

Russian, Czech & Polish Tales

IMAGINATIVE SERIES

SELECTED AUTHORS

Russian, Czech, and Polish Tales

Selected Authors

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Russian, Czech, and Polish Tales

Imaginative Series

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Russia, Czech & Polish Tales

Folk Tales from the Russian

By Verra Xenophontovna de Blumenthal

CHAPTER I
The Tsarevna Frog

In an old, old Russian tsarstvo[1], I do not know when, there lived a sovereign prince with the princess his wife. They had three sons, all of them young, and such brave fellows that no pen could describe them. The youngest had the name of Ivan Tsarevitch. One day their father said to his sons:

"My dear boys, take each of you an arrow, draw your strong bow and let your arrow fly; in whatever court it falls, in that court there will be a wife for you."

The arrow of the oldest Tsarevitch fell on a boyar-house[2] just in front of the terem where women live; the arrow of the second Tsarevitch flew to the red porch of a rich merchant, and on the porch there stood a sweet girl, the merchant's daughter. The youngest, the brave Tsarevitch Ivan, had the ill luck to send his arrow into the midst of a swamp, where it was caught by a croaking frog.

Ivan Tsarevitch came to his father: "How can I marry the frog?" complained the son. "Is she my equal? Certainly she is not."

---

[1] A tsarstvo is the domain of a tsar (czar), which is the title of an absolute monarch in Russia. The word tsar, derived from the Roman name and title, Caesar, may be translated emperor, king, or prince. A number of words are formed from it by adding different syllables: Tsarevitch, the tsar's son, prince; Tsarevna, the tsar's daughter, princess; Tsaritza, the tsar's wife, queen or empress.

[2] Boyar was the word formerly used to mean a Russian nobleman; so a boyar-house is a lord's house; boyarishnia is a lord's daughter. The terem was that part of the boyar-house in which the women's rooms were situated.

"Never mind," replied his father, "you have to marry the frog, for such is evidently your destiny."

Thus the brothers were married: the oldest to a young boyarishnia, a nobleman's child; the second to the merchant's beautiful daughter, and the youngest, Tsarevitch Ivan, to a croaking frog.

After a while the sovereign prince called his three sons and said to them:

"Have each of your wives bake a loaf of bread by tomorrow morning."

Ivan returned home. There was no smile on his face, and his brow was clouded.

"C-R-O-A-K! C-R-O-A-K! Dear husband of mine, Tsarevitch Ivan, why so sad?" gently asked the frog. "Was there anything disagreeable in the palace?"

"Disagreeable indeed," answered Ivan Tsarevitch; "the Tsar, my father, wants you to bake a loaf of white bread by tomorrow."

"Do not worry, Tsarevitch. Go to bed; the morning hour is a better adviser than the dark evening."

The Tsarevitch, taking his wife's advice, went to sleep. Then the frog threw off her frogskin and turned into a beautiful, sweet girl, Vassilissa by name. She now stepped out on the porch and called aloud:

"Nurses and waitresses, come to me at once and prepare a loaf of white bread for to-morrow morning, a loaf exactly like those I used to eat in my royal father's[3] palace."

In the morning Tsarevitch Ivan awoke with the crowing cocks, and you know the cocks and chickens are never late.

---

[3] In Russia there is a fatherly relation existing between the ruler and his subjects which is shown in such phrases as "the tsar father," "their father sovereign," etc. The Russian language has many diminutives, or terms of endearment. For instance, the Tzar is often affectionately called "the little father" by his subjects.

Yet the loaf was already made, and so fine it was that nobody could even describe it, for only in fairyland one finds such marvelous loaves. It was adorned all about with pretty figures, with towns and fortresses on each side, and within it was white as snow and light as a feather.

The Tsar father was pleased and the Tsarevitch received his special thanks.

"Now there is another task," said the Tsar smilingly. "Have each of your wives weave a rug by to-morrow."

Tsarevitch Ivan came back to his home. There was no smile on his face and his brow was clouded.

"C-R-O-A-K! C-R-O-A-K! Dear Tsarevitch Ivan, my husband and master, why so troubled again? Was not father pleased?"

"How can I be otherwise? The Tsar, my father, has ordered a rug by tomorrow."

"Do not worry, Tsarevitch. Go to bed; go to sleep. The morning hour will bring help."

Again the frog turned into Vassilissa, the wise maiden, and again she called aloud:

"Dear nurses and faithful waitresses, come to me for new work. Weave a silk rug like the one I used to sit upon in the palace of the king, my father."

Once said, quickly done.[4] When the cocks began their early "cock-a-doodle-doo," Tsarevitch Ivan awoke, and lo! there lay the most beautiful silk rug before him, a rug that no one could begin to describe. Threads of silver and gold were interwoven among bright-colored silken ones, and the rug was too beautiful for anything but to admire.

The Tsar father was pleased, thanked his son Ivan, and issued a new order. He now wished to see the three wives of his handsome sons, and they were to present their brides on

[4] This is the Russian idiom. Observe how much more lively it is than our own "No sooner said than done."

the next day.

The Tsarevitch Ivan returned home. Cloudy was his brow, more cloudy than before.

"C-R-O-A-K! C-R-O-A-K! Tsarevitch, my dear husband and master, why so sad? Hast thou heard anything unpleasant at the palace?"

"Unpleasant enough, indeed! My father, the Tsar, ordered all of us to present our wives to him. Now tell me, how could I dare go with thee?"

"It is not so bad after all, and might be much worse," answered the frog, gently croaking. "Thou shalt go alone and I will follow thee. When thou hearest a noise, a great noise, do not be afraid; simply say: 'There is my miserable froggy coming in her miserable box.'"

The two elder brothers arrived first with their wives, beautiful, bright, and cheerful, and dressed in rich garments. Both the happy bridegrooms made fun of the Tsarevitch Ivan.

"Why alone, brother?" they laughingly said to him. "Why didst thou not bring thy wife along with thee? Was there no rag to cover her? Where couldst thou have gotten such a beauty? We are ready to wager that in all the swamps in the dominion of our father it would be hard to find another one like her." And they laughed and laughed.

Lo! what a noise! The palace trembled, the guests were all frightened.

Tsarevitch Ivan alone remained quiet and said:

"No danger; it is my froggy coming in her box."

To the red porch came flying a golden carriage drawn by six splendid white horses, and Vassilissa, beautiful beyond all description, gently reached her hand to her husband. He led her with him to the heavy oak tables, which were covered with snow-white linen and loaded with many wonderful dishes such as are known and eaten only in the land of fairies and never anywhere else. The guests were eating and chatting gayly.

Vassilissa drank some wine, and what was left in the tumbler she poured into her left sleeve. She ate some of the fried swan, and the bones she threw into her right sleeve. The wives of the two elder brothers watched her and did exactly the same.

When the long, hearty dinner was over, the guests began dancing and singing. The beautiful Vassilissa came forward, as bright as a star, bowed to her sovereign, bowed to the honorable guests and danced with her husband, the happy Tsarevitch Ivan.

While dancing, Vassilissa waved her left sleeve and a pretty lake appeared in the midst of the hall and cooled the air. She waved her right sleeve and white swans swam on the water. The Tsar, the guests, the servants, even the gray cat sitting in the corner, all were amazed and wondered at the beautiful Vassilissa. Her two sisters-in-law alone envied her. When their turn came to dance, they also waved their left sleeves as Vassilissa had done, and, oh, wonder! they sprinkled wine all around. They waved their right sleeves, and instead of swans the bones flew in the face of the Tsar father. The Tsar grew very angry and bade them leave the palace. In the meantime Ivan Tsarevitch watched a moment to slip away unseen. He ran home, found the frogskin, and burned it in the fire.

Vassilissa, when she came back, searched for the skin, and when she could not find it her beautiful face grew sad and her bright eyes filled with tears.

She said to Tsarevitch Ivan, her husband:

"Oh, dear Tsarevitch, what hast thou done? There was but a short time left for me to wear the ugly frogskin. The moment was near when we could have been happy together forever. Now I must bid thee good-by. Look for me in a far-away country to which no one knows the roads, at the palace of Kostshei the Deathless;" and Vassilissa turned into a white swan and flew away through the window.

Tsarevitch Ivan wept bitterly. Then he prayed to the almighty God, and making the sign of the cross northward, southward, eastward, and westward, he went on a mysterious journey.

No one knows how long his journey was, but one day he met an old, old man. He bowed to the old man, who said:

"Good-day, brave fellow. What art thou searching for, and whither art thou going?"

Tsarevitch Ivan answered sincerely, telling all about his misfortune without hiding anything.

"And why didst thou burn the frogskin? It was wrong to do so. Listen now to me. Vassilissa was born wiser than her own father, and as he envied his daughter's wisdom he condemned her to be a frog for three long years. But I pity thee and want to help thee. Here is a magic ball. In whatever direction this ball rolls, follow without fear."

Ivan Tsarevitch thanked the good old man, and followed his new guide, the ball. Long, very long, was his road. One day in a wide, flowery field he met a bear, a big Russian bear. Ivan Tsarevitch took his bow and was ready to shoot the bear.

"Do not kill me, kind Tsarevitch," said the bear. "Who knows but that I may be useful to thee?" And Ivan did not shoot the bear.

Above in the sunny air there flew a duck, a lovely white duck. Again the Tsarevitch drew his bow to shoot it. But the duck said to him:

"Do not kill me, good Tsarevitch. I certainly shall be useful to thee some day."

And this time he obeyed the command of the duck and passed by. Continuing his way he saw a blinking hare. The Tsarevitch prepared an arrow to shoot it, but the gray, blinking hare said:

"Do not kill me, brave Tsarevitch. I shall prove myself grateful to thee in a very short time."

The Tsarevitch did not shoot the hare, but passed by. He

walked farther and farther after the rolling ball, and came to the deep blue sea. On the sand there lay a fish. I do not remember the name of the fish, but it was a big fish, almost dying on the dry sand.

"O Tsarevitch Ivan!" prayed the fish, "have mercy upon me and push me back into the cool sea."

The Tsarevitch did so, and walked along the shore. The ball, rolling all the time, brought Ivan to a hut, a queer, tiny hut standing on tiny hen's feet.

"Izboushka! Izboushka!" for so in Russia do they name small huts "Izboushka, I want thee to turn thy front to me," cried Ivan, and lo! the tiny hut turned its front at once. Ivan stepped in and saw a witch, one of the ugliest witches he could imagine.

"Ho! Ivan Tsarevitch! What brings thee here?" was his greeting from the witch.

"O, thou old mischief!" shouted Ivan with anger. "Is it the way in holy Russia to ask questions before the tired guest gets something to eat, something to drink, and some hot water to wash the dust off?"

Baba Yaga, the witch, gave the Tsarevitch plenty to eat and drink, besides hot water to wash the dust off. Tsarevitch Ivan felt refreshed. Soon he became talkative, and related the wonderful story of his marriage. He told how he had lost his dear wife, and that his only desire was to find her.

"I know all about it," answered the witch. "She is now at the palace of Kostshei the Deathless, and thou must understand that Kostshei is terrible. He watches her day and night and no one can ever conquer him. His death depends on a magic needle. That needle is within a hare; that hare is within a large trunk; that trunk is hidden in the branches of an old oak tree; and that oak tree is watched by Kostshei as closely as Vassilissa herself, which means closer than any treasure he has."

Then the witch told Ivan Tsarevitch how and where to

find the oak tree. Ivan hastily went to the place. But when he perceived the oak tree he was much discouraged, not knowing what to do or how to begin the work. Lo and behold! that old acquaintance of his, the Russian bear, came running along, approached the tree, uprooted it, and the trunk fell and broke. A hare jumped out of the trunk and began to run fast; but another hare, Ivan's friend, came running after, caught it and tore it to pieces. Out of the hare there flew a duck, a gray one which flew very high and was almost invisible, but the beautiful white duck followed the bird and struck its gray enemy, which lost an egg. That egg fell into the deep sea. Ivan meanwhile was anxiously watching his faithful friends helping him. But when the egg disappeared in the blue waters he could not help weeping. All of a sudden a big fish came swimming up, the same fish he had saved, and brought the egg in his mouth. How happy Ivan was when he took it! He broke it and found the needle inside, the magic needle upon which everything depended.

At the same moment Kostshei lost his strength and power forever. Ivan Tsarevitch entered his vast dominions, killed him with the magic needle, and in one of the palaces found his own dear wife, his beautiful Vassilissa. He took her home and they were very happy ever after.

CHAPTER 2
Seven Simeons

In an empire, in a country beyond many seas and islands, beyond high mountains, beyond large rivers, upon a level expanse, as if spread upon a table, there stood a large town, and in that town there lived a Tsar called Archidei, the son of Aggei; therefore he was called Aggeivitch.

A famous Tsar he was, and a clever one. His wealth could not be counted; his warriors were innumerable. There were forty times forty towns in his kingdom, and in each one of these towns there were ten palaces with silver doors and golden ceilings and magnificent crystal windows.

For his council twelve wise men were selected, each one of them having a beard half a yard long and a head full of wisdom. These advisers offered nothing but truth to their father sovereign; none ever dared advance a lie.

How could such a Tsar be anything but happy? But it is true, indeed, that neither wealth nor wisdom give happiness when the heart is not at ease, and even in golden palaces the poor heart often aches.

So it was with the Tsar Archidei; he was rich and clever, besides being a handsome fellow; but he could not find a bride to his taste, a bride with wit and beauty equal to his own. And this was the cause of the Tsar Archidei's sorrow and distress.

One day he was sitting in his golden armchair looking out of the window lost in thought. He had gazed for quite a while before he noticed foreign sailors landing opposite the imperial palace. The sailors ran their ship up to the wharf, reefed their white sails, threw the heavy anchor into the sea and prepared the plank ready to go ashore. Before them all walked an old

merchant; white was his beard and he had about him the air of a wise man. An idea suddenly occurred to the Tsar: "Sea merchants generally are well informed on many subjects. If I ask them, perchance I shall find that they have met somewhere a princess, beautiful and clever, suitable for me, the Tsar Archidei."

Without delay the order was given to call the sea merchants into the halls of the palace.

The merchant guests appeared, prayed to the holy icons[1] hanging in the corner, bowed to the Tsar, bowed to the wise advisers. The Tsar ordered his servants to serve them with tumblers of strong green wine. The guests drank the strong green wine[2] and wiped their beards with embroidered towels. Then the Tsar Archidei addressed them:

"We are aware that you gallant sea merchants cross all the big waters and see many wonderful things. My desire is to ask you about something, and you must give a straightforward answer without any deceit or evasion."

"So be it, mighty Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch," answered the merchant guests, bowing.

"Well, then, can you tell me if somewhere in an empire or kingdom, or among great princes, there is a maiden as beautiful and wise as I myself, Tsar Archidei; an illustrious maiden who would be a proper wife for me, a suitable Tsaritza for my

[1] The holy icons are pictures or mosaics of Christ, or the Virgin Mary, or of some saint or martyr of the Russian church. In every Russian house there is one or more, hung in a prominent place. Every one who enters the house at once bows and utters a prayer before the icons before he does anything else. This is an old Russian custom which is still kept up by peasants.

[2] Strong green wine. This is the phrase still used by Russian story-tellers to describe the drink which it was an honor to receive from the royal hand. Its strength was magical in that it was not acquired by keeping, but was always the same.

country?"

The merchant guests seemed to be puzzled, and after a long silence the eldest among them thus replied:

"Indeed, I once heard that yonder beyond the great sea, on an island called Buzan, there is a great country; and the sovereign of that land has a daughter named Helena, a princess very beautiful, not less so, I dare say, than thyself. And wise she is, too; a wise man once tried for three years to guess a riddle that she gave, and did not succeed."

"How far is that island, pray tell, and where are the roads that lead to it?"

"The island is not near," answered the old merchant. "If one chooses the wide sea he must journey ten years. Besides, the way to it is not known to us. Moreover, even suppose we did know the way, it seems that the Princess Helena is not a bride for thee."

The Tsar Archidei shouted with anger: "How dost thou dare to speak such words, thou, a long-bearded buck?"

"Thy will be done, but think for thyself. Suppose thou shouldst send an envoy to the island of Buzan. He would require ten long years to go there, ten years equally long to come back, and so his journey would require fully twenty years. By that time a most beautiful princess would grow old; a girl's beauty is like the swallow, a bird of passage; it lasts not long."

The Tsar Archidei became thoughtful. "Well," he said to the merchant guests, "you have my thanks, guests of passage, respectable men of trade. Go in God's name, transact business in my tsarstvo without any taxes whatever. What to do about the beautiful Princess Helena I will try to think out by myself."

The merchants bowed low and left the Tsar's rich palace.

The Tsar Archidei sat still, wrapped in thought, but he could find neither beginning nor end to the problem. "Let me ride into the wide fields," he said; "let me forget my sorrow amid the excitement of the noble hunt, hoping that the future

may bring advice."

The falconers appeared, cheerful notes from the golden trumpets resounded, and falcons and hawks were soon slumbering under their velvet caps as they sat quietly on the fingers of the hunters.

The Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch came with his men to a wide, wide field. All of his men were watching the moment to loose their falcons in order to let the birds pursue a long-legged heron or a white-breasted swan.

Now, you, my listeners, must understand that the fairy tale is quick, but life is not. The Tsar Archidei was on horseback for a long while, and finally came to a green valley. Looking around he saw a well cultivated field where the golden ears of the grain were already ripe, and oh, how beautiful! The Tsar stopped in admiration.

"I presume," he exclaimed, "that good workers are owners of this place, honest plowmen and diligent sowers. If only all fields in my tsarstvo were equally cultivated, my people need never know what hunger means, and there would even be plenty to send beyond the sea to be exchanged for silver and gold."

Then the Tsar Archidei gave orders to inquire who the owners of the field were, and what were their names. Hunters, grooms, and servants rushed in all directions, and discovered seven brave fellows, all of them fair, red-cheeked, and very handsome. They were dining according to the peasant fashion, which means that they were eating rye bread with onions, and drinking clear water. Their blouses were red, with a golden galloon around the neck, and they were so much alike that one could hardly be recognized from another.

The royal messengers approached.

"Whose field is this?" they asked; "this field with golden wheat?"

The seven brave peasants answered cheerfully:

"This is our field; we plowed it, and we also have sown the

golden wheat."

"And what kind of people are you?"

"We are the Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch's peasants, farmers, and we are brothers, sons of one father and mother. The name for all of us is Simeon, so you understand we are seven Simeons."

This answer was faithfully delivered to the Tsar Archidei by the envoys, and the Tsar at once desired to see the brave peasants, and ordered them to be called before him. The seven Simeons presently appeared and bowed. The Tsar looked at them with his bright eyes and asked them:

"What kind of people are you whose field is so well cultivated?"

One of the seven brothers, the eldest of them, answered:

"We are all thy peasants, simpletons, without any wisdom, born of peasant parents, all of us children of the same father and the same mother, and all having the same name, Simeon. Our old father taught us to pray to God, to obey thee, to pay taxes faithfully, and besides to work and toil without rest. He also taught to each of us a trade, for the old saying is, 'A trade is no burden, but a profit.' The old father wished us to keep our trades for a cloudy day,[3] but never to forsake our own fields, and always to be contented, and plow and harrow diligently.

"He also used to say, 'If one does not neglect the mother earth, but thoroughly harrows and sows in due season, then she, our mother, will reward generously, and will give plenty of bread, besides preparing a soft place for the everlasting rest when one is old and tired of life.'"

The Tsar Archidei liked the simple answer of the peasant, and said:

"Take my praise, brave good fellows, my peasants, tillers of the soil, sowers of wheat, gatherers of gold. And now tell

[3] For a cloudy day is the Russian idiom very similar to our own.

me, what trades did your father teach you, and what do you know?"

The first Simeon answered:

"My trade is not a very wise one. If thou wouldst let me have materials and working men, then I could build a post, a white stone column, reaching beyond the clouds, almost to the sky."

"Good enough!" exclaimed the Tsar Archidei. "And thou, the second Simeon, what is thy trade?"

The second Simeon was quick to give answer:

"My trade is a simple one. If my brother will build a white stone column, I can climb upon that column high up in the sky, and I shall see from above all the empires and all the kingdoms under the sun, and everything which is going on in those foreign countries."

"Thy trade is not so bad either," and the Tsar smiled and looked at the third brother. "And thou, third Simeon, what trade is thine?"

The third Simeon also had his answer ready:

"My trade is simple, too; that is to say, a peasant's trade.[4] If thou art in need of ships, thy learned men of foreign birth build them for thee as well as their wisdom teaches them. But if thou wilt order, I will build them simply one, two! and the ship is ready. My ships will be the result of the quick headwork of a peasant simpleton. But where a foreign ship sails a year, mine will sail an hour, and where others take ten years, mine will take not longer than a week."

"Well, well!" laughed the Tsar. "And thy trade, the fourth Simeon?" he asked.

The fourth brother bowed.

"My trade needs no wisdom either. If my brother will build thee a ship, I then will sail that ship; and if an enemy gives

[4] is a peasant's trade is a Russian saying which means, "It doesn't amount to much."

chase or a tempest rises, I'll seize the ship by the black prow and plunge her into the deep waters where there is eternal quiet; and after the storm is over or the enemy far, I'll again guide her to the surface of the wide sea."

"Good!" approved the Tsar. "And thou, fifth Simeon, what dost thou know? Hast thou also a trade?"

