hand last. Here is the thief. It is the page who has stolen the queen's pearls."

So the page was marshalled before the king, and the king was so furious that as soon as he saw the page he struck him right in the face. "Thief and robber, miserable slave! It is you who have stolen the queen's pearls," he shouted so loudly that all the town could hear him.

"I am no thief, your Majesty. I know nothing of any pearls," answered the page without flinching.

"You have had them given you perhaps? Has the queen dared to give away my royal gift to one of her attendants?" roared the king.

"I have received nothing from the queen," answered the page, "and never would she have bestowed her royal husband's gift upon one of his retinue."

And then the page explained how the pearl-sewn suit was a gift from his father, which he had received the day before from a sea captain, and had had no time to unpack.

But the king refused to believe a word of this.

"Where are the queen's pearls, if these are not they embroidered upon your tunic? You, who were her chief page and cup-bearer must know where the pearls are to be found. Answer me. Where is the queen's necklace?"

But the page's only answer was to spread out his arms and shrug his shoulders. Not a word passed across his lips, and although he knew all too well how one pearl after another had slipped off the queen's necklace, he knew too that he would sooner be hacked in pieces than betray the queen's secret with a single word.

Then the king ordered the page to be flung into the deepest dungeon in the castle, and accordingly he was put in chains and led away.

So now the queen sat in one dungeon and the page in

another, and awaited their doom.

And after three days they were told that if the necklace was not in the king's possession within twenty-four hours, the page was to be hanged upon the highest gallows, and the queen to be beheaded in the sight of all her people.

The queen knew well that if she were to say where the pearls were, all the innocent and unhappy would suffer death for her sake, and so she sat quietly there in silence, and waited for them to come and carry her away to be executed.

And the page already saw himself dangling from the gallows, for sooner would he have died a thousand deaths than betray the queen's secret.

But in the night several of the strongest and wisest of the knights in the castle took counsel together. They had compassion upon the handsome young page, who was doomed to die so young. He had always shown respect and deference towards his elders, and bade fair to be in time a brave and gallant knight, and all wished him well.

By dint of much cunning and bravery the page's friends managed to creep up underneath his prison window, which looked out upon the castle moat.

They threw a file into him, and with this he filed away the iron grating, and being young and slender he was able to squeeze through two iron bars, and then jump down into the arms of an old knight, who stood in a boat beneath the prison window ready to catch him.

Then they flung a cloak about him and conducted him on board a ship, which was to cross the seas to his father's castle that same night.

When the red dawn came stealing over the waves, the page stood in the bow of the ship and saw the moon wane over the royal castle, whilst the vessel, with all sail set, steered its course across the glittering sea.

But alas for the queen, poor young Blanzeflor! She sat in the darkest of dungeons, within the innermost court of the

castle. No one could get to her, either through cunning or bravery.

All the prayers and lamentations only, which the unhappy and oppressed sent up to her, fluttered around outside and beat against her prison walls like tired little birds.

She sat with her long golden hair all dishevelled, with her hands bound in heavy fetters, and gazed out into the darkness.

She knew she must soon die, and so she thought over all the sins she had committed in her life, and she began to tremble and feel afraid. Was it perhaps a great sin to have given away all the pearls which the king had said she was never to part with? And now, too, the young page, who was quite innocent, must die for her sake. For this they had told her. And how was it at all possible for her to save him?

She fell on her knees upon the straw lying on the prison floor, and prayed to God that he might perform a miracle and set the guiltless free.

"Thou, O God, canst break through prison walls as easily as the sun breaks through the mists," she said, "Thou canst also set an innocent captive free."

But scarcely had she ended her prayer when she saw in the pale morning light how the thick prison walls fell apart, and between them came a swallow flying, as easily and as quickly as if it were merely flying through the air.

In its beak it held a white pearl, which it dropped upon the queen's knees.

"This is one of the tears you shed before the high altar," twittered the swallow, "God gives it you back in the likeness of a pearl."

At the same moment came another swallow through the wall, and another and another, and in a twinkling the whole prison was filled with a flight of birds, swallows, sparrows, finches and doves.

Each had a white pearl in its beak, which it laid upon

Blanzeflor's lap.

"Here are the tears you shed for those who were poor and sad at heart," they chirped; "not one has fallen in vain."

At last came a little bird with a maimed wing; in its beak was the little crooked pearl, for this too had been threaded on the necklace.

"All we small starving birds to whom you gave crumbs in the winter snow," it twittered, "all we poor little birds have gathered your tears too," and it dropped the pearl into the queen's lap.

Blanzeflor sat perfectly still and let the pearls lie upon her knees, for she could not touch them with her fettered hands.

But when all the birds had dropped their pearls, they gathered in a great cloud about her, and, hovering above her head, disappeared through the prison walls which closed behind them.

Then the sun rose red in the East and shone into the prison so that it streamed with light like heaven itself. But just then the king came with all his retinue. He had come to take the queen away to be beheaded. But when he saw her sitting with a halo of light around her and with the pearls in her lap, he stood stock-still with amazement. Then he began to count the pearls, and every single one was there, all three hundred and sixty-five even to the little crooked one! But the silken cord on which they had been strung was missing. "Why, here we have all the pearls! Here indeed they all are," shouted the king. The queen said nothing and only smiled. "But the cord on which they were threaded," said the king, "where is that?" The queen dropped her eyelids and looked sorrowful.

"Ah, I quite understand, I quite understand!" said the king. "Of course the cord broke, and knowing I had threaded every pearl myself with my own royal hands you would not wear them upon any other. But you might at least have told me that before, for you have my gracious pardon of course for losing the cord, such things do sometimes happen, and I am

bound to say it was very proper and becoming on your part not to want to thread the pearls on any other string. But wait, I will fetch another at once." And away went the king hobbling up the stairs to his own apartments to fetch a new silken cord. He was afraid to ask anyone else because he feared they would steal something, and when the king had snipped off his cord he hurried back so quickly down to the prison again, that he tripped over his own feet and fell and broke his neck, and there he lay dead on the way down to the dungeons where he had let so many innocent people suffer and pine to death.

As the king kept them waiting so long, his courtiers went to look for him, and going up they stumbled upon something on the stairs, and behold! there was the king lying on his face quite dead. It certainly was no fun for him, but the rest of the world did not make much ado about it. It was only the queen who shed tears because she would have liked him to have become a little better before meeting with a sudden death.

However, what was done was done, so it was no use worrying over that. The king was buried, and the queen was proclaimed the only reigning sovereign in all the land.

And never was there a gentler queen than she. From the time the sun rose in the morning until night came, she was to be found within the gates of the palace, ready to receive with open arms all who sought help and comfort from her. And this they found always.

If anyone was in any trouble or distress they simply said:

"We shall go to the queen, there is sure to be one more pearl left on her Majesty's necklace!"

The Boy Who Could Not Tell a Lie

There was once a man who had three sons. When the time came for him to die, it was his wish to divide his inheritance between them all, but being old and weak he had forgotten how to count. When therefore he had given each of his elder sons his share he discovered there was nothing left for the youngest.

"My dear Swen," he said, "this is a nice kettle of fish! I have given your brothers all I possess, and now I have nothing left to bestow upon you but my blessing and a pair of old woollen gloves."

"Don't worry yourself about that, my dear father," replied Swen, "I am quite content with my share. An old pair of woollen gloves is a good thing to have when the cold nips your fingers, and your blessing is worth more to me than all the gold in the world."

So Swen received the gloves and the blessing, and after this the father died. Swen now slung his bow across his shoulders, hung his sword at his side, tucked his flute away inside his jacket, and putting the gloves into his pocket took leave of his brothers, wishing them the best of good luck. Scarcely had he turned his back upon them before the brothers began to quarrel over their inheritance, but Swen went out whistling into the world to try his fortune. "How easily a fellow can march along when he has no pack on his back and not so much as a farthing-piece to weigh him down," thought Swen, and was over the brook at one bound.

Spring-time was coming. All the frozen rivers and brooks had melted and were flowing swiftly along between their steep, rocky banks, and high up above the tilled fields the first

larks were carolling.

"I can trill too," said Swen, and seating himself upon a stone in the middle of the brook he played upon his flute; and so near did the birds come flying that they brushed his cap with their wings, and the small trout in the stream danced to the tunes he played. Whenever he was hungry he would shoot a hare and roast it for himself, and if he lost his way in the forest he would make a path for himself with his sword. But in the evenings he would play for the dance in the peasants' cottages, and get in return a can of ale and a corner of the barn to sleep in overnight. Wherever he wandered he hastened along with so quick and buoyant a step, and with a face so sunny and bright, that the folks who met him would turn round to look at him, and say, "That's a merry youngster for you!"

At last Swen came to the gardens of the king's palace, and there on all sides placards were posted up with "Notice" in large letters on them, stating that the king's Lord High Chamberlain was dead and that anyone who wished could apply for the post.

"Best is good enough," thought Swen; "I must try my luck here," and with this he walked straight into the royal audience-chamber. There sat the king on his throne, hot and perspiring and looking thoroughly worn out after having interviewed all the many applicants.

Beside him, on a high narrow throne, sat the princess, swinging her legs and eating cherries out of a silver basket.

"Good day, your Majesty," said Swen.

"Good day," replied the king. "Pray what is your errand?"

"I have come to apply for the post of Lord High Chamberlain to your Majesty," answered Swen. "I take it that anyone who wants to, has the right to apply."

"You think you are fit then for such a responsible post?" asked the king, stroking his long beard.

"I will tell you that when I have had a try at it," said Swen.

The king looked at the princess and the princess looked at the king, and the princess went on throwing the cherry stones on to the carpet.

"You shouldn't do that," said Swen. "They might leave stains."

"That's none of your business," replied the princess, and went on eating.

"I see you are an archer," said the king. "Can you always hit the bull's-eye?"

"I can't be sure about that," answered Swen. "'No man can be sure of what he doesn't know. But at any rate I can shoot a cherry stone out of the princess's hand." And the princess had to stretch out her hand and put a cherry stone upon it. She would have liked very much to have got out of it but the king said, "No nonsense now, you've got to do it"; and thereupon she held out her hand. Swen bent his bow and away flew the arrow and stuck right in the middle of the cherry stone.

"Ugh!" said the princess, who had become quite red in the face, "that was horrid!"

But the king only sat there and smiled, then he said, "Well, Swen, what about your sword, you can wield that too, I suppose, better than any other fellow?"

"Who can make that boast?" answered Swen. "Any man can meet his master."

"You are an odd fellow," said the king. "All the others who have been here have said they could do anything, whilst you declare you can do nothing."

"No, that I haven't said," answered Swen. "All I say is that there is one thing I cannot do, I cannot tell a lie."

"There you lie already," said the king. "Every man might lie in a hasty moment."

"Well, that is *your* opinion," replied Swen; "however, stick to your royal opinion if you like, only let me stick to mine."

Just at that minute the princess's black cat sprang along

in front of the throne, whereupon Swen whipped out his short sword and cut off the very last white tuft of hair in the tip of the cat's tail.

"Oh, Pussy," said the princess, "what have they done to you?" But the cat noticed nothing at all but just went and seated himself in the sun and began licking his paws.

And now the king caught sight of the flute sticking out of Swen's coat in front.

"You play the flute, I see," said he. "You are a master of that instrument I daresay."

"Larks and chaffinches trill better than I," answered Swen; "I can, however, play a bit of a tune for you."

So Swen began to play, and the birds from the garden came flying in through the open windows and perched around to listen. The cat blinked his eyes as much as to say, "Not so bad, not so bad for a needy-looking menial like him!" and even the flies on the window-panes buzzed softly in order to listen to him. But the princess sat with a cherry in her hand and her mouth open, forgetting to pop the cherry in, so absorbed was she in listening to Swen. When he had come to the end of his last trill, the princess said, "It was just like the ice melting, and the chaffinches twittering, and the trout dancing in the brook."

"Yes, that was just what I meant it to be," said Swen. The princess sat there looking tender and wistful with tears in her eyes, and the king asked Swen:

"What do you think of the princess, Swen? Is she not beautiful?"

"Not bad," answered Swen, "but I have seen handsomer."

Now this made the princess angry; she got up so hastily that the basket of cherries was upset, and away she hurried out of the great hall as fast as her small feet could carry her.

"You can remain in my service," said the king. "Tonight you shall keep your first watch. But let us first go and eat our supper. All this business makes one hungry."

So Swen was allowed to accompany them into the royal banqueting hall, and he took his place a long way off amongst the retainers. All the other attendants and courtiers looked at him with great contempt because he was not wearing the royal livery, but only his shabby, travel-stained clothes, and they contrived that everything should be eaten up off the dishes when they came round to where he sat.

"Well, how are you enjoying your meal, Swen?" shouted the king from his throne.

"Ask those who gobble it up," answered Swen. "I only get empty glasses and clean platters."

Thereupon the king piled up a helping for him on his own golden platter and sent it down to Swen's place with a cup of wine which he had mixed himself. Now Swen ate and drank to his heart's content; afterwards he had to follow the king to his bed-chamber to keep watch outside the door until day-break.

"Be sure to keep awake," said the king, "for he who sleeps at his post is a dead man."

The great door leading into the garden was locked, and the king took off his crown and gold chains and laid them side by side on the table before Swen, then he went into his own apartments, and it was not long before Swen heard his royal snores disturbing the quiet of the night. Swen stood there like a statue and wouldn't even sit down lest he might be tempted to sleep. There he stood and thought of every imaginable thing, whilst the night-shadows stole across the sky and the stars began to twinkle. But just as he was standing there, he was overcome with drowsiness, the like of which he had never felt before. Strange white and pale green sparks danced before his eyes, his head became as heavy as a cannon-ball, and he found it quite impossible to keep on his legs. He then tried to keep his eyes fixed steadily upon the king's crown upon the table, but as he sat and looked at it, it appeared to him to change into the most weird shapes. It seemed to become alive

and to move and crawl about, and all at once he thought it was the princess, who was sitting there eating cherries and throwing the cherry stones all the time into his eyes. "Stop that," he said aloud, and the next moment he was fast asleep.

When he awoke it was early morning. He scarcely realised he had slept at all, and he looked around him in terror. The king's crown and chains had vanished, and what was more the great door leading into the garden stood wide open. Swen knew now that he was a dead man, but when he saw that the thieves had left the great door open, he realised that if he wanted to save his life he could. Nevertheless he stuck to his post that he might be able to tell the king how it had all happened. Presently the king came out and said, "Good morning, Swen, my crown please."

"The crown has gone," Swen answered.

"Gone!" shouted the king; "give me my gold chains then."

"The chains have gone too," replied Swen.

"Impossible," roared the king.

"Nothing is impossible," answered Swen. "I slept like a dog at my post."

"Don't you know that means you are a dead man?" asked the king. "Why did you not escape when the door was open?"

"How could you have got hold of me then to chop off my head?" answered Swen. "Now I can go along with you at once."

Just at that moment the princess arrived upon the scene on her way out for her morning walk. When she saw the king's angry face she asked what in the world was the matter.

"Oh, it is only Swen who has slept at his post; and now we must go and chop off his head," said the king. But at this the princess began to sob and cry and wring her hands, and assure the king that this must have happened through some villainous trick, for she was ready to swear that Swen could never have slept at his post.

"You mustn't swear to anything of the kind," said Swen.

"for if you do you swear falsely. I *have* slept, and now let us go that it may be over quickly."

But now all at once the king said:

"You are an honest fellow, Swen, and now I know you cannot tell a lie. I myself gave you a sleeping-draught in your wine-cup last night, and opened the great door to give you an opportunity of escaping, but you chose rather to stay and face the truth."

"That was a very shabby trick of yours, your Majesty," said Swen. "You ought by right to give me compensation for this"; and he was really very angry.

"Will you take my daughter?" said the king. "I'll wager ten to one she is dying to have you."

"Thank you, your Majesty, I am greatly obliged!" answered Swen, and took the princess's little white hand which she instantly placed in his.

"You would like her just as much I suppose if she were a mere beggar-maid, wouldn't you?" asked the king.

"Well, I am not so sure of that," answered Swen, scratching his head. "It is a mighty fine thing to get a real live princess!"

And so the king had a most gorgeous wedding for Swen and his daughter, and the princess was so happy she could not take her eyes off her bridegroom for a moment, and every five minutes she would sigh and say, "Oh, I am so *frightfully* happy!"

"And yet here am I without a thing to give you for a wedding present," said Swen. "I inherited two things only from my father. The first was his blessing, and that was for me only, so I cannot give that away. But here is the other a pair of old woollen gloves. These you can have, but you will have to darn them yourself for there are holes in all the fingers."

The Princess Who Hid Her Shoes

Once upon a time there was a king who had an only son. He was one day of course to inherit the kingdom after his father and to become king himself, but he did not care one straw either for affairs of state or for the splendours of the court. The only thing he cared about was to play upon his lute.

He had a most beautiful one with a high curved back and a long neck like a swan's, and all inlaid with silver and mother-of-pearl, and upon this lute the prince played from morning to night. If anyone disturbed him in his room, he went out into the pleasure gardens, if they sought him there, he hastened away into the tower, if they called up to him in the tower, he fled away into the wild wood. All he wanted was to be left alone with his lute. He made up all the melodies himself, and you maybe sure they were the loveliest tunes imaginable. Some of them were very tragic, with strong sweeping chords across the lower strings, and the sound of them was like the waves beating upon a rocky shore. These the prince played when he fell to thinking how sad it was that he never, never could be left in peace. But besides these, there w r ere others merry, sparkling tunes, which danced away like the very sunbeams themselves across the thin silvery strings, with their light, clear tones. These the prince played when he sprang away into the woods and knew that no one could find him. Aye, indeed! the prince could play! and better than anyone; but alas! he could not sing the least little bit in fact, he had not so much as a single note in his throat. Many a time he sighed to himself, and said: "I must say it really is most provoking that I, who can play so well, cannot even sing to

my own music."

He tried to console himself with whistling. This did fairly well, at least for the merry tunes; for the mournful ones, in a grander strain, whistling did not do at all. When the prince played these he would gaze around out of those black eyes of his and say to himself: "If only there were someone to sing to my playing!"

But when the prince was grown-up, the king thought it was about time he were married, so he talked it over with a neighbouring king who had an only daughter, and they settled it between them to marry their children to one another. It was such an admirable arrangement in every way. Their kingdoms adjoined, both monarchs were alike rich and powerful, and had been comrades in arms and boon companions in their youth. The prince and princess had never seen each other as yet, but this was a small matter; when they were once married, then they could sit and look at one another for the rest of their lives, and that would be perhaps more than enough for them.

So one fine morning the king went in to his son's room, where the prince sat whistling to the accompaniment of his lute. He had just been composing a new melody which he called the "contrary-wise" tune, for every note in it was just exactly the contrary of what you might expect.

"Pray be seated, my royal father," said the prince, continuing to play.

"Can't you stop that twanging on the strings for half a moment?" said the king, stroking his beard. "I have an important matter to discuss with you."

The prince laid his lute across his knee and glanced at his father. "What is it about?" he said, looking utterly miserable.

"Well, nothing more or less than that I am thinking of marrying you, my boy, and my choice has fallen upon our royal neighbour's daughter. She is young, and pretty, and suits us admirably in every respect. You will please be prepared to

ride off tomorrow to woo her."

The prince gave a deep sigh. "One never can be left in peace, and now, added to everything, I must go off and get married!" he said, passing all his five fingers through his thick hair and looking perfectly distracted.

"Now don't let us have any fuss about it," said the king. "You ought to be thankful to get such a young and pretty wife."

"I don't even know what she looks like, this princess," said the prince, beginning once more to pick out the notes of his "contrary-wise" tune.

"You will know that tomorrow when you see her," answered the king; "as to that, she has red hair and black eyes."

"I have black eyes myself," replied the prince, "so I have enough of that commodity; and as for red hair, it is my abomination. She looks then exactly like a little red fox, of course?"

"You talk like the foolish person you are," said the king. "But the matter is already settled. Tomorrow, before the sun has risen too high, you must be off to woo the princess. I will undertake to see that you go with a retinue befitting your rank; and now I must be going."

The prince opened the door for the king and bowed low before him, but scarcely had he closed the door upon his Majesty when he broke out: "H'm! Two can play at this little game. I have made up my mind what I shall do!" And early the next morning, before anyone in the castle had lifted an eye-lid, the prince rose and dressed himself so quietly that even the flies on the window-pane did not wake up. He filled his silken purse with ducats, slung his beloved lute across his shoulder, and hopped through the window down into the garden. Then he scrambled over the garden wall and found himself out on the open road.

Now the prince had never in his life before been up so early in the morning, and he fell to wondering how the world

could look so beautiful, whilst everybody lay abed, and there was no one to look at it. The clear, bright waters of the lake shone like the sea itself, there was not a cloud in the sky, and the dew on every plant and blade of grass glittered and sparkled with all the colours of the rainbow.

The prince felt so gay and light-hearted that he could not resist thrumming very gently upon the lute strings. He did not dare to play loudly lest anyone should hear him. It was not until he had reached the heart of the wood, where the beech trees drooped their long, sweeping branches about him and the fragrant pines rose like a rampart between him and the open country, that he first gripped the strings firmly and brought out some fine dashing chords.

The sky was so brilliantly blue and his spirits so brilliantly gay that he just let his lute vibrate with a perfect hurricane of sweet sounds. He had given no thought as to whither he should wander, he only knew he wanted to get away, far, far away from the court and wedding feasts and everything that was tiresome and provoking and to be left quietly alone with his lute.

The sun rose higher and higher in the heavens, and the prince began to feel both hungry and thirsty. It was true he had his silken purse full of ducats, but in all the great wild wood there was nothing to buy. He came across a little spring at last, gushing forth out of a cleft in the rock, and here he quenched his thirst and lay down on the grass awhile to rest, then he wandered on again in the mid-day heat.

Now the forest began to open out, and the pathway led across an open glade. Here along the runnels by the wayside grew a long row of blossoming briar-bushes, for it was now nigh upon midsummer. The little round pink roses smiled so pleasantly at the prince that he stooped to pick a flower for his cap, but as he bent back the trailing branches that the thorns might not prick him, he caught sight of something twinkling deep down amid the bushes. What could it be? He

thrust his hand down in amongst the brambles, and behold, what did he find? Why, the sweetest little shoe of green velvet, all embroidered with gold and real pearls!

"A shoe," said the prince, and smiled, "a shoe! Well, where there is one shoe there are probably two"; and so saying he thrust his hand once more far down into the bushes, and sure enough he caught up another little shoe precisely like the first. They were as small and as dainty as a pair of child's shoes, but as costly and as cunningly wrought as if made for a princess.

"Now how did the shoes get into the bushes!" thought the prince looking round; but not a trace of any living creature was to be seen. Just then, however, it struck the prince that the long grass growing in the glade looked as if it had been trodden under foot, making what looked like a little track leading away in amongst the hazel-bushes.

"Ha, ha!" thought the prince, "someone has crept away into the coppice just here." And thereupon he went tip-toeing softly over the grass across the meadow. The track was such a tiny one that every now and then it was hardly visible, and the prince said to himself: "Some small creature has scurried across here, a little foxling maybe, has sprung into the thicket."

But as he went along he simply *had* to stop again and again to gaze about him, for such a wondrously beautiful dingle as this he had never before beheld. The ground was billowy like the sea, now rising up into little knolls, now sinking deep into little hollows, and the grass, starred with a myriad flowers, grew knee-deep everywhere. Big ox-eyed daisies shone like bright stars, and the cotton grass swung its silken tufts gently to and fro. Spruce firs grew there, short and stubby, with their new shoots standing up like Christmas candles on every bough, their tops crowned with cones as red as the wild strawberry, and a fluttering network of the pale purple vetch flung lightly across their branches. The hazels had grown into great

bushes of swelling green with their broad leaves and thick clusters of nuts ready for the ripening, and the birches reared their silvery stems and wrapped themselves about in their long veils of dainty foliage. Here and there stood an ancient oak with quite a little knot of young trees crowding round to listen to his stories. Spruce firs crept in under his arms, poplars leaned against his shoulders and the briar-roses climbed up and up, by the longest of their long trailing branches and twined themselves in and out of his hoary locks, from which all the little rosy blossoms peeped out like small baby faces.