"My trade, Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch, is not a fair one, for I am a blacksmith. If thou wouldst order a shop built for me, I at once would forge a self-shooting gun, and no eagle far above in the sky or wild beast in the wood would be safe from that gun."

"Not bad either," answered the Tsar Archidei, well pleased. "Thy turn now, sixth Simeon."

"My trade is no trade," answered the sixth Simeon, rather humbly. "If my brother shoots a bird or a beast, never mind what or where, I can catch it before it falls down, catch it even better than a hunting dog. If the prey should fall into the blue sea, I'll find it at the sea's bottom; should it fall into the depth of the dark woods, I'll find it there in the midst of night; should it get caught in a cloud, I'll find it even there."

The Tsar Archidei evidently liked the trade of the sixth Simeon very well also. These were all simple trades, you see, without any wisdom whatever, but rather entertaining. The Tsar also liked the peasants' speech, and he said to them:

"Thanks, my peasants, tillers of the soil, my faithful workers. Your father's words are true ones: 'A trade is not a burden, but a profit.' Now come to my capital for a trial; people like you are welcome. And when the season for harvest arrives, the time to reap, to bind in bundles the golden grain, to thresh and carry the wheat to the market, I will let you go home with my royal grace."

Then all the seven Simeons bowed very low. "Thine is the will," said they, "and we are thy obedient subjects."

Here the Tsar Archidei looked at the youngest Simeon and remembered that he had not asked him about his trade.

So he said: "And thou, seventh Simeon, what is thy trade?"

"I have none, Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch. I learned many, but not a single one did me any good, and though I know something very well, I am not sure your majesty would like it."

"Let us know thy secret," ordered the Tsar Archidei.

"No, Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch! Give me, first of all, thy royal word not to kill me for my inborn talent, but to have mercy upon me. Then only will I be willing to disclose my secret."

"Thy wish is granted. I give thee my royal word, true and not to be broken, that whatever thou shalt disclose to me, I will have mercy upon thee."

Hearing these kind words, the seventh Simeon smiled, looked around, shook his curls and began:

"My trade is one for which there is no mercy in thy tsarstvo, and it is the one thing I am able to do. My trade is to steal and to hide the trace of how and when. There is no treasure, no fortunate possession, not even a bewitched one, nor a secret place that could be forbidden me if it be my wish to steal."

As soon as these bold words of the seventh Simeon reached the Tsar's ears he became very angry.

"No!" he exclaimed, "I certainly shall not pardon thee, thief and burglar! I will give orders for thy cruel death! I will have thee chained and thrown into my subterranean prison with nothing but bread and water for food until thou forget thy trade!"

"Great and merciful Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch, postpone thy orders. Listen to my peasant talk," prayed the seventh Simeon. "Our old Russian saying is: 'He is no thief who is not caught, and neither is he who steals, but the one who instigates the theft.' If my wish had been to steal, I should have done it long ago. I should have stolen thy treasures and thy judges would not have objected to take a small share of them,

and I could have built a white-walled stone palace and have been rich. But, mark this: I am a stupid peasant of low origin. I know well enough how to steal, but will not. If thy wish were to learn my trade, how could I keep it from thee? And if thou, for this sincere acknowledgment, wilt have me put to death, then what is the value of thy royal word?"

The Tsar thought a moment. "For this time," he said, "I will not let thee die, for it pleases me to grant thee my grace. But from this very day, this very hour, thou never shalt see God's light nor the bright sunshine nor the silvery moon. Thou shalt never walk at liberty through the wide fields, but thou, my dear guest, shalt dwell in a palace where no sunny ray ever penetrates. You, my servants, take him, chain his hands and his feet and lead him to my chief jailor. And you six Simeons follow me. You have my grace and reward. Tomorrow every one of you will begin to work for me according to his gifts and capacities."

The six Simeons followed the Tsar Archidei, and the seventh brother, the youngest, the beloved one, was fallen upon by the servants, taken away to the dark prison and heavily chained.

The Tsar Archidei ordered carpenters to be sent to the first Simeon, as well as masons and blacksmiths and all sorts of workingmen. He also ordered a supply of bricks, stones, iron, clay, and cement. Without any delay, Simeon, the first brother, began to build a column, and according to his simple peasant's habits his work progressed rapidly, and not a moment was wasted in clever combinations. In a short time the white column was ready, and lo, how high it went! as high as the great planets. The smaller stars were beneath it, and from above the people seemed to be like bugs.

The second Simeon climbed the column, looked around, listened to all sounds, and came down. The Tsar Archidei, anxious to know about everything under the sun, ordered him to report, and Simeon did so. He told the Tsar Archidei all

the wonderful doings all over the world. He told how one king was fighting another, where there was war and where there was peace, and with other things the second Simeon even mentioned deep secrets, quite surprising secrets, which made the Tsar Archidei smile; and the courtiers, encouraged by the royal smile, roared with laughter.

Meantime the third Simeon was accomplishing something in his line. After crossing himself three times the fellow rolled up his sleeves to the elbow, took a hatchet and one, two without any haste built a vessel. What a curious vessel it was! The Tsar Archidei watched the wonderful structure from the shore and as soon as the orders were given for sailing, the new vessel sailed away like a white-winged hawk. The cannon were shooting and upon the masts, instead of rigging, were drawn strings upon which musicians were playing the national tunes.

As soon as the wonderful vessel sailed into deep water, the fourth Simeon snatched the prow and no trace of it remained on the surface; the whole vessel went to the depths like a heavy stone. In an hour or so Simeon, with his left hand, led the ship to the blue surface of the sea again, and with his right he presented to the Tsar a most magnificent sturgeon for his "kulibiaka," the famous Russian fish pie.

While the Tsar Archidei enjoyed himself with looking at the marvelous vessel, the fifth Simeon built a blacksmith shop in the court back of the palace. There he blew the bellows and heated the iron. The noise from his hammers was great and the result of his peasant work was a self-shooting gun. The Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch went to the wild fields and perceived high above him, very high under the sky, an eagle flying.

"Now!" exclaimed the Tsar, "there is an eagle forgetting himself with watching the sun; shoot it. Perchance thou shalt have the good luck to hit it. Then I will honor thee."

Simeon shook his locks, smiled, put into his gun a silver

bullet, aimed, shot, and the eagle fell swiftly to the earth. The sixth Simeon did not even allow the eagle to fall to the ground, but, quick as a flash, he ran under it with a plate, caught it on that big plate and presented his prey to the Tsar Archidei.

"Thanks, thanks, my brave fellows, faithful peasants, tillers of the soil!" exclaimed the Tsar Archidei gayly. "I see now plainly that all of you are men of trade and I wish to reward you. But now go to your dinner and rest awhile."

The six Simeons bowed to the Tsar very low, prayed to the holy icons and went. They were already seated, had time to swallow each one a tumbler of the strong, green wine, took up the round wooden spoons in order to attack the "stchi," the Russian cabbage soup, when lo! the Tsar's fool came running and shaking his striped cap with the round bells and shouted:

"You ignorant simpletons, unlearned peasants, moujiks![5] Is it a suitable moment for dinner when the Tsar wants you? Go in haste!"

All the six started running toward the palace, thinking within themselves: "What can have happened?" In front of the palace stood the guards with their iron staves; in the halls all the wise and learned people were gathered together, and the Tsar himself was sitting on his high throne looking very grim and thoughtful.

"Listen to me," he said when the peasants approached, "you, my brave fellows, my clever brothers Simeon. I like your trades and I think, as do my wise advisers, that if thou, the second Simeon, art able to see everything going on under the sun, thou shouldst climb quickly on yonder column and glance around to see if there is, as they say, beyond the great

[5] Moujik, a peasant: his duties are those of a farm laborer, yet this phrase would not be a fair translation. This word, which is rendered "tiller of the soil," has no exact equivalent in English.

sea an island, Buzan by name. And see if on that island, as men assert, there is a mighty kingdom, and in that kingdom a mighty king, and if that king, as the story goes, has a daughter, the most beautiful princess Helena."

The second Simeon bowed and ran quickly, even forgetting to put on his cap. He went straight to the column, climbed it, looked around, came down, and this was his report:

"Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch, I have accomplished thy sovereign wish. I looked far beyond the sea and have seen the island Buzan. Mighty is the king there, and he is proud and merciless. He sits within his palace and his speech is always the same:

"'I am a great king and I have a most beautiful daughter, the princess Helena. There is no one in the universe more beautiful and more wise than she; there is no bridegroom worthy of her in any place under the bright sun, no tsar, no king, no tsarevitch, no korolevitch.[6] To no one will I ever give my daughter, the princess Helena, and whoever shall dare to court her, on such an one will I declare war, ruin his country, and capture himself.'"

"And how great is the army of that king?" asked the Tsar Archidei; "and also how far is his kingdom from my tsarstvo?"

"Well, according to the measure of my eyes," answered Simeon, "I fancy it would take a ship ten years less two days; or, if it happened to be stormy, I am afraid even a little longer than ten years. And that king has not a small army. I have seen altogether a hundred thousand spearmen, a hundred thousand armed men, and a hundred thousand or more could be gathered from the Tsar's court, from his servants and all kinds of underlings. Besides, there is no small armament of

[6] Korolevitch, from korol: king. The endings evitch and evna show descent, korolevitch meaning son of a king; korolevna meaning daughter of a king.

guards held in reserve for a special occasion, fed and petted by the king."

The Tsar Archidei remained for a long time in thoughtful silence and finally addressed his court people:

"My warriors and advisers: I have but one wish; I want the princess Helena for my wife. But tell me, how can I reach her?"

The wise advisers remained silent, hiding themselves behind each other. The third Simeon looked around, bowed to the Tsar, and said:

"Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch, forgive my simple words. How to reach the island of Buzan there is no need to worry about. Sit down on my ship; she is simply built, and equipped without any wise tricks. Where others require a year she takes but a day, and where other ships take ten years mine will take, let us say, a week. Only order thine advisers to decide whether we ought to fight for or peacefully court the beautiful princess."

"Now, my warriors brave, my advisers sage," spoke the Tsar Archidei to his men, "how will you decide upon this matter? Who among you will go to fight for the princess, or who will be shrewd enough to bring her peacefully here? I will pour gold and silver over that one. I will give to him the first rank among the very first."

And again the brave warriors and the sage advisers remained silent. The Tsar grew angry; he seemed to be ready for a terrible word. Then, as if somebody had asked the fool, out he jumped from behind the wise people with his foolish talk, shook his striped fool's cap, rang his many bells, and shouted:

"Why so silent, wise men? why so deep in thought? You have big heads and long beards; it would seem that there is plenty of wisdom, so why not show it? To go to the island of Buzan to obtain the bride does not mean to lose gold or army. Have you already forgotten the seventh Simeon? Why, it will

be simple enough for him to steal the princess Helena. Afterwards let the king of Buzan come here to fight us, and we will welcome him as an honored guest. But do not forget that he must take ten years' time to reach us, and in ten years ah me! I have heard that some wise man somewhere undertook to teach a horse to talk in ten years!"

"Good! Good!" exclaimed the Tsar Archidei, forgetting even his anger. "I thank thee, striped fool. I certainly shall reward thee. Thou must have a new cap with noisy bells, and each one of thy children a ginger pancake. You, faithful servants, run quickly and bring here the seventh Simeon."

According to the Tsar's bidding the heavy iron gates of the dark prison were thrown open, the heavy chains were taken off and the seventh Simeon appeared before the eager eyes of the Tsar Archidei, who thus addressed him:

"Listen to me attentively, thou seventh Simeon, for I had almost decided to grant thee a high honor; to keep thee thy life long in my prison. But if thou shouldst prove useful to me, then will I give thee freedom; and besides, thou shalt have a share out of my treasures. Art thou able to steal the beautiful princess Helena from her father, the mighty king of the island of Buzan?"

"And why not?" cheerfully laughed the seventh Simeon. "There is nothing difficult about it. She is not a pearl, and I presume she is not under too many locks. Only order the ship which my brother had built for thee to be loaded with velvets and brocades, with Persian rugs, beautiful pearls and precious stones, and bid my four brothers come along with me. But the two eldest keep thou as hostages."

Once said, quickly done. The Tsar Archidei gave orders while all were running hither and thither, and everything was finished so promptly that a short-haired girl would scarcely have had time to plait her hair. The ship, laden with velvets, brocades, with Persian rugs and pearls, and costly precious stones, was ready; the five brothers, the brave Simeons, were

ready; they bowed to the Tsar, spread sail, and disappeared.

The ship floated swiftly over the blue waters; she flew like a hawk in comparison with the slow merchant vessels, and in a week after the five Simeons had left their native land they sighted the island of Buzan.

The island appeared to be surrounded with cannon as thick as peas; the gigantic guards walked up and down the shores tugging fiercely at their big mustaches. As soon as the ship became visible from a tower somebody shouted through a Dutch trumpet:[7]

"Stop! Answer! What kind of people are ye? Why come ye here?"

The seventh Simeon answered from the ship: "We are a peaceful people, not enemies but friends, merchants everywhere welcomed as guests. We bring foreign merchandise. We want to sell, to buy, and to exchange. We also have gifts for your king and for the korolevna."

The five brothers, our brave Simeons, lowered the boat, loaded it with choice Venetian velvets, brocades, pearls, and precious stones, and covered all with Persian rugs. They rowed to the wharf, and landing near the king's palace, at once carried their gifts to the king.

The beautiful korolevna Helena was sitting in her terem. She was a fair maiden with eyes like stars and eyebrows like precious sable. When she looked at one it was like receiving a gift, and when she walked it was like the graceful swimming of a swan. The korolevna was quick to notice the brave, handsome brothers and at once called her nurses and maidens.

"Hasten, my dear nurses, and you, swift maidens, find out what kind of strangers are these coming to our royal palace."

All of the nurses, all of the maidens, ran out with questions ready. The seventh Simeon answered them thus:

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[7] Dutch trumpet, i.e., an imported trumpet.
Anything foreign is " Dutch " to the Russian peasant.

"We are merchant guests, peaceful people. Our native land is the country of the Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch, a great Tsar indeed. We came to sell, to buy, to exchange; moreover, we have gifts for the king and his princess. We do hope the king will favor us and will accept these trifles; if not for himself, at least for the adornment of his court's lovely maidens."

When Helena heard these words she at once let the merchants in. And the merchants appeared, bowed low to the beautiful korolevna, unfolded the showy velvets and golden brocades, strewed around the pearls and precious stones, such stones and pearls as had never been seen before in Buzan. The nurses and the maidens opened their mouths in amazement, and the korolevna herself seemed to be greatly pleased. The seventh Simeon, quick to understand, smiled and said:

"We all know thee to be as wise as beautiful, but now thou art evidently joking about us or mocking us. These simple wares are altogether too plain for thine own use. Accept them for thy nurses and maidens for their everyday attire, and these stones send away to the kitchen boys to play with. But if thou wilt listen to me, let me say that on our ship we have very different velvets and brocades; we have also precious stones, far more precious than any one has ever seen; yet we dared not bring them at once lest we might not suit thy temper and thy hearty wish. If thou shouldst decide to come in person and choose anything from among our possessions, they all are thine and we bow to thee gratefully for the bright glance of thy beautiful eyes."

The royal maid liked well enough these polite words of the handsome Simeon, and to her father she went:

"Father and king, there have come to visit us some foreign merchants and they have brought some goods never before seen in Buzan. Give me thy permission to go on board their wonderful ship to choose what things I like. They also have rich gifts for thee."

The king hesitated before answering her, frowning and

scratching behind his ear.

"Well," he said at last, "be it according to thy wish, my daughter, my beautiful korolevna. And you, my counselors, order my royal vessel to be ready, the cannons loaded, and a hundred of my bravest warriors detailed to escort the vessel. Send besides a thousand heavy armed warriors to guard the korolevna on her way to the merchants' vessel."

Then the king's vessel started from the island of Buzan. Numbers of cannon and warriors protected the princess, and the royal father remained quiet at home.

When they reached the merchants' ship the korolevna Helena came down, and at once the crystal bridge was placed and the korolevna with all her nurses and maidens went on board the foreign ship, such a ship as they had never seen before, never even dreamed of. Meanwhile the guards kept watch.

The seventh Simeon showed the lovely guests everywhere. He was talking smoothly while leisurely unfolding his precious goods. The korolevna listened attentively, looked around curiously, and seemed well pleased.

At the same moment the fourth Simeon, watching the proper moment, snapped the prow and down to mysterious depths went the ship where no one could see her. The people on the king's vessel screamed in terror, the warriors looked like drunken fools, and the guards only opened their eyes wider than before. What should they do? They directed the vessel back to the island and appeared before the king with their terrible tale.

"Oh, my daughter, my darling princess Helena! It is God who punishes me for my pride. I never wanted thee to marry. No king, no prince, would I consider worthy of thee; and now oh! now I know that thou art wedded to the deep sea! As for me, I am left alone for the rest of my sorrowful days."

Then all at once he looked around and shouted to his men:

"You fools! what were you thinking about? You shall all lose your heads! Guards, throw them into dungeons! The most cruel death shall be theirs, such a death that the children of their greatgrandchildren shall shiver to hear the tale!"

Now, while the king of Buzan raved and grieved, the ship of the brothers Simeon, like a golden fish, swam under the blue waters, and when the island was lost from sight the fourth Simeon brought her to the surface and she rose upon the waters like a white-winged gull. By this time the princess was becoming anxious about the long time they were away from home, and she exclaimed:

"Nurses and maidens, we are leisurely looking around, but I fancy my father the king finds the time sadly long." She hastily walked to the deck of the ship, and behold! only the wide sea was around her like a mirror! Where was her native island, where the royal vessel? There was nothing visible but the blue sea. The princess screamed, struck her white bosom with both hands, transformed herself into a white swan and flew high into the sky. But the fifth Simeon, watching closely, lost no time, snapped his lucky gun and the white swan was shot. His brother, the sixth Simeon, caught the white swan, but lo! instead of the white swan there was a silvery fish, which slipped away from him. Simeon caught the fish, but the pretty, silvery fish turned into a small mouse running around the ship. Simeon did not let it reach a hole, but swifter than a cat caught the mouse, and the princess Helena, as beautiful and natural as before, appeared before them, fair-faced, bright-eyed.

On a lovely morning a week later the Tsar Archidei was sitting by the window of his palace lost in thought. His eyes were turned toward the sea, the wide, blue sea. He was sad at heart and could not eat; feasts had no interest for him, the

costly dishes had no taste, the honey drink[8] seemed weak. All his thoughts and longings were for the princess Helena, the beautiful one, the only one.

What is that far away upon the waters?

Is it a white gull? Or are those white wings not wings, but sails? No, it is not a gull, but the ship of the brothers Simeon, and she approaches as rapidly as the wind which blows her sails. The cannon boom, native melodies are played on the cords of the masts. Soon the ship is anchored, the crystal bridge prepared, and the korolevna Helena, the beautiful princess, appears like a never-setting sun, her eyes like bright stars, and oh! how happy is the Tsar Archidei!

"Run quick, my faithful servants, you brave officers of state, and you, too, my bodyguard, and all you useful and ornamental fellows of my palace, run and prepare, shoot off rockets and ring the bells in order to give a joyful welcome to korolevna Helena, the beautiful."

All hastened to their tasks, to shoot, to ring the bells, to open the gates, to honorably receive the korolevna. The Tsar himself came out to meet the beautiful princess, took her white hands and helped her into the palace.

"Welcome! welcome!" said the Tsar Archidei. "Thy fame, korolevna Helena, reached me, but never could I imagine such beauty as is thine. Yet, though I admire thee, I do not want to separate thee from thy father. Say the word and my faithful servants will take thee back to him. If thou choosest, however, to remain in my tzarstvo, be the tsaritza over my country and rule over me, the Tzar Archidei, also."

At these words of the Tsar the korolevna Helena threw such a glance at the Tsar that it seemed to him the sun was laughing, the moon singing, and the stars dancing all around.

Well, what more is there to be said? You certainly can

[8] Honey drink, a drink made by fermenting honey and water. It is quite common in Russia, and is about the same as our mead.

imagine the rest. The courtship was not long and the wedding feast was soon ready, for you know kings always have everything at their command. The brothers Simeon were at once dispatched to the king of Buzan with a message from the korolevna, his daughter, and this is what she wrote:

"Dear father, mighty king and sovereign: I have found a husband according to my heart's wish and I am asking thy fatherly blessing. My bridegroom, the Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch, sends his counselors to thee, begging thee to come to our wedding."

At the very moment when the merchant ship was to land at the island of Buzan, crowds of people had gathered to witness the execution of the unfortunate guards and brave warriors whose ill-luck it was to have allowed the princess to disappear.

"Stop!" Simeon the seventh shouted aloud from the deck. "We bring a missive from the korolevna Helena. Holla!"

Very glad indeed was the king of the island of Buzan, and glad were all his subjects. The missive was read and the condemned were pardoned.

"Evidently," the king said, "it is fated that the handsome and witty Tsar Archidei and my beautiful daughter are to become husband and wife."

Then the king treated the envoys and the brothers Simeon very well and sent his blessings with them, as he himself did not wish to go, being very old. The ship soon returned and the Tsar Archidei rejoiced over it with his beautiful bride, and at once summoned the seven Simeons, the seven brave peasants.

He said to them: "Thanks! thanks! my peasants, my brave tillers of the soil. Take as much gold as you wish. Take silver also and ask for whatever is your heart's desire. Everything shall be given you with my mighty hand. Would you like to become boyars, you shall be the greatest among the very great. Do you choose to become governors, each one shall have a

town."

The first Simeon bowed to the Tsar and cheerfully answered:

"Thanks also to thee, Tsar Archidei Aggeivitch. We are but simple people and simple are our ways. It would not do for us to become boyars or governors. We do not care for thy treasures either. We have our own father's field, which shall always give us bread for hunger and money for need. Let us go home, taking with us thy gracious word as our reward. If thou choosest to be so kind, give us thine order which shall save us from the judges and tax-gatherers; and if we should be guilty of some offense, let thyself alone be our judge. And do, we pray thee, pardon the seventh Simeon, our youngest brother. His trade is surely bad, but he is not the first and not the last one to have such a gift."

"Let it be as you wish," said the Tsar; and every desire was granted to the seven Simeons, and each one of them received a big tumbler of strong green wine out of the hands of the Tsar himself. Soon after this the wedding was celebrated.

Now, honorable dames and gentlemen, do not judge this story of mine too severely. If you like it, praise it; if not, let it be forgotten. The story is told and a word is like a sparrow once out it is out for good.[9]

[9] Russian and other Slavonic tales often have queer endings, similar to the one here given by the story-teller at the end of the story, which is no part of the tale. To the Russian they give a poetic touch, a little sense of confusion and mystery which is certainly delightful.

CHAPTER 3
The Language of the Birds

Somewhere in a town in holy Russia,[1] there lived a rich merchant with his wife. He had an only son, a dear, bright, and brave boy called Ivan. One lovely day Ivan sat at the dinner table with his parents. Near the window in the same room hung a cage, and a nightingale, a sweet-voiced, gray bird, was imprisoned within. The sweet nightingale began to sing its wonderful song with trills and high silvery tones. The merchant listened and listened to the song and said:

"How I wish I could understand the meaning of the different songs of all the birds! I would give half my wealth to the man, if only there were such a man, who could make plain to me all the different songs of the different birds."

Ivan took notice of these words and no matter where he went, no matter where he was, no matter what he did, he always thought of how he could learn the language of the birds.

Some time after this the merchant's son happened to be hunting in a forest. The winds rose, the sky became clouded, the lightning flashed, the thunder roared loudly, and the rain fell in torrents. Ivan soon came near a large tree and saw a big nest in the branches. Four small birds were in the nest; they were quite alone, and neither father nor mother was there to protect them from the cold and wet. The good Ivan pitied them, climbed the tree and covered the little ones with his "kaftan," a long-skirted coat which the Russian peasants and

[1] Holy Russia. To the Russian his country is sacred; everything outside is profane by comparison. The phrase suggests the Holy Roman Empire of history, or the Celestial Kingdom of the Chinese.

merchants usually wear. The thunderstorm passed by and a big bird came flying and sat down on a branch near the nest and spoke very kindly to Ivan.

"Ivan, I thank thee; thou hast protected my little children from the cold and rain and I wish to do something for thee. Tell me what thou dost wish."

Ivan answered: "I am not in need; I have everything for my comfort. But teach me the birds' language."

"Stay with me three days and thou shalt know all about it."

Ivan remained in the forest three days. He understood well the teaching of the big bird and returned home more clever than before. One beautiful day soon after this Ivan sat with his parents when the nightingale was singing in his cage. His song was so sad, however, so very sad, that the merchant and his wife also became sad, and their son, their good Ivan, who listened very attentively, was even more affected, and the tears came running down his cheeks.

"What is the matter?" asked his parents; "what art thou weeping about, dear son?"

"Dear parents," answered the son, "it is because I understand the meaning of the nightingale's song, and because this meaning is so sad for all of us."

"What then is the meaning? Tell us the whole truth; do not hide it from us," said the father and mother.

"Oh, how sad it sounds!" replied the son. "How much better would it be never to have been born!"

"Do not frighten us," said the parents, alarmed. "If thou dost really understand the meaning of the song, tell us at once."

"Do you not hear for yourselves? The nightingale says: 'The time will come when Ivan, the merchant's son, shall become Ivan, the king's son, and his own father shall serve him as a simple servant.'"

The merchant and his wife felt troubled and began to

distrust their son, their good Ivan. So one night they gave him a drowsy drink, and when he had fallen asleep they took him to a boat on the wide sea, spread the white sails, and pushed the boat from the shore.

For a long time the boat danced on the waves and finally it came near a large merchant vessel, which struck against it with such a shock that Ivan awoke. The crew on the large vessel saw Ivan and pitied him. So they decided to take him along with them and did so. High, very high, above in the sky they perceived cranes. Ivan said to the sailors:

"Be careful; I hear the birds predicting a storm. Let us enter a harbor or we shall suffer great danger and damage. All the sails will be torn and all the masts will be broken."

But no one paid any attention and they went farther on. In a short time the storm arose, the wind tore the vessel almost to pieces, and they had a very hard time to repair all the damage. When they were through with their work they heard many wild swans flying above them and talking very loud among themselves.

"What are they talking about?" inquired the men, this time with interest.

"Be careful," advised Ivan. "I hear and distinctly understand them to say that the pirates, the terrible sea robbers, are near. If we do not enter a harbor at once they will imprison and kill us."

The crew quickly obeyed this advice and as soon as the vessel entered the harbor the pirate boats passed by and the merchants saw them capture several unprepared vessels. When the danger was over, the sailors with Ivan went farther, still farther. Finally the vessel anchored near a town, large and unknown to the merchants. A king ruled in that town who was very much annoyed by three black crows. These three crows were all the time perching near the window of the king's chamber. No one knew how to get rid of them and no one could kill them. The king ordered notices to be placed at

all crossings and on all prominent buildings, saying that whoever was able to relieve the king from the noisy birds would be rewarded by obtaining the youngest korolevna, the king's daughter, for a wife; but the one who should have the daring to undertake but not succeed in delivering the palace from the crows would have his head cut off. Ivan attentively read the announcement, once, twice, and once more. Finally he made the sign of the cross and went to the palace. He said to the servants:

"Open the window and let me listen to the birds."

The servants obeyed and Ivan listened for a while. Then he said:

"Show me to your sovereign king."

When he reached the room where the king sat on a high, rich chair, he bowed and said:

"There are three crows, a father crow, a mother crow, and a son crow. The trouble is that they desire to obtain thy royal decision as to whether the son crow must follow his father crow or his mother crow."

The king answered: "The son crow must follow the father crow."

As soon as the king announced his royal decision the crow father with the crow son went one way and the crow mother disappeared the other way, and no one has heard the noisy birds since. The king gave one-half of his kingdom and his youngest korolevna to Ivan, and a happy life began for him.

In the meantime his father, the rich merchant, lost his wife and by and by his fortune also. There was no one left to take care of him, and the old man went begging under the windows of charitable people. He went from one window to another, from one village to another, from one town to another, and one bright day he came to the palace where Ivan lived, begging humbly for charity. Ivan saw him and recognized him, ordered him to come inside, and gave him food to eat and also supplied him with good clothes, asking questions:

"Dear old man, what can I do for thee?" he said.

"If thou art so very good," answered the poor father, without knowing that he was speaking to his own son, "let me remain here and serve thee among thy faithful servants."

"Dear, dear father!" exclaimed Ivan, "thou didst doubt the true song of the nightingale, and now thou seest that our fate was to meet according to the predictions of long ago."

The old man was frightened and knelt before his son, but his Ivan remained the same good son as before, took his father lovingly into his arms, and together they wept over their sorrow.

Several days passed by and the old father felt courage to ask his son, the korolevitch:

"Tell me, my son, how was it that thou didst not perish in the boat?"

Ivan Korolevitch laughed gayly.

"I presume," he answered, "that it was not my fate to perish at the bottom of the wide sea, but my fate was to marry the korolevna, my beautiful wife, and to sweeten the old age of my dear father."

CHAPTER 4
Baba Yaga[1]

Somewhere, I cannot tell you exactly where, but certainly in vast Russia, there lived a peasant with his wife and they had twins—a son and daughter. One day the wife died and the husband mourned over her very sincerely for a long time. One year passed, and two years, and even longer. But there is no order in a house without a woman, and a day came when the man thought, "If I marry again possibly it would turn out all right." And so he did, and had children by his second wife.

The stepmother was envious of the stepson and daughter and began to use them hardly. She scolded them without any reason, sent them away from home as often as she wished, and gave them scarcely enough to eat. Finally she wanted to get rid of them altogether. Do you know what it means to allow a wicked thought to enter one's heart?

The wicked thought grows all the time like a poisonous plant and slowly kills the good thoughts. A wicked feeling was growing in the stepmother's heart, and she determined to send the children to the witch, thinking sure enough that they would never return.

"Dear children," she said to the orphans, "go to my grandmother who lives in the forest in a hut on hen's feet. You will do everything she wants you to, and she will give you sweet things to eat and you will be happy."

The orphans started out. But instead of going to the witch, the sister, a bright little girl, took her brother by the

[1] Baba, a peasant woman, or grandmother; granny. Yaga, witch. Baba Yaga, therefore, is the familiar "Grandmother Witch."

hand and ran to their own old, old grandmother and told her all about their going to the forest.

"Oh, my poor darlings!" said the good old grandmother, pitying the children, "my heart aches for you, but it is not in my power to help you. You have to go not to a loving grandmother, but to a wicked witch. Now listen to me, my darlings," she continued; "I will give you a hint: Be kind and good to every one; do not speak ill words to any one; do not despise helping the weakest, and always hope that for you, too, there will be the needed help."

The good old grandmother gave the children some delicious fresh milk to drink and to each a big slice of ham. She also gave them some cookies—there are cookies everywhere—and when the children departed she stood looking after them a long, long time.

The obedient children arrived at the forest and, oh, wonder! there stood a hut, and what a curious one! It stood on tiny hen's feet, and at the top was a rooster's head. With their shrill, childish voices they called out loud:

"Izboushka, Izboushka! turn thy back to the forest and thy front to us!"

The hut did as they commanded. The two orphans looked inside and saw the witch resting there, her head near the threshold, one foot in one corner, the other foot in another corner, and her knees quite close to the ridge pole.

"Fou, Fou, Fou!" exclaimed the witch; "I feel the Russian spirit."

The children were afraid, and stood close, very close together, but in spite of their fear they said very politely:

"Ho, grandmother, our stepmother sent us to thee to serve thee."

"All right; I am not opposed to keeping you, children. If you satisfy all my wishes I shall reward you; if not, I shall eat you up."

Without any delay the witch ordered the girl to spin the

thread, and the boy, her brother, to carry water in a sieve to fill a big tub. The poor orphan girl wept at her spinning-wheel and wiped away her bitter tears. At once all around her appeared small mice squeaking and saying:

"Sweet girl, do not cry. Give us cookies and we will help thee."

The little girl willingly did so.

"Now," gratefully squeaked the mice, "go and find the black cat. He is very hungry; give him a slice of ham and he will help thee."

The girl speedily went in search of the cat and saw her brother in great distress about the tub, so many times he had filled the sieve, yet the tub was still dry. The little birds passed, flying near by, and chirped to the children:

"Kind-hearted little children, give us some crumbs and we will advise you."

The orphans gave the birds some crumbs and the grateful birds chirped again:

"Some clay and water, children dear!"

Then away they flew through the air.

The children understood the hint, spat in the sieve, plastered it up with clay and filled the tub in a very short time. Then they both returned to the hut and on the threshold met the black cat. They generously gave him some of the good ham which their good grandmother had given them, petted him and asked:

"Dear Kitty-cat, black and pretty, tell us what to do in order to get away from thy mistress, the witch?"

"Well," very seriously answered the cat, "I will give you a towel and a comb and then you must run away. When you hear the witch running after you, drop the towel behind your back and a large river will appear in place of the towel.

"If you hear her once more, throw down the comb and in place of the comb there will appear a dark wood. This wood will protect you from the wicked witch, my mistress."

Baba Yaga came home just then.

"Is it not wonderful?" she thought; "every thing is exactly right."

"Well," she said to the children, "today you were brave and smart; let us see to-morrow. Your work will be more difficult and I hope I shall eat you up."

The poor orphans went to bed, not to a warm bed prepared by loving hands, but on the straw in a cold corner. Nearly scared to death from fear, they lay there, afraid to talk, afraid even to breathe.

The next morning the witch ordered all the linen to be woven and a large supply of firewood to be brought from the forest.

The children took the towel and comb and ran away as fast as their feet could possibly carry them. The dogs were after them, but they threw them the cookies that were left; the gates did not open themselves, but the children smoothed them with oil; the birch tree near the path almost scratched their eyes out, but the gentle girl fastened a pretty ribbon to it. So they went farther and farther and ran out of the dark forest into the wide, sunny fields.

The cat sat down by the loom and tore the thread to pieces, doing it with delight. Baba Yaga returned.

"Where are the children?" she shouted, and began to beat the cat. "Why hast thou let them go, thou treacherous cat? Why hast thou not scratched their faces?"

The cat answered: "Well, it was because I have served thee so many years and thou hast never given me a bite, while the dear children gave me some good ham."

The witch scolded the dogs, the gates, and the birch tree near the path.

"Well," barked the dogs, "thou certainly art our mistress, but thou hast never done us a favor, and the orphans were kind to us."

The gates replied:

"We were always ready to obey thee, but thou didst neglect us, and the dear children smoothed us with oil."

The birch tree lisped with its leaves, "Thou hast never put a simple thread over my branches and the little darlings adorned them with a pretty ribbon."

Baba Yaga understood that there was no help and started to follow the children herself. In her great hurry she forgot to look for the towel and the comb, but jumped astride a broom and was off. The children heard her coming and threw the towel behind them. At once a river, wide and blue, appeared and watered the field. Baba Yaga hopped along the shore until she finally found a shallow place and crossed it.

Again the children heard her hurry after them and so they threw down the comb. This time a forest appeared, a dark and dusky forest in which the roots were interwoven, the branches matted together, and the tree-tops touching each other. The witch tried very hard to pass through, but in vain, and so, very, very angry, she returned home.

The orphans rushed to their father, told him all about their great distress, and thus concluded their pitiful story:

"Ah, father dear, why dost thou love us less than our brothers and sisters?"

The father was touched and became angry. He sent the wicked stepmother away and lived a new life with his good children. From that time he watched over their happiness and never neglected them any more.

How do I know this story is true? Why, one was there who told me about it.

CHAPTER 5
Father Frost

In a far-away country, somewhere in Russia, there lived a stepmother who had a stepdaughter and also a daughter of her own. Her own daughter was dear to her, and always whatever she did the mother was the first to praise her, to pet her; but there was but little praise for the stepdaughter; although good and kind, she had no other reward than reproach. What on earth could have been done? The wind blows, but stops blowing at times; the wicked woman never knows how to stop her wickedness. One bright cold day the stepmother said to her husband:

"Now, old man, I want thee to take thy daughter away from my eyes, away from my ears. Thou shalt not take her to thy people into a warm izba.[1] Thou shalt take her into the wide, wide fields to the crackling frost."

The old father grew sad, began even to weep, but nevertheless helped the young girl into the sleigh. He wished to cover her with a sheepskin in order to protect her from the cold; however, he did not do it. He was afraid; his wife was watching them out of the window. And so he went with his lovely daughter into the wide, wide fields; drove her nearly to the woods, left her there alone, and speedily drove away–he was a good man and did not care to see his daughter's death.

Alone, quite alone, remained the sweet girl. Broken-hearted and terror-stricken she repeated fervently all the prayers she knew.

Father Frost, the almighty sovereign at that place, clad in

[1] Izba is a hut. Izboushka, a tiny hut.

furs, with a long, long, white beard and a shining crown on his white head, approached nearer and nearer, looked at this beautiful guest of his and asked:

"Dost thou know me? me, the red-nosed Frost?"

"Be welcome, Father Frost," answered gently the young girl. "I hope our heavenly Lord sent thee for my sinful soul."

"Art thou comfortable, sweet child?" again asked the Frost. He was exceedingly pleased with her looks and mild manners.

"Indeed I am," answered the girl, almost out of breath from cold.

And the Frost, cheerful and bright, kept crackling in the branches until the air became icy, but the good-natured girl kept repeating:

"I am very comfortable, dear Father Frost."

But the Frost, however, knew all about the weakness of human beings; he knew very well that few of them are really good and kind; but he knew no one of them even could struggle too long against the power of Frost, the king of winter. The kindness of the gentle girl charmed old Frost so much that he made the decision to treat her differently from others, and gave her a large heavy trunk filled with many beautiful, beautiful things. He gave her a rich "schouba"[2] lined with precious furs; he gave her silk quilts light like feathers and warm as a mother's lap. What a rich girl she became and how many magnificent garments she received! And besides all, old Frost gave her a blue "sarafan"[3] ornamented with silver and pearls.

When the young girl put it on she became such a beautiful maiden that even the sun smiled at her.

The stepmother was in the kitchen busy baking pancakes for the meal which it is the custom to give to the priests and

[2] Schouba, a large fur-lined cloak.

[3] Sarafan, the Russian national costume for women.

friends after the usual service for the dead.

"Now, old man," said the wife to the husband, "go down to the wide fields and bring the body of thy daughter; we will bury her."

The old man went off. And the little dog in the corner wagged his tail and said:

"Bow-wow! bow-wow! the old man's daughter is on her way home, beautiful and happy as never before, and the old woman's daughter is wicked as ever before."

"Keep still, stupid beast!" shouted the stepmother, and struck the little dog.

"Here, take this pancake, eat it and say, 'The old woman's daughter will be married soon and the old man's daughter shall be buried soon.'"

The dog ate the pancake and began anew:

"Bow-wow! bow-wow! the old man's daughter is coming home wealthy and happy as never before, and the old woman's daughter is somewhere around as homely and wicked as ever before."

The old woman was furious at the dog, but in spite of pancakes and whipping, the dog repeated the same words over and over again.

Somebody opened the gate, voices were heard laughing and talking outside. The old woman looked out and sat down in amazement. The stepdaughter was there like a princess, bright and happy in the most beautiful garments, and behind her the old father had hardly strength enough to carry the heavy, heavy trunk with the rich outfit.

"Old man!" called the stepmother, impatiently; "hitch our best horses to our best sleigh, and drive my daughter to the very same place in the wide, wide fields."

The old man obeyed as usual and took his stepdaughter to the same place and left her alone.

Old Frost was there; he looked at his new guest.

"Art thou comfortable, fair maiden?" asked the red-nosed

sovereign.

"Let me alone," harshly answered the girl; "canst thou not see that my feet and my hands are about stiff from the cold?"

The Frost kept crackling and asking questions for quite a while, but obtaining no polite answer became angry and froze the girl to death.

"Old man, go for my daughter; take the best horses; be careful; do not upset the sleigh; do not lose the trunk."

And the little dog in the corner said:

"Bow-wow! bow-wow! the old man's daughter will marry soon; the old woman's daughter shall be buried soon."

"Do not lie. Here is a cake; eat it and say, 'The old woman's daughter is clad in silver and gold.'"

The gate opened, the old woman ran out and kissed the stiff frozen lips of her daughter. She wept and wept, but there was no help, and she understood at last that through her own wickedness and envy her child had perished.

The Russian Garland: Being Russian Folk Tales

by Robert Steele

Story of the Most Wonderful and Noble Self-Playing Harp

In a certain country there lived a king named Filon, whose wife Chaltura had an only son, named Astrach, who from his earliest years had a strong desire to render himself famous by knightly deeds. When he arrived at mature age, Astrach began to think of marrying, and he asked his father in what kingdom lived the most beautiful of all Tsar's or King's daughters. The King replied: "If it is your wish to marry, my dearest son, my noble child, I will show you the portraits of the daughters of the Tsars and Kings of all lands." So saying, he led Prince Astrach to a gallery, and showed him the pictures. After examining them all closely, Astrach fell passionately in love with the Tsarevna Osida, daughter of Afor, the Tsar of Egypt. Then he besought his father's blessing, and asked leave to repair to the Court of the Egyptian Sultan, to sue for the hand of Osida. King Filon rejoiced at the thought of his son's marrying, gave him his blessing, and dismissed him.

Then Prince Astrach went to seek a goodly steed in the royal stables, but could find none there to his mind. So he bade farewell to his father and mother, and started for his journey to Egypt alone on foot; and he wandered long, here and there, far and near, until at length he saw on the plain a palace of white marble, roofed with gold, which emitted beams of light, shining like the sun. Prince Astrach went up to the palace; and, on reaching it, he walked round the building, looking in at every window, to see if any persons were there; but he could discover no one. So he went into the courtyard, and wandered up and down for a long time; but

there, too, he could see no living soul; then he entered the marble palace, and went from room to room, but all was silent and deserted. At length he came to an apartment, in which a table was spread for one person; and being very hungry, Prince Astrach sat down, and ate and drank his fill; after which he laid himself down on a bed and fell fast asleep.

As soon as he awoke, he wandered again through the palace until he came to a room, from the window of which he saw the most beautiful garden he had ever beheld, and it came into his mind to go for a walk in it. Then he went out of the palace and strolled about for a long time; and at length came to a stone wall, in which was an iron door, with a massive lock. As the Prince touched the lock he heard behind the door the neighing of a horse; and, wishing to remove the lock, he took up a huge stone in his arms and fell to hammering the door. At the first blow it burst open, and there behind it was a second iron door, with a lock like the first. This, too, he broke open, and found behind it ten other doors, through all of which he forced his way in like manner; and behind the last he beheld a noble charger, with a complete suit of armour. Then he went up and stroked the horse, which stood still as if rooted to the spot.