A little stream, come from the mountains, flowed through the woodland, but it could only be heard, not seen, for when the alders heard it murmuring they had loped lightly thither and planted themselves so thickly to look down upon it that there was no room for anyone else.

And here the roses grew in greatest profusion. They climbed up the trees and flung garlands across from bush to bush. They snatched away the prince's cap with their long thorny sprays and set snares for his feet in the long grass. Turn wherever he would he could see nothing but roses.

"Any number of roses here," quoth the prince, pausing awhile. Somewhere on a hilly slope sat a thrush and sang. The prince could not see it for it was hidden deep in a thicket, but he stopped to listen to all the merry music it was making. It was certainly singing to someone, for every now and then it would be silent as if waiting for an answering call. And now the prince really did hear someone reply with a blithe whistle, away in amongst the trees. Could it be a bird? Surely not, that was no bird, that was a human voice a little maiden's voice.

"She whistles well," thought the prince, "almost as well as I," and thereupon he stole softly forward through the bushes. Then all at once he noticed that the little grass-trodden path had stopped short, and that the grass in the glade was standing up stiff and proud, waving and beckoning with all its many starry flowers.

Just at this spot stood an old lime tree with long drooping branches, and a few paces in front of it grew a hazel and a briar bush; the briar had spanned an arch of blossoming roses right across to the hazel tree. Beneath was the prettiest arbour, where the sunbeams danced in a shower of gold through the leaves, and underneath all this green lay a moss-covered stone, and on this stone someone was sitting!

The prince turned aside the branches very, very gently, and peeped in, and behold, what did he see? why the very sweetest little princess, with her hair falling about her and a dainty crown on her head! She was sitting with her eyes down, threading strawberries on a straw and whistling the while. Then the prince, too, began to whistle softly between his teeth. But when the little maid heard him, she looked up and uttered such a scream that Echo, who was sleeping through the mid-day heat up on the mountain-side, awoke, and, starting to her feet, shrieked wildly to the hills across the lake. And all the hills answering, shouted together: "O—h, O—h, what is it? what is it? what is it?"

"Why do you scream so?" said the prince. "I am not at all dangerous." Then he took stock of the princess.

She had black eyes and red hair and the whitest hands he had ever seen. Her dress was the colour of the summer sky, embroidered with the pale purple flower of the vetch and light green grass. Round her neck she had a necklace of many rows of small creamy pearls, and on her head she wore a coronet studied with blue and green gems. On her feet she had flaming red stockings, but she had no shoes! This the prince noticed at once, although she had hastily drawn her feet in under her.

"What reward for treasure trove?" asked the prince, holding behind his back the small shoes he had found.

"Are they my shoes?" cried the princess, stretching out her hands. "Oh, kind sir, please give me my shoes."

"Yes, but first say what is to be my reward?" asked the

prince again.

"Oh, you shall have these strawberries on a straw," said the princess, lifting them up between her small fingers. "I picked them myself, and they are quite ripe, every single one of them."

"Agreed," said the prince. So he set the little shoes down before the princess and received the strawberries in exchange.

"May I sit here, too, beside you and eat them?" asked the prince.

"Certainly, why not?" answered the princess, and made room for him beside her on the stone.

"Of course I shouldn't think of depriving you of all your strawberries anyway," said the prince. "We'll eat them together, turn and turn about." And this they accordingly did. First the princess drew a strawberry off the straw and popped it into the prince's mouth, and then he drew one off and popped it into hers, and so sweet and ripe were the berries they literally melted in the mouth. When nothing but the straw was left the prince wiped his fingers and looked at the princess.

"Why did you thrust your shoes under a bush, you queer little maid?" said he. "Don't you know it is dangerous to walk in the high grass in your stockings? There are snakes about here, and they might easily bite your feet."

"I am not a bit afraid of snakes," replied the princess, "I am only afraid of people; and the further I ran the more footmarks did my shoes leave behind in the grass, that was why I hid them in the bushes."

"Poor little thing," said the prince. "But what harm could people possibly wish to such a sweet little princess as you?"

"Ah well," said the princess, and sighed, "you see they want to marry me off to a prince whom I have never seen and whom I would not marry—no, not if they were to throw him at me."

"Why, that is exactly my case," said the prince. "My father

wants to marry me off too, to a princess whom I have never seen and whom I hope I never shall see, and to escape the whole tiresome business I took myself off."

"What was the princess like?" asked the princess, looking at the prince out of the corner of her eye.

"Well, you see, she has black eyes and red hair, and is just exactly like a wretched little foxling," said the prince.

"Oh, how horrid you are!" said the princess. She sat waving a branch to and fro to keep off the flies. "At any rate you can be quite sure they don't mean *me.* Just look at my hair, do you call that red?"—she let her long hair slip over her slender palm and held it right up under the prince's nose. "Strawberries are red, but my hair is brown and black, and golden too when it catches the sunlight. Don't you see how it glistens? And look at my eyes"—she drew the lower lid down on her cheek, and leaning forward, lifted her face up to his. "Wouldn't you say my eyes were really dark blue? It is only when the shadows fall across them that they look black."

"You have the loveliest hair and the loveliest eyes I ever saw, that's all I know!" said the prince. "But tell me what the prince was like whom you ran away from in your stockings."

"Oh, well, what he looks like I really cannot say," the princess replied, "for, thank goodness, I have never seen him, but they say he is quite crazy. I hear he cares neither for work nor sport, nor anything but play. They say, too, he plays from morning to night like a madman, but whether it be at dice or any other game I do not know, and as to that it is of little consequence, for whichever way it were, he might easily play away all our possessions, and a pretty fix we should be in, sitting there with empty hands with not so much as a cup of wine to call our own perhaps. And you may be sure whatever the man is like whom I shall one day marry, crazy at least he shall not be, be he ever so much a prince."

"All you have just been saying luckily does not apply to me at all," said the prince. "For I am by no means half-witted,

on the contrary, I have a very good head of my own, and the only thing I can play is my lute, and that is the most precious thing in all the world to me."

"Is that it there slung across your shoulders?" asked the princess. "Oh, *do* play a little for me."

Then the prince swung the lute round and laid it across his knee.

"What a pretty thing it is and how queer looking," said the princess, her white fingers straying over the strings; "I have never seen anything like it before."

"'Never heard,' you'll say in a moment," answered the prince. "But now listen and then you shall hear"; and he began to play.

First he struck the strings very, very softly till it sounded like the wind blowing lightly across the tips of the grasses, then he let gay, staccato notes hop and dance like sunbeams in the air, and at last he struck big chords full of tumultuous sound like the waves beating up against the cliffs. The longer he played the more and more wondrously did the sweet notes blend and weave themselves together.

The princess sat leaning forward with her hair falling aslant her cheeks, her eyes fixed upon the lute whence all these lovely sounds streamed forth. When the last faint echoes of the music had died away amid the shadows she sighed and said:

"Oh, how lovely! But why don't you sing to it?"

"I can't sing," said the prince. "That is just the annoying part of it all."

"You can't sing?" cried the princess in astonishment. "How extraordinary!"

"You can sing perhaps?" asked the prince.

"Can I sing!" answered the princess. "You just begin playing and then you shall hear."

"But you don't know my tunes," said the prince, "for I composed them myself, every one of them."

"That does not matter," answered the princess. "Just play and you shall hear."

So the prince fell to playing once more and the princess began to sing. She had the sweetest of voices, clear and warm like sunshine, high and soft like summer air. And no matter how the prince played, changing from one key to another, slipping from a gay refrain into a sad one and back to a gay refrain once more, the princess was always in time and tune to the music. Her voice winged away over the notes like a boat over the waves. She sat and gazed into the lute and caught the melody almost before it was played.

"How in the name of all that is wonderful can you sing to my tunes which you have never heard before?" asked the prince.

"I guess them," replied the princess, laughing; "I watch the notes and see which way they mean to fly."

"Just wait, and I will play you a tune which you will certainly not be able to guess," said the prince. He was thinking of the last tune he had composed, the "Contrary-wise tune," which invariably produced the most unexpected harmonies.

But the princess was not baffled. Her big eyes turned quite black with gazing into the lute, her hair shone purple-red in the sunlight, and whilst the prince's fingers flew from one key to another her voice would chime in too, hopping hither and thither like a bird fastened by its leg to a cord.

Then the prince dashed into the quaintest, craziest melodies such as he had never as yet tried, but she followed him as surely with her voice as if she had heard them many a time before.

"Why, I declare you are a perfect wonder," said the prince, laying his lute across his knee. "Why, next we shall be having you making up the words to the tune, just as you are sitting there!"

"Oh, I could do that quite easily," answered the princess —her cheeks were quite flushed—"but then the words would

be as contrary-wise as the tune you were playing."

"Why, that's just what it is called, 'The contrary-wise tune,'" laughed the prince, beginning to play again; and then the princess sang:

Free would I be—alone, to laugh or sigh,
But Love along my path springs lightly by.
When I do rest awhile—awhile rests he.
When I do walk—gaily he walks with me,
Was it black, was it red, was it fox-red hair?
Was it me, was it you, the lute's magic did snare?

Whate'er I willed, now will I more than all.
Love sweetly trilling, joins the charmed lute's call.
Say, do you weep, do you laugh? Nay, you smile through your tears.
Say, who has stolen my heart, claimed my faith, stilled my fears?
See, my gold-broidered shoes! Who has found my shoes?
Little green, little gold, little pearl-broidered shoes!

"Ha, ha!" laughed the prince. "That was a jolly song. How did you hit upon it?"

"How did you hit upon my shoes in the bushes?" asked the princess.

"Indeed I cannot say," said the prince; "all I know is I did not look for them, of that I am very sure! But now you shall put on your shoes for we must be going." Thereupon he knelt down in front of the princess and fastened her golden shoe-clasps over her red stockings.

"There!" said the prince. "Now your shoes are on and we can be off."

"And where shall we go?" asked the princess.

"Oh, I don't know," said the prince; "where did you think of going?"

"Well, really, I can't say exactly," she answered and

lowered her eyelids. "My one idea was to run away, look, I had brought away my money with me, my silk purse is full of ducats!"

"So is mine," said the prince, drawing out his purse of gold. "But what can we get for all our gold here in this wilderness? not as much as a crust of dry bread!"

"No," the princess sighed, "not so much as a crust!"

"I tell you what," said the prince. "I think we had better go home to my royal father and tell him we want to marry each other."

"Are you sure *I* want to?" said the princess, looking at him out of the tail of her eye.

"No, of course I am not *sure*," said the prince, a little embarrassed, "I only guess you do."

"Then you guess quite rightly," said the princess, and thereupon they kissed each other.

But all this time the prince's royal father sat at home in the royal castle, storming at his son who had made good his escape and was nowhere to be found in the morning when all the courtiers came riding to accompany him on his journey to woo the princess. There was nothing for it but for all these noble lords to dismount and send their horses back to their stables again.

The king was in such a bad temper that all the courtiers stole about the corridors on tip-toe as if they had been preparing for a funeral instead of a wedding. But at last, towards the end of the day, the king caught sight of a couple coming along arm in arm through the gardens in the light of the setting sun. And by all the saints, wasn't that his vagabond son, coming coolly along, twanging that everlasting old lute of his? But who was the little maid he had got hold of? Wasn't that a crown on her head, glittering in the evening sunlight? Who in the name of fortune could it be?

A moment later the door leading into the king's apartments was flung open, and on the threshold stood the prince

and princess arm in arm!

"My royal father," said the prince, "here you see the bride I have chosen. Her will I wed and no other in the world."

"How did you get hold of *her?*" said the king, stroking his beard.

"First I found her shoes and then I found her heart," answered the prince. "She can sing all my tunes although she has never heard them before, and we mean to sing and play together for the rest of our lives."

"Then we are all agreed," said the king, holding out his hand. "For she is our royal neighbour's daughter herself, and the very maid I had chosen for your bride."

"She?" said the prince, looking with amazement at the princess. "But she hasn't black eyes and fox-red hair?"

"Tut, tut," said the king, "it is a small matter what colour her hair is, as long as she is the right one."

And so a most magnificent wedding took place in the castle. First came the king, then came the prince and princess, then a page bearing two small shoes upon a velvet cushion, and after them followed the court in most gorgeous array, with drums beating and banners flying.

And so the prince and princess lived long together, and a happier married couple was never seen, for however queer and contrary-wise were the tunes he played she always understood how to sing the loveliest lays to them.

"Lars, My Lad!"

There was once a prince or a duke, or something of that sort, but at any rate he belonged to a very grand family, and he would not stop at home. So he travelled all over the world, and wherever he went he was well liked, and was received in the best and gayest families, for he had no end of money. He made friends and acquaintances, as you may imagine, wherever he went, for he who has a well-filled trough is sure to fall in with pigs who want to have their fill. But he went on spending his money until he came to want, and at last his purse became so empty that he had not even a farthing left. And now there was an end to all his friends as well, for they behaved like the pigs; when the trough was empty and he had no more to give them, they began to grunt and grin, and then they ran away in all directions. There he stood alone with a long face. Everybody had been so willing to help him to get rid of his money, but nobody would help him in return; and so there was nothing for it but to trudge home and beg for crusts on the way.

So late one evening he came to a great forest. He did not know where he should find a shelter for the night, but he went on looking and searching till he caught sight of an old tumble-down hut, which stood in the middle of some bushes. It was not exactly good enough for such a fine cavalier, but when you cannot get what you want you must take what you can get. And, since there was no help for it, he went into the hut. Not a living soul was to be seen; there was not even a stool to sit upon, but alongside the wall stood a big chest. What could there be inside that chest? If only there were some bits of mouldy bread in it! How nice they would taste! For, you must

know, he had not had a single bit of food the whole day, and he was so hungry and his stomach so empty that it groaned with pain. He lifted the lid. But inside the chest there was another chest, and inside that chest there was another; and so it went on, each one smaller than the other, until they became quite tiny boxes. The more there were the harder he worked away, for there must be something very fine inside, he thought, since it was so well hidden.

At last he came to a tiny, little box, and in this box lay a bit of paper and that was all he got for his trouble! It was very annoying, of course, but then he discovered there was something written on the paper, and when he looked at it he was just able to spell it out, although at first it looked somewhat difficult.

"Lars, my lad!"

As he pronounced these words something answered right in his ear:

"What are master's orders?"

He looked round, but he saw nobody. This was very funny, he thought, and so he read out the words once more:

"Lars, my lad!"

And the answer came as before:

"What are master's orders?"

But he did not see anybody this time either.

"If there is anybody about who hears what I say, then be kind enough to bring me something to eat," he said. And the next moment there stood a table laid out with all the best things one could think of. He set to work to eat and drink, and had a proper fill. He had never enjoyed himself so much in all his life, he thought.

When he had eaten all he could get down, he began to feel sleepy, and so he took out the paper again:

"Lars, my lad!"

"What are master's orders?"

"Well, you have given me food and drink, and now you

must get me a bed to sleep in as well. But I want a really fine bed," he said, for you must know he was a little more bold now that his hunger was stayed. Well, there it stood, a bed so fine and dainty that even the king himself might covet it. Now this was all very well in its way; but when once you are well off you wish for still more, and he had no sooner got into bed than he began to think that the room was altogether too wretched for such a grand bed. So he took out the paper again:

"Lars, my lad!"

"What are master's orders?"

"Since you are able to get me such food and such a bed here in the midst of the wild forest, I suppose you can manage to get me a better room, for you see I am accustomed to sleep in a palace, with golden mirrors and draped walls and ornaments and comforts of all kinds," he said. Well, he had no sooner spoken the words than he found himself lying in the grandest chamber anybody had ever seen.

Now he was comfortable, he thought, and felt quite satisfied as he turned his face to the wall and closed his eyes.

But that was not all the grandeur; for when he woke up in the morning and looked round, he saw it was a big palace he had been sleeping in. One room led into the other, and wherever he went the place was full of all sorts of finery and luxuries, both on the walls and on the ceilings, and they glittered so much when the sun shone on them, that he had to shade his eyes with his hand, so strong was the glare of gold and silver wherever he turned. He then happened to look out of the window. Good gracious! How grand it was! There was something else than pine forests and juniper bushes to look at, for there was the finest garden anyone could wish for, with splendid trees and roses of all kinds. But he could not see a single human being, or even a cat; and that, you know, was rather lonely, for otherwise he had everything so grand and had been set up as his own master again.

So he took out the bit of paper:

"Lars, my lad!"

"What are master's orders?"

"Well now you have given me food and bed and a palace to live in, and I intend to remain here, for I like the place," he said, "yet I don't like to live quite by myself. I must have both lads and lasses whom I may order about to wait upon me," he said.

And there they were. There came servants and stewards and scullery maids and chambermaids of all sorts, and some came bowing and some curtseying. So now the duke thought he was really satisfied.

But now it happened that there was a large palace on the other side of the forest, and there the king lived who owned the forest, and the great, big fields around it. As he was walking up and down in his room he happened to look out through the window and saw the new palace, where the golden weathercocks were swinging to and fro on the roof in the sunlight, which dazzled his eyes.

"This is very strange," he thought; and so he called his courtiers. They came rushing in, and began bowing and scraping.

"Do you see the palace over there?" said the king.

They opened their eyes and began to stare.

Yes, of course they saw it.

"Who is it that has dared to build such a palace in my grounds?" said the king.

They bowed, and they scraped with their feet, but they did not know anything about it.

The king then called his generals and captains.

They came, stood to attention and presented arms.

"Be gone, soldiers and troopers," said the king, "and pull down the palace over there, and hang him who has built it; and don't lose any time about it!"

Well, they set off in great haste to arm themselves, and

away they went. The drummers beat the skins of their drums, and the trumpeters blew their trumpets, and the other musicians played and blew as best they could, so that the duke heard them long before he could see them. But he had heard that kind of noise before, and knew what it meant, so he took out his scrap of paper:

"Lars, my lad!"

"What are master's orders?"

"There are soldiers coming here," he said, "and now you must provide me with soldiers and horses, that I may have double as many as those over in the wood, and with sabres and pistols, and guns and cannons with all that belongs to them; but be quick about it."

And no time was lost; for when the duke looked out, he saw an immense number of soldiers, who were drawn up around the palace.

When the king's men arrived, they came to a sudden halt and dared not advance. But the duke was not afraid; he went straight up to the colonel of the king's soldiers and asked him what he wanted.

The colonel told him his errand.

"It's of no use," said the duke. "You see how many men I have; and if the king will listen to me, we shall become good friends, and I will help him against his enemies, and in such a way that it will be heard of far and wide," he said.

The colonel was of the same opinion, and the duke then invited him and all his soldiers inside the palace, and the men had more than one glass to drink and plenty of everything to eat as well.

But while they were eating and drinking they began talking; and the duke then got to hear that the king had a daughter who was his only child, and was so wonderfully fair and beautiful that no one had ever seen her like before. And the more the king's soldiers ate and drank the more they thought she would suit the duke for a wife.

And they went on talking so long that the duke at last began to be of the same opinion. "The worst of it," said the soldiers, "is that she is just as proud as she is beautiful, and will never look at a man."

But the duke laughed at this. "If that's all," said the duke, "there's sure to be a remedy for that complaint."

When the soldiers had eaten and drunk as much as they could find room for, they shouted "Hurrah!" so that it echoed among the hills, and then they set out homewards. But, as you may imagine, they did not walk exactly in parade order, for they were rather unsteady about the knees, and many of them did not carry their guns in regulation manner. The duke asked them to greet the king from him. He would call on him the following day, he said.

When the duke was alone again, he began to think of the princess, and to wonder if she were as beautiful and fair as they had made her out to be. He would like to make sure of it; and as so many strange things had happened that day that it might not be impossible to find that out as well, he thought.

"Lars, my lad!"

"What are master's orders?"

"Well, now you must bring me the king's daughter as soon as she has gone to sleep," he said; "but she must not be awakened either on the way here or back. Do you hear that?" he said. And before long the princess was lying on the bed. She slept so soundly and looked so wonderfully beautiful, as she lay there. Yes, she was as sweet as sugar, I can tell you.

The duke walked round about her, but she was just as beautiful from whatever point of view he looked at her.

The more he looked the more he liked her.

"Lars, my lad!"

"What are master's orders?"

"You must now carry the princess home," he said, "for now I know how she looks, and tomorrow I will ask for her hand," he said.

Next morning the king looked out of the window. "I suppose I shall not be troubled with the sight of that palace anymore," he thought. But, zounds! There it stood just as on the day before, and the sun shone so brightly on the roof, and the weathercocks dazzled his eyes.

He now became furious, and called all his men.

They came quicker than usual.

The courtiers bowed and scraped, and the soldiers stood to attention and presented arms.

"Do you see the palace there?" screamed the king.

They stretched their necks, and stared and gaped.

Yes, of course, that they did.

"Have I not ordered you to pull down the palace and hang the builder?" he said.

Yes, they could not deny that; but then the colonel himself stepped forward and reported what had happened and how many soldiers the duke had, and how wonderfully grand the palace was.

And next he told him what the duke had said, and how he had asked him to give his greetings to the king, and all that sort of thing.

The king felt quite confused, and had to put his crown on the table and scratch his head. He could not understand all this, although he was a king; for he could take his oath it had all been built in a single night; and if the duke were not the evil one himself, he must in any case have done it by magic.

While he sat there pondering, the princess came into the room.

"Good morning to you, father!" she said. "Just fancy, I had such a strange and beautiful dream last night!" she said.

"What did you dream then, my girl?" said the king.

"I dreamt I was in the new palace over yonder, and that I saw a duke there, so fine and handsome that I could never have imagined the like; and now I want to get married, father," she said.

"Do you want to get married? you, who never cared to look at a man! That's very strange!" said the king.

"That may be," said the princess; "but it's different now, and I want to get married, and it's the duke I want," she said.

The king was quite beside himself, so frightened did he become of the duke.

But all of a sudden he heard a terrible noise of drums and trumpets and instruments of all kinds; and then came a message that the duke had just arrived with a large company, all of whom were so grandly dressed that gold and silver glistened in every fold. The king put on his crown and his coronation robes, and then went out on the steps to receive them. And the princess was not slow to follow him.

The duke bowed most graciously, and the king of course did likewise, and when they had talked a while about their affairs and their grandeur they became the best of friends. A great banquet was then prepared, and the duke was placed next to the princess at the table. What they talked about is not easy to tell, but the duke spoke so well for himself that the princess could not very well say "no" to anything he said, and then he went up to the king and asked for her hand. The king could not exactly say "no" either, for he could very well see that the duke was a person with whom it were best to be on friendly terms; but give his sanction there and then, he could not very well do that either. He wanted to see the duke's palace first, and find out about the state of affairs over there, as you may understand.

So it was arranged that he should visit the duke and take the princess with him to see his palace; and with this they parted company.

When the duke returned home, Lars became busier than ever, for there was so much to attend to. But he set to work and strove hard; and when the king and his daughter arrived everything was so magnificent and splendid that no words can describe it. They went through all the rooms and looked

about, and they found everything as it should be, and even still more splendid, thought the king, and so he was quite pleased.

The wedding then took place, and that in grand style; and on the duke's arrival home with his bride he too gave a great feast, and then there was an end to the festivities.

Some time passed by, and one evening the duke heard these words:

"Are you satisfied now?"

It was Lars, as you may guess, but the duke could not see him.

"Well, I ought to be," said the duke. "You have provided me with everything I have," he said.

"Yes, but what have I got in return?" asked Lars.

"Nothing," said the duke; "but, bless me, what could I have given you, who are not of flesh and blood, and whom I cannot see either?" he said. "But if there is anything I can do for you, tell me what it is, and I shall do it."

"Well, I should like to ask you for that little scrap of paper which you found in the chest," said Lars.

"Nothing else?" said the duke. "If such a trifle can help you, I can easily do without it, for now I begin to know the words by heart," he said.

Lars thanked the duke, and asked him to put the paper on the chair in front of the bed, when he retired to rest, and he would be sure to fetch it during the night.

The duke did as he was told; and so he and the princess lay down and went to sleep.

But early in the morning the duke awoke and felt so cold that his teeth chattered, and when he had got his eyes quite open he found he was quite naked and had not even as much as a thread on his back; and instead of the grand bed and the beautiful bedroom, and the magnificent palace, he lay on the big chest in the old tumble-down hut.

He began to shout:

"Lars, my lad!" But he got no answer. He shouted once more:

"Lars, my lad!" But he got no answer this time either. So he shouted all he could:

"Lars, my lad!" But it was all in vain.

Now he began to understand how matters stood. When Lars had got the scrap of paper he was freed from service at the same time, and now he had taken everything with him. But there was no help for it. There stood the duke in the old hut quite naked; and as for the princess she was not much better off, although she had her clothes on, for she had got them from her father, so Lars had no power over them.

The duke had now to tell the princess everything, and ask her to leave him. He would have to manage as best he could, he said. But she would not hear of it. She well remembered what the parson had said when he married them, and she would never, never leave him, she said.

In the meantime the king in his palace had also awakened, and when he looked out of the window he did not see any sign whatever of the other palace, where his daughter and son-in-law lived. He became uneasy, as you may imagine, and called his courtiers.

They came in, and began to bow and scrape.

"Do you see the palace over yonder behind the forest?" he asked.

They stretched their necks and stared with all their might.

No, they did not see it.

"Where has it gone to, then?" asked the king.

Well, really they did not know.

It was not long before the king had set out with all his court through the forest; and when he arrived at the place where the palace with the beautiful gardens should have been, he could not see anything but heather and juniper bushes and firs. But then he discovered the old tumble-down hut, which stood there among the bushes. He entered the hut

and mercy on us! what a sight met his eyes! There stood his son-in-law, quite naked, and his daughter, who had not very many clothes on either, and who was crying and moaning.

"Dear, dear! what does all this mean?" said the king; but he did not get any answer, for the duke would rather have died than tell him.

The king did his utmost to get him to speak; but in spite of all the king's promises and threats the duke remained obstinate and would not utter a word.

The king then became angry and no wonder, for now he could see that this grand duke was not what he pretended to be, and so he ordered the duke to be hanged, and that without any loss of time. The princess begged and prayed for mercy; but neither prayers nor tears were of any help now; for an impostor he was, and as an impostor he should die, said the king.

And so it had to be. They erected a gallows, and placed the rope round the duke's neck. But while they were getting the gallows ready, the princess got hold of the hangman, and gave both him and his assistant some money, that they should so manage the hanging of the duke that he should not lose his life, and in the night they were to cut him down, so that he and the princess might then flee the country. And that's how the matter was arranged.

In the meantime they had strung up the duke, and the king and his court and all the people went their way.

The duke was now in great straits. He had, however, plenty of time to reflect how foolish he had been in not saving some of the crumbs when he was living in plenty, and how unpardonably stupid he had been in letting Lars have the scrap of paper. This vexed him more than all. If only he had it again, he thought, they should see he had been gaining some sense in return for all he had lost. But it is of little use snarling if you haven't got any teeth. "Ah, well, well!" he sighed, and so he dangled his legs, which was really all he

could do.

The day passed slowly and tediously for him, and he was not at all displeased when he saw the sun setting behind the forest. But just before it disappeared he heard a fearful shouting, and when he looked down the hill, he saw seven cartloads of worn-out shoes, and on the top of the hindmost cart he saw a little old man in grey clothes and with a red pointed cap on his head. His face was like that of the worst scarecrow, and the rest of him was not very handsome either.

He drove straight up to the gallows, and when he arrived right under it he stopped and looked up at the duke, and then burst out laughing, the ugly old fellow!

"How stupid you were!" he said; "but what should the fool do with his stupidity if he did not make use of it?" And then he laughed again. "Yes, there you are hanging now, and here am I carting away all the shoes I have worn out for your whims. I wonder if you can read what is written on this bit of paper, and if you recognise it?" he said with an ugly laugh, holding up the paper before the duke's eyes.

But all who hang are not dead, and this time it was Lars who was befooled.

The duke made a clutch, and snatched the paper from him.

"Lars, my lad!"

"What are master's orders?"

"Well, you must cut me down from the gallows and put the palace and all the rest in its place again, exactly as it was before, and when the night has set in you must bring back the princess."

All went merrily as in a dance, and before long everything was in its place, just as it was when Lars took himself off.

When the king awoke the next morning he looked out of the window, as was his custom, and there stood the palace again, with the weathercocks glittering so beautifully in the sunshine. He called his courtiers, and they came and began

to bow and scrape.

They stretched their necks as far as they could, and stared and gaped.

"Do you see the palace over there?" said the king.

Yes, of course they did.

The king then sent for the princess, but she was not to be found. He then went out to see if his son-in-law was still hanging on the gallows, but neither son-in-law nor gallows was to be seen.

He had to lift off his crown and scratch his head. But that did not improve matters; he could not make head or tail of either one thing or the other. He set off at once with all his court through the forest, and when he came to the place where the palace should stand, there it stood sure enough. The gardens and the roses were exactly as they used to be, and the duke's people were to be seen everywhere among the trees. His son-in-law and his daughter received him on the steps, dressed in their finest clothes.

"Well, I never saw the like of this," said the king to himself; he could scarcely believe his own eyes, so wonderful did it all seem to him.

"God's peace be with you, father, and welcome here!" said the duke.

The king stood staring at him.

"Are you my son-in-law?" he asked.

"Well, I suppose I am," said the duke. "Who else should I be?"

"Did I not order you to be hanged yesterday like any common thief?" said the king.

"I think you must have been bewitched on the way," said the duke, with a laugh. "Do you think I am the man to let myself be hanged? Or is there anyone here who dares to believe it?" he said, and looked so fiercely at the courtiers that they felt as if they were being pierced through and through.

They bowed and scraped and cringed before him.

"Who could believe such a thing? Was it at all likely?"

"Well, if there is anyone who dares to say the king could have wished me such evil, let him speak out," said the duke, and fixed his eyes upon them still more fiercely than before.

They went on bowing and scraping and cringing.

How could anyone dare to say such a thing? No, they had more sense than that, they should hope.

The king did not know what to believe, for when he looked at the duke he thought he never could have wished him such evil; but still he was not quite convinced.

"Did I not come here yesterday, and was not the whole palace gone, and was there not an old hut in its place? And did not I go into that hut, and did not you stand stark naked right before my eyes?" he asked.

"I wonder the king can talk so," said the duke. "I think the trolls must have bewitched your eyes in the forest and made you quite crazy; or what do you think?" he said, and turned round to the courtiers.

They bowed and bowed till their backs were bent double, and agreed with everything he said, there could be no mistake about that. The king rubbed his eyes, and looked round about him.

"I suppose it is as you say, then," he said to the duke, "and it is well I have got back my proper sight and have come to my senses again. For it would have been a sin and a shame if I had let you be hanged," he said; and so he was happy again, and nobody thought anymore about the matter.

"Once bitten, twice shy," as the proverb says; and the duke now took upon himself to manage and look after most of his affairs, so that it was seldom Lars had to wear out his shoes. The king soon gave the duke half the kingdom into the bargain; so he had now plenty to do, and people said they would have to search a long time to find his equal in wise and just ruling.

Then one day Lars came to the duke, looking very little

better than the first time he had seen him; but he was, of course, more humble, and did not dare to giggle and make grimaces.

"You do not want my help any longer, now," he said; "for although I did wear out my shoes at first, I am now unable to wear out a single pair, and my feet will soon be covered all over with moss. So I thought I might now get my leave of absence," he said.

The duke quite agreed with him. "I have tried to spare you, and I almost think I could do without you," he said. "But the palace and all the rest I do not want to lose, for such a clever builder as you I shall never get again; nor do I ever want to adorn the gallows again, as you can well understand; so I cannot give you back the paper on any account said."

"Well, as long as you have got it, I need not fear," said Lars; "but if anybody else should get hold of it there will be nothing but running and trudging about again, and that's what I want to avoid; for when one has been tramping about for a thousand years, as I have done, one begins to get tired of it," he said.

But they went on talking, and at last they agreed that the duke should put the paper in the box, and then bury it seven ells under the ground, under a stone fixed in the earth. They then thanked one another for the time they had spent in each other's company, and so they parted.

The duke carried out his part of the agreement, for he was not likely to want to change it. He lived happy and contented with the princess, and they had both sons and daughters. When the king died, he got the whole of the kingdom, and you may guess he was none the worse off for that; and there no doubt he still lives and reigns, if he is not dead.

But as for that box with the scrap of paper in it, there are many who are still running about looking for it.

The Sausage

There was once an old woman, who was all alone one evening in her cottage, occupied with her household affairs. While she was waiting for her husband, who was away at work over in the forest, and while she was bustling about, a fine, grand lady came in, and so the woman began to curtsey and curtsey, for she had never seen such a grand person before.

"I should be so much obliged if you would lend me your brewing pan," said the lady, "for my daughter is going to be married, and I expect guests from all parts."

Oh, dear, yes! That she might have, said the woman, although she could not remember whether she had ever seen her before, and so she went to fetch the pan.

The lady took it and thanked the woman, saying that she would pay her well for the loan of it, and so she went her way.

Two days afterwards the lady came back with it, and this time she also found the woman alone.

"Many thanks for the loan," said the lady, "and now in return you shall have three wishes."

And with this the lady left, and vanished so quickly that the old woman had not even time to ask her name or where she lived. But that did not matter, she thought, for now she had three wishes, and she began to think what she should wish for. She expected her husband back soon, and she thought it would be best to wait till he came home and could have a say in the matter. But the least they could wish for must be a fine big farm the best in the parish, and a box full of money, and just fancy how happy and comfortable they would be then, for they had worked so hard all their days! Ah, yes, then the neighbours would have something to wonder at,

for you may guess how they would stare at all the fine things she would have.

But since they were now so rich it was really a shame that there should be nothing but some blue, sour milk and some hard crusts of bread in the cupboard for her husband when he came home tired and weary, he who was fond of hot food. She had just been to her neighbour's, and there she had seen a fine big sausage, which they were going to have for supper.

"Ah, deary me, I wish I had that sausage here!" sighed the old woman; and the next moment a big sausage lay on the table right before her. She was just going to put it in the pan when her husband came in.

"Father, father!" cried the woman, "it's all over with our troubles and hard work now. I lent my brewing pan to a fine lady, and when she brought it back she promised we should have three wishes. And now you must help me to wish for something really good, for you're so clever at hitting upon the right thing and it's all true, for just look at the sausage, which I got the moment I wished for it!"

"What do you mean, you silly old woman?" shouted the husband, who became angry. "Have you been wishing for such a paltry thing as a sausage, when you might have had anything you liked in the world? I wish that the sausage were sticking to your nose, since you haven't any better sense."

All at once the woman gave a cry, for sure enough there was the sausage sticking to her nose; and she began tearing and pulling away at it, but the more she pulled the firmer it seemed to stick. She was not able to get it off.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" sobbed the woman. "You don't seem to have any more sense than I, since you can wish me such ill luck. I only wanted something nice for you, and then, oh, dear! oh, dear!" and the old woman went on crying and sobbing.

The husband tried, of course, to help his wife to get rid of the sausage; but for all he pulled and tugged away at it he did

not succeed, and he was nearly pulling his wife's head off her body.

But they had one wish left, and what were they now to wish?

Yes, what were they to wish? They might, of course, wish for something very fine and grand; but what could they do with all the finery in the world, as long as the mistress of the house had a long sausage sticking to the end of her nose? She would never be able to show herself anywhere!

"You wish for something," said the woman in the midst of her crying.

"No, you wish," said the husband, who also began crying when he saw the state his wife was in, and saw the terrible sausage hanging down her face.

So he thought he would make the best use he could of the last wish, and said:

"I wish my wife was rid of that sausage."

And the next moment it was gone!

They both became so glad that they jumped up and danced round the room in great glee for you must know that although a sausage may be ever so nice when you have it in your mouth, it is quite a different thing to having one sticking to your nose all your life.

The Old Woman and the Tramp

There was once a tramp, who went plodding his way through a forest. The distance between the houses was so great that he had little hope of finding a shelter before the night set in. But all of a sudden he saw some lights between the trees. He then discovered a cottage, where there was a fire burning on the hearth. How nice it would be to roast one's self before that fire, and to get a bite of something, he thought; and so he dragged himself towards the cottage.

Just then an old woman came towards him.

"Good evening, and well met!" said the tramp.

"Good evening," said the woman. "Where do you come from?"

"South of the sun, and east of the moon," said the tramp; "and now I am on the way home again, for I have been all over the world with the exception of this parish," he said.

"You must be a great traveller, then," said the woman. "What may be your business here?"

"Oh, I want a shelter for the night," he said.

"I thought as much," said the woman; "but you may as well get away from here at once, for my husband is not at home, and my place is not an inn," she said.

"My good woman," said the tramp, "you must not be so cross and hard-hearted, for we are both human beings, and should help one another, it is written."

"Help one another?" said the woman, "help? Did you ever hear such a thing? Who'll help me, do you think? I haven't got a morsel in the house! No, you'll have to look for quarters elsewhere," she said.

But the tramp was like the rest of his kind; he did not

consider himself beaten at the first rebuff. Although the old woman grumbled and complained as much as she could, he was just as persistent as ever, and went on begging and praying like a starved dog, until at last she gave in, and he got permission to lie on the floor for the night.

That was very kind, he thought, and he thanked her for it.

"Better on the floor without sleep, than suffer cold in the forest deep," he said; for he was a merry fellow, this tramp, and was always ready with a rhyme.

When he came into the room he could see that the woman was not so badly off as she had pretended; but she was a greedy and stingy woman of the worst sort, and was always complaining and grumbling.

He now made himself very agreeable, of course, and asked her in his most insinuating manner for something to eat.

"Where am I to get it from?" said the woman. "I haven't tasted a morsel myself the whole day."

But the tramp was a cunning fellow, he was.

"Poor old granny, you must be starving," he said. "Well, well, I suppose I shall have to ask you to have something with me, then."

"Have something with you!" said the woman. "You don't look as if you could ask anyone to have anything! What have you got to offer one, I should like to know?"

"He who far and wide does roam sees many things not known at home; and he who many things has seen has wits about him and senses keen," said the tramp. "Better dead than lose one's head! Lend me a pot, grannie!"

The old woman now became very inquisitive, as you may guess, and so she let him have a pot.

He filled it with water and put it on the fire, and then he blew with all his might till the fire was burning fiercely all round it. Then he took a four-inch nail from his pocket, turned it three times in his hand and put it into the pot.

The woman stared with all her might.

"What's this going to be?" she asked.

"Nail broth," said the tramp, and began to stir the water with the porridge stick.

"Nail broth?" asked the woman.

"Yes, nail broth," said the tramp.

The old woman had seen and heard a good deal in her time, but that anybody could have made broth with a nail, well, she had never heard the like before.

"That's something for poor people to know," she said, "and I should like to learn how to make it."

"That which is not worth having, will always go a-begging," said the tramp.

But if she wanted to learn how to make it she had only to watch him, he said, and went on stirring the broth.

The old woman squatted on the ground, her hands clasping her knees, and her eyes following his hand as he stirred the broth.

"This generally makes good broth," he said; "but this time it will very likely be rather thin, for I have been making broth the whole week with the same nail. If one only had a handful of sifted oatmeal to put in, that would make it all right," he said. "But what one has to go without, it's no use thinking more about," and so he stirred the broth again.

"Well, I think I have a scrap of flour somewhere," said the old woman, and went out to fetch some, and it was both good and fine.

The tramp began putting the flour into the broth, and went on stirring, while the woman sat staring now at him and then at the pot until her eyes nearly burst their sockets.

"This broth would be good enough for company," he said, putting in one handful of flour after another. "If I had only a bit of salted beef and a few potatoes to put in, it would be fit for gentlefolks, however particular they might be," he said. "But what one has to go without, it's no use thinking more

about."

When the old woman really began to think it over, she thought she had some potatoes, and perhaps a bit of beef as well; and these she gave the tramp, who went on stirring, while she sat and stared as hard as ever.

"This will be grand enough for the best in the land," he said.

"Well, I never!" said the woman; "and just fancy all with a nail!"

He was really a wonderful man, that tramp! He could do more than drink a sup and turn the tankard up, he could.

"If one had only a little barley and a drop of milk, we could ask the king himself to have some of it," he said; "for this is what he has every blessed evening that I know, for I have been in service under the king's cook" he said.

"Dear me! Ask the king to have some! Well, I never!" exclaimed the woman, slapping her knees. She was quite awe-struck at the tramp and his grand connections.

"But what one has to go without, it's no use thinking more about," said the tramp.

And then she remembered she had a little barley; and as for milk, well, she wasn't quite out of that, she said, for her best cow had just calved. And then she went to fetch both the one and the other.

The tramp went on stirring, and the woman sat staring, one moment at him and the next at the pot.

Then all at once the tramp took out the nail.

"Now it's ready, and now we'll have a real good feast," he said. "But to this kind of soup the king and the queen always take a dram or two, and one sandwich at least. And then they always have a cloth on the table when they eat," he said. "But what one has to go without, it's no use thinking more about."

But by this time the old woman herself had begun to feel quite grand and fine, I can tell you; and if that was all that was wanted to make it just as the king had it, she thought it

would be nice to have it just the same way for once, and play at being king and queen with the tramp. She went straight to a cupboard and brought out the brandy bottle, dram glasses, butter and cheese, smoked beef and veal, until at last the table looked as if it were decked out for company.

Never in her life had the old woman had such a grand feast, and never had she tasted such broth, and just fancy, made only with a nail!

She was in such a good and merry humour at having learnt such an economical way of making broth that she did not know how to make enough of the tramp who had taught her such a useful thing.

So they ate and drank, and drank and ate, until they became both tired and sleepy.

The tramp was now going to lie down on the floor. But that would never do, thought the old woman; no, that was impossible. "Such a grand person must have a bed to lie in," she said.

He did not need much pressing. "It's just like the sweet Christmas time," he said, "and a nicer woman I never came across. Ah, well! Happy are they who meet with such good people," said he; and he lay down on the bed and went asleep.

And next morning when he woke the first thing he got was coffee and a dram.

When he was going the old woman gave him a bright dollar piece.

"And thanks, many thanks, for what you have taught me," she said. "Now I shall live in comfort, since I have learnt how to make broth with a nail."

"Well, it isn't very difficult, if one only has something good to add to it," said the tramp as he went his way.

The woman stood at the door staring after him.

"Such people don't grow on every bush," she said.

What Shall Baby's Name Be?

There was once upon a time a worthy and well-to-do couple, who lived on the fat of the land, and had their house full of everything that was good and nice. But of children they had not many, for there was only one daughter in the house, and her they called Peggy, although she was christened Margaret, as you may guess.

Whatever the cause might be, whether the girl was ugly or whether there was anything else the matter with her, she grew up to be a big wench of full five and twenty years, and yet there was no suitor who would look at her.

"It's very strange," thought the father to himself; for all the lads in the parish knew, of course, that he had one of the finest farms, and many, many hundreds of dollars in money as well, and that he could give his daughter as a dowry both oxen and cows, goats and sheep, and that he would let his son-in-law take over the whole of the farm and keep the old folks till they died. He was never sparing with words on this subject. "Yes, they must be a silly, crack-brained lot when they don't avail themselves of such an opportunity, and get hold of one's only daughter," thought both the man and his wife. Peggy thought the same, although she did not say as much; but the lads seemed to keep away just as much as ever, for day after day passed, and year after year, but still no suitor came.

So one summer evening, as the man sat looking down the road and longing that a suitor might come, it happened that one of the best and smartest lads from one of the farms in the parish came strolling up the hill.

"Mother, mother!" cried the man. "I think he's coming at last! Come and have a look!"

His wife came running into the room and began staring out through the window.

"Well, what did I say?" she exclaimed. "If it isn't Peter South-farm! Sure enough it's he!"

She rushed out of the room again and began to bustle about and tidy her chamber, and called Peggy.

"Look out, wench! Now he's coming!"

"Whom do you mean, mother?"

"Why, your sweetheart, of course."

"Eh, you don't say so, mother!" cried Peggy, and became so pleased that she was quite beside herself.

And now they set to work to tidy and smarten themselves, and prepare something for the stranger who was coming up the road, for such a rare guest one could not expect every day.

In the meantime the suitor for they had guessed quite rightly, a suitor it was had entered the room, and greeted the man with a "good evening."

"Good evening," replied the man, and asked him to sit down. "One needs some rest, when one has walked up a steep hill like this," he said.

But the lad needed some pressing, it seemed.

He did not know if he would be welcome, he said; and so it was best that he should remain at the door till he had told his errand.

The man felt his heart leaping in his breast.

For many years he had longed for someone to come on such an errand, for he knew well what the lad was after.

"What errand might that be?" he asked.

"Well, it's rather an important matter," said the suitor.

The man called his wife, and she came in and greeted the lad.

"Excuse me but may I ask," said the lad, "if there is a nice young girl here called Margaret?"

Yes, indeed there was their only child, a big grown-up wench! And so clever with her hands she could sew and

stitch, spin and weave, both plain and striped and patterned and she wasn't above taking off her gold ring and giving a hand at heavy work, if it was wanted. And then she was their only daughter, and was going to have the whole of the farm, the oxen and cows, the goats and sheep, the silver and gold, the clothes, the money and woven stuffs of all kinds as her dowry.

Both the man and his wife went on jabbering and chattering at the same time, and got so excited that it was with the greatest difficulty that the suitor was allowed to explain his errand.

She was just the girl he was looking out for, he said, and as he had no spokesman with him he would have to speak for himself, and tell them how he was off at home, and hear if they, who were her parents, would be satisfied with a son-in-law like him, he said. "Well, that is quite possible," said the man. He himself was now so old and worn out and broken down with rheumatics that he wanted someone to take over the farm, so he could not very well refuse a good offer, he said. But one could not talk over such matters at the door; the lad must come inside, and partake of what his wife could offer.

"But this much I may say, at any rate," said the man, trying to put on a grand air, "that many have already spoken to me on the subject; but it is you, do you see, just you, that I have been waiting for," he said; "and you may reckon yourself lucky that you have not come too late. And, mother, you see, she agrees with everything I say or, what do you think, mother?"

She had so much to attend to and look after, she said, but she was of the same mind as her husband. "And Peggy," said the man, "she is a good and obedient child. She does everything we tell her."

Peggy stood outside the door and kept it ajar, while she peeped through the opening, and would have said "yes" there and then, if it had only been proper. But she could not show

herself too willing, either.

The man and the suitor now began to help themselves to the refreshments, and to talk about their farms and about the harvest, and about the number of cattle each of them could feed during the winter on their farms, and such things, while the wife was busy smartening up Peggy, whose head was so full of courtship and marriage that she was quite unfit to do anything for herself. But when she was dressed she looked very smart and shone like the sun, and then, as you may guess, she was to go in and see her suitor.

But she could not go in empty handed, and so her mother hit upon the idea for women are always so artful that Peggy should go down to the cellar for beer, and then come in to her suitor with the large silver cup in her hand.