Prince Astrach forthwith proceeded to saddle his horse with a Tcherkess saddle, put a silken bridle into his mouth, and leading him out, mounted, and rode into the open fields. But as soon as he applied the spur, the horse grew restive, reared higher than the waving forests, plunged lower than the flying clouds; mountains and rivers he left behind; small streams he covered with his tail and broad rivers he crossed at a bound, until at length Prince Astrach so tired out the brave steed that he was covered with foam.

Then the horse spoke with a man's voice the following words: "O Prince, thou my noble rider, it is now three-and-thirty years since I served the dead Yaroslav Yaroslavovich—that stout and powerful knight—and I have borne him in

many a single combat and battle; yet never have I been so worn out as to-day; now I am ready to serve you faithfully till death." Then Prince Astrach returned into the courtyard, put his brave steed into the stable, and gave him white corn and spring water; after which he went into the marble palace, ate and drank his fill, and then laid him down to sleep.

The following morning he rose early, saddled his good horse, and rode forth towards Egypt, to Tsar Afor, to sue for the hand of his daughter, the beautiful Tsarevna Osida. When he arrived at the court he announced himself as the son of King Filon, whereupon Tsar Afor received him with all honour, and enquired what purpose had brought him thither, to which Prince Astrach replied: "Great Tsar of all the lands of Egypt, I am not come to your Court to feast and banquet, but to ask for your lovely daughter to wife."

"Brave Knight, Prince Astrach," answered the Tsar, "I will gladly bestow my daughter on you; but one service you must render me. The unbelieving Tartar Tsar is drawing near, and threatens to lay waste my kingdom, to carry off my daughter, and slay me and my wife." Prince Astrach replied: "My gracious lord, Tsar Afor, readily will I go forth to battle for the Faith with this unbelieving Tsar; and to protect your city from untimely destruction." Whereat Tsar Afor was glad at heart, and ordered a great banquet to be prepared for the bold and fair Prince Astrach; so there was great feasting, and the betrothal took place with all solemnity.

The next day the Busurman army of three hundred thousand men arrived before the city, whereat Tsar Afor was greatly alarmed, and took counsel with Astrach. Then the Prince saddled his steed, went into the royal palace, and offered up his prayers, bowing himself to all four quarters of the globe. After this he took leave of Tsar Afor and his wife, and his betrothed Tsarevna, the beautiful Osida, and rode straight to the enemy's camp; and when he spurred his charger, the steed bounded from the earth higher than the waving

forests, and lower than the drifting clouds; mountains and valleys he left beneath his feet, small streams he covered with his tail, wide rivers he sprang across, and at length arrived at the enemy's camp. Then Prince Astrach fell upon the Busurmen with fearful slaughter, and wherever he waved his arm, a way was opened, and where he turned his horse there was a clear space for him; so he routed and destroyed the whole army, took the Busurman Tsar himself prisoner, and brought him to Tsar Afor, who threw him into prison.

Then there was great feasting and rejoicing, and the revels lasted for a whole fortnight. At the end of this time, Prince Astrach reminded Tsar Afor of his marriage contract with the Tsarevna Osida; and Tsar Afor ordered a great banquet to be made, and bade his daughter prepare for the wedding. When the Tsarevna heard this, she called Prince Astrach and said: "My beloved friend and bridegroom, you are in too great a haste to marry; only think how dull a wedding feast would be without any music, for my father has no players. Therefore, dear friend, ride off, I entreat you, through thrice nine lands, to the thirtieth kingdom, in the domain of the deathless Kashtshei, and win from him the Self-playing Harp; it plays all tunes so wonderfully that every one is bound to listen to it, and it is beyond price: this will enliven our wedding."

Then Astrach, the King's son, went to the royal stable and saddled his steed; and, after taking leave of Tsar Afor and his betrothed Princess, mounted his good horse and rode off to the kingdom of the deathless Kashtshei, in search of the Self-playing Harp. As he rode along he saw an old hut, standing in a garden facing a wood; and he called out with his knightly voice: "Hut, hut, turn about, with your back to the wood, and your front to me!" And instantly the hut turned itself round. Then Prince Astrach dismounted and entered the hut, and there was an old witch sitting on the floor spinning flax. And the witch screamed with a frightful voice: "Fu! fu! fu! never before has the sound of a Russian spirit been heard here; and

now a Russian spirit comes to sight!" Then she asked Prince Astrach: "Wherefore, good youngling, Prince Astrach, art thou come hither—of thine own free will or not? Hither no bird flies, no wild beast wanders, no knight ever passes my hut. And how has God brought you here?"

But Prince Astrach replied: "You silly old wife, first give me food and drink, and then put your questions." Thereupon the old witch instantly set food before Prince Astrach, whipped him into the bath-room, combed his locks, made ready his bed, and then fell again to questioning him. "Tell me, good youth, whither art thou travelling—to what far country? and dost thou go of thine own free will or no?"

And Prince Astrach answered: "Willingly as I go, yet I go twice as unwillingly through thrice nine lands into the thirtieth kingdom, the domain of the deathless Kashtshei, to fetch the Self-playing Harp."

"Ho! ho! ho!" cried the old witch. "You'll find it a hard task to gain the Harp; but say your prayers and lie down to rest; the morning is the time for such exploits, but the night for sleep." So Astrach, the King's son, laid himself down to sleep.

The next morning the witch awoke early, got up, and aroused Prince Astrach. "Bestir yourself, Prince Astrach, it is time for you to set out on your travels." So Astrach arose and speedily dressed himself, pulled on his stockings and boots, washed, and said his prayers, bowing himself north, south, east, and west, and made ready to take leave of the witch. Then she said: "How! will you go away without asking an old woman like me how you can gain the Self-playing Harp?" And when he asked her she said: "Go your way, in God's name, and when you come to the realm of the deathless Kashtshei, manage to arrive exactly at noon. Near his golden palace is a green garden, and in this garden you will see a fair Princess walking about. Leap over the wall and approach the maiden; she will rejoice to see you, for it is now six years since she was

carried off from her father's court by the deathless Kashtshei. Enquire of this maiden how you can obtain the Self-playing Harp, and she will direct you."

Thereupon Prince Astrach mounted his good steed and rode far and fast, and came into the kingdom of the deathless Kashtshei. Then he repaired to the golden palace, and heard the sound of the Self-playing Harp: he stood still to listen, and was absorbed by its wonderful music. At last he came to himself, leaped over the wall into the green garden, and beheld there the Princess, who was at first sight terrified; but Prince Astrach went up to her, quieted her fears, and asked her how he could obtain the Self-playing Harp. Then the Tsarevna Darisa answered: "If you will take me with you from this place I will tell you how to obtain the Harp." So Prince Astrach gave her his promise. Then she told him to wait in the garden, and meanwhile she herself went to the deathless Kashtshei and began to coax him with false and flattering words. "My most beloved friend and intimate, tell me, I pray you, will you never die?"

"Assuredly never," replied Kashtshei.

"Then," said the Princess, "where is your death? Is it here?"

"Certainly," he replied; "it is in the broom under the threshold."

Thereupon Tsarevna Darisa instantly seized the broom and threw it into the fire; but, although the besom burned, the deathless Kashtshei still remained alive. Then the Tsarevna said to him: "My beloved, you do not love me sincerely, for you have not told me truly where is your death; nevertheless, I am not angry, but love you with my whole heart."

And with these fawning words, she entreated Kashtshei to tell her in truth where was his death. Then he said with a laugh: "Have you any reason for wishing to know? Well, then, out of love I will tell you where it lies; in a certain field there

stand three green oaks, and under the roots of the largest oak is a worm, and if ever this worm is found and crushed, that instant I shall die."

When the Tsarevna Darisa heard these words, she went straight to Prince Astrach, and told him how he must go to that field, and seek for the three oaks, dig up the worm under the biggest oak and crush it. So the Prince went forth, and rode on from morning to night, until at length he came to the three green oaks. Then he dug up the worm from the roots of the largest, and having killed it, he returned to the Tsarevna Darisa, and said to her: "Does the deathless Kashtshei still live? I have found the worm and destroyed it." And she replied, "Kashtshei is still alive."

Then said Prince Astrach, "Go again and ask him right lovingly where is his death." So the Princess went, and said to him with tears: "You do not love me, and don't tell me the truth, but treat me as a stupid"; and at last King Kashtshei yielded to her entreaties, and told her the whole truth, saying: "My death is far from hence, and hard to find, on the wide ocean: in that sea is the island of Bujan, and upon this island there grows a green oak, and beneath this oak is an iron chest, and in this chest is a small basket, and in this basket a hare, and in this hare a duck, and in this duck an egg; and he who finds this egg, and breaks it, at that same instant causes my death."

As soon as the Tsarevna heard these words she hastened back to Prince Astrach and told him all. And thereupon he straightway mounted his good steed, and rode to the seashore. There he saw a fisherman in a boat, and asked him to carry him to the island of Bujan; and, taking a seat in the boat, they speedily reached the island, where he landed. Prince Astrach soon found the green oak, and he dug up the iron chest, and broke it in pieces, and opened the basket, and took out of the basket the hare, and tore in pieces the hare, when out flew a grey duck; and as she flew over the sea, she let fall

the egg into the water. Thereat Prince Astrach was very sorrowful, and ordered the fisherman to cast his nets into the sea, and instantly the man did so, and caught a huge pike. So Prince Astrach drew the pike out of the net, and found in it the egg which the duck had dropped: and, seating himself in the boat, he bade the fisherman make for the shore. Then, after rewarding the man for his trouble, the Prince mounted his steed and returned to the Tsarevna Darisa.

As soon as he arrived and told her that he had found the egg, the Princess said: "Now fear nothing; come with me straight to Kashtshei." And when they appeared before him, Kashtshei jumped up, and would have killed Prince Astrach; but the Prince instantly took the egg in his hand and fell to crushing it gradually. Then Kashtshei began to cry and roar aloud, and said to the Tsarevna Darisa: "Was it not out of love that I told you where my death was? And is this the return you make?" So saying he seized his sword from the wall to slay the Tsarevna; but at the same moment Astrach, the King's son, crushed the egg, and Kashtshei fell dead upon the ground like a sheaf of corn.

Then the Tsarevna Darisa led Astrach into the palace, where was the Self-playing Harp, and said to him: "The Harp is now thine—take it; but in return for it, conduct me back to my home." So Prince Astrach took up the Harp, and it played so gloriously that he was struck dumb with amazement at its sounds, as well as its workmanship of the purest Eastern crystal and gold strings. After gazing at it for a long time, Prince Astrach left the palace, and mounting his gallant steed with Darisa, set out upon his return. First he carried the Tsarevna back to her parents, and afterwards went on his way to Egypt, to Tsar Afor, and gave the Self-playing Harp to his betrothed, the Tsarevna Osida. Then they placed the Harp on the table, and it fell to playing the most beautiful and merry tunes.

The next day Prince Astrach married the fair Tsarevna

Osida, and in a short time left Egypt, and returned to his native country. When his father and mother saw their dear son again they rejoiced exceedingly. Not long afterwards King Filon died, and Prince Astrach wore his father's crown, and lived with his beloved Queen Osida in all joy and happiness until they died.

Story of Ivan the Peasant's Son

In a certain village there lived a poor peasant with his wife, who for three years had no children: at length the good woman had a little son, whom they named Ivan. The boy grew, but even when he was five years old, could not walk. His father and mother were very sad, and prayed that their son might be strong on his feet; but, however many their prayers, he had to sit, and could not use his feet for three-and-thirty years long.

One day the peasant went with his wife to church; and whilst they were away, a beggar man came to the window of the cottage and begged alms of Ivan the peasant's son. And Ivan said to him: "I would gladly give you something, but I cannot rise from my stool." Then said the beggar: "Stand up and give me alms! Your feet are stout and strong!" In an instant Ivan rose up from his stool, and was overjoyed at his newly acquired power: he called the man into the cottage and gave him food to eat. Then the beggar asked for a draught of beer, and Ivan instantly went and fetched it; the beggar, however, did not drink it, but bade Ivan empty the flask himself, which he did to the very bottom. Then the beggar said: "Tell me, Ivanushka, how strong do you feel?" "Very strong," replied Ivan. "Then fare you well!" said the beggar; and disappeared, leaving Ivan standing lost in amazement.

In a short time his father and mother came home, and when they saw their son healed of his weakness, they were astonished, and asked him how it had happened. Then Ivan told them all, and the old folk thought it must have been no beggar but a holy man who had cured him; and they feasted for joy and made merry.

Presently Ivan went out to make a trial of his strength; and going into the kitchen garden, he seized a pole and stuck it half its length into the ground, and turned it with such strength that the whole village turned round. Then he went back into the cottage to take leave of his parents and ask their blessing. The old folk fell to weeping bitterly when he spoke of leaving them, and entreated him to stay at least a little longer; but Ivan heeded not their tears, and said: "If you will not give me your consent, I shall go without it." So his parents gave him their blessing; and Ivan prayed, bowing himself to all four sides, and then took leave of his father and mother. Thereupon he went straight out of the yard, and followed his eyes, and wandered for ten days and ten nights until at length he came to a large kingdom. He had scarcely entered the city when a great noise and outcry arose; whereat the Tsar was so frightened that he ordered a proclamation to be made, that whoever appeased the tumult should have his daughter for wife, and half his kingdom with her.

When Ivanushka heard this he went to the Court and desired the Tsar to be informed that he was ready to appease the tumult. So the doorkeeper went straight and told the Tsar, who ordered Ivan the peasant's son to be called. And the Tsar said to him: "My friend, is what you have said to the doorkeeper true?"

"Quite true," replied Ivan; "but I ask for no other reward than that your Majesty gives me whatever is the cause of the noise." At this the Tsar laughed, and said: "Take it by all means, if it is of any use to you." So Ivan the peasant's son made his bow to the Tsar and took his leave.

Then Ivan went to the doorkeeper and demanded of him a hundred workmen, who were instantly given him; and Ivan ordered them to dig a hole in front of the palace. And when the men had thrown up the earth, they saw an iron door, with a copper ring. So Ivan lifted up this door with one hand, and beheld a steed fully caparisoned, and a suit of knightly

armour. When the horse perceived Ivan, he fell on his knees before him, and said with a human voice: "Ah, thou brave youth! Ivan the peasant's son! the famous knight Lukopero placed me here; and for three-and-thirty years have I been impatiently awaiting you. Seat yourself on my back, and ride whithersoever you will: I will serve you faithfully, as I once served the brave Lukopero."

Ivan saddled his good steed, gave him a bridle of embroidered ribands, put a Tcherkess saddle on his back, and buckled ten rich silken girths around him. Then he vaulted into the saddle, struck him on the flank, and the horse chafed at the bit, and rose from the ground higher than the forest; he left hill and dale swiftly under his feet, covered large rivers with his tail, sent forth a thick steam from his ears, and flames from his nostrils.

At length Ivan the peasant's son came to an unknown country, and rode through it for thirty days and thirty nights, until at length he arrived at the Chinese Empire. There he dismounted, and turned his good steed out into the open fields, while he went into the city and bought himself a bladder, drew it over his head, and went round the Tsar's palace. Then the folks asked him whence he came, and what kind of man he was, and what were his father and mother's names. But Ivan only replied to their questions, "I don't know." So they all took him for a fool, and went and told the Chinese Tsar about him. Then the Tsar ordered Ivan to be called, and asked where he came from and what was his name; but he only answered as before, "I don't know." So the Tsar ordered him to be driven out of the Court. But it happened that there was a gardener in the crowd, who begged the Tsar to give the fool over to him that he might employ him in gardening. The Tsar consented, and the man took Ivan into the garden, and set him to weed the beds whilst he went his way.

Then Ivan lay down under a tree and fell fast asleep. In the night he awoke, and broke down all the trees in the

garden. Early the next morning the gardener came and looked round, and was terrified at what he beheld: so he went to Ivan the peasant's son and fell to abusing him, and asked him who had destroyed all the trees. But Ivan only replied, "I don't know." The gardener was afraid to tell this to the Tsar; but the Tsar's daughter looked out of her window and beheld with amazement the devastation, and asked who had done it all. The gardener replied that fool Know-nothing had destroyed the noble trees; but entreated her not to tell her father, promising to put the garden into a better condition than it was before.

Ivan did not sleep the next night, but went and drew water from the well, and watered the broken trees; and early in the morning they began to rise and grow; and when the sun rose they were all covered with leaves, and were even finer than ever. When the gardener came into the garden he was amazed at the change; but he did not again ask Know-nothing any questions, as he never returned an answer. And when the Tsar's daughter awoke, she rose from her bed, and looking out into the garden, she saw it in a better state than before; then, sending for the gardener, she asked him how it had all happened in so short a time. But the man answered that he could not himself understand it, and the Tsar's daughter began to think Know-nothing was in truth wonderfully wise and clever. From that moment she loved him more than herself, and sent him food from her own table.

Now the Chinese Tsar had three daughters, who were all very beautiful: the eldest was named Duasa, the second Skao, and the youngest, who had fallen in love with Ivan the peasant's son, was named Lotao. One day the Tsar called them to him and said to them: "My dear daughters, fair Princesses, the time is come that I wish to see you married; and I have called you now to bid you choose husbands from the princes of the countries around." Then the two eldest instantly named two Tsareviches with whom they were in love; but the

youngest fell to weeping, and begged her father to give her for wife to Know-nothing. At this request the Tsar was amazed, and said: "Have you lost your senses, daughter, that you wish to marry the fool Know-nothing, who cannot speak even a word?" "Fool as he may be," she answered, "I entreat you, my lord father, to let me marry him." "If nothing else will please you," said the Tsar sorrowfully, "take him—you have my consent."

Soon after, the Tsar sent for the Princes whom his eldest daughters had chosen for husbands; they obeyed the invitation instantly, and came with all speed to China, and the weddings were celebrated. The Princess Lotao also was married to Ivan the peasant's son, and her elder sisters laughed at her for choosing a fool for a husband.

Not long afterwards a great army invaded the country, and its leader, the knight Polkan, demanded of the Tsar his daughter, the beautiful Lotao, for wife, threatening that, if he did not consent, he would burn his country with fire and slay his people with the sword, throw the Tsar and Tsarina into prison, and take their daughter by force. At these threats the Tsar was aghast with terror, and instantly ordered his armies to be collected; and they went forth, commanded by the two Princes, against Polkan. Then the two armies met, and fought like two terrible thunder-clouds, and Polkan overthrew the army of the Chinese Tsar.

At this time the Princess came to her husband, Ivan the peasant's son, and said to him: "My dear friend Know-nothing, they want to take me from you; the infidel knight Polkan has invaded our country with his army and routed our hosts with his terrible sword." Then Ivan told the Princess to leave him in peace; and, jumping out of the window, he ran into the open fields, and cried aloud:

"Sivka Burka! he!
Fox of Spring! Appear!

Like a grass blade, here
Stand before me!"

The horse galloped until the earth trembled: from his ears came steam, from his nostrils flames. Ivan the peasant's son crept into his ear to change himself, and came out looking such a brave knight as no pen can write down or story tell. Then he rode up to the army of Polkan, and laid about him with his sword, trod the army down under his horse's hoofs, and drove it quite out of the kingdom. At the sight of this the Chinese Tsar came to Ivan, but knew him not, and invited him to his palace; but Ivan answered: "I am not your subject and I will not serve you." And so saying, away he rode, let his horse run loose in the open fields, went back to the palace, crept again through the window, drew the bladder over his head, and lay down to sleep.

The Tsar gave a public feast for this great victory, and it lasted several days; until the knight Polkan once more invaded the country with a fresh army, and again demanded with threats the youngest Princess for his wife. The Tsar instantly assembled his armies again, and sent them against Polkan; but the knight defeated them forthwith. Then Lotao went to her husband, and everything happened exactly as before; and Ivan again drove Polkan and his army out of the empire. Thereupon the Tsar invited him to his palace; but without heeding him, Ivan turned off his horse in the fields, went back to the palace, and lay down to sleep. So the Tsar gave another feast, in honour of the victory over Polkan; but he marvelled what hero it could be who had so bravely defended his realm.

After a while, Polkan a third time invaded the empire, and all fell out as before: Ivan jumped out of the window, ran into the fields, mounted his steed, and rode forth against the enemy. Then the horse said in a human voice: "Listen, Ivan Peasantson! we have now a hard task to perform; defend

yourself as stoutly as possible, and stand firm against Polkan—otherwise you and the whole Chinese army will be destroyed." Then Ivan spurred his steed, rode against Polkan's host, and began to slay them right and left. When Polkan saw that his army was defeated, he flew into a rage, and fell upon Ivan the peasant's son like a furious lion, and a fight began between the two horses, at the sight of which the whole army stood aghast. They fought for a long time, and Polkan wounded Ivan in the left hand. Thereupon Ivan the peasant's son, in a fierce rage, aimed his javelin at Polkan, and pierced him through the heart: then he struck off his head, and drove the whole army out of China.

Ivan now went to the Chinese Tsar, who bowed to the ground, and invited him to his palace. The Princess Lotao, seeing blood upon Ivan's left hand, bound it up with her handkerchief, and invited him to remain in the palace; but, without heeding her, Ivan mounted his steed and trotted off. Then he turned his horse into the fields, and went himself to sleep.