While she was on her way down to the cellar she began thinking that when she was married it might easily happen that she, like others, would have a child; and then she went on thinking and pondering what she should call her first baby, for a name it must have, of course; but what should it be? Yes, what ought she to call it?

But she could not make up her mind about it, although she thought and pondered all she could, till at last she quite forgot both the cellar and the beer, the suitor and the rest of the world. It was really not an easy matter either, for she could not know whether it would be a boy or a girl; but whatever it might be, the baby must have a name, and a really fine name, too, you must know.

But what should it be?

Yes, what should baby's name be?

While she stood there meditating her father and the suitor sat in the room partaking of the refreshments before them smoked ham and cheese and other good things which the wife had in her cupboard.

One oatmeal cake after the other disappeared while they were waiting for the beer and the girl, and they began to think

that the wolves must have got hold of her, since she did not come back.

"She is so shy and childish, that girl of mine," said the wife, "and I shouldn't wonder if she is afraid to come in. I shall have to fetch her, I suppose!"

And she hurried out to look for Peggy, whom she found standing outside the cellar-door, pondering and thinking.

"You are like Noah's raven, you are! How can a big wench like you stand there like that? I do believe you have lost your senses! Why don't you go in to your suitor?" said her mother. "What is it you are thinking about?"

"Oh, my dear mother," said Peggy, "I am just thinking what my first baby should be called. Can you tell me, mother?"

"Bless me, girl, if I can," said the woman; "but a name it must have, the little angel and a fine name it must be. But what shall it be? Let me see."

And she too began thinking and remained standing there.

As neither his daughter nor his wife came back the man became uneasy.

"This is really too bad," he said, "that Peggy should make herself so precious. She is not generally so contrary, and I am sure that she'll say 'yes' just as willingly as we do," he said. "I suppose I must go myself and fetch her."

And so he limped out of the room as quickly as he could.

When he saw his wife and daughter standing outside the cellar-door he burst into a furious rage and shouted:

"I think you must have gone out of your minds, standing there like a pair of sundials, while you have got a suitor in the house! Just come in, will you?"

"Yes, yes," said the wife; "but I must tell you, we have been trying to settle a very ticklish business."

"Well, then, what might that be?" said the man.

"Why, what shall Peggy's first baby be called?"

"Oh, is that it?" said the man, looking as tender and pleased as if he had the youngster on his arm. "So, that's it, is

it? Well, the baby must have a really fine name, the little angel! But what shall we call it? Yes, what shall we call it?"

He began to scratch his head and to think and ponder. He did not know either whether it would be a boy or a girl, but no matter which it was, the baby must have a name, and what should it be called? yes, what should they call it?

He couldn't make up his mind either, and so he remained standing there as well.

In the meantime the suitor had been sitting all by himself in the parlour, and was getting tired of waiting. So, as neither the maiden nor the old folks came back, he thought they must be doing it purposely, and had made up their minds to make a fool of him; whereupon he became furious, and took his hat and went.

When he came out into the farmyard he saw them all three standing outside the cellar-door.

The man caught sight of him first. "I must tell you, my lad," he said, "we have been standing here thinking over a very important matter, and that is, what shall Peggy's first baby be called?"

"Good gracious!" said the suitor, "that'll surely bear thinking over, and you may have to think it over for a long time," he said, "for the baby will not be called after me! That's as certain as the sun rose this morning." And with that he lifted his hat and went down the hill.

The old man began to shout after him, but it was of no use. He went down the road and never came back again.

What happened afterwards I have not heard a word about; but if a suitor ever did call again, they would, no doubt, take care not to lose their heads over such useless speculations, for we all know that there is a time for everything, and that we should strike while the iron is hot.

Twigmuntus, Cowbelliantus, Perchnosius

Once upon a time there was a king who was so very learned that no parson in the whole world could surpass him; in fact, he was so learned that ordinary folks could hardly understand what he said, nor could he understand them either. But in order to have someone to talk with, he procured seven wise professors, who were not quite so learned as himself, but who were just able to interpret his learned sayings, so that people could apprehend them, and who could twist and turn about the talk of ordinary folk so that it became sufficiently learned and complicated for the king to understand it.

The king had no son, but he had a daughter, and in order that she should be happily married, and the country governed according to the fundamental principles of his learning, he issued an edict that he who was so learned as to put the king and his professors to silence should have his daughter and half the kingdom there and then. But anyone who attempted the task and did not succeed, should lose his head for having dared to exchange words with the king.

That was no joke; but the princess was so fair and beautiful that it was no joke to gaze at her either. And the king did not keep her caged up, for anyone who wished could see her.

There came princes and counts and barons and parsons and doctors, and learned persons from all quarters of the world; and no sooner did they see the princess than they one and all wanted to try their luck. But, however learned they were, their learning never proved sufficient, and every one of them lost his head.

Over in a corner of the kingdom there lived a farmer, who had a son. This lad was not stupid; he was quick of

apprehension and sharp witted, and he was not afraid of anything.

When the king's edict came to this out-of-the-way place, and the parson had read it from the pulpit, the lad wanted to try his luck. "He who nothing risks, nothing wins," thought the lad; and so he went to the parson and told him that if he would give him lessons in the evenings, he would work for the parson in the daytime, but he wanted to become so learned that he could try a bout with the king and his professors.

"Whoever means to compete with them must be able to do something more than munch bread," said the parson.

"That may be," said the lad; "but I'll try my luck."

The parson thought, of course, that he was mad; but when he could get such a clever hand to work for him only for his keep, he thought he could not very well say no; and so the lad got what he wanted.

He worked for the parson in the daytime, and the parson read with him in the evening; and in this way they went on for some time, but at last the lad grew tired of his books.

"I am not going to sit here and read and grind away, and lose what few wits I have," he said; "and it won't be of much help either, for if you are lucky things will come right of themselves, and if you are not lucky you'll never make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

And with this he pitched the books on the shelf and went his way.

All at once he came to a large forest, where the trees and the bushes were so thick that it was with difficulty he could get along. While he was thus pushing his way through, he began wondering what he should say when he came to the king's palace, and how best he could make use of the learning he had picked up from the parson. All of a sudden the twig of a tree struck him across his mouth, so that his teeth rattled.

"That is Twigmuntus," he said.

A little while after he came to a meadow, where a cow

was standing bellowing so furiously that it almost deafened him.

"That is Cowbelliantus," he said.

He then came to a river; but as there was neither bridge nor planks across it, he had to put his clothes on his head and swim across.

While he was swimming a perch came and bit him on the nose.

"That is Perchnosius," he said.

At last he came to the king's palace, where things did not look at all pleasant, for there were men's heads stuck on long stakes round about, and they grinned so horribly that they were enough to frighten anyone out of his wits. But the lad was not easily frightened.

"God's peace!" he said, and raised his cap. "There you stick and grin at me; but who knows if I may not be keeping you company before the day is over, and be grinning with you at others? But if I happen to be alive, you shall not stick there any longer gaping at people," he said.

So he went up to the palace and knocked at the gate.

The guard came out and asked what he wanted.

"I have come to try my luck with the princess," said the lad.

"You?" said the guard, "well, you're a likely one, you are! Have you lost your senses? There have been princes and counts and barons and parsons and doctors and learned persons here, and all of them have had to pay with their heads for that pleasure; and yet you think you'll succeed!" he said.

"I should say it is no concern of yours," said the lad; "just open the gate, and you'll see one who's not afraid of anything."

But the guard would not let him in.

"Do as I tell you," said the lad, "or there'll be a fine to-do!"

But the guard would not.

The lad then seized him by the collar and flung him against the wall, so that it creaked; and then he walked straight in to the king, who sat in his parlour with all his seven professors about him. Their faces were long and thin, and they looked like puny sickly persons about to die. They were sitting with their heads on one side meditating and staring at the floor.

Then one of them, who looked up, asked the lad in ordinary language: "Who are you?"

"A suitor," said the lad.

"Do you want to try for the princess's hand?"

"Well, that's about it!" said the lad.

"Have you lost your wits? There have been princes and counts and barons and parsons and doctors and learned persons here, and all of them have gone headless away; so you had better turn about and get away while your head is on your shoulders," he said.

"Don't trouble yourself on that account, but rather think of the head on your own shoulders," said the lad. "You look after yours, and I'll take care of mine! So just begin, and let me hear how much wit you have got, for I don't think you look so very clever," he said.

The first professor then began a long harangue of gibberish; and when he had finished the second went on; and then the third; and in this way they continued till at length it was the turn of the seventh. The lad did not understand a single word of it all, but he didn't lose courage for all that. He only nodded his approval to all of it.

When the last had finished his harangue he asked:

"Can you reply to that?"

"That's easy enough," said the lad. "Why, when I was in my cradle and in my go-cart I could twist my mouth about and prate and jabber like you," he said. "But since you are so terribly learned, I'll put a question to you, and that shall not be a long one:

"Twigmuntus, Cowbelliantus, Perchnosius? Can you give me an answer to that?"

And now you should have seen how they stretched their necks and strained their ears. They put on their spectacles and began to look into their books and turn over the leaves.

But while they were searching and meditating, the lad put his hands in his trouser pockets, and looked so frank and fearless that they could not help admiring him, and wondering that one who was so young could be so learned and yet look just like other people.

"Well, how are you getting on?" said the lad. "Cannot all your learning help you to open your mouths, so that I can have an answer to my question?" he said.

Then they began to ponder and meditate, and then they glanced at the ceiling, and then they stared at the walls, and then they fixed their eyes upon the floor. But they could not give him any answer, nor could the king himself, although he was much more learned than all the others together. They had to give it up, and the lad got the princess and half the kingdom. This he ruled in his own way, and if it did not fare better, it did not fare worse for him than for the king with all his fundamental principles.

Tales from Norway

East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon

Once on a time there was a poor husbandman who had so many children that he hadn't much of either food or clothing to give them. Pretty children they all were, but the prettiest was the youngest daughter, who was so lovely there was no end to her loveliness.

So one day, 'twas on a Thursday evening late at the fall of the year, the weather was so wild and rough outside, and it was so cruelly dark, and rain fell and wind blew, till the walls of the cottage shook again. There they all sat round the fire busy with this thing and that. But just then, all at once something gave three taps on the window-pane. Then the father went out to see what was the matter; and, when he got out of doors, what should he see but a great big White Bear.

"Good evening to you!" said the White Bear.

"The same to you," said the man.

"Will you give me your youngest daughter? If you will, I'll make you as rich as you are now poor," said the Bear.

Well, the man would not be at all sorry to be so rich; but still he thought he must have a bit of a talk with his daughter first; so he went in and told them how there was a great White Bear waiting outside, who had given his word to make them so rich if he could only have the youngest daughter.

The lassie said "No!" outright. Nothing could get her to say anything else; so the man went out and settled it with the White Bear, that he should come again the next Thursday evening and get an answer. Meantime he talked his daughter over, and kept on telling her of all the riches they would get, and how well off she would be herself; and so at last she thought better of it, and washed and mended her rags, made

herself as smart as she could, and was ready to start. I can't say her packing gave her much trouble.

Next Thursday evening came the White Bear to fetch her, and she got upon his back with her bundle, and off they went. So, when they had gone a bit of the way, the White Bear said:

"Are you afraid?"

No! she wasn't.

"Well! mind and hold tight by my shaggy coat, and then there's nothing to fear," said the Bear.

So she rode a long, long way, till they came to a great steep hill. There, on the face of it, the White Bear gave a knock, and a door opened, and they came into a castle, where there were many rooms all lit up; rooms gleaming with silver and gold; and there too was a table ready laid, and it was all as grand as grand could be. Then the White Bear gave her a silver bell; and when she wanted anything, she was only to ring it, and she would get it at once.

Well, after she had eaten and drunk, and evening wore on, she got sleepy after her journey, and thought she would like to go to bed, so she rang the bell; and she had scarce taken hold of it before she came into a chamber, where there was a bed made, as fair and white as anyone would wish to sleep in, with silken pillows and curtains and gold fringe. All that was in the room was gold or silver; but when she had gone to bed, and put out the light, a man came and laid himself alongside her. That was the White Bear, who threw off his beast shape at night; but she never saw him, for he always came after she had put out the light, and before the day dawned he was up and off again. So things went on happily for a while, but at last she began to get silent and sorrowful; for there she went about all day alone, and she longed to go home to see her father and mother, and brothers and sisters. So one day, when the White Bear asked what it was that she lacked, she said it was so dull and lonely there, and how she

longed to go home to see her father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and that was why she was so sad and sorrowful, because she couldn't get to them.

"Well, well!" said the Bear, "perhaps there's a cure for all this; but you must promise me one thing, not to talk alone with your mother, but only when the rest are by to hear; for she'll take you by the hand and try to lead you into a room alone to talk; but you must mind and not do that, else you'll bring bad luck on both of us."

So one Sunday the White Bear came and said, now they could set off to see her father and mother. Well, off they started, she sitting on his back; and they went far and long. At last they came to a grand house, and there her brothers and sisters were running about out of doors at play, and everything was so pretty, 'twas a joy to see.

"This is where your father and mother live now," said the White Bear, "but don't forget what I told you, else you'll make us both unlucky."

No! bless her, she'd not forget; and when she had reached the house, the White Bear turned right about and left her.

Then when she went in to see her father and mother, there was such joy, there was no end to it. None of them thought they could thank her enough for all she had done for them. Now, they had everything they wished, as good as good could be, and they all wanted to know how she got on where she lived.

Well, she said, it was very good to live where she did; she had all she wished. What she said beside I don't know; but I don't think any of them had the right end of the stick, or that they got much out of her. So in the afternoon, after they had done dinner, all happened as the White Bear had said. Her mother wanted to talk with her alone in her bedroom; but she minded what the White Bear had said, and wouldn't go upstairs.

"Oh! what we have to talk about, will keep," she said, and

put her mother off. But somehow or other, her mother got round her at last, and she had to tell her the whole story. So she said, how every night, when she had gone to bed, a man came and lay down beside her as soon as she had put out the light, and how she never saw him, because he was always up and away before the morning dawned; and how she went about woeful and sorrowing, for she thought she should so like to see him, and how all day long she walked about there alone, and how dull, and dreary, and lonesome it was.

"My!" said her mother; "it may well be a Troll you slept with! But now I'll teach you a lesson how to set eyes on him. I'll give you a bit of candle, which you can carry home in your bosom; just light that while he is asleep, but take care not to drop the tallow on him."

Yes! she took the candle and hid it in her bosom, and as night drew on, the White Bear came and fetched her away.

But when they had gone a bit of the way, the White Bear asked if all hadn't happened as he had said?

Well, she couldn't say it hadn't.

"Now, mind," said he, "if you have listened to your mother's advice, you have brought bad luck on us both, and then, all that has passed between us will be as nothing."

"No," she said, "she hadn't listened to her mother's advice."

So when she reached home, and had gone to bed, it was the old story over again. There came a man and lay down beside her; but at dead of night, when she heard he slept, she got up and struck a light, lit the candle, and let the light shine on him, and so she saw that he was the loveliest Prince one ever set eyes on, and she fell so deep in love with him on the spot, that she thought she couldn't live if she didn't give him a kiss there and then. And so she did, but as she kissed him, she dropped three hot drops of tallow on his shirt, and he woke up.

"What have you done?" he cried; "now you have made us

both unlucky, for had you held out only this one year, I had been freed. For I have a stepmother who has bewitched me, so that I am a White Bear by day, and a Man by night. But now all ties are snapt between us; now I must set off from you to her. She lives in a castle which stands East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon, and there, too, is a Princess, with a nose three ells long, and she's the wife I must have now."

She wept and took it ill, but there was no help for it; go he must.

Then she asked if she mightn't go with him?

No, she mightn't.

"Tell me the way then," she said; "and I'll search you out; that surely I may get leave to do."

"Yes, she might do that," he said; "but there was no way to that place. It lay East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon, and thither she'd never find her way."

So next morning, when she woke up, both Prince and castle were gone, and then she lay on a little green patch, in the midst of the gloomy thick wood, and by her side lay the same bundle of rags she had brought with her from her old home.

So when she had rubbed the sleep out of her eyes, and wept till she was tired, she set out on her way, and walked many, many days, till she came to a lofty crag. Under it sat an old hag, and played with a gold apple which she tossed about. Her the lassie asked if she knew the way to the Prince, who lived with his stepmother in the castle, that lay East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon, and who was to marry the Princess, with a nose three ells long.

"How did you come to know about him?" asked the old hag; "but maybe you are the lassie who ought to have had him?"

Yes, she was.

"So, so; it's you, is it?" said the old hag. "Well, all I know about him is, that he lives in the castle that lies East o' the

Sun and West o' the Moon, and thither you'll come, late or never; but still you may have the loan of my horse, and on him you can ride to my next neighbor; maybe she'll be able to tell you; and when you get there, just give the horse a switch under the left ear, and beg him to be off home; and, stay, this gold apple you may take with you."

So she got upon the horse, and rode a long, long time, till she came to another crag, under which sat another old hag, with a gold carding-comb. Here the lassie asked if she knew the way to the castle that lay East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon, and she answered, like the first old hag, that she knew nothing about it, except it was east o' the sun and west o' the moon.

"And thither you'll come, late or never; but you shall have the loan of my horse to my next neighbor; maybe she'll tell you all about it; and when you get there, just switch the horse under the left ear, and beg him to be off home."

And this old hag gave her the golden carding-comb; it might be she'd find the use for it, she said. So the lassie got up on the horse, and rode a far, far way, and a weary time; and so at last she came to another great crag, under which sat another old hag, spinning with a golden spinning-wheel. Here, too, she asked if she knew the way to the Prince, and where the castle was that lay East o' the Sun and West a' the Moon. So it was the same thing over again.

"Maybe it's you who ought to have had the Prince?" said the old hag.

Yes, it was.

But she, too, didn't know the way a bit better than the other two; "east o' the sun and west o' the moon it was," she knew — that was all.

"And thither you'll come, late or never; but I'll lend you my horse, and then I think you'd best ride to the East Wind and ask him; maybe he knows those parts, and can blow you thither. But when you get to him, you need only give the

horse a switch under the left ear, and he'll trot home of himself."

And so, too, she gave her the gold spinning-wheel. "Maybe you'll find a use for it," said the old hag.

Then on she rode many, many days, a weary time, before she got to the East Wind's house, but at last she did reach it, and then she asked the East Wind if he could tell her the way to the Prince who dwelt east o' the sun and west o' the moon. Yes, the East Wind had often heard tell of it, the Prince, and the castle, but he couldn't tell the way, for he had never blown so far.

"But, if you will, I'll go with you to my brother, the West Wind, maybe he knows, for he's much stronger. So, if you will just get on my back, I'll carry you thither."

Yes, she got on his back, and I should just think they went briskly along.

So when they got there, they went into the West Wind's house, and the East Wind said the lassie he had brought was the one who ought to have had the Prince who lived in the castle East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon; and so she had set out to seek him, and how he had come with her, and would be glad to know if the West Wind knew how to get to the castle.

"Nay," said the West Wind, "so far I've never blown; but if you will, I'll go with you to our brother, the South Wind, for he's much stronger than either of us, and he has flapped his wings far and wide. Maybe he'll tell you. You can get on my back, and I'll carry you to him."

Yes, she got on his back, and so they traveled to the South Wind, and weren't so very long on the way, I should think.

When they got there, the West Wind asked him if he could tell her the way to the castle that lay East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon, for it was she who ought to have had the Prince who lived there.

"You don't say so. That's she, is it?" said the South Wind.

"Well, I have blustered about in most places in my time, but so far have I never blown; but if you will, I'll take you to my brother the North Wind; he is the oldest and strongest of the whole lot of us, and if he don't know where it is, you'll never find anyone in the world to tell you. You can get on my back, and I'll carry you thither."

Yes, she got on his back, and away he went from his house at a fine rate. And this time, too, she wasn't long on her way.

So when they got to the North Wind's house, he was so wild and cross, cold puffs came from him a long way off.

"Blast you both, what do you want?" he roared out to them ever so far off, so that it struck them with an icy shiver.

"Well," said the South Wind, "you needn't be so foul-mouthed, for here I am, your brother, the South Wind, and here is the lassie who ought to have had the Prince who dwells in the castle that lies East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon, and now she wants to ask you if you ever were there, and can tell her the way, for she would be so glad to find him again."

"Yes, I know well enough where it is," said the North Wind; "once in my life I blew an aspen-leaf thither, but I was so tired I couldn't blow a puff for ever so many days after. But if you really wish to go thither, and aren't afraid to come along with me, I'll take you on my back and see if I can blow you thither."

Yes, with all her heart; she must and would get thither if it were possible in any way; and as for fear, however madly he went, she wouldn't be at all afraid.

"Very well then," said the North Wind, "but you must sleep here tonight, for we must have the whole day before us if we're to get thither at all."

Early next morning the North Wind woke her, and puffed himself up, and blew himself out, and made himself so stout and big, 'twas gruesome to look at him; and so off they went, high up through the air, as if they would never stop till they got to the world's end.

Down here below there was such a storm; it threw down long tracts of wood and many houses, and when it swept over the great sea ships foundered by hundreds.

So they tore on and on—no one can believe how far they went—and all the while they still went over the sea, and the North Wind got more and more weary, and so out of breath he could scarce bring out a puff, and his wings drooped and drooped, till at last he sunk so low that the crests of the waves dashed over his heels.

"Are you afraid?" said the North Wind.

No, she wasn't.

But they weren't very far from land; and the North Wind has still so much strength left in him that he managed to throw her up on the shore under the windows of the castle which lay East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon; but then he was so weak and worn out, he had to stay there and rest many days before he could get home again.

Next morning the lassie sat down under the castle window, and began to play with the gold apple; and the first person she saw was the Long-nose who was to have the Prince.

"What do you want for your gold apple, you lassie?" said the Long-nose, and threw up the window.

"It's not for sale for gold or money," said the lassie.

"If it's not for sale for gold or money, what is it that you will sell it for? You may name your own price," said the Princess.

"Well, if I may get to the Prince, who lives here, and be with him tonight, you shall have it," said the lassie whom the North Wind had brought.

Yes, she might; that could be done. So the Princess got the gold apple; but when the lassie came up to the Prince's bedroom at night he was fast asleep; she called him and shook him, and between whiles she wept sore; but all she could do she couldn't wake him up. Next morning, as soon as day broke, came the Princess with the long nose, and drove her

out again.

So, in the daytime, she sat down under the castle windows and began to card with her golden carding-comb, and the same thing happened. The Princess asked what she wanted for it; and she said it wasn't for sale for gold or money, but if she might get leave to go up to the Prince and be with him that night, the Princess should have it. But when she went up, she found him fast asleep again, and all she called, and all she shook, and wept, and prayed, she couldn't get life into him; and as soon as the first gray peep of day came, then came the Princess with the long nose, and chased her out again.

So, in the daytime, the lassie sat down outside under the castle window, and began to spin with her golden spinning-wheel, and that, too, the Princess with the long nose wanted to have. So she threw up the window and asked what she wanted for it. The lassie said, as she had said twice before, it wasn't for sale for gold or money; but if she might go up to the Prince who was there, and be with him alone that night, she might have it.

Yes, she might do that and welcome. But now you must know there were some Christian folk who had been carried off thither, and as they sat in their room, which was next the Prince, they had heard how a woman had been in there, and wept and prayed, and called to him two nights running, and they told that to the Prince.

That evening, when the Princess came with her sleepy drink, the Prince made as if he drank, but threw it over his shoulder, for he could guess it was a sleepy drink. So, when the lassie came in, she found the Prince wide awake; and then she told him the whole story how she had come thither.

"Ah," said the Prince, "you've just come in the very nick of time, for tomorrow is to be our wedding-day; but now I won't have the Long-nose, and you are the only woman in the world who can set me free. I'll say I want to see what my wife is fit for, and beg her to wash the shirt which has the three

spots of tallow on it; she'll say yes, for she doesn't know 'tis you who put them there; but that's a work only for Christian folk, and not for such a pack of Trolls, and so I'll say that I won't have any other for my bride than the woman who can wash them out, and ask you to do it."

So there was great joy and love between them all that night. But next day, when the wedding was to be, the Prince said:

"First of all, I'd like to see what my bride is fit for."

"Yes!" said the stepmother, with all her heart.

"Well," said the Prince, "I've got a fine shirt which I'd like for my wedding shirt, but somehow or other it has got three spots of tallow on it, which I must have washed out; and I have sworn never to take any other bride than the woman who's able to do that. If she can't, she's not worth having."

Well, that was no great thing they said, so they agreed, and she with the long nose began to wash away as hard as she could, but the more she rubbed and scrubbed, the bigger the spots grew.

"Ah!" said the old hag, her mother, "you can't wash; let me try."

But she hadn't long taken the shirt in hand, before it got far worse than ever, and with all her rubbing, and wringing, and scrubbing, the spots grew bigger and blacker, and the darker and uglier was the shirt.

Then all the other Trolls began to wash, but the longer it lasted, the blacker and uglier the shirt grew, till at last it was as black all over as if it had been up the chimney.

"Ah!" said the Prince, "you're none of you worth a straw; you can't wash. Why there, outside, sits a beggar lassie, I'll be bound she knows how to wash better than the whole lot of you. Come in, Lassie!" he shouted.

Well, in she came.

"Can you wash this shirt clean, lassie, you?" said he.

"I don't know," she said, "but I think I can." And almost

before she had taken it and dipped it in the water, it was as white as driven snow, and whiter still.

"Yes, you are the lassie for me," said the Prince.

At that the old hag flew into such a rage, she burst on the spot, and the Princess with the long nose after her, and the whole pack of Trolls after her—at least I've never heard a word about them since.

As for the Prince and Princess, they set free all the poor Christian folk who had been carried off and shut up there; and they took with them all the silver and gold, and flitted away as far as they could from the castle that lay East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon.

True and Untrue

Once on a time there were two brothers; one was called True, and the other Untrue. True was always upright and good towards all, but Untrue was bad and full of lies, so that no one could believe what he said. Their mother was a widow, and hadn't much to live on; so when her sons had grown up, she was forced to send them away that they might earn their bread in the world. Each got a little scrip with some food in it, and then they went their way.

Now, when they had walked till evening, they sat down on a windfall in the wood, and took out their scrips, for they were hungry after walking the whole day, and thought a morsel of food would be sweet enough.

"If you're of my mind," said Untrue, "I think we had better eat out of your scrip, so long as there is anything in it, and after that we can take to mine."

Yes! True was well pleased with this, so they fell to eating, but Untrue got all the best bits, and stuffed himself with them, while True got only the burnt crusts and scraps.

Next morning they broke their fast off True's food, and they dined off it too, and then there was nothing left in his scrip. So when they had walked till late at night, and were ready to eat again. True wanted to eat out of his brother's scrip, but Untrue said "No," the food was his, and he had only enough for himself.

"Nay! but you know you ate out of my scrip so long as there was anything in it," said True.

"All very line, I dare say," answered Untrue; "but if you are such a fool as to let others eat up your food before your face, you must make the best of it; for now all you have to do

is to sit here and starve."

"Very well!" said True, "you're Untrue by name and untrue by nature; so you have been, and so you will be all your life long."

Now when Untrue heard this, he flew into a rage, and rushed at his brother, and plucked out both his eyes. "Now, try if you can see whether folk are untrue or not, you blind buzzard!" and so saying, he ran away and left him.

Poor True! there he went, walking along and feeling his way through the thick wood. Blind and alone, he scarce knew which way to turn, when all at once he caught hold of the trunk of a great bushy lime-tree; so he thought he would climb up into it, and sit there till the night was over for fear of the wild beasts.

"When the birds begin to sing," he said to himself, "then I shall know it is day, and I can try to grope my way farther on." So he climbed up into the lime-tree. After he had sat there a little time, he heard how someone came and began to make a stir and clatter under the tree, and soon after others came; and when they began to greet one another, he found out it was Bruin the bear, and Graylegs the wolf, and Slyboots the fox, and Longears the hare, who had come to keep St. John's eve under the tree. So they began to eat and drink, and be merry; and when they had done eating they fell to gossipping together. At last the Fox said:

"Sha'n't we, each of us, tell a little story while we sit here?"

Well! the others had nothing against that. It would be good fun, they said, and the Bear began; for you may fancy he was king of the company.

"The king of England," said Bruin, "has such bad eyesight, that he can scarce see a yard before him; but if he only came to this lime-tree in the morning, while the dew is still on the leaves, and took and rubbed his eyes with the dew, he would get back his sight as good as ever."

"Very true!" said Graylegs. "The king of England has a

deaf and dumb daughter too; but if he only knew what I know, he would soon cure her. Last year she went to the communion. She let a crumb of the bread fall out of her mouth, and a great toad came and swallowed it down; but if they only dug up the chancel floor they would find the toad sitting right under the altar rails, with the bread still sticking in his throat. If they were to cut the toad open and take and give the bread to the princess, she would be like other folk again as to her speech and hearing."

"That is all very well," said the Fox; "but if the king of England knew what I know, he would not be so badly off for water in his palace; for under the great stone, in his palace-yard, is a spring of the clearest water one could wish for, if he only knew to dig for it there."

"Ah!" said the hare in a small voice; "the king of England has the finest orchard in the whole land, but it does not bear so much as a crab, for there lies a heavy gold chain in three turns round the orchard. If he got that dug up, there would not be a garden like it for bearing in all his kingdom."

"Very true, I dare say," said the Fox; "but now it's getting very late, and we may as well go home." So they all went away together. After they were gone. True fell asleep as he sat up in the tree; but when the birds began to sing at dawn, he woke up, and took the dew from the leaves, and rubbed his eyes with it, and so got his sight back as good as it was before Untrue plucked his eyes out. Then he went straight to the king of England's palace, and begged for work, and got it on the spot. So one day the king came out into the palace-yard, and when he had walked about a bit, he wanted to drink out of his pump; for you must know the day was hot, and the king very thirsty; but when they poured him out a glass, it was so muddy, and nasty, and foul, that the king got quite vexed.

"I don't think there's ever a man in my whole kingdom who has such bad water in his yard as I, and yet I bring it in pipes from far over hill and dale," cried out the king.

"Like enough, your Majesty," said True, "but if you would let me have some men to help me to dig up this great stone which lies here in the middle of your yard, you would soon see good water, and plenty of it."

Well! the king was willing enough; and they had scarcely got the stone well out, and dug under it a while, before a jet of water sprang out high up into the air, as clear and full as if it came out of a conduit, and clearer water was not to be found in all England.

A little while after the king was out in his palace-yard again, and there came a great hawk flying after his chickens, and all the king's men began to clap their hands and bawl out, "There he flies! There he flies!" The king caught up his gun and tried to shoot the hawk, but he couldn't see so far, so he fell into great grief.

"Would to Heaven," he said, "there was anyone who could tell me a cure for my eyes; for I think I shall soon go quite blind!"

"I can tell you one soon enough," said True; and then he told the king what he had done to cure his own eyes, and the king set off that very afternoon to the lime-tree, as you may fancy, and his eyes were quite cured as soon as he rubbed them with the dew which was on the leaves in the morning. From that time forth there was no one whom the king held so dear as True, and he had to be with him wherever he went, both at home and abroad.

So one day as they were walking together in the orchard, the king said, "I can't tell how it is! There isn't a man in England spends so much on his orchard as I, and yet I can't get one of the trees to bear so much as a crab."

"Well! well!" said True; "if I may have what lies three times twisted round your orchard and men to dig it up, your orchard will bear well enough."

Yes! the king was quite willing, so True got men and began to dig, and at last he dug up the whole gold chain. Now

True was a rich man, far richer indeed than the king himself, but still the king was well pleased, for his orchard bore so that the boughs of the trees hung down to the ground and such sweet apples and pears nobody had ever tasted.

Another day too the king and True were walking about, and talking together, when the princess passed them, and the king was quite downcast when he saw her.

"Isn't it a pity, now, that so lovely a princess as mine should want speech and hearing?" he said to True.

"Aye, but there is a cure for that," said True.

When the king heard that, he was so glad that he promised him the princess to wife, and half his kingdom into the bargain, if he could get her right again. So True took a few men, and went into the church, and dug up the toad which sat under the altar-rails. Then he cut open the toad, and took out the bread and gave it to the king's daughter; and from that hour she got back her speech, and could talk like other people.

Now True was to have the princess, and they got ready for the bridal feast, and such a feast had never been seen before; it was the talk of the whole land. Just as they were in the midst of dancing the bridal-dance, in came a beggar lad, and begged for a morsel of food, and he was so ragged and wretched that everyone crossed themselves when they looked at him; but True knew him at once, and saw that it was Untrue, his brother.

"Do you know me again?" said True.

"Oh! where should such a one as I ever have seen so great a lord," said Untrue.

"Still you have seen me before," said True. "It was I whose eyes you plucked out a year ago this very day. Untrue by name, and untrue by nature. So I said before, and so I say now; but you are still my brother, and so you shall have some food. After that, you may go to the lime-tree where I sat last year; if you hear anything that can do you good, you will be

lucky."

So Untrue did not wait to be told twice. "If True has got so much good by sitting in the lime-tree, that in one year he has come to be king over half England, what good may not I get?" he thought. So he set off and climbed up into the lime-tree. He had not sat there long, before all the beasts came as before, and ate and drank, and kept St. John's eve under the tree. When they had left off eating, the Fox wished that they should begin to tell stories, and Untrue got ready to listen with all his might, till his ears were almost fit to fall off. But Bruin the bear was surly, and growled and said:

"Someone has been chattering about what we said last year, and so now we will hold our tongues about what we know;" and with that the beasts bid one another "Good night," and parted, and Untrue was just as wise as he was before, and the reason was, that his name was Untrue, and his nature untrue too.

Boots, Who Made the Princess Say, "That's a Story"

Once on a time there was a King who had a daughter, and she was such a dreadful story-teller that the like of her was not to be found far or near. So the King gave out, that if any one could tell such a string of lies as would get her to say, "That's a story," he should have her to wife, and half the kingdom besides. Well, many came, as you may fancy, to try their luck, for everyone would have been very glad to have the Princess, to say nothing of the kingdom; but they all cut a sorry figure, for the Princess was so given to story-telling, that all their lies went in at one ear and out of the other. Among the rest came three brothers to try their luck, and the two elder went first, but they fared no better than those who had gone before them. Last of all the third, Boots, set off and found the Princess in the farm-yard.

"Good-morning," he said, "and thank you for nothing."

"Good morning," said she, "and the same to you."

Then she went on:

"You haven't such a fine farm-yard as ours, I'll be bound; for when two shepherds stand, one at each end of it, and blow their ram's horns, the one can't hear the other."

"Haven't we though!" answered Boots; "ours is far bigger; for when a cow begins to go with calf at end of it, she doesn't get to the other end before the time to drop her calf is come."

"I dare say!" said the Princess. "Well, but you haven't such a big ox, after all, as ours yonder; for when two men sit, one on each horn, they can't touch each other with a twenty-foot rule."

"Stuff!" said Boots; "is that all? why, we have an ox who

is so big, that when two men sit, one on each horn, and each blows his great mountain-trumpet, they can't hear one another."

"I dare say!" said the Princess; "but you haven't so much milk as we, I'll be bound; for we milk our kine into great pails, and carry them indoors, and empty them into great tubs, and so we make great, great cheeses."

"Oh! you do, do you?" said Boots. "Well, we milk ours into great tubs, and then we put them in carts and drive them indoors, and then we turn them out into great brewing vats, and so we make cheeses as big as a great house. We had, too, a dun mare to tread the cheese well together when it was making; but once she tumbled down into the cheese, and we lost her; and after we had eaten at this cheese seven years, we came upon a great dun mare, alive and kicking. Well, once after that I was going to drive this mare to the mill, and her backbone snapped in two; but I wasn't put out, not I, for I took a spruce sapling, and put it into her for a backbone, and she had no other backbone all the while we had her. But the sapling grew up into such a tall tree, that I climbed right up to heaven by it, and when I got there, I saw the Virgin Mary sitting and spinning the foam of the sea into pig's-bristle ropes; but just then the spruce-fir broke short off and I couldn't get down again; so the Virgin Mary let me down by one of the ropes, and down I slipped straight into a fox's hole, and who should sit there but my mother and your father cobbling shoes; and just as I stepped in, my mother gave your father such a box on the ear, that it made his whiskers curl."

"That's a story!" said the Princess; "my father never did any such thing in all his born days!"

So Boots got the Princess to wife, and half the kingdom besides.

Gudbrand on the Hill-Side

Once on a time there was a man whose name was Gudbrand; he had a farm which lay far, far away upon a hill-side, and so they called him Gudbrand on the Hill-side.

Now, you must know this man and his goodwife lived so happily together, and understood one another so well, that all the husband did the wife thought so well done there was nothing like it in the world, and she was always glad whatever he turned his hand to. The farm was their own land, and they had a hundred dollars lying at the bottom of their chest, and two cows tethered up in a stall in their farm-yard.

So one day his wife said to Gudbrand:

"Do you know, dear, I think we ought to take one of our cows into town and sell it; that's what I think; for then we shall have some money in hand, and such well-to-do people as we ought to have ready money like the rest of the world. As for the hundred dollars at the bottom of the chest yonder, we can't make a hole in them, and I'm sure I don't know what we want with more than one cow. Besides, we shall gain a little in another way, for then I shall get off with looking after only one cow, instead of having, as now, to feed and litter and water two."

Well, Gudbrand thought his wife talked right good sense, so he set off at once with the cow on his way to town to sell her; but when he got to the town, there was no one who would buy his cow.

"Well! well! never mind," said Gudbrand, "at the worst, I can only go back home again with my cow. I've both stable and tether for her, I should think, and the road is no farther out than in;" and with that he began to toddle home with his

cow.

But when he had gone a bit of the way, a man met him who had a horse to sell, so Gudbrand thought 'twas better to have a horse than a cow, so he swopped with the man. A little farther on, he met a man walking along, and driving a fat pig before him, and he thought it better to have a fat pig than a horse, so he swopped with the man. After that he went a little farther, and a man met him with a goat; so he thought it better to have a goat than a pig, and he swopped with the man that owned the goat. Then he went on a good bit till he met a man who had a sheep, and he swopped with him too, for he thought it always better to have a sheep than a goat. After a while he met a man with a goose, and he swopped away the sheep for the goose; and when he had walked a long, long time, he met a man with a cock, and he swopped with him, for he thought in this wise, "'Tis surely better to have a cock than a goose." Then he went on till the day was far spent, and he began to get very hungry, so he sold the cock for a shilling, and bought food with the money, for, thought Gudbrand on the Hill-side, "'Tis always better to save one's life than to have a cock."

After that he went on home till he reached his nearest neighbor's house, where he turned in.

"Well," said the owner of the house, "how did things go with you in town?"

"Rather so so," said Gudbrand; "I can't praise my luck, nor do I blame it either," and with that he told the whole story from first to last.

"Ah!" said his friend, "you'll get nicely hauled over the coals, that one can see, when you get home to your wife. Heaven help you, I wouldn't stand in your shoes for something."

"Well!" said Gudbrand on the Hill-side, "I think things might have gone much worse with me; but now, whether I have done wrong or not, I have so kind a goodwife, she never has a word to say against anything that I do."

"Oh!" answered his neighbor, "I hear what you say, but I don't believe it for all that."

"Shall we lay a bet upon it?" asked Gudbrand on the Hill-side. "I have a hundred dollars at the bottom of my chest at home; will you lay as many against them?"

Yes, the friend was ready to bet; so Gudbrand stayed there till evening, when it began to get dark, and then they went together to his house, and the neighbor was to stand outside the door and listen, while the man went in to see his wife.

"Good evening!" said Gudbrand on the Hillside.

"Good evening!" said the goodwife. "Oh! is that you? Now, God be praised!"

Yes, it was he. So the wife asked how things had gone with him in town.

"Oh! only so so," answered Gudbrand; "not much to brag of. When I got to the town there was no one who would buy the cow, so you must know I swopped it away for a horse."

"For a horse!" said his wife; "well that is good of you; thanks with all my heart. We are so well-to-do that we may drive to church, just as well as other people; and if we choose to keep a horse we have a right to get one, I should think. So run out, child, and put up the horse."

"Ah!" said Gudbrand, "but you see I've not got the horse after all; for when I got a bit farther on the road, I swopped it away for a pig."

"Think of that now!" said the wife; "you did just as I should have done myself; a thousand thanks! Now I can have a bit of bacon in the house to set before people when they come to see me, that I can. What do we want with a horse? People would only say we had got so proud that we couldn't walk to church. Go out, child, and put up the pig in the stye."

"But I've not got the pig either," said Gudbrand; "for when I got a little farther on, I swopped it away for a milch goat."

"Bless us!" cried his wife, "how well you manage

everything! Now I think it over, what should I do with a pig? People would only point at us and say, 'Yonder they eat up all they have got.' No! now I have got a goat, and I shall have milk and cheese, and keep the goat too. Run out, child, and put up the goat."

"Nay, but I haven't got the goat either," said Gudbrand, "for a little farther on I swopped it away, and got a fine sheep instead."

"You don't say so!" cried his wife; "why, you do everything to please me, just as if I had been with you; what do we want with a goat? If I had it I should lose half my time in climbing up the hills to get it down. No! if I have a sheep, I shall have both wool and clothing, and fresh meat in the house. Run out, child, and put up the sheep."

"But I haven't got the sheep any more than the rest," said Gudbrand, "for when I had gone a bit farther, I swopped it away for a goose."

"Thank you, thank you, with all my heart!" cried his wife; "what should I do with a sheep? I have no spinning-wheel, nor carding-comb, nor should I care to worry myself with cutting, and shaping, and sewing clothes. We can buy clothes now, as we have always done; and now I shall have roast goose, which I have longed for so often; and, besides, down to stuff my little pillow with. Run out, child, and put up the goose."

"Ah!" said Gudbrand, "but I haven't the goose either; for when I had gone a bit farther I swopped it away for a cock."

"Dear me!" cried his wife, "how you think of everything! just as I should have done myself! A cock! think of that! why, it's as good as an eight-day clock, for every morning the cock crows at four o'clock, and we shall be able to stir our stumps in good time. What should we do with a goose? I don't know how to cook it; and as for my pillow, I can stuff it with cotton-grass. Run out, child, and put up the cock."

"But, after all, I haven't got the cock," said Gudbrand;

"for when I had gone a bit farther, I got as hungry as a hunter, so I was forced to sell the cock for a shilling, for fear I should starve."

"Now, God be praised that you did so!" cried his wife; "whatever you do, you do it always just after my own heart. What should we do with the cock? We are our own masters, I should think, and can lie a-bed in the morning as long as we like. Heaven be thanked that I have got you safe back again! you who do everything so well that I want neither cock nor goose; neither pigs nor kine."

Then Gudbrand opened the door and said:

"Well, what do you say now? Have I won the hundred dollars?" and his neighbor was forced to allow that he had.

The Three Princesses of Whiteland

Once on a time there was a fisherman who lived close by a palace, and fished for the king's table. One day when he was out fishing he just caught nothing. Do what he would— however he tried with bait and angle—there was never a sprat on his hook. But when the day was far spent a head bobbed up out of the water, and said:

"If I may have what your wife is going to give you, you shall catch fish enough."

So the man answered boldly, "Yes," for he did not know what it was that his wife was going to give him. After that, as was like enough, he caught plenty of fish of all kinds. But when he got home at night and told his story, how he had got all that fish, his wife fell a-weeping and moaning, and was beside herself for the promise which her husband had made, for she said, "I was going to give you a little boy."

Well, the story soon spread, and came up to the castle; and when the king heard the woman's grief and its cause, he sent down to say he would take care of the child, and see if he couldn't save it.

So the months went on and on, and when her time came the fisher's wife had a boy; so the king took it at once, and brought it up as his own son, until the lad grew up. Then he begged leave one day to go out fishing with his father; he had such a mind to go, he said. At first the king wouldn't hear of it, but at last the lad had his way, and went. So he and his father were out the whole day, and all went right and well till they landed at night. Then the lad remembered he had left his handkerchief, and went to look for it; but as soon as ever he got into the boat, it began to move off with him at such

speed that the water roared under the bow, and all the lad could do in rowing against it with the oars was no use; so he went and went the whole night, and at last he came to a white strand, far, far away.

There he went ashore, and when he had walked about a bit, an old, old man met him, with a long white beard.

"What's the name of this land?" asked the lad.

"Whiteland," said the man, who went on to ask the lad whence he came, and what he was going to do. So the lad told him all.

"Ay, ay!" said the man; "now when you have walked a little farther along the strand here, you'll come to three Princesses, whom you will see standing in the earth up to their necks, with only their heads out. Then the first—she is the eldest—will call out and beg you so prettily to come and help her; and the second will do the same; to neither of these shall you go; make haste past them, as if you neither saw nor heard anything. But the third you shall go to, and do what she asks. If you do this you'll have good luck—that's all."

When the lad came to the first Princess, she called out to him, and begged him so prettily to come to her, but he passed on as though he saw her not. In the same way he passed by the second; but to the third he went straight up.

"If you'll do what I bid you," she said, "you may have which of us you please."

"Yes;" he was willing enough; so she told him how three Trolls had set them down in the earth there; but before they had lived in the castle up among the trees.

"Now," she said, "you must go into that castle, and let the Trolls whip you each one night for each of us. If you can bear that you'll set us free."

Well, the lad said he was ready to try.

"When you go in," the Princess went on to say, "you'll see two lions standing at the gate; but if you'll only go right in the middle between them they'll do you no harm. Then go

straight on into a little dark room, and make your bed. Then the Troll will come to whip you; but if you take the flask which hangs on the wall, and rub yourself with the ointment that's in it wherever his lash falls, you'll be as sound as ever. Then grasp the sword that hangs by the side of the flask and strike the Troll dead."

Yes, he did as the Princess told him; he passed in the midst between the lions, as if he hadn't seen them, and went straight into the little room, and there he lay down to sleep. The first night there came a Troll with three heads and three rods, and whipped the lad soundly; but he stood it till the Troll was done; then he took the flask and rubbed himself, and grasped the sword and slew the Troll.

So, when he went out next morning, the Princesses stood out of the earth up to their waists.

The next night 'twas the same story over again, only this time the Troll had six heads and six rods, and he whipped him far worse than the first; but when he went out next morning, the Princesses stood out of the earth as far as the knee.

The third night there came a Troll that had nine heads and nine rods, and he whipped and flogged the lad so long that he fainted away; then the Troll took him up and dashed him against the wall; but the shock brought down the flask, which fell on the lad, burst, and spilled the ointment all over him, and so he became as strong and sound as ever again. Then he wasn't slow; he grasped the sword and slew the Troll; and next morning when he went out of the castle the Princesses stood before him with all their bodies out of the earth. So he took the youngest for his Queen, and lived well and happily with her for some time.

At last he began to long to go home for a little to see his parents. His Queen did not like this; but at last his heart was so set on it, and he longed and longed so much, there was no holding him back, so she said:

"One thing you must promise me. This: Only to do what

your father begs you to do, and not what your mother wishes;" and that he promised.

Then she gave him a ring, which was of that kind that anyone who wore it might wish two wishes. So he wished himself home, and when he got home his parents could not wonder enough what a grand man their son had become.