The Tsar again ordered a great banquet to be prepared; and the Princess Lotao went to her husband and tried to awaken him, but all in vain. On a sudden she beheld with surprise golden hair upon his head, from which the bladder had fallen off; and, stepping up to him, she saw her handkerchief bound on his left hand; and now she knew that he it had been who had three times defeated and at last slain Polkan. Then she ran instantly to her father, led him into the apartment, and said: "See, my father! You told me I had married a fool; look closely at his hair, and at this wound which he received from Polkan." Then the Tsar saw that it had been he who had thrice delivered his empire, and he rejoiced greatly.

When Ivan the peasant's son awoke, the Emperor took him by his white hands, led him into the palace, thanked him for the services he had rendered; and being himself far

advanced in years, he placed the crown upon Ivan's head. Then Ivan mounted the throne, and ruled happily, and lived with his wife for many years in the greatest harmony and love.

Story of the Golden Mountain

In a certain country there lived a Tsar with his wife, who had three handsome sons; the eldest was named Vasili Tsarevich, and the second Fedor Tsarevich, and the youngest son Ivan Tsarevich. One day the Tsar went out with his Tsarina for a walk in the garden, and on a sudden a violent storm came on, which carried off the Tsarina from his sight. The Tsar was very much grieved, and mourned a long time for his wife; and the two eldest sons, seeing their father's sorrow, begged his blessing and permission to go forth and wander in search of their mother. So he consented, and dismissed them.

The two sons travelled for a long time, until at length they came to a wide desert, where they pitched their tents, and waited until some one should pass who might show them the way. For three whole years they waited, but saw no one.

Meanwhile the youngest brother, Ivan Tsarevich, grew up, and went likewise to his father, begged his blessing, and took leave. And he wandered for a long time, until at length he discerned in the distance some tents, up to which he rode; and there he discovered his brothers. "What brings you to such a desolate place, brothers?" said he; "let us join company and travel in search of our mother." The others followed his advice, and they all journeyed on together.

They rode on and on for many days, until at length they saw afar off a palace, built of crystal, and surrounded by a fence of the same material. So they rode up to the palace, and Ivan Tsarevich opened the gate, and entered the court-yard; and at the entrance-door he saw a pillar, into which were fastened two rings, one of gold and the other of silver. Then

drawing his bridle through both these rings, he tied up his steed, and went up the stairs. At the head of the stairs the King himself came to meet him; and, after a long conversation, he found out that Ivan Tsarevich was his nephew. So he conducted him into his hall, and invited in his brothers also.

After remaining in the palace a long time, the King gave the brothers a magic ball, which they bowled away, and then rode after it, until they came to a mountain, so high and steep that they could not ascend it. Ivan Tsarevich rode round and round the mountain, until at last he found a cleft. He stepped into it and beheld an iron door, with a copper ring; and on opening this he perceived some iron hooks, which he fastened to his hands and feet, and by their aid he climbed up the mountain. On reaching the top he was very tired, and sat down to rest; but no sooner had he taken off the hooks than they disappeared.

In the distance upon the mountain Ivan beheld a tent of fine cambric, upon which was represented a copper kingdom, and on its top was a copper ball. Then he approached the tent; but at its entrance there lay two huge lions, which allowed no one to enter. Ivan Tsarevich seeing two copper basins standing close by, poured some water into them, and quenched the thirst of the lions, who then let him freely enter the tent. And when he got in, Ivan beheld a beautiful Queen lying on a sofa, and sleeping at her feet a dragon with three heads, which he cut off at a single blow. The Queen thanked him for this service, and gave him a copper egg, in which was contained a copper kingdom, whereupon the Tsarevich took his leave and went his way further.

After travelling for a long time, he descried a tent of fine gauze, fastened to a cedar tree by silver cords, with knobs of emeralds; upon the tent was represented a silver kingdom, and on the top was a silver ball. At the entrance lay two immense tigers, to which he in like manner gave to drink, and

they permitted him to pass. On entering the tent he beheld, seated on a sofa, a Queen richly attired, who far surpassed the first one in beauty. At her feet lay a six-headed dragon, as large again as the other. Then Ivan Tsarevich struck off all the heads at a blow, and, as a reward for his valor, the Queen presented him with a silver egg, in which was enclosed a silver kingdom. Thereupon he took leave of the Queen and journeyed on.

After a time Ivan came to a third tent, made of silk, upon which was embroidered a golden kingdom, and on its top was placed a ball of pure gold. The tent was fastened to a laurel tree with golden cords, from which hung knobs of diamonds. Before the entrance lay two huge crocodiles, which breathed forth flames of fire. The Tsarevich gave them some water to drink, and thus gained an entrance into the tent, in which he beheld a Queen, who in beauty far surpassed the former ones. At her feet lay a dragon with twelve heads, all of which Ivan Tsarevich struck off at two blows. The Queen, in return for this service, gave him a golden egg, which contained a golden kingdom; and with the egg she gave him also her heart. As they were conversing together, Ivan asked the Queen whether she knew where his mother was; then she showed Ivan her dwelling, and wished him success in his enterprise.

After travelling a great distance, Ivan Tsarevich came to a castle; he entered, and went through many apartments, but without finding anyone. At length he came to a spacious hall, where he beheld his mother sitting, arrayed in royal robes. Ivan embraced her tenderly, telling her how he had travelled far and wide with his brothers in search of her. Then the Tsarina told Ivan Tsarevich that a spirit would soon appear, and bade him hide himself in the folds of her cloak. "When the spirit comes and tries to embrace me," she added, "try all you can to seize his magic wand with both hands: he will then rise up with you from the earth; fear not, but remain quiet, for he will presently fall down again, and be dashed to pieces.

These you must collect and burn, and strew the ashes in the field."

Scarcely had the Tsarina spoken, and wrapped Ivan in her cloak, when the Spirit appeared and offered to embrace her. Then Ivan Tsarevich started up, as his mother had directed, and seized the magic wand. In a furious rage the Spirit flew with him high up into the air, but soon fell to the ground and was dashed in pieces. Then the Tsarevich gathered up the remains and burned them, and kept the magic wand; after which he took with him his mother and the three Queens he had rescued, came to an oak-tree, and let them all slide down the mountain in a linen cloth. When his brothers saw him left alone on the mountain, they pulled the cloth from his hands, conducted their mother and the Queens back to their own kingdom, and made them promise solemnly to tell their father that it was the elder brothers who had found and rescued them.

Ivan Tsarevich was thus left alone on the mountain, and knew not how to get down. Lost in thought he wandered about; and, throwing by chance the magic wand from one hand to the other, on a sudden a man stood before him, who said: "What is your pleasure, Ivan Tsarevich?" Thereat Ivan wondered greatly, and asked the man who he was, and how he had come to that uninhabited mountain. "I am a Spirit," replied the figure, "and was subject to him whom you have destroyed; but as you now possess his magic wand, and have changed it from one hand to the other—which you must always do when you have need of me—I am here ready to obey you." "Good!" said Ivan Tsarevich; "then do me now the first service, and carry me back to my own kingdom."

No sooner had Ivan uttered these words than he found himself at once transported to his native city. He wished first to know what was passing in the castle; but instead of going in directly, he went and took work in a shoemaker's shop, thinking that he should not be easily recognised in such a

place. The next morning the shoemaker went into the city to buy leather, and returned home so tipsy that he was unable to work, and left it all to his new assistant. But Ivan, being quite ignorant of shoemaking, called the Spirit to his aid, ordered him to take the leather and make it into shoes, and then lay down to sleep.

Early the next morning, when the shoemaker awoke, he went to see what work Ivan had done; but, perceiving him still fast asleep, he flew into a rage, and exclaimed: "Up, you lazy loon! have I engaged you only to sleep?" Ivan, stretching himself slowly, replied: "Have patience, master; first go to the workshop, and see what you shall find." So the shoemaker went to the shop; and what was his astonishment at beholding a quantity of shoes all made and ready! And when he took up a shoe, and examined the work closely, his amazement only increased, and he could scarcely believe his eyes, for the shoes had not a single stitch, but were just as if cast in a mould.

The shoemaker now took his goods, and went into the city to sell them; and no sooner were these wonderful shoes seen than they were all bought in the twinkling of an eye. In a short time the man became so renowned that his fame reached the palace; then the Princesses desired him to be summoned, and ordered of him many dozens of pairs of shoes; but they were all to be ready without fail the next morning. The poor shoemaker in vain assured them that this was impossible; they only threatened that, unless he obeyed their will his head should be struck off, as they saw clearly that there was some magic in the affair.

The shoemaker left the castle in despair, and went into the city to buy leather. Late in the evening he returned home, threw the leather on the floor, and said to Ivan: "Hark ye, fellow, what a piece of work you have made with your devilish tricks!" Then he told Ivan what the Princesses had ordered him to do, and how they had threatened him unless he fulfilled their commands. "Do not trouble yourself," said Ivan

Tsarevich, "go to bed and sleep—an hour in the morning is worth two at night." The shoemaker thanked him for his advice, threw himself on the bench, and soon began to snore aloud. Then Ivan Tsarevich summoned the Spirit, ordered him to have the work done and in readiness by the morning, and then lay down to sleep.

Early the next morning, when the shoemaker awoke, he called to mind that he was to lose his head that day; so he went in despair to Ivan to bid him farewell, and asked him to come and have a drink so that he could bear up. But Ivan said: "Fear nothing, man; go into the workshop and take the work which was ordered." The shoemaker went distrustfully into the shop; but when he beheld all the shoes ready made, he capered about, not knowing what to do for joy, and embraced his companion. Then he took all the shoes, and hastened to the castle.

When the Princesses saw all this they were more than ever convinced that Ivan Tsarevich must be in the city; and they said to the shoemaker; "You have well and truly fulfilled our orders; but there is another service which you must render us; to-night a golden castle must be built opposite to ours, with a porcelain bridge from one to the other, covered with velvet." The shoemaker stood aghast on hearing this demand, and replied: "I am indeed only a poor shoemaker, and how can I possibly do such a thing?" "Well," replied the Princesses, "unless you fulfil our wish your head shall assuredly be struck off."

The poor fellow left the castle overwhelmed with grief, and wept bitterly. On his return home, he told Ivan Tsarevich what a feat he had been ordered to accomplish. "Go quietly to bed," replied Ivan; "the morning sun shall see it done." So the shoemaker lay down on the bench and fell fast asleep. Then Ivan called up the Spirit, and desired him to fulfil the command of the King's daughters, after which he went to bed.

Early the next morning Ivan Tsarevitch awoke his master,

and giving him a goose's wing, bade him go on to the bridge and sweep off the dust. Meanwhile Ivan went into the Golden castle. And when the Tsar and the Princesses went out early on to the balcony they were amazed at beholding the Castle and the bridge; but the Princesses were out of their wits with joy, for they were now quite sure that Ivan Tsarevich was in the city; and presently after, indeed, they saw him at a window in the golden castle. Then they begged the Tsar and Tsarina to go with them into the castle; and as soon as they set foot on the staircase, Ivan Tsarevich came out to meet them. Thereupon his mother and the three Princesses ran and embraced him, exclaiming: "This is our deliverer!" His brothers looked down ashamed, and the Tsar stood dumb with amazement; but his wife soon explained it all to him. Thereat the Tsar fell into a passion with his eldest sons, and was going to put them all to death; but Ivan fell at his feet and said: "Dear father, if you desire to reward me for what I have done, only grant my brothers their lives, and I am content." Then his father raised him up, embraced him, and said: "They are truly unworthy of such a brother!" So they all returned to the castle.

The next day three weddings were celebrated. The eldest son, Vasili Tsarevich, took the Princess of the copper kingdom; Fedor Tsarevich, the second son, chose the Princess of the silver kingdom, and Ivan Tsarevich settled with his Princess in the golden kingdom. He took the poor shoemaker into his household, and they all lived happily for many years.

The Mild Man and His Cantankerous Wife

There lived once upon a time, in great poverty, a countryman and his wife: he was mild as a calf, and she as cunning as a serpent. She abused and drubbed her husband for every trifle. One day she begged some corn of a neighbour to make a loaf of bread, and she sent her husband with it to the mill to have it ground. The miller ground the corn, but charged them nothing on account of their poverty; and the countryman set out on his return home with his pan full of flour. But on a sudden there arose such a strong wind that in the twinkle of an eye all the flour was blown out of the pan, which he carried on his head. So he went home and told his wife; and when she heard it she fell to scolding and beating him without mercy; and she threatened him on and on, until at length she grew tired; then she ordered him to go to the wind which had blown away the flour and get paid for it, either in money or in as much flour as there had been in the pan.

The poor countryman, whose bones ached with the blows he had received from his wife, went out of the house weeping and wringing his hands; but whither to turn his steps he knew not. And at last he came to a large and dark forest, in which he wandered here and there. At last an old woman met him and said: "My good man, where are you going, and how are you going to find your way? What has brought you into this country, where rarely a bird flies, and rarely does a beast run?"

"Good Mother," replied the man, "force has driven me hither. I went to the mill with some corn, and when it was ground I shook the flour into a pan and went my way home; but suddenly a wind arose and carried off the flour out of the pan; and when I came without it to the house and told my

wife, she beat me, and has sent me to seek the Wind, and ask him either to give me back the meal or to pay me for it in money. So now I go here and there to look for the Wind, and know not where to find it."

"Follow me," said the old woman: "I am the mother of the Winds, and have four sons; the first son is the East Wind, the second is the South Wind, the third is the West Wind, and the fourth the North Wind. Tell me, now, which Wind it is that has blown away your meal?"

"The South Wind, Mother dear," answered the countryman.

Then the old woman led the man deeper into the forest, and came to a little hut, and said: "Here I live, master woodman; creep on to the stove, and wrap yourself up; my children will soon be here."

"But why should I wrap myself up?" said the peasant.

"Because my son the North Wind is very cold, and you would be frozen," said the old woman.

Not long after, the old woman's sons began to assemble; and when at length the South Wind came, the old woman called the countryman from the stove and said to her sons: "South Wind, my dear son, a complaint is brought against you; why do you injure poor folks? You have blown away this man's flour from out of his dish; pay him now for it with money, or how you will."

"Very well, Mother," replied the Wind, "I will pay him for his flour." Then he called the countryman and said: "Hark ye, my little farmer, take this basket; it contains everything you can wish for—money, bread, all kinds of food and drink; you have only to say: 'Basket, give me this and that,' and it will instantly give you all you desire. Go home now—you have here payment for your flour." So the countryman made his bow to the South Wind, thanked him for the basket, and went his way home.

When the man came home, he gave the basket to his wife,

saying: "Here, wife, is a basket for you, which contains everything you can wish for—only ask it." So the good woman took the basket, and said: "Basket, give me good flour for bread!" And instantly the basket gave her as much as ever she could desire. Then she asked again for this thing and that, and the basket gave her everything in the twinkling of an eye.

A few days after, it happened that a nobleman passed by the countryman's cottage; and when the good woman saw him, she said to her husband; "Go and invite this lord to be our guest; if you don't bring him here, I will beat you half dead."

The countryman dreaded a beating from his wife. So he went and invited the nobleman to dinner. Meanwhile the good woman took all kinds of food and drink out of the basket, spread the table, and then sat down patiently at the window, laying her hands in her lap, awaiting the arrival of her husband and their guest. The nobleman was astonished at receiving such an invitation and laughed, and would not go home with the man; but instead, he ordered his servants who attended him to go with the countryman, to dinner, and bring him back word how he treated them. So the servants went with the countryman, and when they entered his cottage, they were greatly amazed: for, to judge by his hut, he must be very poor, but from the dishes upon the table he was evidently a person of some consequence. Then they sat down to dinner, and made merry; but they remarked that, whenever the good woman wanted anything, she asked the basket for it, and obtained all she required. So they did not leave the room at once, and sent one of their comrades home to make as quickly as possible just such another basket and bring it to them, without letting the countryman or his wife observe it.

Thereupon the man ran as fast as he could, and got a basket just like the other; and when he brought it to the cottage, the guests secretly took the countryman's basket and put theirs in its place. Then they took leave of the man and

his wife, and returned to their master and told him how daintily the countryman had treated them.

The countryman's wife threw away all the food that was left, intending to cook fresh on the morrow. The next morning she went to her basket and began to ask it for what she wanted; and when she found that the basket gave her nothing, she called her husband and said: "Old Greybeard, what basket is this you have brought me? Likely enough it has served us once and for all; and what good is it now if it gives us nothing more? Go back to the Wind and beg him to give us back our flour, or I'll beat you to death."

So the poor man went back to the Winds. When he came to the old woman, their mother, he fell to complaining of his wife. The old woman told him to wait for her son, who would soon come home.

Not long after came the South Wind, and the countryman began to complain of his wife. Then the Wind answered: "I am sorry, old man, that you have such a wicked wife; but I will assist you, and she shall not beat you any more. Take this cask, and when you get home and your wife is going to beat you, place yourself behind the cask and cry: 'Five! out of the cask and thrash my wife!' and when they have given her a good beating, then say: 'Five! back to the cask!'" Then the peasant made a low bow to the Wind, and went his way.

When he came home he said: "There, I have brought you here a cask instead of the basket."

At this the good woman flew into a rage and said: "A cask, indeed! What shall I do with it? Why have you brought back no flour?" And, so saying, she seized the poker, and was going to beat her husband. But the poor man stepped quietly behind the cask and cried: "Five! out of the cask! Thrash my wife instantly!" In a moment five stout young fellows jumped out of the cask and fell to cudgelling the woman. And when her husband saw that she was beaten enough, and she begged for mercy, he cried: "Five! back to the cask!" Then instantly they

stopped beating her, and crept back into the cask.

The countryman thought over his loss and decided to go forthwith to the nobleman and challenge him to fight. The nobleman laughed outright at the folly of the man; nevertheless he would not refuse, as he wished to have some sport; so he told the man to go into the field. So he tucked his cask under his arm, betook himself to the field, and waited for the nobleman, who came riding to meet him with a number of attendants; and, when he drew near, he ordered his servants, for a joke, to thrash the peasant soundly. The man saw that they were mocking him, and he was wroth with the nobleman, and said: "Come, Sir! give me my basket back this instant, or it shall fare ill with you all, I promise!" Nevertheless they did not stop beating, so he cried out: "Out, Five to each! thrash them soundly!" Immediately five stout fellows sprang out of the cask upon every man of them and began to beat them unmercifully. Then the nobleman thought that they would kill him, and roared out with might and main: "Stop, stop, my good friend and hear me!" So the countryman, upon this, cried: "Hold! you fellows! back to the cask!" Then they all stopped beating, and crept back into the cask again. And straightway the nobleman ordered his servants to fetch the basket and give it to the countryman, who took it and hied back home, and lived ever after with his wife in peace and harmony.

Story of the Duck with Golden Eggs

Once upon a time there lived an old man named Abrosim, with his old wife Fetinia: they were in great poverty and want, and had a son named Ivanushka, who was fifteen years of age. One day the old man Abrosim brought home a crust of bread for his wife and son to eat; but hardly had he begun to cut the bread than Krutchina (Sorrow) sprang from behind the stove, snatched the crust out of his hands and ran back. At this the old man bowed low to Krutchina, and begged her to give him back the bread as he and his wife had nothing to eat. Old Krutchina answered: "I will not give you back the bread; but I will give you instead a duck, which lays a golden egg every day."

"Well and good," said Abrosim; "at all events I shall go to bed without a supper to-night; only do not deceive me, and tell me where I shall find the duck."

"Early in the morning, as soon as you are up," replied Krutchina, "go into the town and there you will see a duck in a pond; catch it and bring it home with you." When Abrosim heard this, he laid himself down to sleep.

Next morning the old man rose early, went to the town, and was overjoyed when he really saw a duck in the pond: so he began to call it, and soon caught it, took it home with him, and gave it to Fetinia. The old wife handled the duck and said she was going to lay an egg. They were now both in great delight, and, putting the duck in a bowl, they covered it with a sieve. After waiting an hour, they peeped gently under the sieve and saw to their joy that the duck had laid a golden egg. Then they let her run about a little on the floor; and the old man took the egg to town to sell it; and he sold the egg for a

hundred roubles, took the money, went to market, bought all kinds of vegetables, and returned home.

The next day the duck laid another egg, and Abrosim sold this also; and in this way the duck went on, laying a golden egg every day, and the old man in a short time grew very rich. Then he built himself a grand house, and a great number of shops, and bought wares of all sorts, and set up in trade.

Now, Fetinia had struck up a secret friendship with a young shopman, who did not care for the old woman, but persuaded her he did to make her give him money. And one day, when Abrosim was gone out to buy some new wares, the shopman called to gossip with Fetinia, when by chance he espied the duck; and, taking her up, he saw written under her wing in golden letters: "Whoso eats this duck will become a Tsar." The man said nothing of this to Fetinia, but begged and entreated her for love's sake to roast the duck. Fetinia told him she could not kill the duck, for all their good luck depended upon her. Still the shopman entreated the old woman only the more urgently to kill and cook the duck; until at length, overcome by his soft words and entreaties, Fetinia consented, killed the duck and popped her into the stove. Then the shopman took his leave, promising soon to come back and Fetinia also went into the town.

Just at this time Ivanushka returned home, and being very hungry, he looked about everywhere for something to eat; when by good luck he espied in the stove the roast duck; so he took her out, ate her to the very bones, and then returned to his work. Presently after, the shopman came in, and calling Fetinia, begged her to take out the roast duck. Fetinia ran to the oven, and when she saw that the duck was no longer there she was in a great fright, and told the shopman that the duck had vanished. Thereat the man was angry with her, and said: "I'll answer for it you have eaten the duck yourself!" And so saying he left the house in a pet.