Now, when he had been at home some days, his mother wished him to go up to the palace and shew the king what a fine fellow he had come to be. But his father said:

"No, don't let him do that; if he does, we shan't have anymore joy of him this time."

But it was no good, the mother begged and prayed so long, that at last he went. So when he got up to the palace, he was far braver, both in clothes and array, than the other king, who didn't quite like this, and at last he said:

"All very fine; but here you can see my queen, what like she is, but I can't see yours, that I can't. Do you know, I scarce think she's so good-looking as mine?"

"Would to Heaven," said the young king, "she were standing here, then you'd see what she was like." And that instant there she stood before them.

But she was very woeful, and said to him:

"Why did you not mind what I told you; and why did you not listen to what your father said? Now, I must away home, and as for you, you have had both your wishes."

With that she knitted a ring among his hair, with her name on it, and wished herself home, and was off.

Then the young king was cut to the heart, and went, day out day in, thinking and thinking how he should get back to his queen. "I'll just try," he thought, "if I can't learn where Whiteland lies;" and so he went out into the world to ask. So when he had gone a good way, he came to a high hill, and there he met one who was lord over all the beasts of the wood, for they all came home to him when he blew his horn; so the king asked if he knew where Whiteland was.

"No, I don't," said he, "but I'll ask my beasts." Then he blew his horn and called them, and asked if any of them knew where Whiteland lay; but there was no beast that knew.

So the man gave him a pair of snow-shoes.

"When you get on these," he said, "you'll come to my brother, who lives hundreds of miles off; he is lord over all the birds of the air. Ask him. When you reach his house, just turn the shoes, so that the toes point this way, and they'll come home of themselves." So when the king reached the house, he turned the shoes as the lord of the beasts had said, and away they went home of themselves.

So he asked again after Whiteland, and the man called all the birds with a blast of his horn, and asked if any of them knew where Whiteland lay; but none of the birds knew. Now, long, long after the rest of the birds, came an old eagle, which had been away ten round years, but he couldn't tell any more than the rest.

"Well, well," said the man, "I'll lend you a pair of snow-shoes, and when you get them on, they'll carry you to my brother, who lives hundreds of miles off; he's lord of all the fish in the sea; you'd better ask him. But don't forget to turn the toes of the shoes this way,"

The king was full of thanks, got on the shoes, and when he came to the man who was lord over the fish of the sea, he turned the toes round, and so off they went home like the other pair. After that, he asked again after Whiteland.

So the man called the fish with a blast, but no fish could tell where it lay. At last came an old pike which they had great work to call home, he was such a way off. So when they asked him he said:

"Know it! I should think I did. I've been cook there ten years, and tomorrow I'm going there again; for now, the queen of Whiteland, whose king is away, is going to wed another husband."

"Well," said the man, "as this is so, I'll give you a bit of

advice. Hereabouts, on a moor, stand three brothers, and here they have stood these hundred years, fighting about a hat, a cloak, and a pair of boots. If anyone has these three things, he can make himself invisible, and wish himself anywhere he pleases. You can tell them you wish to try the things, and after that, you'll pass judgment between them whose they shall be,"

Yes, the king thanked the man, and went and did as he told him,

"What's all this?" he said to the brothers, "Why do you stand here fighting forever and a day? Just let me try these things, and I'll give judgment whose they shall be."

They were very willing to do this; but as soon as he had got the hat, clock, and boots, he said:

"When we meet next time I'll tell you my judgment," and with these words he wished himself away.

So as he went along up in the air, he came up with the North Wind.

"Whither away?" roared the North Wind.

"To Whiteland," said the king; and then he told him all that had befallen him.

"Ah," said the North Wind, "you go faster than I—you do; for you can go straight, while I have to puff and blow round every turn and corner. But when you get there, just place yourself on the stairs by the side of the door, and then I'll come storming in, as though I were going to blow down the whole castle. And then when the prince, who is to have your queen, comes out to see what's the matter, just you take him by the collar and pitch him out of doors; then I'll look after him, and see if I can't carry him off."

Well—the king did as the North Wind said. He took his stand on the stairs, and when the North Wind came, storming and roaring, and took hold of the castle wall, so that it shook again, the prince came out to see what was the matter. But as soon as ever he came, the king caught him by the collar and pitched him out of doors, and then the North Wind caught

him up, and carried him off. So when there was an end of him, the king went into the castle, and at first his queen didn't know him, he was so wan and thin, through wandering so far and being so woeful; but when he showed her the ring, she was as glad as glad could be; and so the rightful wedding was held, and the fame of it spread far and wide.

The Lad Who Went to the North Wind

Once on a time there was an old widow who had one son; and as she was poorly and weak, her son had to go up into the safe to fetch meal for cooking; but when he got outside the safe and was just going down the steps, there came the North Wind, puffing and blowing, caught up the meal, and so away with it through the air. Then the lad went back into the safe for more; but when he came out again on the steps, if the North Wind didn't come again and carry off the meal with a puff; and more than that, he did so the third time. At this the lad got very angry; and as he thought it hard that the North Wind should behave so, he thought he'd just look him up, and ask him to give up his meal.

So off he went, but the way was long, and he walked and walked; but at last he came to the North Wind's house.

"Good day!" said the lad, "and thank you for coming to see us yesterday."

"Good Day!" answered the North Wind, for his voice was loud and gruff, "and thanks for coming to see me. What do you want?"

"Oh!" answered the lad, "I only wished to ask you to be so good as to let me have back that meal you took from me on the safe steps, for we haven't much to live on; and if you're to go on snapping up the morsel we have, there'll be nothing for it but to starve,"

"I haven't got your meal," said the North Wind; "but if you are in such need, I'll give you a cloth which will get you everything you want, if you only say, 'Cloth, spread yourself, and serve up all kinds of good dishes'!"

With this the lad was well content. But, as the way was so

long he couldn't get home in one day, so he turned into an inn on the way; and when they were going to sit down to supper he laid the cloth on a table which stood in the corner, and said:

"Cloth, spread yourself, and serve up all kinds of good dishes."

He had scarce said so before the cloth did as it was bid; and all who stood by thought it a fine thing, but most of all the landlady. So, when all were fast asleep, at dead of night, she took the lad's cloth, and put another in its stead, just like the one he had got from the North Wind, but which couldn't so much as serve up a bit of dry bread.

So, when the lad woke, he took his cloth and went off with it, and that day he got home to his mother.

"Now," said he, "I've been to the North Wind's house, and a good fellow he is, for he gave me this cloth, and when I only say to it, 'Cloth, spread yourself, and serve up all kinds of good dishes,' I get any sort of food I please."

"All very true, I dare say," said his mother; "but seeing is believing, and I shan't believe it till I see it."

So the lad made haste, drew out a table, laid the cloth on it, and said:

"Cloth, spread yourself, and serve up all kinds of good dishes."

But never a bit of dry bread did the cloth serve up.

"Well!" said the lad, "there's no help for it but to go to the North Wind again;" and away he went.

So he came late in the afternoon to where the North Wind lived.

"Good evening!" said the lad.

"Good evening!" said the North Wind.

"I want my rights for that meal of ours which you took," said the lad; "for, as for that cloth I got, it isn't worth a penny."

"I've got no meal," said the North Wind; "but yonder you have a ram which coins nothing but golden ducats as soon as

you say to it: 'Ram, ram! make money'!"

So the lad thought this a fine thing; but as it was too far to get home that day, he turned in for the night to the same inn where he had slept before.

Before he called for anything, he tried the truth of what the North Wind had said of the ram, and found it all right; but, when the landlord saw that, he thought it was a famous ram, and, when the lad had fallen asleep, he took another which couldn't coin gold ducats, and changed the two.

Next morning off went the lad; and when he got home to his mother, he said:

"After all, the North Wind is a jolly fellow; for now he has given me a ram which can coin golden ducats if I only say, 'Ram, ram! make money'!"

"All very true, I dare say," said his mother; "but I shan't believe any such stuff until I see the ducats made."

"Ram, ram! make money!" said the lad, but if the ram made anything it wasn't money.

So the lad went back again to the North Wind and blew him up, and said the ram was worth nothing, and he must have his rights for the meal.

"Well!" said the North Wind; "I've nothing else to give up but that old stick in the corner yonder; but it's a stick of that kind that if you say, 'Stick, stick! lay on'! it lays on till you say, 'Stick, stick! now stop'!"

So, as the way was long, the lad turned in this night too to the landlord; but as he could pretty well guess how things stood as to the cloth and the ram, he lay down at once on the bench and began to snore as if he were asleep.

Now the landlord, who easily saw that the stick must be worth something, hunted up one which was like it, and when he heard the lad snore, was going to change the two; but, just as the landlord was about to take it, the lad bawled out:

"Stick, stick! lay on!"

So the stick began to beat the landlord, till he jumped

over chairs, and tables, and benches, and yelled and roared:

"Oh my! oh my! bid the stick be still, else it will beat me to death, and you shall have back both your cloth and your ram!"

When the lad thought the landlord had got enough, he said:

"Stick, stick! now stop!"

Then he took the cloth and put it into his pocket, and went home with his stick in his hand, leading the ram by a cord round its horns; and so he got his rights for the meal he had lost.

The Three Billy-Goats Gruff

Once on a time there were three Billy-goats, who were to go up to the hill-side to make themselves fat, and the name of all three was "Gruff."

On the way up was a bridge over a burn they had to cross; and under the bridge lived a great ugly Troll, with eyes as big as saucers, and a nose as long as a poker.

So first of all came the youngest billy-goat Gruff to cross the bridge.

"Trip, trap; trip, trap!" went the bridge.

"Who's that tripping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.

"Oh! it is only I, the tiniest billy-goat Gruff; and I'm going up to the hill-side to make myself fat," said the billy-goat, with such a small voice.

"Now, I'm coming to gobble you up!" said the Troll.

"Oh, no! pray don't take me. I'm too little, that I am," said the billy-goat; "wait a bit till the second billy-goat Gruff comes, he's much bigger."

"Well, be off with you!" said the Troll.

A little while after came the second billy-goat Gruff to cross the bridge.

"Trip, trap! trip, trap! trip, trap!" went the bridge.

"Who's that tripping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.

"Oh! it's the second billy-goat Gruff, and I'm going up to the hill-side to make myself fat," said the billy-goat, who hadn't such a small voice.

"Now, I'm coming to gobble you up," said the Troll.

"Oh, no! don't take me, wait a little till the big billy-goat Gruff comes, he's much bigger."

"Very well, be off with you!" said the Troll.

But just then up came the big billy-goat Gruff.

"Trip, trap! Trip, trap! Trip, trap!" went the bridge, for the billy-goat was so heavy that the bridge creaked and groaned under him.

"Who's that tramping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.

"It's I! The big billy-goat Gruff," said the billy-goat, who had an ugly hoarse voice of his own.

"Now, I'm coming to gobble you up!" roared the Troll.

"Well, come along! I've got two spears,
And I'll poke your eyeballs out at your ears;
I've got besides two curling stones.
And I'll crush you to bits, body and bones."

That was what the big billy-goat said; and so he flew at the Troll and poked his eyes out with his horns, and crushed him to bits, body and bones, and tossed him out into the burn, and after that he went up to the hill-side. There the billy-goats got so fat they were scarce able to walk home again; and if the fat hasn't fallen off them, why they're still fat; and so, —

"Snip, snap, snout,
This tale's told out,"

The Husband Who Was to Mind the House

Once on a time, there was a man so surly and cross, he never thought his wife did anything right in the house. So, one evening in hay-making time, he came home, scolding and swearing, and showing his teeth and making a dust.

"Dear love, don't be so angry; there's a good man," said his goody; "tomorrow let's change our work. I'll go out with the mowers and mow, and you shall mind the house at home."

Yes! the husband thought that would do very well. He was quite willing, he said.

So early next morning, his goody took a scythe over her neck, and went out into the hayfield with the mowers, and began to mow; but the man was to mind the house, and do the work at home.

First of all, he wanted to churn the butter; but when he had churned a while, he got thirsty, and went down to the cellar to tap a barrel of ale. So, just when he had knocked in the bung, and was putting the tap into the cask, he heard overhead the pig come into the kitchen. Then off he ran up the cellar steps, with the tap in his hand, as fast as he could, to look after the pig lest it should upset the churn; but when he got up, and saw the pig had already knocked the churn over, and stood there, routing and grunting amongst the cream which was running all over the floor, he got so wild with rage that he quite forgot the ale-barrel, and ran at the pig as hard as he could. He caught it too just as it ran out of doors, and gave it such a kick that piggy lay for dead on the spot. Then all at once he remembered he had the tap in his hand; but when he got down to the cellar, every drop of ale had run out of the cask.

Then he went into the dairy and found enough cream left to fill the churn again, and so he began to churn, for butter they must have at dinner. When he had churned a bit, he remembered that their milking cow was still shut up in the byre and hadn't had a bit to eat or a drop to drink all the morning, though the sun was high. Then all at once he thought 'twas too far to take her down to the meadow, so he'd just get her up on the house top—for the house, you must know, was thatched with sods, and a fine crop of grass was growing there. Now their house lay close up against a steep down, and he thought if he laid a plank across to the thatch at the back he'd easily get the cow up.

But still he couldn't leave the churn, for there was his little babe crawling about on the floor, and "if I leave it," he thought, "the child is safe to upset it." So he took the churn on his back and went out with it; but then he thought he'd better first water the cow before he turned her out on the thatch; so he took up a bucket to draw water out of the well; but as he stooped down at the well's brink, all the cream ran out of the churn over his shoulders, and so down into the well.

Now it was near dinner-time, and he hadn't even got the butter yet; so he thought he'd best boil the porridge, and filled the pot with water, and hung it over the fire. When he had done that, he thought the cow might perhaps fall off the thatch and break her legs or her neck. So he got up on the house to tie her up. One end of the rope he made fast to the cow's neck, and the other he slipped down the chimney and tied round his own thigh; and he had to make haste, for the water now began to boil in the pot and he had still to grind the oatmeal.

So he began to grind away: but while he was hard at it, down fell the cow off the house-top after all, and as she fell she dragged the man up the chimney by the rope. There he stuck fast; and as for the cow she hung half way down the wall, swinging between heaven and earth, for she could

neither get down nor up.

And now the goody had waited seven lengths and seven breadths for her husband to come and call them home to dinner; but never a call they had. At last she thought she'd waited long enough, and went home. But when she got there and saw the cow hanging in such an ugly place, she ran up and cut the rope in two with her scythe. But as she did this, down came her husband out of the chimney; and so when his old dame came inside the kitchen, there she found him standing on his head in the porridge pot.

The Pancake

Once on a time there was a goody who had seven hungry bairns, and she was frying a pancake for them. It was a sweet-milk pancake, and there it lay in the pan bubbling and frizzling so thick and good, it was a sight for sore eyes to look at. And the bairns stood round about, and the goodman sat by and looked on.

"Oh, give me a bit of pancake, mother, dear; I am so hungry," said one bairn.

"Oh, darling mother," said the second.

"Oh, darling, good mother," said the third.

"Oh, darling, good, nice mother," said the fourth.

"Oh, darling, pretty, good, nice mother," said the fifth.

"Oh, darling, pretty, good, nice, clever mother," said the sixth.

"Oh, darling, pretty, good, nice, clever, sweet mother," said the seventh.

So they begged for the pancake all round, the one more prettily than the other; for they were so hungry and so good.

"Yes, yes, bairns, only bide a bit till it turns itself," —she ought to have said, "till I can get it turned,"—"and then you shall all have some a lovely sweet-milk pancake; only look how fat and happy it lies there."

When the pancake heard that it got afraid, and in a trice it turned itself all of itself, and tried to jump out of the pan; but it fell back into it again t'other side up, and so when it had been fried a little on the other side too, till it got firmer in its flesh, it sprang out on the floor, and rolled off like a wheel through the door and down the hill.

"Holloa! Stop, pancake!" and away went the goody after

it, with the frying-pan in one hand and the ladle in the other, as fast as she could, and her bairns behind her, while the goodman limped after them last of all.

"Hi! won't you stop? Seize it. Stop, pancake," they all screamed out, one after the other, and tried to catch it on the run and hold it; but the pancake rolled on and on, and in the twinkling of an eye it was so far ahead that they couldn't see it, for the pancake was faster on its feet than any of them.

So when it had rolled awhile it met a man.

"Good day, pancake," said the man.

"God bless you, Manny Panny!" said the pancake.

"Dear pancake," said the man, "don't roll so fast; stop a little and let me eat you."

"When I have given the slip to Goody Poody, and the goodman, and seven squalling children, I may well slip through your fingers, Manny Panny," said the pancake, and rolled on and on till it met a hen.

"Good day, pancake," said the hen.

"The same to you, Henny Penny," said the pancake

"Pancake, dear, don't roll so fast; bide a bit and let me eat you up," said the hen.

"When I have given the slip to Goody Poody, and the goodman, and seven squalling children, and Manny Panny, I may well slip through your claws, Henny Penny," said the pancake, and so it rolled on like a wheel down the road.

Just then it met a cock.

"Good day, pancake," said the cock.

"The same to you, Cocky Locky," said the pancake.

"Pancake, dear, don't roll so fast, but bide a bit and let me eat you up."

"When I have given the slip to Goody Poody, and the goodman, and seven squalling children, and to Manny Panny, and Henny Penny, I may well slip through your claws, Cocky Locky," said the pancake, and off it set rolling away as fast as it could; and when it had rolled a long way it met a duck.

"Good day, pancake," said the duck.

"The same to you, Ducky Lucky."

"Pancake, dear, don't roll away so fast; bide a bit and let me eat you up."

"When I have given the slip to Goody Poody, and the goodman, and seven squalling children, and Manny Panny, and Henny Penny, and Cocky Locky, I may well slip through your fingers, Ducky Lucky," said the pancake, and with that it took to rolling and rolling faster than ever; and when it had rolled a long, long while, it met a goose.

"Good day, pancake," said the goose.

"The same to you, Goosey Poosey."

"Pancake, dear, don't roll so fast; bide a bit and let me eat you up."

"When I have given the slip to Goody Poody, and the goodman, and seven squalling children, and Manny Panny, and Henny Penny, and Cocky Locky, and Ducky Lucky, I can well slip through your feet, Goosey Poosey," said the pancake, and off it rolled.

So when it had rolled a long, long way farther, it met a gander.

"Good day, pancake," said the gander.

"The same to you, Gander Pander," said the pancake.

"Pancake, dear, don't roll so fast; bide a bit and let me eat you up."

"When I have given the slip to Goody Poody, and the goodman, and seven squalling children, and Manny Panny, and Henny Penny, and Cocky Locky, and Ducky Lucky, and Goosey Poosey, I may well slip through your feet, Gander Pander," said the pancake, which rolled off as fast as ever.

So when it had rolled a long, long time, it met a pig.

"Good day, pancake," said the pig.

"The same to you, Piggy Wiggy," said the pancake, which, without a word more, began to roll and roll like mad.

"Nay, nay," said the pig, "you needn't be in such a hurry;

we two can then go side by side and see one another over the wood; they say it is not too safe in there."

The pancake thought there might be something in that, and so they kept company. But when they had gone awhile, they came to a brook. As for Piggy, he was so fat he swam safe across, it was nothing to him; but the poor pancake couldn't get over.

"Seat yourself on my snout," said the pig, "and I'll carry you over."

So the pancake did that.

"Ouf, ouf," said the pig, and swallowed the pancake at one gulp; and then, as the poor pancake could go no farther, why this story can go no farther either.

The Green Knight

Once on a time there was a king who was a widower, and he had an only daughter. But it is an old saying, that a widower's grief is like knocking your funny bone it hurts, but it soon passes away; and so the king married a queen who had two daughters. Now this queen well, she was no better than stepmothers are wont to be; snappish and spiteful she always was to her stepdaughter.

Well, a long time after, when they were grown up, these three girls, war broke out, and the king had to go forth to fight for his country and his kingdom. But before he went the three daughters had leave to say what the king should buy and bring home for each of them, if he won the day against the foe.

So the stepdaughters were to speak first, as you may fancy, and say what they wished.

Well, the first wished for a golden spinning-wheel, so small that it could stand on a sixpenny-piece; and the second, she begged for a golden winder, so small that it could stand on a sixpenny-piece; that was what they wanted to have, and till they had them there was no spinning or winding to be got out of them. But his own daughter, she would ask for no other thing than that he would greet the Green Knight in her name.

So the king went out to war, and whithersoever he went he won, and however things turned out he brought the things he had promised his stepdaughters; but he had clean forgotten what his own daughter had begged him to do, till at last he made a feast because he had won the day.

Then it was that he set eyes on a Green Knight, and all at once his daughter's words came into his head, and he greeted

him in her name. The Green Knight thanked him for the greeting, and gave him a book which looked like a hymn-book with parchment clasps. That the king was to take home and give her; but he was not to unclasp it, or the princess either, till she was all alone.

So, when the king had done fighting and feasting he went home again, and he had scarce got inside the door before his stepdaughters clung round him to get what he had promised to buy them. Yes, he said, he had brought them what they wished; but his own daughter, she held back and asked for nothing, and the king forgot all about it too, till one day when he was going out, and he put on the coat he had worn at the feast, and just as he thrust his hand into his pocket for his handkerchief, he felt the book, and knew what it was.

So he gave it to his daughter, and said he was to greet her with it from the Green Knight, and she mustn't unclasp it till she was all alone.

Well, that evening when she was by herself in her bedroom she unclasped the book, and as soon as she did so she heard a strain of music, so sweet she had never heard the like of it; and then, what do you think? Why, the Green Knight came to her and told her the book was such a book that whenever she unclasped it he must come to her, and it would be all the same wherever she might be, and when she clasped it again he would be off and away again.

Well, she unclasped the book often and often in the evenings when she was alone and at rest, and the knight always came to her, and was almost always there. But her stepmother, who was always thrusting her nose into everything, she found out there was someone with her in her room, and she was not long in telling it to the king. But he wouldn't believe it. No, he said, they must watch first and see if it was so before they trumped up such stories, and took her to task for them.

So one evening they stood outside the door and listened,

and it seemed as though they heard someone talking inside; but when they went in there was no one.

"Who was it you were talking with?" asked the stepmother, both sharp and cross.

"It was no one, indeed," said the princess.

"Nay," said she, "I heard it as plain as day."

"Oh," said the princess, "I only lay and read aloud out of a prayer-book."

"Show it me," said the queen.

"Well, then, it was only a prayer-book after all, and she must have leave to read that," the king said.

But the stepmother thought just the same as before, and so she bored a hole through the wall and stood prying about there. So one evening when she heard that the knight was in the room, she tore open the door and came flying into her stepdaughter's room like a blast of wind; but she was not slow in clasping the book either, and he was off and away in a trice; but however quick she had been, for all that her stepmother caught a glimpse of him, so that she was sure someone had been there.

It happened just then that the king was setting out on a long, long journey; and while he was away the queen had a deep pit dug down into the ground, and there she built up a dungeon, and in the stone and mortar she laid ratsbane and other strong poisons, so that not so much as a mouse could get through the wall. As for the master-mason, he was well paid, and gave his word to fly the land; but he didn't, for he stayed where he was. Then the princess was thrown into that dungeon with her maid, and when they were inside the queen walled up the door, and left only a little hole open at the top to let down food to them. So there she sat and sorrowed, and the time seemed long, and longer than long; but at last she remembered she had her book with her, and took it out and unclasped it. First of all she heard the same sweet strain she had heard before, and then arose a grievous sound of wailing,

and just then the Green Knight came.

"I am at death's door," he said; and then he told her that her stepmother had laid poison in the mortar, and he did not know if he should ever come out alive. So when she clasped the book up as fast as she could, she heard the same wailing sound.

But you must know the maid who was shut up with her had a sweetheart, and she sent word to him to go to the master-mason, and beg him to make the hole at top big enough for them to creep out at it. If he would do that, the princess would pay him so well he could live in plenty all his days. Yes, he did so, and they set out and travelled far, far away in strange lands, she and her maid, and wherever they came they asked after the Green Knight.

So after a long, long time they came to a castle which was all hung with black; and just as they were passing by it a shower of rain fell, and so the princess stepped into the church porch to wait till the rain was over.

As she stood there, a young man and an old man came by, who also wished to take shelter; but the princess drew away farther into a corner, so that they did not see her.

"Why is it," said the young man, "that the king's castle is hung with black?"

"Don't you know," said the greybeard, "the prince here is sick to death, he whom they call the Green Knight?" And so he went on telling him how it had all happened. So when the young man had listened to the story, he asked if there was anyone who could make him well again.

"Nay, nay," said the other; "there is but one cure, and that is if the maiden who was shut up in the dungeon were to come and pluck healing plants in the fields, and boil them in sweet milk, and wash him with them thrice."

Then he went on reckoning up the plants that were needful before he could get well again.

All this the princess heard, and she kept it in her head;

and when the rain was over the two men went away, nor did she bide there long either.

So when they got home to the house in which they lived, out they went at once to get all kinds of plants and grasses in the field and wood, she and the maid, and they plucked and gathered early and late till she had got all that she was to boil. Then she bought her a doctor's hat and a doctor's gown, and went to the king's castle, and offered to make the prince well again.

"No, no; it is no good," said the king. So many had been there and tried, but he always got worse instead of better. But she would not yield, and gave her word he should be well, and that soon and happily. Well, then, she might have leave to try, and so she went into the Green Knight's bedroom and washed him the first time. And when she came the next day he was so well he could sit up in bed; the day after he was man enough to walk about the room, and the third he was as well and lively as a fish in the water.

"Now he may go out hunting," said the doctor.

Then the king was as overjoyed with the doctor as a bird in broad day. But the doctor said he must go home.

Then she threw off her hat and gown, and dressed herself smart, and made a feast, and then she unclasped the book. Then arose the same joyful strain as of old, and in a trice the Green Knight was there, and he wondered much to know how she had got thither.

So she told him all about it, and how it had happened; and when they had eaten and drunk he took her straight up to the castle, and told the king the whole story from beginning to end. Then there was such a bridal and such a feast; and when it was over they set off to the bride's home, and there was great joy in her father's heart; but they took the step-mother and rolled her down-hill in a cask full of spikes.

Tales from Finland

The True Bride

There were once two orphans, a brother and a sister, who lived alone in the old farmhouse where their fathers before them had lived for many generations. The brother's name was Osmo, the sister's Ilona. Osmo was an industrious youth, but the farm was small and barren and he was hard put to it to make a livelihood.

"Sister," he said one day, "I think it might be well if I went out into the world and found work."

"Do as you think best, brother," Ilona said. "I'm sure I can manage on here alone."

So Osmo started off, promising to come back for his sister as soon as he could give her a new home. He wandered far and wide and at last got employment from the King's Son as a shepherd.

The King's Son was about Osmo's age, and often when he met Osmo tending his flocks he would stop and talk to him.

One day Osmo told the King's Son about his sister, Ilona.

"I have wandered far over the face of the earth," he said, "and never have I seen so beautiful a maiden as Ilona."

"What does she look like?" the King's Son asked.

Osmo drew a picture of her and she seemed to the King's Son so beautiful that at once he fell in love with her.

"Osmo," he said, "if you will go home and get your sister, I will marry her."

So Osmo hurried home not by the long land route by which he had come but straight over the water in a boat.

"Sister," he cried, as soon as he saw Ilona, "you must come with me at once for the King's Son wishes to marry you!"

He thought Ilona would be overjoyed, but she sighed and

shook her head.

"What is it, sister? Why do you sigh?"

"Because it grieves me to leave this old house where our fathers have lived for so many generations."

"Nonsense, Ilona! What is this little old house compared to the King's castle where you will live once you marry the King's Son!"

But Ilona only shook her head.

"It's no use, brother! I can't bear to leave this old house until the grindstone with which our fathers for generations ground their meal is worn out."

When Osmo found she was firm, he went secretly and broke the old grindstone into small pieces. He then put the pieces together so that the stone looked the same as before. But of course the next time Ilona touched it, it fell apart.

"Now, sister, you'll come, will you not?" Osmo asked.

But again Ilona shook her head.

"It's no use, brother. I can't bear to go until the old stool where our mothers have sat spinning these many generations is worn through."

So again Osmo took things into his own hands and going secretly to the old spinning stool he broke it and when Ilona sat on it again it fell to pieces.

Then Ilona said she couldn't go until the old mortar which had been in use for generations should fall to bits at a blow from the pestle. Osmo cracked the mortar and the next time Ilona struck it with the pestle it broke.

Then Ilona said she couldn't go until the old worn doorsill over which so many of their forefathers had walked should fall to splinters at the brush of her skirts. So Osmo secretly split the old doorsill into thin slivers and, when next Ilona stepped over it, the brush of her skirts sent the splinters flying.

"I see now I must go," Ilona said, "for the house of our forefathers no longer holds me."

So she packed all her ribbons and her bodices and skirts

in a bright wooden box and, calling her little dog Pilka, she stepped into the boat and Osmo rowed her off in the direction of the King's castle.

Soon they passed a long narrow spit of land at the end of which stood a woman waving her arms. That is she looked like a woman. Really she was Suyettar but they, of course, did not know this.

"Take me in your boat!" she cried.

"Shall we?" Osmo asked his sister.

"I don't think we ought to," Ilona said. "We don't know who she is or what she wants and she may be evil."

So Osmo rowed on. But the woman kept shouting:

"Hi, there! Take me in your boat! Take me!"

A second time Osmo paused and asked his sister:

"Don't you think we ought to take her?"

"No," Ilona said.

So Osmo rowed on again. At this the creature raised such a pitiful outcry demanding what they meant denying assistance to a poor woman that Osmo was unable longer to refuse and in spite of Ilona's warning he rowed to land.

Suyettar instantly jumped into the boat and seated herself in the middle with her face towards Osmo and her back towards Ilona.

"What a fine young man!" Suyettar said in whining flattering tones. "See how strong he is at the oars! And what a beautiful girl, too! I daresay the King's Son would fall in love with her if ever he saw her!"

Thereupon Osmo very foolishly told Suyettar that the King's Son had already promised to marry Ilona. At that an evil look came into Suyettar's face and she sat silent for a time biting her fingers. Then she began mumbling a spell that made Osmo deaf to what Ilona was saying and Ilona deaf to what Osmo was saying.

At last in the distance the towers of the King's castle appeared.

"Stand up, sister!" Osmo said. "Shake out your skirts and arrange your pretty ribbons! We'll soon be landing now!"

Ilona could see her brother's lips moving but of course she could not hear what he was saying.

"What is it, brother?" she asked.

Suyettar answered for him:

"Osmo orders you to jump headlong into the water!"

"No! No!" Ilona cried. "He couldn't order anything so cruel as that!"

Presently Osmo said:

"Sister, what ails you? Don't you hear me? Shake out your skirts and arrange your pretty ribbons for we'll soon be landing now."

"What is it, brother?" Ilona asked.

As before Suyettar answered for him:

"Osmo orders you to jump headlong into the water!"

"Brother, how can you order so cruel a thing!" Ilona cried, bursting into tears. "Is it for this you made me leave the home of my fathers?"

A third time Osmo said:

"Stand up, sister, and shake out your skirts and arrange your ribbons! We'll soon be landing now!"

"I can't hear you, brother! What is it you say?"

Suyettar turned on her fiercely and screamed:

"Osmo orders you to jump headlong into the water!"

"If he says I must, I must!" poor Ilona sobbed, and with that she leapt overboard.

Osmo tried to save her but Suyettar held him back and with her own arms rowed off and Ilona was left to sink.

"What will become of me now!" Osmo cried. "When the King's Son finds I have not brought him my sister he will surely order my death!"

"Not at all!" Suyettar said. "Do as I say and no harm will come to you. Offer me to the King's Son and tell him I am your sister. He won't know the difference and anyway I'm sure

I'm just as beautiful as Ilona ever was!"

With that Suyettar opened the wooden box that held Ilona's clothes and helped herself to skirt and bodice and gay colored ribbons. She decked herself out in these and for a little while she really did succeed in looking like a pretty young girl.

So Osmo presented Suyettar to the King's Son as Ilona, and the King's Son because he had given his word married her. But before one day was past, he called Osmo to him and asked him angrily:

"What did you mean by telling me your sister was beautiful?"

"Isn't she beautiful?" Osmo faltered.

"No! I thought she was at first but she isn't! She is ugly and evil and you shall pay the penalty for having deceived me!"

Thereupon he ordered that Osmo be shut up in a place filled with serpents.

"If you are innocent," the King's Son said, "the serpents will not harm you. If you are guilty they will devour you!"

Meanwhile poor Ilona when she jumped into the water sank down, down, down, until she reached the Sea King's palace. They received her kindly there and comforted her and the Sea King's Son, touched by her grief and beauty, offered to marry her. But Ilona was homesick for the upper world and would not listen to him.

"I want to see my brother again!" she wept.

They told her that the King's Son had thrown her brother to the serpents and had married Suyettar in her stead, but Ilona still begged so pitifully to be allowed to return to earth that at last the Sea King said:

"Very well, then! For three successive nights I will allow you to return to the upper world. But after that never again!"

So they decked Ilona in the lovely jewels of the sea with great strands of pearls about her neck and to each of her

ankles they attached long silver chains. As she rose in the water the sound of the chains was like the chiming of silver bells and could be heard for five miles.

Ilona came to the surface of the water just where Osmo had landed. The first thing she saw was his boat at the water's edge and curled up asleep in the bottom of the boat her own little dog, Pilka.

"Pilka!" Ilona cried, and the little dog woke with a bark of joy and licked Ilona's hand and yelped and frisked.

Then Ilona sang this magic song to Pilka:

"Peely, peely, Pilka, pide,
Lift the latch and slip inside!
Past the watchdog in the yard,
Past the sleeping men on guard!
Creep in softly as a snake,
Then creep out before they wake!
Peely, peely, Pilka, pide,
Peely, peely, Pilka!"

Pilka barked and frisked and said:

"Yes, mistress, yes! I'll do whatever you bid me!"

Ilona gave the little dog an embroidered square of gold and silver which she herself had worked down in the Sea King's palace.

"Take this," she said to Pilka, "and put it on the pillow where the King's Son lies asleep. Perhaps when he sees it he will know that it comes from Osmo's true sister and that the frightful creature he has married is Suyettar. Then perhaps he will release Osmo before the serpents devour him. Go now, my faithful Pilka, and come back to me before the dawn."

So Pilka raced off to the King's palace carrying the square of embroidery in her teeth. Ilona waited and half an hour before sunrise the little dog came panting back.

"What news, Pilka? How fares my brother and how is my

poor love, the King's Son?"

"Osmo is still with the serpents," Pilka answered, "but they haven't eaten him yet. I left the embroidered square on the pillow where the King's Son's head was lying. Suyettar was asleep on the bed beside him where you should be, dear mistress. Suyettar's awful mouth was open and she was snoring horribly. The King's Son moved uneasily for he was troubled even in his sleep."

"And did you go through the castle, Pilka?"

"Yes, dear mistress."

"And did you see the remains of the wedding feast?"

"Yes, dear mistress, the remains of a feast that shamed the King's Son, for Suyettar served bones instead of meat, fish heads, turnip tops, and bread burned to a cinder."

"Good Pilka!" Ilona said. "Good little dog! You have done well! Now the dawn is coming and I must go back to the Sea King's palace. But I shall come again tonight and also tomorrow night and do you be here waiting for me."

Pilka promised and Ilona sank down into the sea to a clanking of chains that sounded like silver bells. The King's Son heard them in his sleep and for a moment woke and said:

"What's that?"

"What's what?" snarled Suyettar. "You're dreaming! Go back to sleep!"

A few hours later when he woke again, he found the lovely square of embroidery on his pillow.

"Who made this?" he cried.

Suyettar was busy combing her snaky locks. She turned on him quickly.

"Who made what?"

When she saw the embroidery she tried to snatch it from him, but he held it tight.

"I made it, of course!" she declared. "Who but me would sit up all night and work while you lay snoring!"

But the King's Son, as he folded the embroidery, muttered

to himself:

"It doesn't look to me much like your work!"

After he had breakfasted, the King's Son asked for news of Osmo. A slave was sent to the place of the serpents and when he returned he reported that Osmo was sitting amongst them uninjured.

"The old king snake has made friends with him," he added, "and has wound himself around Osmo's arm."

The King's Son was amazed at this news and also relieved, for the whole affair troubled him sorely and he was beginning to suspect a mystery.

He knew an old wise woman who lived alone in a little hut on the seashore and he decided he would go and consult her. So he went to her and told her about Osmo and how Osmo had deceived him in regard to his sister. Then he told her how the serpents instead of devouring Osmo had made friends with him and last he showed her the square of lovely embroidery he had found on his pillow that morning.

"There is a mystery somewhere, granny," he said in conclusion, "and I know not how to solve it."

The old woman looked at him thoughtfully.

"My son," she said at last, "that is never Osmo's sister that you have married. Take an old woman's word—it is Suyettar! Yet Osmo's sister must be alive and the embroidery must be a token from her. It probably means that she begs you to release her brother."

"Suyettar!" repeated the King's Son, aghast.

At first he couldn't believe such a horrible thing possible and yet that, if it were so, would explain much.

"I wonder if you're right," he said. "I must be on my guard!"

That night on the stroke of midnight to the sound of silver chimes Ilona came floating up through the waves and little Pilka, as she appeared, greeted her with barks of joy.

As before Ilona sang:

"Peely, peely, Pilka, pide,
Lift the latch and slip inside!
Past the watchdog in the yard,
Past the sleeping men on guard!
Creep in softly as a snake,
Then creep out before they wake!
Peely, peely, Pilka, pide,
Peely, peely, Pilka!"

This time Ilona gave Pilka a shirt for the King's Son. Beautifully embroidered it was in gold and silver and Ilona herself had worked it in the Sea King's palace.

Pilka carried it safely to the castle and left it on the pillow where the King's Son could see it as soon as he woke. Then Pilka visited the place of the serpents and before the first ray of dawn was back at the seashore to reassure Ilona of Osmo's safety.

Then dawn came and Ilona, as she sank in the waves to the chime of silver bells, called out to Pilka:

"Meet me here tonight at the same hour! Fail me not, dear Pilka, for tonight is the last night that the Sea King will allow me to come to the upper world!"

Pilka, howling with grief, made promise:

"I'll be here, dear mistress, that I will!"

The King's Son that morning, as he opened his eyes, saw the embroidered shirt lying on the pillow at his head. He thought at first he must be dreaming for it was more beautiful than any shirt that had ever been worked by human fingers.

"Ah!" he sighed at last, "who made this?"

"Who made what?" Suyettar demanded rudely.

When she saw the shirt she tried to snatch it, but the King's Son held it from her. Then she pretended to laugh and said:

"Oh, that! I made it, of course! Do you think anyone else in the world would sit up all night and work for you while you

lie there snoring! And small thanks I get for it, too!"

"It doesn't look to me like your work!" said the King's Son significantly.

Again the slave reported to him that Osmo was alive and unhurt by the serpents.

"Strange!" thought the King's Son.

He took the embroidered shirt and made the old wise woman another visit.

"Ah!" she said, when she saw the shirt, "now I understand! Listen, my Prince: last night at midnight I was awakened by the chime of silver bells and I got up and looked out the door. Just there at the water's edge, close to that little boat, I saw a strange sight. A lovely maiden rose from the waves holding in her hands the very shirt that you now have. A little dog that was lying in the boat greeted her with barks of joy. She sang a magic rime to the dog and gave it the shirt and off it ran. That maid, my Prince, must be Ilona. She must be in the Sea King's power and I think she is begging you to rescue her and to release her brother."

The King's Son slowly nodded his head.

"Granny, I'm sure what you say is true! Help me to rescue Ilona and I shall reward you richly."

"Then, my son, you must act at once, for tonight, I heard Ilona say, is the last night that the Sea King will allow her to come to the upper world. Go now to the smith and have him forge you a strong iron chain and a great strong scythe. Then tonight hide you down yonder in the shadow of the boat. At midnight when you hear the silver chimes and the maiden slowly rises from the waves, throw the iron chain about her and quickly draw her to you. Then, with one sweep of your scythe, cut the silver chains that are fastened to her ankles. But remember, my son, that is not all. She is under enchantment and as you try to grasp her the Sea King will change her to many things—a fish, a bird, a fly, and I know not what, and if in any form she escape you, then all is lost."

At once the King's Son hurried away to the smithy and had the smith forge him a strong iron chain and a heavy sharp scythe. Then when night fell he hid in the shadow of the boat and waited. Pilka snuggled up beside him. Midnight came and to the sweet chiming as of silver bells Ilona slowly rose from the waves. As she came she began singing:

"Peely, peely, Pilka, pide——"

Instantly the King's Son threw the strong iron chain about her and drew her to him. Then with one mighty sweep of the scythe he severed the silver chains that were attached to her ankles and the silver chains fell chiming into the depths. Another instant and the maiden in his arms was no maiden but a slimy fish that squirmed and wriggled and almost slipped through his fingers. He killed the fish and, lo! it was not a fish but a frightened bird that struggled to escape. He killed the bird and, lo! it was not a bird but a writhing lizard. And so on through many transformations, growing finally small and weak until at last there was only a mosquito. He crushed this and in his arms he found again the lovely Ilona.

"Ah, dear one," he said, "you are my true bride and not Suyettar who pretended she was you! Come, we will go at once to the castle and confront her!"

But Ilona cried out at this:

"Not there, my Prince, not there! Suyettar if she saw me would kill me and devour me! Keep me from her!"

"Very well, my dear one," the King's Son said. "We'll wait until tomorrow and after tomorrow there will be no Suyettar to fear."

So for that night they took shelter in the old wise woman's hut, Ilona and the King's Son and faithful little Pilka.

The next morning early the King's Son returned to the castle and had the sauna heated. Just inside the door he had a deep hole dug and filled it with burning tar. Then over the

top of the hole he stretched a brown mat and on the brown mat a blue mat. When all was ready he went indoors and roused Suyettar.

"Where have you been all night?" she demanded angrily.

"Forgive me this time," he begged in pretended humility, "and I promise never again to be parted from my own true bride. Come now, my dear, and bathe for the sauna is ready."

Then Suyettar, who loved to have people see her go to the sauna just as if she were a real human being, put on a long bathrobe and clapped her hands. Four slaves appeared. Two took up the train of her bathrobe and the two others supported her on either side. Slowly she marched out of the castle, across the courtyard, and over to the sauna.

"They all really think I'm a human princess!" she said to herself, and she was so sure she was beautiful and admired that she tossed her head and smirked from side to side and took little mincing steps.

When she reached the sauna she was ready to drop the bathrobe and jump over the doorsill to the steaming shelf, but the King's Son whispered:

"Nay! Nay! Remember your dignity as a beautiful princess and walk over the blue mat!"

So with one more toss of her head, one more smirk of her ugly face, Suyettar stepped on the blue mat and sank into the hole of burning tar. Then the King's Son quickly locked the door of the sauna and left her there to burn in the tar, for burning, you know, is the only way to destroy Suyettar. As she burned the last hateful thing Suyettar did was to tear out handfuls of her hair and scatter them broadcast in the air.

"Let these," she cried, yelling and cursing, "turn into mosquitos and worms and moths and trouble mankind forever!"

Then her yells grew fainter and at last ceased altogether and the King's Son knew that it was now safe to bring Ilona home. First, however, he had Osmo released from the place of the serpents and asked his forgiveness for the unjust

punishment.

Then he and Osmo together went to the hut of the old wise woman and there with tears of happiness the brother and sister were reunited. The King's Son to show his gratitude to the old wise woman begged her to accompany them to the castle and presently they all set forth with Pilka frisking ahead and barking for joy.

That day there was a new wedding feast spread at the castle and this time it was not bones and fish heads and burnt crusts but such food as the King's Son had not tasted for many a day.

To celebrate his happy marriage the King's Son made Osmo his chamberlain and gave Pilka a beautiful new collar.

"Now at last," Ilona said, "I am glad I left the house of my forefathers."

Mighty Mikko

There was once an old woodsman and his wife who had an only son named Mikko. As the mother lay dying the young man wept bitterly.

"When you are gone, my dear mother," he said, "there will be no one left to think of me."

The poor woman comforted him as best she could and said to him:

"You will still have your father."

Shortly after the woman's death, the old man, too, was taken ill.

"Now, indeed, I shall be left desolate and alone," Mikko thought, as he sat beside his father's bedside and saw him grow weaker and weaker.

"My boy," the old man said just before he died, "I have nothing to leave you but the three snares with which these many years I have caught wild animals. Those snares now belong to you. When I am dead, go into the woods and if you find a wild creature caught in any of them, free it gently and bring it home alive."

After his father's death, Mikko remembered the snares and went out to the woods to see them. The first was empty and also the second, but in the third he found a little red Fox. He carefully lifted the spring that had shut down on one of the Fox's feet and then carried the little creature home in his arms. He shared his supper with it and when he lay down to sleep the Fox curled up at his feet. They lived together some time until they became close friends.

"Mikko," said the Fox one day, "why are you so sad?"

"Because I'm lonely."

"Pooh!" said the Fox. "That's no way for a young man to talk! You ought to get married! Then you wouldn't feel lonely!"

"Married!" Mikko repeated. "How can I get married? I can't marry a poor girl because I'm too poor myself and a rich girl wouldn't marry me."

"Nonsense!" said the Fox. "You're a fine well set up young man and you're kind and gentle. What more could a princess ask?"

Mikko laughed to think of a princess wanting him for a husband.

"I mean what I say!" the Fox insisted. "Take our own Princess now. What would you think of marrying her?"

Mikko laughed louder than before.

"I have heard," he said, "that she is the most beautiful princess in the world! Any man would be happy to marry her!"

"Very well," the Fox said, "if you feel that way about her then I'll arrange the wedding for you."

With that the little Fox actually did trot off to the royal castle and gain audience with the King.

"My master sends you greetings," the Fox said, "and he begs you to loan him your bushel measure."

"My bushel measure!" the King repeated in surprise. "Who is your master and why does he want my bushel measure?"

"Ssh!" the Fox whispered as though he didn't want the courtiers to hear what he was saying. Then slipping up quite close to the King he murmured in his ear:

"Surely you have heard of Mikko, haven't you?—Mighty Mikko as he's called."

The King had never heard of any Mikko who was known as Mighty Mikko but, thinking that perhaps he should have heard of him, he shook his head and murmured:

"H'm! Mikko! Mighty Mikko! Oh, to be sure! Yes, yes, of

course!"

"My master is about to start off on a journey and he needs a bushel measure for a very particular reason."

"I understand! I understand!" the King said, although he didn't understand at all, and he gave orders that the bushel measure which they used in the storeroom of the castle be brought in and given to the Fox.

The Fox carried off the measure and hid it in the woods. Then he scurried about to all sorts of little out of the way nooks and crannies where people had hidden their savings and he dug up a gold piece here and a silver piece there until he had a handful. Then he went back to the woods and stuck the various coins in the cracks of the measure. The next day he returned to the King.

"My master, Mighty Mikko," he said, "sends you thanks, O King, for the use of your bushel measure."

The King held out his hand and when the Fox gave him the measure he peeped inside to see if by chance it contained any trace of what had recently been measured. His eye of course at once caught the glint of the gold and silver coins lodged in the cracks.

"Ah!" he said, thinking Mikko must be a very mighty lord indeed to be so careless of his wealth; "I should like to meet your master. Won't you and he come and visit me?"