At night Abrosim and his son Ivanushka came home, and,

looking in vain for the duck, he asked his wife what had become of her. Fetinia replied that she knew nothing of the duck; but Ivanushka said: "My father and benefactor, when I came home to dinner, my mother was not there; so, looking into the oven, and seeing a roast duck, I took it out and ate it up; but, indeed, I know not whether it was our duck or a strange one."

Then Abrosim flew into a rage with his wife, and beat her till she was half-dead, and hunted his son out of the house.

Little Ivan betook himself to the road, and walked on and on, following the way his eyes led him. And he journeyed for ten days and ten nights, until at length he came to a great city; and as he was entering the gates, he saw a crowd of people assembled, holding a moot; for their Tsar was dead, and they did not know whom to choose to rule over them. Then they agreed that whoever first passed through the city gates should be elected Tsar.

Now just at this time it happened that Little Ivan came through the city gates, whereupon all the people cried with one voice: "Here comes our Tsar!" and the Elders of the people took Ivanushka by the arms, and brought him into the royal apartments, clad him in the Tsar's robes, seated him on the Tsar's throne, made their obeisance to him as their sovereign Tsar, and waited to receive his commands. Ivanushka fancied it was all a dream; but when he collected himself, he saw that he was in reality a Tsar. Then he rejoiced with his whole heart, and began to rule over the people, and appointed various officers. Amongst others he chose one named Luga, and calling him, spoke as follows: "My faithful servant and brave knight Luga, render me one service; travel to my native country, go straight to the King, greet him for me, and beg of him to deliver up to me the merchant Abrosim and his wife; if he gives them up, bring them hither; but if he refuses, threaten him that I will lay waste his kingdom with fire and sword, and make him prisoner."

When the servant Luga arrived at Ivanushka's native country he went to the Tsar, and asked him to give up Abrosim and Fetinia. The Tsar knew that Abrosim was a rich merchant living in his city, and was not willing to let him go; nevertheless, when he reflected that Ivanushka's kingdom was a large and powerful one, fearing to offend him, he handed over Abrosim and Fetinia. And Luga received them from the Tsar, and returned with them to his own kingdom. When he brought them before Ivanushka, the Tsar said: "True it is, my father, you drove me from your home; I therefore now receive you into mine: live with me happily, you and my mother, to the end of your days."

Abrosim and Fetinia were overjoyed that their son had become a great Tsar, and they lived with him many years, and then died. Ivanushka sat upon the throne for thirty years, in health and happiness, and his subjects loved him truly to the last hour of his life.

Story of Bulat the Brave Companion

There was once upon a time a Tsar named Chodor, who had an only son, Ivan Tsarevich. Chodor gave him in his youth various masters to teach him the different knightly exercises; and when Ivan was grown up, he begged leave of his father to travel in other countries, in order to see the world. Tsar Chodor consented, and bade him show his skill and valour in foreign lands, and bring renown on his father.

Then Ivan Tsarevich went into the royal stables to choose a good steed; and he thought that if he could find one on whose back he could lay his hand, without the horse's going on his knees, it would be just the one to suit him. So he looked in all the stalls, but found no horse to his mind, and he went his way with a heavy heart. Then he took his crossbow and arrows and roved about in the open fields to drive away his sadness. As he was walking thus along, he saw high in the air a swan, and he drew his bow and shot; but he missed the swan, and his arrow vanished from his sight. Then Ivan was sad at losing a favourite arrow, and with tears in his eyes he sought for it the whole field over. At last he came to a little hill, and heard a man's voice calling to him: "Come hither, Ivan Tsarevich!" Ivan wondered to himself not a little at hearing a voice and seeing no one. But the voice called again; and Ivan went toward the spot whence it came, and remarked in the hill a little window, with an iron lattice; and at the window he saw a man, who beckoned to him with the hand. Ivan came up, and the man said to him: "Why are you so sad, my good lad, Ivan Tsarevich?"

"How can I help grieving?" replied Ivan; "I have lost my favourite arrow, and can find it nowhere, and my sorrow is

the greater because I can not discover a steed to please me."

"That is no great matter to grieve for," said the man; "I will get you a good horse, and give you back your arrow since it flew down to me here; but what will you give me for it?"

"Anything you ask," replied Ivan, "if you will give me what you promise."

"Nay, said the man, "I want nothing more than that you will free me from this place."

"And how and by whom were you caged up thus?"

"Your father imprisoned me here," replied the man. "I was a famous robber, and was called Bulat the Brave Companion. He was enraged against me, and ordered me to be taken and imprisoned; and here I have been confined for three-and-thirty years."

"Hark ye, Bulat, brave Companion," said Ivan, "I cannot set you free without my father's consent; were he to hear of it he would be wroth."

"Fear not," replied Bulat; "your father will hear nothing; for as soon as you set me at liberty I shall go into other lands and not live here."

"Well then," said Ivan Tsarevich, "I consent, only on condition that you give me back my arrow and tell me where I can find a trusty steed."

"Go into the open fields," said Bulat the Brave Companion, "and there you will see three green oaks; and, on the ground under these oaks, an iron door, with a copper ring. Under the door is a stable, in which stands a good steed, shut in by twelve iron doors with twelve steel locks. Heave up this door, strike off the twelve steel locks, and open the twelve doors; there you will find a horse; mount him and come to me; I will give you back your arrow, and then you will let me out of this prison."

When Ivan Tsarevich heard this he went into the open fields, saw the three green oaks, and found the iron door with the copper ring. So he hove up the door, knocked off the

twelve locks, and opened the twelve doors, and entered a stable, where he beheld a knightly steed and a suit of armour. Then Ivan Tsarevich laid his hand upon the horse, and the horse fell not upon his knees, but merely bent himself a little. And as soon as the horse saw a knight standing before him, he neighed loudly, and let Ivan saddle and bridle him. Ivan Tsarevich took the steed, the battle-axe, and sword, led the horse out of the stable, leaped into the Tcherkess saddle, and took the silken bridle in his white hand. Then Ivan wished to try his steed, and struck him on the flank: the horse chafed his bit, and rose from the ground, and away he went over the tall forests and under the flying clouds, left hill and dale beneath his feet, covered small streams with his tail, bounded over wide rivers and marshes; and so at last Ivan came to Bulat the Brave Companion, and said with a loud voice: "Now give me back my arrow, Bulat my brave fellow, and I will let you out of your cage." So Bulat instantly gave him back his arrow, and Ivan set him free.

"I thank you, Ivan Tsarevich," said Bulat, "for giving me freedom. I will, in return, render you good service; whenever you are in any difficulty, and want me, only say: 'Where is my Bulat, the Brave Companion?' and I will instantly come to you and serve you faithfully in your need." So saying, Bulat cried with a loud voice:

"Sivka Burka! he!
Fox of Spring! Appear!
Like a grass blade, here
Stand before me!"

Instantly a steed stood before Bulat the Brave, who crept into his ear, ate and drank his fill, and then crept out at the other ear; and he became such a handsome youth as no one can imagine, no pen can describe, nor story tell. Then Bulat mounted his horse and galloped off, exclaiming: "Farewell, then, for the present, Ivan Tsarevich!"

Ivan now mounted his good steed and rode to his father, and with tears in his eyes, took leave of him; then, taking with him his squire, he rode forth into foreign lands. And after they had ridden for some time they came to a wood; the day was bright and hot, and Ivan Tsarevich grew thirsty. So they wandered all about the wood, seeking water, but could find none. At length they found a deep well, in which there was some water; and Ivan said to his squire: "Go down the well and fetch me up some water; I will hold you by a rope to prevent you being drowned."

"Nay, Ivan Tsarevich," said the squire, "I am heavier than you, and you cannot hold me up; you had better descend, for I can support you."

So Ivan followed his squire's advice, and let himself down into the well. And when Ivan had drunk enough, he told the squire to draw him up; but the squire answered: "Nay, I will not draw you out until you give me your word in writing that you are my servant and I am your master, and that my name is Ivan Tsarevich; if you refuse this I will drown you in the well."

"My dear squire," cried Ivan, "do not drown me, but draw me up, and I will do all you desire." "No, I don't believe you," said the squire; "swear me an oath." So Ivan swore that he would be true.

Thereupon the squire drew him out, and Ivan Tsarevich took a piece of paper, wrote the writing, and gave it to the squire. Then he took off his own cloak, and exchanged it for the squire's, and they went on their way. After some days they came to the kingdom of the Tsar Panthui. And when the Tsar heard of the arrival of Ivan Tsarevich he went out to meet him; and, greeting the false Tsarevich, he took him by the white hands, conducted him into his marble halls, seated him at his oaken table, and they feasted and made merry. Then Tsar Panthui asked the false Tsarevich what had brought him to his kingdom, and he answered: "My gracious lord, I am

come to sue for the hand of your daughter, the fair Princess Tseria."

"Gladly will I give you my daughter to wife," replied Panthui.

In the course of their talk the false Ivan said to the Tsar Panthui: "Let my servant, I pray, do the lowest work in the kitchen, for he has greatly annoyed me on my journey." So the Tsar immediately commanded Ivan to be set to do the most menial work, whilst his squire feasted and made merry with the Tsar.

A few days after this an army was seen marching against the kingdom of Panthui, threatening to lay it waste and take the Tsar prisoner. Thereupon Panthui called the false Ivan and said: "My dear future son-in-law, a hostile army has come to attack my dominions: drive the enemy back and I will give you my daughter, but only on this condition." And the squire answered; "Well and good, I will do as you desire; but only by night—in the day I have no luck in fight."

As soon as night drew on and everyone in the castle had gone to rest, the false Ivan went out into the open court, called to him the true Tsarevich, and said: "Ivan Tsarevich, be not angry with me for taking your place; forget it all, do me one service, and drive the enemy from this kingdom." And Ivan answered: "Go and lie down to sleep—all shall be accomplished." Then the squire went and lay down to sleep, and Ivan cried with a loud voice: "Where is my Bulat, the Brave Companion?" In an instant Bulat stood before him, and asked: "What service do you require now? What is your need? Tell me forthwith." Then Ivan Tsarevich told him his need, and Bulat desired him to saddle his horse and put on his armour; and then cried with a loud voice:

"Sivka Burka! he!
Fox of Spring! Appear!
Like a grass blade, here

Stand before me!"

The Horse bounded till the ground shook; from his ears rose a column of steam, and from his nostrils issued flames; but when he came up to Bulat he stood still. Then Bulat the Brave Companion mounted the horse, and Ivan Tsarevich seated himself upon his steed, and so they rode forth from the courtyard. Meanwhile the Princess Tseria, who was not yet asleep, was sitting at the window, and overheard all that Ivan Tsarevich had spoken with the squire and Bulat the Brave Companion.

As soon as they reached the hostile army, Bulat said to Ivan: "Fall thou upon the enemy on the right, I will attack them on the left." And so they began to mow down this mighty army with the sword, and to trample them down with their horses' hoofs; and in an hour's time they had stretched on the earth a hundred thousand men. Then the hostile King fled with the small remains of his army back into his own kingdom, and Ivan Tsarevich returned with Bulat the Brave Companion to the castle of the Tsar Panthui, unsaddled his steed, led him into the stable, and gave him white wheat to eat. After that he took leave of Bulat the Brave Companion, went back into the kitchen, and lay down to sleep.

Early the next morning the Tsar went out on to his balcony, and looked forth over the country where the hostile army lay; and when he saw that it was all cut down and destroyed, he called to him the false Ivan, and thanked him for having saved his kingdom; he rewarded him with a rich present and promised soon to give him his daughter to wife.

After a fortnight the same Tsar marched again with a fresh army and besieged the city. And the Tsar Panthui in terror called again upon the false Ivan and said: "My dear friend, Ivan Tsarevich, save me once more from the enemy, and drive them from my kingdom, and I will immediately give you my daughter to wife." And so it all fell out again exactly as

before, and the enemy were quite driven away by Ivan and Bulat the Brave.

The hostile King, however, soon returned to attack Tsar Panthui a third time, and over and over again he was driven back, until at last he was himself killed. Then Ivan and Bulat the Brave Companion went back, unsaddled their steeds, and put them into the stable. Thereupon Bulat took leave of Ivan Tsarevich, and said: "You will never see me more." With this he mounted his horse and rode forth; and Ivan went into the kitchen and lay down to sleep.

Early the next morning the Tsar went again on to his balcony, and looked forth over the country where the hostile army had been; and when he saw that it was all destroyed, he sent for his future son-in-law and said: "Now I will give you my daughter to wife." Then all the preparations were made for the wedding; and a few days after, the squire married the fair Princess Tseria; and when they had returned from church, and were sitting at table, Ivan Tsarevich begged the head cook to let him go into the banquet-hall and see his master and his bride seated at the table. So the cook consented, and gave him a change of dress. When Ivan entered the royal hall he stationed himself behind the other guests and gazed at his squire and the fair Tseria. But the Princess espied Ivan, and recognised him instantly; then she jumped up from the table, took him by the hand, led him to the Tsar, and said: "This is the true bridegroom and the saviour of your kingdom, and not yon man who was betrothed to me."

Then the Tsar Panthui asked his daughter what it all meant, and begged her to explain the mystery. And when the Princess Tseria had related to him all that had passed, Ivan Tsarevich was placed at the table beside her, and his squire was shot at the gate for his treacherous conduct. Ivan married the Princess, and returned with her to his father's kingdom. Tsar Chodor placed the crown upon his head, and Ivan mounted the throne, and ruled over the kingdom.

Story of Prince Malandrach and the Princess Salikalla

In a certain country, in the city of Anderika there lived a Tsar, a clever man, named Abraham Tuksalamovich, with his wife for thirty years in peace and happiness, but they had no child. At last Tsar Abraham Tuksalamovich prayed, with tears, that Heaven would give them a son; their wish was fulfilled, and they had a brave little boy, whom they named Malandrach Abrahamovich. The little fellow grew, not by days but by hours; as buck-wheat dough rises with yeast, so did the Tsarevich grow and grow. The Tsar had his son taught all kinds of arts; and when the boy came to mature years, he went to the Tsar and said: "My lord and father, you have instructed me in various arts, but there is one which I have not yet learnt."

"My bold and dear son, Malandrach," said the Tsar, "tell me and let me know what art you desire to learn; I will provide you careful teachers." And thereupon the Tsarevich answered: "My lord and father, yesterday I was reading a Swedish book, in which I found that there are people able to fly in the air with wings. I have now a great desire to learn this art, and I entreat you to procure me masters who may teach it me."

The Tsar replied: "My bold child, it is impossible that men should fly in the air; you must have been reading something silly, or a fairy tale; do not believe such stories. Nevertheless, I will send into all foreign lands to make search for any such people; and if they can be found I will order them to be brought hither, and have you instructed in their art."

When the Tsar wants them, he does not wait for beer to be brewed nor brandy to be distilled so the Tsar instantly sent messengers into distant lands, commanding them to seek everywhere for flying men, and, if they found any, to bring them to his Court. So the messengers went forth into various countries, and after three years they found a master of the art in the city of Austripa, and brought him to the Tsar Abraham; and when Malandrach saw him he was overjoyed. Then the Tsar asked this person whether he understood the art of flying, and the man replied: "Gracious sovereign, although it is not for me to praise myself, yet in truth I am the first master in our country. If your Majesty desire me to teach Prince Malandrach to fly in the air only command a large and lofty hall to be built, two hundred ells long and as many wide, and one hundred ells in height; this hall must be quite empty, have a great number of windows, and a little closet adjoining it."

When the Tsar heard this, he instantly ordered such a palace to be built at once. And as soon as all was ready, the highflyer made two pairs of wings—one for himself and the other for Malandrach—and he began to teach the Tsarevich to fly in this hall, fastening the wings on to himself and Malandrach; and when he left off teaching, he laid the two pairs of wings in the closet, locked them up, and took the key with him. But one day it happened, when the Tsarevich had taken his lesson, and the master locked up the wings in the closet, that Malandrach observed this, and, without saying anything to his teacher, went with him to his father.

Now, just at this time the Tsar had a great feast prepared, and a large number of guests were invited. Then Malandrach, without saying a word to anyone, hastened to the large hall, took his wings from the closet, fastened them on to his shoulders, went into the courtyard, and began to flap his wings. Thereupon he flew up on to the lofty building, alighted upon it, and resting there, gazed with delight over his father's

kingdom. After awhile he wished to descend upon the ground, but suddenly a shudder came over him, and he dreaded to let himself down from such a height; and, instead of descending, he mounted higher and higher, until at length the earth appeared only like an apple, he had flown so high.

Just then a strong wind arose, which carried Malandrach Tsarevich into an unknown country; and his strength failed him, so that he could not manage his wings, and he began to fall. Then he beheld the wide sea beneath him, and was exceedingly terrified; but, collecting his remaining strength, he rose aloft again, and looked around on all four sides to see whether any shore was to be seen. At length he descried in the distance a small island; so he flew towards it, and alighting, he took off his wings and took them under his arms. Thereupon he set out rambling about the island in search of food, for he was sorely pinched by hunger; and he found by chance a tree with sweet fruit upon it, of which he ate his fill. Then he lay down to sleep upon the grass, under a spreading tree, and slept there until daybreak.

In the morning Malandrach arose and was about to fasten on his wings; but his arms ached so much that he could not move them; so he was obliged to stay there ten long days. On the eleventh day, however, he fastened on the wings, blessed himself, mounted high into the air, and looked around on all sides to seek for his father's kingdom; he could not, however, discover it, but toward evening he espied a shore, upon which was a thick forest; so he alighted, took off his wings, and following a path, he came at last to the gates of a city. Then he concealed his wings under a bush, and going into the city, enquired for the market. And when they showed him the way, he went to it, and bought a long cloak. Then he returned to the forest, put his wings under his arm, and betook himself again to the city, where he met a man whom he asked: "Know you, friend, of any dwelling that is to be let?" The stranger replied: "You are doubtless a foreigner?"

"As you say," replied the Tsarevich Malandrach; "I am a merchant from India, and have come hither in a ship with my wares. Our vessel was wrecked in a storm, and I was cast upon the shore of this kingdom upon a raft, to which I had made myself fast."

"My friend," said the stranger, "if you like, come and live with me; I will maintain you like my own son." So Malandrach willingly consented, and went home with the stranger, and lived in his house more than a month, never going outside the courtyard. His host, observing this, asked him: "Why do you never take a walk in the city and see the noble buildings and the old ruins?" Then Malandrach begged his host, whose name was Achron, to take a walk with him and show him the royal palace. So his host accompanied Malandrach about the city until evening, when they returned home and lay down to sleep.

The next day Malandrach Tsarevich awoke betimes, rose from bed, dressed and washed himself, said his prayers, and bowed to all four sides. And after breakfast he went alone to take a walk, till at length he came outside the city, and perceived an immense stone building, surrounded by a wall; he walked round this wall, and could see no gate, but only a little door, which was locked fast. Prince Malandrach marvelled greatly at this enormous building, and returning home, asked his host what it was. The man replied that it was a royal building, in which lived the daughter of the Tsar, named Salikalla; but the reason of her being shut up there he did not know.

When Malandrach Tsarevich heard this he took his wings and went back the next day to the stone building. There he waited until evening, then fastened on his wings, flew over the wall into the garden, and alighted on a tree. As he sat perched upon the tree, he looked towards the window at which the Tsarevna Salikalla sat, which was far, far off.

Soon she lay down to sleep, and Malandrach watched her; and in an hour's time he flew in at the window, which was left

open. He went gently up to the Tsarevna, and saw that she was asleep; then he wished to awaken her with a kiss, but dared not. He stood gazing at her beauty and stayed there until near daybreak; then hastened home, fearing to awaken the Princess. So he silently took leave of her, and left behind a sign by which she might perceive that someone had been there. The sign was this: he laid her shoes on the bed, and then flew out of the window, went home, and lay down to sleep.

In the morning the Tsarevna awoke, and thought when she saw her shoes on the bed, that they had been laid there by her attendant, who slept in the adjoining room. Then she asked the servant, who replied that she had not done it, whereat the Princess wondered greatly.

In the evening Prince Malandrach went again to the stone palace, fastened on his wings, flew through the window, and gazed once more with delight on the beauty of the Tsarevna. Before daybreak, when he was obliged to return home, he again took the shoes, laid them at the head board of the bed, then flew out of the window, went home, and lay down to sleep.

When Salikalla awoke the next morning, and perceived the shoes again on the head board of her couch, she asked the servant whether she had laid them there. But the servant replied that she had not seen them; whereat the Princess wondered still more than before; and she resolved not to sleep the next night, but to watch who laid the shoes upon the couch.

The Tsarevich Malandrach waited until evening, then took his wings under his arm and returned to the palace; and when he thought that the Princess was asleep, he bound on his wings and flew in at the window. But hardly had he approached the couch and attempted to kiss her than the Tsarevna suddenly seized him with both hands, and exclaimed: "Who art thou? How dost thou dare to come

hither?" Prince Malandrach knew not what to answer for astonishment, and fell to entreating pardon of the Tsarevna. She would not, however, let him go, until by threats she had made him tell her who he was, and how he had come into the palace. Then he told her the whole truth, from beginning to end; and the Tsarevna Salikalla was so pleased that she kissed his sugar lips, and begged him to remain, asking him to forgive her having been so rough and unkind.