This was what the Fox wanted the King to say but he pretended to hesitate.

"I thank your Majesty for the kind invitation," he said, "but I fear my master can't accept it just now. He wants to get married soon and we are about to start off on a long journey to inspect a number of foreign princesses."

This made the King all the more anxious to have Mikko visit him at once for he thought that if Mikko should see his daughter before he saw those foreign princesses he might fall in love with her and marry her. So he said to the Fox:

"My dear fellow, you must prevail on your master to make

me a visit before he starts out on his travels! You will, won't you?"

The Fox looked this way and that as if he were too embarrassed to speak.

"Your Majesty," he said at last, "I pray you pardon my frankness. The truth is you are not rich enough to entertain my master and your castle isn't big enough to house the immense retinue that always attends him."

The King, who by this time was frantic to see Mikko, lost his head completely.

"My dear Fox," he said, "I'll give you anything in the world if you prevail upon your master to visit me at once! Couldn't you suggest to him to travel with a modest retinue this time?"

The Fox shook his head.

"No. His rule is either to travel with a great retinue or to go on foot disguised as a poor woodsman attended only by me."

"Couldn't you prevail on him to come to me disguised as a poor woodsman?" the King begged. "Once he was here, I could place gorgeous clothes at his disposal."

But still the Fox shook his head.

"I fear Your Majesty's wardrobe doesn't contain the kind of clothes my master is accustomed to."

"I assure you I've got some very good clothes," the King said. "Come along this minute and we'll go through them and I'm sure you'll find some that your master would wear."

So they went to a room which was like a big wardrobe with hundreds and hundreds of hooks upon which were hung hundreds of coats and breeches and embroidered shirts. The King ordered his attendants to bring the costumes down one by one and place them before the Fox.

They began with the plainer clothes.

"Good enough for most people," the Fox said, "but not for my master."

Then they took down garments of a finer grade.

"I'm afraid you're going to all this trouble for nothing," the Fox said. "Frankly now, don't you realize that my master couldn't possibly put on any of these things!"

The King, who had hoped to keep for his own use his most gorgeous clothes of all, now ordered these to be shown.

The Fox looked at them sideways, sniffed them critically, and at last said:

"Well, perhaps my master would consent to wear these for a few days. They are not what he is accustomed to wear but I will say this for him: he is not proud."

The King was overjoyed.

"Very well, my dear Fox, I'll have the guest chambers put in readiness for your master's visit and I'll have all these, my finest clothes, laid out for him. You won't disappoint me, will you?"

"I'll do my best," the Fox promised.

With that he bade the King a civil good day and ran home to Mikko.

The next day as the Princess was peeping out of an upper window of the castle, she saw a young woodsman approaching accompanied by a Fox. He was a fine stalwart youth and the Princess, who knew from the presence of the Fox that he must be Mikko, gave a long sigh and confided to her serving maid:

"I think I could fall in love with that young man if he really were only a woodsman!"

Later when she saw him arrayed in her father's finest clothes—which looked so well on Mikko that no one even recognized them as the King's—she lost her heart completely and when Mikko was presented to her she blushed and trembled just as any ordinary girl might before a handsome young man.

All the Court was equally delighted with Mikko. The ladies went into ecstasies over his modest manners, his fine figure, and the gorgeousness of his clothes, and the old gray-beard Councilors, nodding their heads in approval, said to

each other:

"Nothing of the coxcomb about this young fellow! In spite of his great wealth see how politely he listens to us when we talk!"

The next day the Fox went privately to the King, and said:

"My master is a man of few words and quick judgment. He bids me tell you that your daughter, the Princess, pleases him mightily and that, with your approval, he will make his addresses to her at once."

The King was greatly agitated and began:

"My dear Fox—"

But the Fox interrupted him to say:

"Think the matter over carefully and give me your decision tomorrow."

So the King consulted with the Princess and with his Councilors and in a short time the marriage was arranged and the wedding ceremony actually performed!

"Didn't I tell you?" the Fox said, when he and Mikko were alone after the wedding.

"Yes," Mikko acknowledged, "you did promise that I should marry the Princess. But, tell me, now that I am married what am I to do? I can't live on here forever with my wife."

"Put your mind at rest," the Fox said. "I've thought of everything. Just do as I tell you and you'll have nothing to regret. Tonight say to the King: 'It is now only fitting that you should visit me and see for yourself the sort of castle over which your daughter is hereafter to be mistress!'"

When Mikko said this to the King, the King was overjoyed for now that the marriage had actually taken place he was wondering whether he hadn't perhaps been a little hasty. Mikko's words reassured him and he eagerly accepted the invitation.

On the morrow the Fox said to Mikko:

"Now I'll run on ahead and get things ready for you."

"But where are you going?" Mikko said, frightened at the

thought of being deserted by his little friend.

The Fox drew Mikko aside and whispered softly:

"A few days' march from here there is a very gorgeous castle belonging to a wicked old dragon who is known as the Worm. I think the Worm's castle would just about suit you."

"I'm sure it would," Mikko agreed. "But how are we to get it away from the Worm?"

"Trust me," the Fox said. "All you need do is this: lead the King and his courtiers along the main highway until by noon tomorrow you reach a crossroads. Turn there to the left and go straight on until you see the tower of the Worm's castle. If you meet any men by the wayside, shepherds or the like, ask them whose men they are and show no surprise at their answer. So now, dear master, farewell until we meet again at your beautiful castle."

The little Fox trotted off at a smart pace and Mikko and the Princess and the King attended by the whole Court followed in more leisurely fashion.

The little Fox, when he had left the main highway at the crossroads, soon met ten woodsmen with axes over their shoulders. They were all dressed in blue smocks of the same cut.

"Good day," the Fox said politely. "Whose men are you?"

"Our master is known as the Worm," the woodsmen told him.

"My poor, poor lads!" the Fox said, shaking his head sadly.

"What's the matter?" the woodsmen asked.

For a few moments the Fox pretended to be too overcome with emotion to speak. Then he said:

"My poor lads, don't you know that the King is coming with a great force to destroy the Worm and all his people?"

The woodsmen were simple fellows and this news threw them into great consternation.

"Is there no way for us to escape?" they asked.

The Fox put his paw to his head and thought.

"Well," he said at last, "there is one way you might escape and that is by telling everyone who asks you that you are the Mighty Mikko's men. But if you value your lives never again say that your master is the Worm."

"We are Mighty Mikko's men!" the woodsmen at once began repeating over and over. "We are Mighty Mikko's men!"

A little farther on the road the Fox met twenty grooms, dressed in the same blue smocks, who were tending a hundred beautiful horses. The Fox talked to the twenty grooms as he had talked to the woodsmen and before he left them they, too, were shouting:

"We are Mighty Mikko's men!"

Next the Fox came to a huge flock of a thousand sheep tended by thirty shepherds all dressed in the Worm's blue smocks. He stopped and talked to them until he had them roaring out:

"We are Mighty Mikko's men!"

Then the Fox trotted on until he reached the castle of the Worm. He found the Worm himself inside lolling lazily about. He was a huge dragon and had been a great warrior in his day. In fact his castle and his lands and his servants and his possessions had all been won in battle. But now for many years no one had cared to fight him and he had grown fat and lazy.

"Good day," the Fox said, pretending to be very breathless and frightened. "You're the Worm, aren't you?"

"Yes," the dragon said, boastfully, "I am the great Worm!"

The Fox pretended to grow more agitated.

"My poor fellow, I am sorry for you! But of course none of us can expect to live forever. Well, I must hurry along. I thought I would just stop and say good-by."

Made uneasy by the Fox's words, the Worm cried out:

"Wait just a minute! What's the matter?"

The Fox was already at the door but at the Worm's entreaty he paused and said over his shoulder:

"Why, my poor fellow, you surely know, don't you? that the King with a great force is coming to destroy you and all your people!"

"What!" the Worm gasped, turning a sickly green with fright. He knew he was fat and helpless and could never again fight as in the years gone by.

"Don't go just yet!" he begged the Fox. "When is the King coming?"

"He's on the highway now! That's why I must be going! Good-by!"

"My dear Fox, stay just a moment and I'll reward you richly! Help me to hide so that the King won't find me! What about the shed where the linen is stored? I could crawl under the linen and then if you locked the door from the outside the King could never find me."

"Very well," the Fox agreed, "but we must hurry!"

So they ran outside to the shed where the linen was kept and the Worm hid himself under the linen. The Fox locked the door, then set fire to the shed, and soon there was nothing left of that wicked old dragon, the Worm, but a handful of ashes.

The Fox now called together the dragon's household and talked them over to Mikko as he had the woodsmen and the grooms and the shepherds.

Meanwhile the King and his party were slowly covering the ground over which the Fox had sped so quickly. When they came to the ten woodsmen in blue smocks, the King said:

"I wonder whose woodsmen those are."

One of his attendants asked the woodsmen and the ten of them shouted out at the top of their voices:

"We are Mighty Mikko's men!"

Mikko said nothing and the King and all the Court were impressed anew with his modesty.

A little farther on they met the twenty grooms with their hundred prancing horses. When the grooms were questioned,

they answered with a shout:

"We are Mighty Mikko's men!"

"The Fox certainly spoke the truth," the King thought to himself, "when he told me of Mikko's riches!"

A little later the thirty shepherds when they were questioned made answer in a chorus that was deafening to hear:

"We are Mighty Mikko's men!"

The sight of the thousand sheep that belonged to his son-in-law made the King feel poor and humble in comparison and the courtiers whispered among themselves:

"For all his simple manner, Mighty Mikko must be a richer, more powerful lord than the King himself! In fact it is only a very great lord indeed who could be so simple!"

At last they reached the castle which from the blue smocked soldiers that guarded the gateway they knew to be Mikko's. The Fox came out to welcome the King's party and behind him in two rows all the household servants. These, at a signal from the Fox, cried out in one voice:

"We are Mighty Mikko's men!"

Then Mikko in the same simple manner that he would have used in his father's mean little hut in the woods bade the King and his followers welcome and they all entered the castle where they found a great feast already prepared and waiting.

The King stayed on for several days and the more he saw of Mikko the better pleased he was that he had him for a son-in-law.

When he was leaving he said to Mikko:

"Your castle is so much grander than mine that I hesitate ever asking you back for a visit."

But Mikko reassured the King by saying earnestly:

"My dear father-in-law, when first I entered your castle I thought it was the most beautiful castle in the world!"

The King was flattered and the courtiers whispered among themselves:

"How affable of him to say that when he knows very well

how much grander his own castle is!"

When the King and his followers were safely gone, the little red Fox came to Mikko and said:

"Now, my master, you have no reason to feel sad and lonely. You are lord of the most beautiful castle in the world and you have for wife a sweet and lovely Princess. You have no longer any need of me, so I am going to bid you farewell."

Mikko thanked the little Fox for all he had done and the little Fox trotted off to the woods.

So you see that Mikko's poor old father, although he had no wealth to leave his son, was really the cause of all Mikko's good fortune, for it was he who told Mikko in the first place to carry home alive anything he might find caught in the snares.

The Forest Bride

There was once a farmer who had three sons. One day when the boys were grown to manhood he said to them:

"My sons, it is high time that you were all married. Tomorrow I wish you to go out in search of brides."

"But where shall we go?" the oldest son asked.

"I have thought of that, too," the father said. "Do each of you chop down a tree and then take the direction in which the fallen tree points. I'm sure that each of you if you go far enough in that direction will find a suitable bride."

So the next day the three sons chopped down trees. The oldest son's tree fell pointing north.

"That suits me!" he said, for he knew that to the north lay a farm where a very pretty girl lived.

The tree of the second son when it fell pointed south.

"That suits me!" the second son declared thinking of a girl that he had often danced with who lived on a farm to the south.

The youngest son's tree—the youngest son's name was Veikko—when it fell pointed straight to the forest.

"Ha! Ha!" the older brothers laughed. "Veikko will have to go courting one of the Wolf girls or one of the Foxes!"

They meant by this that only animals lived in the forest and they thought they were making a good joke at Veikko's expense. But Veikko said he was perfectly willing to take his chances and go where his tree pointed.

The older brothers went gaily off and presented their suits to the two farmers whose daughters they admired. Veikko, too, started off with brave front but after he had gone some distance in the forest his courage began to ebb.

"How can I find a bride," he asked himself, "in a place where there are no human creatures at all!"

Just then he came to a little hut. He pushed open the door and went in. It was empty. To be sure there was a little mouse sitting on the table, daintily combing her whiskers, but a mouse of course doesn't count.

"There's nobody here!" Veikko said aloud.

The little mouse paused in her toilet and turning towards him said reproachfully:

"Why, Veikko, I'm here!"

"But you don't count. You're only a mouse!"

"Of course I count!" the little mouse declared. "But tell me, what were you hoping to find?"

"I was hoping to find a sweetheart."

The little mouse questioned him further and Veikko told her the whole story of his brothers and the trees.

"The two older ones are finding sweethearts easily enough," Veikko said, "but I don't see how I can off here in the forest. And it will shame me to have to go home and confess that I alone have failed."

"See here, Veikko," the little mouse said, "why don't you take me for your sweetheart?"

Veikko laughed heartily.

"But you're only a mouse! Whoever heard of a man having a mouse for a sweetheart!"

The mouse shook her little head solemnly.

"Take my word for it, Veikko, you could do much worse than have me for a sweetheart! Even if I am only a mouse I can love you and be true to you."

She was a dear dainty little mouse and as she sat looking up at Veikko with her little paws under her chin and her bright little eyes sparkling Veikko liked her more and more.

Then she sang Veikko a pretty little song and the song cheered him so much that he forgot his disappointment at not finding a human sweetheart and as he left her to go home he

said:

"Very well, little mouse, I'll take you for my sweetheart!"

At that the mouse made little squeaks of delight and she told him that she'd be true to him and wait for him no matter how long he was in returning.

Well, the older brothers when they got home boasted loudly about their sweethearts.

"Mine," said the oldest, "has the rosiest reddest cheeks you ever saw!"

"And mine," the second announced, "has long yellow hair!"

Veikko said nothing.

"What's the matter, Veikko?" the older brothers asked him, laughing. "Has your sweetheart pretty pointed ears or sharp white teeth?"

You see they were still having their little joke about foxes and wolves.

"You needn't laugh," Veikko said. "I've found a sweetheart. She's a gentle dainty little thing gowned in velvet."

"Gowned in velvet!" echoed the oldest brother with a frown.

"Just like a princess!" the second brother sneered.

"Yes," Veikko repeated, "gowned in velvet like a princess. And when she sits up and sings to me I'm perfectly happy."

"Huh!" grunted the older brothers not at all pleased that Veikko should have so grand a sweetheart.

"Well," said the old farmer after a few days, "now I should like to know what those sweethearts of yours are able to do. Have them each bake me a loaf of bread so that I can see whether they're good housewives."

"Mine will be able to bake bread—I'm sure of that!" the oldest brother declared boastfully.

"So will mine!" chorused the second brother.

Veikko was silent.

"What about the Princess?" they said with a laugh. "Do

you think the Princess can bake bread?"

"I don't know," Veikko answered truthfully. "I'll have to ask her."

Of course he had no reason for supposing that the little mouse could bake bread and by the time he reached the hut in the forest he was feeling sad and discouraged.

When he pushed open the door he found the little mouse as before seated on the table daintily combing her whiskers. At sight of Veikko she danced about with delight.

"I'm so glad to see you!" she squeaked. "I knew you would come back!"

Then when she noticed that he was silent she asked him what was the matter. Veikko told her:

"My father wants each of our sweethearts to bake him a loaf of bread. If I come home without a loaf my brothers will laugh at me."

"You won't have to go home without a loaf!" the little mouse said. "I can bake bread."

Veikko was much surprised at this.

"I never heard of a mouse that could bake bread!"

"Well, I can!" the little mouse insisted.

With that she began ringing a small silver bell, tinkle, tinkle, tinkle. Instantly there was the sound of hurrying footsteps, tiny scratchy footsteps, and hundreds of mice came running into the hut.

The little Princess mouse sitting up very straight and dignified said to them:

"Each of you go fetch me a grain of the finest wheat."

All the mice scampered quickly away and soon returned one by one, each carrying a grain of the finest wheat. After that it was no trick at all for the Princess mouse to bake a beautiful loaf of wheaten bread.

The next day the three brothers presented their father the loaves of their sweethearts' baking. The oldest one had a loaf of rye bread.

"Very good," the farmer said. "For hardworking people like us rye bread is good."

The loaf the second son had was made of barley.

"Barley bread is also good," the farmer said.

But when Veikko presented his loaf of beautiful wheaten bread, his father cried out:

"What! White bread! Ah, Veikko now must have a sweetheart of wealth!"

"Of course!" the older brothers sneered. "Didn't he tell us she was a Princess? Say, Veikko, when a Princess wants fine white flour, how does she get it?"

Veikko answered simply:

"She rings a little silver bell and when her servants come in she tells them to bring her grains of the finest wheat."

At this the older brothers nearly exploded with envy until their father had to reprove them.

"There! There!" he said. "Don't grudge the boy his good luck! Each girl has baked the loaf she knows how to make and each in her own way will probably make a good wife. But before you bring them home to me I want one further test of their skill in housewifery. Let them each send me a sample of their weaving."

The older brothers were delighted at this for they knew that their sweethearts were skilful weavers.

"We'll see how her ladyship fares this time!" they said, sure in their hearts that Veikko's sweetheart, whoever she was, would not put them to shame with her weaving.

Veikko, too, had serious doubts of the little mouse's ability at the loom.

"Whoever heard of a mouse that could weave?" he said to himself as he pushed open the door of the forest hut.

"Oh, there you are at last!" the little mouse squeaked joyfully.

She reached out her little paws in welcome and then in her excitement she began dancing about on the table.

"Are you really glad to see me, little mouse?" Veikko asked.

"Indeed I am!" the mouse declared. "Am I not your sweetheart? I've been waiting for you and waiting, just wishing that you would return! Does your father want something more this time, Veikko?"

"Yes, and it's something I'm afraid you can't give me, little mouse."

"Perhaps I can. Tell me what it is."

"It's a sample of your weaving. I don't believe you can weave. I never heard of a mouse that could weave."

"Tut! Tut!" said the mouse. "Of course I can weave! It would be a strange thing if Veikko's sweetheart couldn't weave!"

She rang the little silver bell, tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, and instantly there was the faint scratch-scratch of a hundred little feet as mice came running in from all directions and sat up on their haunches awaiting their Princess' orders.

"Go each of you," she said, "and get me a fiber of flax, the finest there is."

The mice went scurrying off and soon they began returning one by one each bringing a fiber of flax. When they had spun the flax and carded it, the little mouse wove a beautiful piece of fine linen. It was so sheer that she was able when she folded it to put it into an empty nutshell.

"Here, Veikko," she said, "here in this little box is a sample of my weaving. I hope your father will like it."

Veikko when he got home felt almost embarrassed for he was sure that his sweetheart's weaving would shame his brothers. So at first he kept the nutshell hidden in his pocket.

The sweetheart of the oldest brother had sent as a sample of her weaving a square of coarse cotton.

"Not very fine," the farmer said, "but good enough."

The second brother's sample was a square of cotton and linen mixed.

"A little better," the farmer said, nodding his head.

Then he turned to Veikko.

"And you, Veikko, has your sweetheart not given you a sample of her weaving?"

Veikko handed his father a nutshell at sight of which his brothers burst out laughing.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" they laughed. "Veikko's sweetheart gives him a nut when he asks for a sample of her weaving."

But their laughter died as the farmer opened the nutshell and began shaking out a great web of the finest linen.

"Why, Veikko, my boy!" he cried, "however did your sweetheart get threads for so fine a web?"

Veikko answered modestly:

"She rang a little silver bell and ordered her servants to bring her in fibers of finest flax. They did so and after they had spun the flax and carded it, my sweetheart wove the web you see."

"Wonderful!" gasped the farmer. "I have never known such a weaver! The other girls will be all right for farmers' wives but Veikko's sweetheart might be a Princess! Well," concluded the farmer, "it's time that you all brought your sweethearts home. I want to see them with my own eyes. Suppose you bring them tomorrow."

"She's a good little mouse and I'm very fond of her," Veikko thought to himself as he went out to the forest, "but my brothers will certainly laugh when they find she is only a mouse! Well, I don't care if they do laugh! She's been a good little sweetheart to me and I'm not going to be ashamed of her!"

So when he got to the hut he told the little mouse at once that his father wanted to see her.

The little mouse was greatly excited.

"I must go in proper style!" she said.

She rang the little silver bell and ordered her coach and five. The coach when it came turned out to be an empty

nutshell and the five prancing steeds that were drawing it were five black mice. The little mouse seated herself in the coach with a coachman mouse on the box in front of her and a footman mouse on the box behind her.

"Oh, how my brothers will laugh!" thought Veikko.

But he didn't laugh. He walked beside the coach and told the little mouse not to be frightened, that he would take good care of her. His father, he told her, was a gentle old man and would be kind to her.

When they left the forest they came to a river which was spanned by a foot bridge. Just as Veikko and the nutshell coach had reached the middle of the bridge, a man met them coming from the opposite direction.

"Mercy me!" the man exclaimed as he caught sight of the strange little coach that was rolling along beside Veikko. "What's that?"

He stooped down and looked and then with a loud laugh he put out his foot and pushed the coach, the little mouse, her servants, and her five prancing steeds—all off the bridge and into the water below.

"What have you done! What have you done!" Veikko cried. "You've drowned my poor little sweetheart!"

The man thinking Veikko was crazy hurried away.

Veikko with tears in his eyes looked down into the water.

"You poor little mouse!" he said. "How sorry I am that you are drowned! You were a faithful loving sweetheart and now that you are gone I know how much I loved you!"

As he spoke he saw a beautiful coach of gold drawn by five glossy horses go up the far bank of the river. A coachman in gold lace held the reins and a footman in pointed cap sat up stiffly behind. The most beautiful girl in the world was seated in the coach. Her skin was as red as a berry and as white as snow, her long golden hair gleamed with jewels, and she was dressed in pearly velvet. She beckoned to Veikko and when he came close she said:

"Won't you come sit beside me?"

"Me? Me?" Veikko stammered, too dazed to think.

The beautiful creature smiled.

"You were not ashamed to have me for a sweetheart when I was a mouse," she said, "and surely now that I am a Princess again you won't desert me!"

"A mouse!" Veikko gasped. "Were you the little mouse?"

The Princess nodded.

"Yes, I was the little mouse under an evil enchantment which could never have been broken if you had not taken me for a sweetheart and if another human being had not drowned me. Now the enchantment is broken forever. So come, we will go to your father and after he has given us his blessing we will get married and go home to my kingdom."

And that's exactly what they did. They drove at once to the farmer's house and when Veikko's father and his brothers and his brothers' sweethearts saw the Princess' coach stopping at their gate they all came out bowing and scraping to see what such grand folk could want of them.

"Father!" Veikko cried, "don't you know me?"

The farmer stopped bowing long enough to look up.

"Why, bless my soul!" he cried, "it's our Veikko!"

"Yes, father, I'm Veikko and this is the Princess that I'm going to marry!"

"A Princess, did you say, Veikko? Mercy me, where did my boy find a Princess?"

"Out in the forest where my tree pointed."

"Well, well, well," the farmer said, "where your tree pointed! I've always heard that was a good way to find a bride."

The older brothers shook their heads gloomily and muttered:

"Just our luck! If only our trees had pointed to the forest we, too, should have found princesses instead of plain country wenches!"

But they were wrong: it wasn't because his tree pointed to

the forest that Veikko got the Princess, it was because he was so simple and good that he was kind even to a little mouse.

Well, after they had got the farmer's blessing they rode home to the Princess' kingdom and were married. And they were happy as they should have been for they were good and true to each other and they loved each other dearly.

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