"O my best beloved and most beautiful Tsarevna," replied Malandrach, "tell me truly, I pray, why art thou shut up alone in this palace without any living creature near you?"

Then the Princess told him the story of her life. "When I was born," she said, "my father summoned all the wise men to him, and asked them how long I should live; and they told my parents that until my fifteenth year I should live happily, but that then some evil should befall me, upon hearing which my father ordered this house to be built, and when I was ten years old he placed me here for ten years, and this is the sixth year I am here. My mother visits me once a month, and my father once a quarter, and a servant is given to attend upon me. My mother will be here in a week's time; tarry, dear Prince, meanwhile, and cheer my solitude."

The Tsarevich Malandrach readily consented, and the time passed quickly in various amusements and conversation, and at last they took an oath to marry each other. For more than a year they lived together thus, only separating when the time came round for the visits of the Tsarevna's parents.

One day the Princess saw her mother coming unexpectedly to the palace to visit her. Then she called to Malandrach and begged him instantly to depart; but just at the moment when he had fastened on his wings and was flying out of the window the Tsarina observed him. Astonished at the sight, she asked her daughter what it meant, and pressed her so with entreaties and threats to tell her the truth, that Salikalla at last told her of the visit of Malandrach, and how he had come

flying into her window.

When the Tsarina heard this she went straight-way to the Tsar, and told him all that her daughter had related. Then the Tsar instantly sent a large body of men to seize Malandrach in the house of his host, and to bring him into his presence. And the soldiers went into the house where Malandrach lived, took him away and led him before the Tsar. Then the Tsar asked him whose son he was, from what country he had come, and what was his name. The Tsarevich replied, and told the plain truth, Thereupon the Tsar called his daughter Salikalla and said: "Tell me is this the same man who flew in through your window?" She answered that it was, and added that she loved him with her whole heart. Then the Tsar took his daughter by the hand and gave her to the Tsarevich Malandrach, saying to him: "My dearest son-in-law, receive from my hand my only daughter for your wife, and live with her in happiness and love."

And, as when the Tsar wants it, beer is not brewed nor brandy distilled, the wedding was celebrated forthwith.

So Malandrach married the beautiful Princess Salikalla; and, after living with his father-in-law for half a year, he asked leave to go with his wife to his own father. Then the Tsar ordered a ship to be equipped and dismissed them with his blessing, and Malandrach sailed with his wife to his native country. When they arrived at the Court of his father, the Tsar Abraham was overjoyed at again seeing his beloved son, and asked him: "Where have you been this long while, and by what accident did you wander from my kingdom?"

And Tsarevich Malandrach told his father the whole truth.

Tsar Abraham Tuksalamovich was now very old so he placed the crown on the head of his beloved son, and soon after died, Malandrach Abrahamovich lived with his beloved wife Salikalla many years in harmony and love.

Emelyan, the Fool

In a certain village lived at one time a peasant, who had three sons, two of whom were clever, but the third was a fool, and his name was Emelyan. And when the peasant had lived a long time, and was grown very old, he called his three sons to him, and said to them: "My dear children, I feel that I have not much longer to live; so I give you the house and cattle, which you will divide among you, share and share alike. I have also given you each a hundred roubles." Soon after, the old man died, and the sons, when they had buried him, lived on happy and contented.

Some time afterwards Emelyan's brothers took a fancy to go to the city and trade with the hundred roubles their father had left them. So they said to Emelyan: "Hark ye, fool! we are going to the city, and will take your hundred roubles with us; and, if we prosper in trade, we will buy you a red coat, red boots, and a red cap. But do you stay here at home; and when our wives, your sisters-in-law, desire you to do anything, do as they bid you." The fool, who had a great longing for a red coat and cap, and red boots, answered that he would do whatever his sisters-in-law bade him. So his brothers went off to the city, and the fool stayed at home with his two sisters.

One day, when the winter was come, and the cold was great, his sisters-in-law told him to go out and fetch water; but the fool remained lying on the stove, and said: "Ay, indeed, and who then are you?" The sisters began to scold him and said: "How now, fool! we are what you see. You know how cold it is, and that it is a man's business to go." But he said: "I am lazy." "How!" they exclaimed, "you are lazy? Surely you will want to eat, and if we have no water we cannot cook.

But never mind," they added; "we will only tell our husbands not to give him anything when they have bought the fine red coat and all for him!"

The fool heard what they said; and, as he longed greatly to have the red coat and cap, he saw that he must go; so he got down from the stove and began to put on his shoes and stockings and to dress himself to go out. When he was dressed, he took the buckets and the axe and went down to the river hard by. And when he came to the river he began to cut a large hole in the ice. Then he drew water in the buckets, and setting them on the ice, he stood by the hole, looking into the water. And as the fool was looking, he saw a large pike swimming about. However stupid Emelyan was, he felt a wish to catch this pike; so he stole cautiously and softly to the edge of the hole, and making a sudden grasp at the pike he caught him, and pulled him out of the water. Then, putting him in his bosom, he was hastening home with him, when the pike cried out: "Ho, fool! why have you caught me?" He answered: "To take you home and get my sisters-in-law to cook you." "Nay, fool! do not take me home, but throw me back into the water and I will make a rich man of you." But the fool would not consent, and jogged on his way home. When the pike saw that the fool was not for letting him go, he said to him: "Hark ye, fool! put me back in the water and I will do for you everything you do not like to do yourself; you will only have to wish and it shall be done."

On hearing this the fool rejoiced beyond measure for, as he was uncommonly lazy, he thought to himself: "If the pike does everything I have no mind to do, all will be done without my being troubled to work." So he said to the pike: "I will throw you back into the water if you do all you promise." The pike said: "Let me go first and then I will keep my promise." But the fool answered: "Nay, nay, you must first perform your promise, and then I will let you go." When the pike saw that Emelyan would not put him into the water he said: "If you

wish me to do all you desire, you must first tell me what your desire is."

"I wish," said the fool, "that my buckets should go of themselves from the river up the hill to the village without spilling any of the water." Then said the pike: "Listen now, and remember the words I say to you: At the pike's command, and at my desire, go, buckets, of yourselves up the hill!" Then the fool repeated after him these words, and instantly, with the speed of thought, the buckets ran up the hill. When Emelyan saw this he was amazed beyond measure, and he said to the pike: "But will it always be so?" "Everything you desire will be done," replied the pike; "but I warn you not to forget the words I have taught you." Then Emelyan put the pike into the water and followed his buckets home.

The neighbours were all amazed and said to one another: "This fool makes the buckets come up of themselves from the river, and he follows them home at his leisure." But Emelyan took no notice of them, and went his way home. The buckets were by this time in the house, and standing in their place on the foot-bench; so the fool got up and stretched himself on the stove.

After some time his sisters-in-law said to him again: "Emelyan, why are you lazying there? Get up and go cut wood." But the fool replied: "Yes! and you—who are you?" "Don't you see it is now winter, and if you don't cut wood you will be frozen?" "I am lazy," said the fool. "What! you are lazy?" cried the sisters. "If you do not go instantly and cut wood, we will tell our husbands not to give you the red coat, or the red cap, or the fine red boots!" The fool, who longed for the red cap, coat, and boots, saw that he must go and cut the wood; but as it was bitterly cold, and he did not like to come down from off the stove, he repeated in an undertone, as he lay, the words: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, up, axe, and hew the wood! and do you, logs, come of yourselves in the stove!" Instantly the axe jumped up, ran out

into the yard, and began to cut up the wood; and the logs came of themselves into the house, and laid themselves in the stove. When the sisters saw this, they wondered exceedingly at the cleverness of the fool; and, as the axe did of its own accord the work whenever Emelyan was wanted to cut wood, he lived for some time in peace and harmony with them. At length the wood was all finished, and they said to him: "Emelyan, we have no more wood, so you must go to the forest and cut some." "Ay," said the fool, "and you, who are you, then?" The sisters replied: "The wood is far off, and it is winter, and too cold for us to go." But the fool only said: "I am lazy." "How! you are lazy," cried they; "you will be frozen then; and moreover, we will take care, when our husbands come home, that they shall not give you the red coat, cap, and boots." As the fool longed for the clothes, he saw that he must go and cut the wood; so he got off the stove, put on his shoes and stockings, and dressed himself; and, when he was dressed, he went into the yard, dragged the sledge out of the shed, took a rope and the axe with him, and called out to his sisters-in-law: "Open the gate."

When the sisters saw that he was riding off without any horses, they cried: "Why, Emelyan, you have got on the sledge without yoking the horses!" But he answered that he wanted no horses, and bade them only open the gate. So the sisters threw open the gate, and the fool repeated the words: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, away, sledge, off to the wood!" Instantly the sledge galloped out of the yard at such a rate that the people of the village, when they saw it, were filled with amazement at Emelyan's riding the sledge without horses, and with such speed that a pair of horses could never have drawn it at such a rate. The fool had to pass through the town on his way to the wood, and away he dashed at full speed. But the fool did not know that he should cry out: "Make way!" so that he should not run over anyone; but away he went, and rode over quite a lot of people; and, though they

ran after him, no one was able to overtake and bring him back. At last Emelyan, having got clear of the town, came to the wood and stopped his sledge. Then he got down and said: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, up, axe, hew wood; and you, logs! lay yourselves on the sledge, and tie yourselves together." Scarcely had the fool uttered these words when the axe began to cut wood, the logs to lay themselves on the sledge, and the rope to tie them down. When the axe had cut wood enough, Emelyan desired it to cut him a good cudgel; and when the axe had done this, he mounted the sledge and cried: "Up, and away! At the pike's command, and at my desire, go home, sledge!" Away then went the sledge at the top of its speed, and when he came to the town, where he had hurt so many people, he found a crowd waiting to catch him; and, as soon as he got into the gates, they laid hold of him, dragged him off his sledge, and fell to beating him. When the fool saw how they were treating him, he said in an under voice: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, up, cudgel, and thrash them!" Instantly the cudgel began to lay about it on all sides; and, when the people were all driven away, he made his escape, and came to his own village. The cudgel, having thrashed all soundly, rolled home after him; and Emelyan, as usual, when he got home, climbed up and lay upon the stove.

After he had left the town, all the people fell to talking, not so much of the number of persons he had injured, as of their amazement at his riding in a sledge without horses; and the news spread from one to another, till it reached the Court and came to the ears of the King. And when the King heard it, he felt an extreme desire to see him: so he sent an officer with some soldiers to look for him. The officer instantly started, and took the road that the fool had taken; and when he came to the village where Emelyan lived, he summoned the Starosta, or head-man of the village, and said to him: "I am sent by the King to take a certain fool, and bring him

before his Majesty." The Starosta at once showed him the house where Emelyan lived, and the officer went into it and asked where the fool was. He was lying on the stove, and answered: "What is it you want with me?" "How!" said the officer, "what do I want with you? Get up this instant and dress yourself; I must take you to the King." But Emelyan said: "What to do?" Whereat the officer became so enraged at the rudeness of his replies that he hit him on the cheek. "At the pike's command, and at my desire," said the fool, "up, cudgel, and thrash them!" Instantly up sprang the cudgel and began to lay about it on all sides. So the officer was obliged to go back to the town as fast as he could; and when he came before the King, and told him how the fool had cudgelled him, the King marvelled greatly, and would not believe the story.

Then the King called to him a wise man and ordered him to bring the fool by craft, if nothing else would do; so the wise man went to the village where Emelyan lived, called the Starosta before him and said: "I am ordered by the King to take your fool; and therefore ask for the persons with whom he lived." Then the Starosta ran and fetched Emelyan's sisters-in-law. The King's messenger asked them what it was the fool liked, and they answered: "Noble sir, if anyone entreats our fool earnestly to do anything, he flatly refuses the first and second time; the third time he consents, and does what he is required, for he dislikes to be roughly treated."

The King's messenger thereupon dismissed them and forbade them to tell Emelyan that he had summoned them before him. Then he brought raisins, baked plums, and grapes, and went to the fool. When he came into the room, he went up to the stove and said: "Emelyan, why are you lying there?" and with that he gave him the raisins, the baked plums, and the grapes, and said: "Emelyan, we will go together to the King: I will take you with me." But the fool replied: "I am very warm here"; for there was nothing he liked so much as being warm. Then the messenger began to entreat him: "Be so good,

Emelyan, do let us go! You will like the Court vastly."

"No," said the fool "I am lazy." But the messenger entreated him once more: "Do come with me, there's a good fellow, and the King will give you a fine red coat and cap, and a pair of red boots."

When the fool heard of the red coat he said: "Go on before, I will follow you." The messenger pressed him no further, but went out and asked the sisters-in-law if there was any danger of the fool's deceiving him. They assured him there was not, and he went away.

Emelyan, who remained lying on the stove, then said to himself: "How I dislike this going to the King!" And after a minute's thought, he said: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, up, stove, and away to the town!" And instantly the wall of the room opened, and the stove moved out; and when it got clear of the yard, it went at such a rate that there was no overtaking it; soon it came up with the King's messenger, and went along with him into the palace. When the King saw the fool coming, he went forth with all his Court to meet him; and he was amazed beyond measure at seeing Emelyan come riding on the stove. But the fool lay still and said nothing. Then the King asked him why he had upset so many people on his way to the wood. "It was their own fault," said the fool; "why did they not get out of the way?"

Just at that moment the King's daughter came to the window, and Emelyan happening suddenly to look up, and seeing how handsome she was, said in a whisper: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, let this lovely maiden fall in love with me!"; And scarcely had he spoken the words when the King's daughter fell desperately in love with him. Then said the fool: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, up, stove, and away home!" Immediately the stove left the palace, went through the town, returned home, and set itself in its old place. And Emelyan lived there for some time comfortably and happy.

But it was very different in the town; for, at the word of Emelyan, the King's daughter had fallen in love, and she began to implore her father to give her the fool for her husband. The King was in a great rage, both with her and the fool, but he knew not how to catch him; then his minister proposed that the same officer, as a punishment for not succeeding the first time, should be sent again to take Emelyan. This advice pleased the King, and he summoned the officer to his presence, and said: "Hark ye, friend! I sent you before for the fool, and you came back without him; to punish you I now send you for him a second time. If you bring him, you shall be rewarded; if you return without him, you shall be punished."

When the officer heard this, he left the King and lost no time in going in quest of the fool; and on coming to the village he called for the Starosta and said to him: "Here is money for you; buy everything necessary for a good dinner to-morrow. Invite Emelyan, and when he comes, make him drink until he falls asleep." The Starosta, knowing that the officer came from the King, was obliged to obey him; so he bought all that was required and invited the fool. And Emelyan said he would come, whereat the officer was greatly rejoiced. So next day the fool came to dinner, and the Starosta plied him so well with drink that he fell fast asleep. When the officer saw this, he ordered the kibitka (or carriage) to be brought; and putting the fool into it, they drove off to the town, and went straight to the palace. As soon as the King heard that they were come, he ordered a large cask to be provided without delay, and to be bound with strong iron hoops. When the cask was brought to the King, and he saw that everything was ready as he desired, he commanded his daughter and the fool to be put in it, and the cask to be well pitched; and, when this was all done, the cask was thrown into the sea, and left to the mercy of the waves. Then the King returned to his palace, and the cask floated along upon the sea. All this time the fool was fast

asleep; when he awoke, and saw that it was quite dark, he said to himself: "Where am I?" for he thought he was alone. But the Princess said: "You are in a cask, Emelyan! and I am shut up with you in it." "But who are you?" said the fool. "I am the King's daughter," replied she. And she told him why she had been shut up there with him. Then she besought him to free himself and her out of the cask; but the fool said: "Nay, I am warm enough here." "But grant me at least the favour," said the Princess; "have pity on my tears, and deliver me out of this cask." "Why so?" said Emelyan; "I am lazy." Then the Princess began to entreat him still more urgently, until the fool was at last moved by her tears and entreaties, and said: "Well, I will do this for you." Then he said softly: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, cast us, O sea! upon the shore, where we may dwell on dry land; but let it be near our own country; and, cask! fall to pieces on the shore."

Scarcely had the fool uttered these words when the waves began to roll, and the cask was thrown on a dry place, and fell to pieces of itself. So Emelyan got up and went with the Princess round about the spot where they were cast; and the fool saw that they were on a fine island, where there was an abundance of trees, with all kinds of fruit upon them. When the Princess saw this, she was greatly rejoiced and said: "But, Emelyan, where shall we live? there is not even a nook here." "You want too much," said the fool. "Grant me one favour," replied the Princess: "let there be at least a little cottage in which we may shelter ourselves from the rain"; for the Princess knew that he could do everything that he wished. But the fool said: "I am lazy." Nevertheless, she went on entreating him, until at last Emelyan was obliged to do as she desired. Then he stepped aside and said: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, let me have in the middle of this island a finer castle than the King's, and let a crystal bridge lead from my castle to the royal palace; and let there be attendants of all conditions in the court!" Hardly were the words spoken,

when there appeared a splendid castle, with a crystal bridge. The fool went with the Princess into the castle and beheld the apartments all magnificently furnished, and a number of persons, footmen and all kinds of officers, who waited for the fool's commands. When he saw that all these men were like men, and that he alone was ugly and stupid, he wished to be better, so he said: "At the pike's command, and at my desire, away! let me become a youth without an equal, and extremely wise!" And hardly had he spoken, when he became so handsome and so wise that all were amazed.

Emelyan now sent one of his servants to the King to invite him and all his Court. So the servant went along the crystal bridge which the fool had made, and when he came to the Court, the ministers brought him before the King, and Emelyan's messenger said: "Please, your Majesty, I am sent by my master to invite you to dinner." The King asked him who his master was, but he answered: "Please, your Majesty, I can tell you nothing about my master (for the fool had ordered him not to tell who he was), but if you come to dine with him, he will inform you himself." The King, being curious to know who had sent to invite him, told the messenger that he would go without fail. The servant went away, and when he got home the King and his Court set out along the crystal bridge to go and visit the fool; and, when they arrived at the castle, Emelyan came forth to meet the King, took him by his white hands, kissed him on his sugared lips, led him into his castle, and seated him at the oaken tables covered with fine diaper tablecloths, and spread with sugar-meats and honey-drinks. The King and his ministers ate and drank and made merry.

When they rose from the table and retired, the fool said to the King: "Does your Majesty know who I am?" As Emelyan was now dressed in fine clothes, and was very handsome, it was not possible to recognize him; so the King replied that he did not know him. Then the fool said: "Does not your Majesty recollect how a fool came riding on a stove to your

Court, and how you fastened him up in a pitched cask with your daughter, and cast them into the sea? Know me now I am that Emelyan."

When the King saw him thus in his presence he was greatly terrified and knew not what to do. But the fool went to the Princess and led her out to him; and the King, on seeing his daughter, was greatly rejoiced, and said: "I have been very unjust to you, and so I gladly give you my daughter, to wife." The fool humbly thanked the King; and when Emelyan had prepared everything for the wedding, it was celebrated with great magnificence, and the following day the fool gave a feast to the ministers and all the people. When the festivities were at an end, the King wanted to give up his kingdom to his son-in-law, but Emelyan did not wish to have the crown. So the King went back to his kingdom, and the fool remained in the castle and lived happily.

Story of Prince Peter with the Golden Keys, and the Princess Magilene.

In France there once lived a high-born Prince named Volchvan, with his wife Petronida; and they had an only son named Peter. Now, Prince Peter had in his youth a great inclination for knightly prowess and deeds of war; and, when he came of age, he sighed after nothing so much as chivalrous feats. But it happened that at this time a knight named Ruiganduis arrived there from the kingdom of Naples, who, observing Peter's bravery, said: "Prince Peter, there is a King in Naples who has a beautiful daughter named Magilene, and this King rewards richly all those knights who do battle in behalf of his daughter."

Then Peter went to his father and mother and begged for their blessing that he might travel to the kingdom of Naples to learn there knightly feats, but especially to see the beauty of the King's daughter Magilene. So they dismissed Prince Peter with great sorrow, exhorting him to make friendship with good men only; then, giving him three golden rings with precious stones and a gold chain, they dismissed him in peace.

When Prince Peter arrived at the kingdom of Naples, he ordered a skilful workman to make him a coat-of-mail and a helmet, and to fasten to this two golden keys; then he rode to the tournament-lists, where the King and his knights were assembled. There he gave his name as Peter with the Golden Keys, and he placed himself behind the knights. First rode forth Sir Andrei Skrintor, and against him appeared the son of the King of England; and Andrei struck Henry so hard a blow that he was well-nigh thrown from his horse; where-

upon Landiot, the King's son, rode out and overthrew Andrei Skrintor. When Prince Peter saw this he rode at Landiot, and cried with a loud voice: "Long life and happiness to their Majesties and the beautiful Princess Magilene!" and he rode at Landiot so furiously that he threw both him and his steed to the ground, and thrust the lance through his heart. Peter was praised by the King for this exploit, and still more by the Princess Magilene and all present, and he became the foremost of the King's knights.

When the Princess Magilene beheld the valour and handsome appearance of Prince Peter she fell in love with him, and resolved to be his wife. She told her wish to her waiting-maid, and from that time Prince Peter visited the beautiful King's daughter daily, and gave her the three golden rings, in token of his love, and rode with her out of the city.

And they rode off upon their goodly steeds, taking with them a quantity of gold and silver, and they journeyed on and on the whole night. Then Prince Peter came to an impenetrable forest, stretching among the mountains as far as the seacoast, where they stopped to rest; and the King's daughter threw herself on the grass, from weariness, and fell asleep. But Prince Peter sat beside her and watched her while she slept. Then he observed a knot in a golden clasp, and unfastening it, he found the three rings which he had given her. He laid them on the grass, and, as chance would have it, a black raven flew past, picked up the rings and flew with them on to a tree. Peter climbed up the tree to catch the bird; but, as he was just about to seize it, the raven flew into another tree, and so from one tree to another, and then over the sea, and let fall the rings into the water, and itself lighted upon an island. Away ran Prince Peter after the raven to the seashore, and looked about till he found a small fishing boat to row to the island, but having no oars, he was obliged to paddle along with his hands. On a sudden a violent wind arose, and carried him out on to the open sea. When Peter saw that he was far from land,

he well-nigh despaired of being saved, and exclaimed, with sighs and tears: "Alas! woe is me, the most miserable of men! Why did I take the rings out of their place of safety? I have destroyed all my joy; I have carried off the fair Princess, and left her forsaken in a pathless wood. Wild beasts will tear her to pieces, or she will lose her way and die of hunger. Murderer that I am, that have shed innocent blood!" And with that he began to sink in the waves.

Now it happened that a ship from Turkey came sailing by, and when the sailors saw a man sinking in the sea they picked him up and took him half-dead on board their ship. Then they sailed on until they arrived at the city of Alexandria, where they sold Peter to the Turkish Pasha. But the Pasha sent Prince Peter as a present to the Sultan of Turkey, who, when he saw his discreet behaviour, and handsome men, made Peter a great senator, and his uprightness and gracious behaviour won for him the love of everyone.

When the Princess Magilene awoke from her sleep in the wood, she looked around on all sides, but nowhere beheld Prince Peter: she wept with grief and despair, and fell upon the ground. At length she arose, went into the wood, and cried aloud with all her strength: "Noble Prince Peter, whither are you gone?" And thus she wandered about for a long time, and met a nun, and begged for her dark dress, giving her in exchange her light-coloured one. At length she came to a harbour, where she hired a ship from the country in which Peter's father lived. There she dwelt with a noble lady named Susanna; she chose a spot among the mountains for a harbour, and built a convent, to which she gave the name of Saint Peter and Paul, and established an hospital for the reception of strangers. Thus Magilene became celebrated by her piety and goodness. Then came Peter's father and mother to visit her, and brought her three rings, saying their cook had bought a fish, inside which these rings were found; but, as they had given them to their son Peter, they feared that he

had been drowned at sea, and they wept bitterly.

After Prince Peter had lived for a long time at the Court of the Turkish Sultan, he expressed a wish to travel to his native country. So the Sultan dismissed him with great presents, giving him much gold and silver and costly jewels. Then Peter hired a French ship, bought fourteen casks, put at the bottom of them some salt, then laid over this gold and silver, and on this more salt, and told the sailors that the casks contained only salt.

He sailed with a favourable wind to his native country, and anchored at an island, not far from the country of France, for Prince Peter suffered from sea sickness. Then he wandered about on the shore, and lost his way in the island; he lay down and fell fast asleep. The sailors sought for him everywhere for a long time, calling him by name; but not finding him, they went on their way. At length they came to the convent, and there deposited the casks of salt; and once when there was a want of salt in the convent, Magilene ordered the casks to be opened and found in them innumerable treasures.

Prince Peter was found by some other sailors upon the island, and carried to this convent, where he was placed in Magilene's hospital and there he remained for more than a month, but did not recognize Magilene, for her face was concealed by a black veil. And Peter wept every day.

One day Magilene came to the hospital, saw Peter weeping, and asked him the cause of his tears; and he related to her exactly all his adventures. Then Magilene knew him again, and sent to inform his father Volchvan and his mother, Petronida, that their son was safe and well. Soon came the father and mother to the convent, and the King's daughter received them attired in princely robes. When Prince Peter saw his parents he fell at their feet, embraced them, and wept, and they wept with him. But Prince Peter stood up, took them by the hands, kissed them, and said: "My lord and father, and you my mother, this maiden is the daughter of the great King

of Naples, to sue for whom I wandered so far." Then they were married, and lived happily ever after.

Czechoslovak Fairy Tales

By Parker Fillmore

The Story of Three Wonderful Serving Men: Longshanks, Girth, and Keen

There was once an aged king who had an only son. One day he called the prince to him and said: "My dear son, you know that ripe fruit falls in order to make room for other fruit. This my old head is like ripe fruit and soon the sun will no longer shine upon it. Now before I die I should like to see you happily married. Get you a wife, my son."

"I would, my father, that I could please you in this," the prince answered, "but I know of no one who would make you a worthy daughter-in-law."

The old king reached into his pocket, drew out a golden key, and handed it to the prince. He said: "Go up into the tower to the very top. There look about you and when you have decided what you like best of all you see, come back and tell me."

The prince took the key and at once mounted the tower. He had never before gone to the very top and he had never heard what was there. He went up and up until at last he saw a small iron door in the ceiling. He opened this with the golden key, pushed it back, and entered a large circular hall. The ceiling was blue and silver like the heavens on a bright night when the stars shine, and the floor was covered with a green silken carpet. There were twelve tall windows set in gold frames, and on the crystal glass of each window a beautiful young girl was pictured in glowing colors. Every one of them was a princess with a royal crown upon her head. As the prince looked at them it seemed to him that each was more lovely than the last, and for the life of him he knew not which

was the loveliest. Then they began to move as if alive, and they smiled at the prince and nodded, and looked as if they were about to speak.

Suddenly the prince noticed that one of the twelve windows was covered with a white curtain. He pulled the curtain aside and there without any question was the most beautiful princess of them all, clothed in pure white, with a silver girdle and a crown of pearls. Her face was deathly pale and sad as the grave.

For a long time the prince stood before this picture in utter amazement and as he looked at it a pain seemed to enter his heart.

"This one I want for my bride," he said aloud, "this one and no other."

At these words the maiden bowed, flushed like a rose, and then instantly all the pictures disappeared.

When the prince told his father what he had seen and which maiden he had chosen, the old king was greatly troubled.

"My son," he said, "you did ill to uncover what was covered and in declaring this, your choice, you have exposed yourself to a great danger. This maiden is in the power of a black magician who holds her captive in an iron castle. Of all who have gone to rescue her not one has ever returned. However, what's done is done and you have given your word. Go, then, try what fortune has in store for you, and may Heaven bring you back safe and sound."

So the prince bade his father farewell, mounted his horse, and rode forth to find his bride. His first adventure was to lose his way in a deep forest. He wandered about some time not knowing where to turn when suddenly he was hailed from behind with these words: "Hey, there, master, wait a minute!"

He looked around and saw a tall man running toward him.

"Take me into your service, master," the tall man said. "If

you do you won't regret it."

"What is your name," the prince asked, "and what can you do?"

"People call me Longshanks because I can stretch myself out. I'll show you. Do you see a bird's nest in the top of that tall fir? I'll get it down for you and not by climbing the tree either."

So saying he began to stretch out and his body shot up and up until he was as tall as the fir tree. He reached over and got the nest and then, in a shorter time than it had taken him to stretch out, he reduced himself to his natural size.

"You do your trick very well," the prince said, "but just now a bird's nest isn't of much use to me. What I need is some one to show me the way out of this forest."

"H'm," Longshanks said, "that's an easy enough matter."

Again he began to stretch himself up and up and up until he was three times as tall as the highest pine in the forest. He looked around and said: "Over there, in that direction, is the nearest way out."

Then he made himself small again, took the horse by the bridle, walked ahead, and in a short time they emerged from the forest.

A broad plain stretched out before them and beyond it they could see tall gray rocks that looked like the walls of a great city and mountains overgrown with forests.

Longshanks pointed off across the plain and said: "There, master, goes a comrade of mine who would be very useful to you. You ought to take him into your service too."

"Very well," said the prince, "call him here that I may find out what sort of a fellow he is."

"He is too far away to call," Longshanks said. "He wouldn't hear my voice and if he did he would be a long time in reaching us, for he has much to carry. I had better step over and get him myself."

As he said this, Longshanks stretched out and out until

his head was lost in the clouds. He took two or three strides, reached his comrade, set him on his shoulder, and brought him to the prince.

The new man was heavily built and round as a barrel.

"Who are you?" the prince asked. "And what can you do?"

"I am called Girth," the man said. "I can widen myself."

"Let me see you do it," the prince said.

"Very well, master," said Girth, beginning to puff out, "I will. But take care! Ride off into the forest as fast as you can!"

The prince did not understand the warning, but he saw that Longshanks was in full flight, so he spurred his horse and galloped after him.

It was just as well he did, for in another moment Girth would have crushed both him and his horse, so fast did he spread out, so huge did he become. In a short time he filled the whole plain until it looked as though a mountain had fallen upon it.

When the plain was entirely covered, he stopped expanding, heaved a deep breath that shook the forest trees, and returned to his natural size.

"You made me run for my life!" the prince said. "I tell you I don't meet a fellow like you every day! By all means join me."

They went across the plain and as they neared the rocks they met a man whose eyes were bandaged with a handkerchief.

"Master," said Longshanks, "there is my other comrade. Take him into your service, too, and I can tell you won't regret the bread he eats."

"Who are you?" the prince asked. "And why do you keep your eyes bandaged? You can't see where you're going."

"On the contrary, master, it is just because I see too well that I have to bandage my eyes. With bandaged eyes I see as well as other people whose eyes are uncovered. When I take

the handkerchief off, my sight is so keen it goes straight through everything. When I look at anything intently it catches fire, and if it can't burn, it crumbles to pieces. On account of my sight I'm called Keen."

He untied the handkerchief, turned to one of the rocks opposite, and gazed at it with glowing eyes. Soon the rock began to crumble and fall to pieces. In a few moments it was reduced to a heap of sand. In the sand something gleamed like fire. Keen picked it up and handed it to the prince. It was a lump of pure gold.

"Ha, ha!" said the prince. "You are a fine fellow and worth more than wages! I should be a fool not to take you into my service. Since you have such keen eyes, look and tell me how much farther it is to the Iron Castle and what is happening there now."

"If you rode there alone," Keen answered, "you might get there within a year, but with us to help you, you will arrive this very day. Our coming is not unexpected, either, for at this very moment they are preparing supper for us."

"What is the captive princess doing?"

"She is sitting on a high tower behind an iron grating. The magician stands on guard."

"If you are real men," the prince cried, "you will all help me to free her."

The three comrades promised they would.

They led the prince straight through the gray rocks by a defile which Keen made with his eyes, and on and on through high mountains and deep forests. Whatever obstacle was in the way one or another of the three comrades was able to remove it.

By late afternoon they had crossed the last mountain, had left behind them the last stretch of dark forest, and they saw looming up ahead of them the Iron Castle.

Just as the sun sank the prince and his followers crossed the drawbridge and entered the courtyard gate. Instantly the

drawbridge lifted and the gate clanged shut.

They went through the courtyard and the prince put his horse in the stable, where he found a place all in readiness. Then the four of them marched boldly into the castle.

Everywhere in the courtyard, in the stables, and now in the various rooms of the castle they saw great numbers of richly clad men all of whom, masters and servants alike, had been turned to stone.

They went on from one room to another until they reached the banquet hall. This was brilliantly lighted and the table, with food and drink in abundance, was set for four persons. They waited, expecting some one to appear, but no one came. At last, overpowered by hunger, they sat down and ate and drank most heartily.

After supper they began to look about for a place to sleep. It was then without warning that the doors burst open and the magician appeared. He was a bent old man with a bald head and a gray beard that reached to his knees. He was dressed in a long black robe and he had, instead of a belt, three iron bands about his waist.

He led in a beautiful lady dressed in white with a silver girdle and a crown of pearls. Her face was deathly pale and as sad as the grave. The prince recognized her instantly and sprang forward to meet her. Before he could speak, the magician raised his hand and said: "I know why you have come. It is to carry off this princess. Very well, take her. If you can guard her for three nights so that she won't escape you, she is yours. But if she escapes you, then you and your men will suffer the fate of all those who have come before you and be turned into stone."

Then when he had motioned the princess to a seat, he turned and left the hall.

The prince could not take his eyes from the princess, she was so beautiful. He tried to talk to her, asking her many questions, but she made him no answer. She might have been

marble the way she never smiled and never looked at any of them.

He seated himself beside her, determined to stay all night on guard in order to prevent her escape. For greater security Longshanks stretched himself out on the floor like a strap and wound himself around the room the whole length of the wall. Girth sat in the doorway and puffed himself out until he filled that space so completely that not even a mouse could slip through. Keen took his place by a pillar in the middle of the hall.

But, alas, in a few moments they all grew heavy with drowsiness and in the end slept soundly all night long.

In the morning in the early dawn the prince awoke and with a pain in his heart that was like a blow from a dagger, he saw that the princess was gone. Instantly he aroused his men and asked them what was to be done.

"It's all right, master, don't worry," said Keen as he took a long look through the window. "I see her now. A hundred miles from here is a forest, in the midst of the forest an ancient oak, on the top of the oak an acorn. The princess is that acorn. Let Longshanks take me on his shoulders and we'll go get her."

Longshanks picked Keen up, stretched himself out, and set forth. He took ten miles at a stride and in the time it would take you or me to run around a cottage, here he was back again with the acorn in his hand. He gave it to the prince.

"Drop it, master, on the floor."

The prince dropped the acorn and instantly the princess appeared.

As the sun came over the mountain tops the doors slammed open and the magician entered. A crafty smile was on his face. But when he saw the princess the smile changed to a scowl, he growled in rage, and bang! one of the iron bands about his waist burst asunder. Then he took the princess by the hand and dragged her off.

That whole day the prince had nothing to do but wander about the castle and look at all the strange and curious things it contained. It seemed as if at some one instant all life had been arrested. In one hall he saw a prince who had been turned into stone while he was brandishing his sword. The sword was still uplifted. In another room there was a stone knight who was taken in the act of flight. He had stumbled on the threshold but he had not yet fallen.

A serving man sat under the chimney eating his supper. With one hand he was reaching a piece of roast meat to his mouth. Days, months, perhaps years had gone by, but the meat had not yet touched his lips. There were many others, all of them still in whatever position they happened to be when the magician had cried: "Be ye turned into stone!"

In the courtyard and the stables the prince found many fine horses overtaken by the same fate.

Outside the castle everything was equally dead and silent. There were trees but they had no leaves, there was a river but it didn't flow, and no fish could live in its waters. There wasn't a singing bird anywhere, and there wasn't even one tiny flower.

In the morning, at noon, and at supper-time the prince and his companions found a rich feast prepared for them. Unseen hands served them food and poured them wine.

Then after supper, as on the preceding night, the doors burst open and the magician led in the princess, whom he handed over to the prince to guard for the second night.

Of course the prince and his men determined to fight off drowsiness this time with all their strength. But in spite of this determination again they fell asleep. At dawn the prince awoke and saw that the princess was gone.

He jumped up and shook Keen by the shoulder.

"Wake up, Keen, wake up! Where is the princess?"

Keen rubbed his eyes, took one look out of the window, and said: "There, I see her. Two hundred miles from here is a

mountain, in the mountain is a rock, in the rock a precious stone. That stone is the princess. If Longshanks will carry me over there we'll get her."

Longshanks put Keen on his shoulder, stretched himself out until he was able to go twenty miles at a stride, and off he went. Keen fixed his glowing eyes on the mountain and the mountain crumbled. Then the rock that was inside the mountain broke into a thousand pieces and there was the precious stone glittering among the pieces.

They picked it up and carried it back to the prince. As soon as he dropped it on the floor the princess reappeared.

When the magician came in and found her there, his eyes sparkled with anger, and bang! the second of his iron bands cracked and burst asunder. Rumbling and growling he led the princess away.

That day passed as the day before. After supper the magician brought back the princess and, looking fiercely at the prince, he sneered and said: "Now we'll see who wins, you or I."

This night the prince and his men tried harder than ever to stay awake. They didn't even allow themselves to sit down but kept walking. All in vain. One after another they fell asleep on their feet and again the princess escaped.

In the morning the prince, as usual, was the first to awake. When he saw the princess was gone, he aroused Keen.

"Wake up, Keen!" he cried. "Look out and tell me where the princess is."

This time Keen had to look long before he saw her.

"Master, she is far away. Three hundred miles from here there is a black sea. At the bottom of that sea is a shell. In that shell is a golden ring. That ring is the princess. But don't be worried, master, we'll get her. This time let Longshanks take Girth as well as me, for we may need him."

So Longshanks put Keen on one shoulder and Girth on the other. Then he stretched himself out until he was able to

cover thirty miles at a stride. When they reached the black sea Keen showed Longshanks where to reach down in the water for the shell. Longshanks reached down as far as he could but not far enough to touch bottom.

"Wait, comrades, wait a bit," said Girth. "Now it's my turn to help."

With that he puffed himself out and out as far as he could. Then he lay down on the beach and began drinking up the sea. He drank it in such great gulps that soon Longshanks was able to reach bottom and to get the shell. Longshanks took out the ring and then, putting his comrades on his shoulders, started back for the castle. He was not able to go fast, for Girth, with half the sea in his stomach, was very heavy. At last in desperation Longshanks turned Girth upside down and shook him and instantly the great plain upon which he emptied him turned into a huge lake. It was all poor Girth could do to scramble out of the water and back to Longshanks' shoulder.

Meanwhile at the castle the prince was awaiting his men in great anxiety. Morning was breaking and still they did not come. As the first rays of the sun shot over the mountain tops the doors slammed open and the magician stood on the threshold. He glanced around and when he saw that the princess was not there he gave a mocking laugh and entered.

But at that very instant there was the crash of a breaking window, a golden ring struck the floor, and lo! the princess! Keen had seen in time the danger that was threatening the prince and Longshanks had hurled the ring through the window.

The magician bellowed with rage until the castle shook and then, bang! the third iron band burst asunder and from what had once been the magician a black crow arose and flew out of the broken window and was never seen again.

Instantly the beautiful princess blushed like a rose and was able to speak and to thank the prince for delivering her.

Everything in the castle came to life. The prince with the uplifted sword finished his stroke and put the sword into its scabbard. The knight who was stumbling fell and jumped up holding his nose to see whether he still had it. The serving man under the chimney put the meat into his mouth and kept on eating. And so every one finished what he had been doing at the moment of enchantment. The horses, too, came to life and stamped and neighed.

Around the castle the trees burst into leaf. Flowers covered the meadows. High in the heavens the lark sang, and in the flowing river there were shoals of tiny fish. Everything was alive again, everything happy.

The knights who had been restored to life gathered in the hall to thank the prince for their deliverance. But the prince said to them: "You have nothing to thank me for. If it had not been for these, my three trusty servants, Longshanks, Girth, and Keen, I should have met the same fate as you."

The prince set out at once on his journey home with his bride and his three serving men. When he reached home the old king, who had given him up for lost, wept for joy at his unexpected return.

All the knights whom the prince had rescued were invited to the wedding which took place at once and lasted for three weeks.

When it was over, Longshanks, Girth, and Keen presented themselves to the young king and told him that they were again going out into the world to look for work. The young king urged them to stay.

"I will give you everything you need as long as you live," he promised them, "and you won't have to exert yourselves at all."

But such an idle life was not to their liking. So they took their leave and started out again and to this day they are still knocking around somewhere.

The Three Golden Hairs

The Story of a Charcoal-Burner's Son Who Married a Princess

There was once a king who took great delight in hunting. One day he followed a stag a great distance into the forest. He went on and on until he lost his way. Night fell and the king by happy chance came upon a clearing where a charcoal-burner had a cottage. The king asked the charcoal-burner to lead him out of the forest and offered to pay him handsomely.

"I'd be glad to go with you," the charcoal-burner said, "but my wife is expecting the birth of a child and I cannot leave her. It is too late for you to start out alone. Won't you spend the night here? Lie down on some hay in the garret and tomorrow I'll be your guide."

The king had to accept this arrangement. He climbed into the garret and lay down on the floor. Soon afterwards a son was born to the charcoal-burner.

At midnight the king noticed a strange light in the room below him. He peeped through a chink in the boards and saw the charcoal-burner asleep, his wife lying in a dead faint, and three old women, all in white, standing over the baby, each holding a lighted taper in her hand.

The first old woman said: "My gift to this boy is that he shall encounter great dangers."

The second said: "My gift to him is that he shall go safely through them all, and live long."

The third one said: "And I give him for wife the baby daughter born this night to the king who lies upstairs on the straw."

The three old women blew out their tapers and all was quiet. They were the Fates.

The king felt as though a sword had been thrust into his heart. He lay awake till morning trying to think out some plan by which he could thwart the will of the three old Fates.

When day broke the child began to cry and the charcoal-burner woke up. Then he saw that his wife had died during the night.

"Ah, my poor motherless child," he cried, "what shall I do with you now?"

"Give me the baby," the king said. "I'll see that he's looked after properly and I'll give you enough money to keep you the rest of your life."

The charcoal-burner was delighted with this offer and the king went away promising to send at once for the baby.

A few days later when he reached his palace he was met with the joyful news that a beautiful little baby daughter had been born to him. He asked the time of her birth, and of course it was on the very night when he saw the Fates. Instead of being pleased at the safe arrival of the baby princess, the king frowned.

Then he called one of his stewards and said to him: "Go into the forest in a direction that I shall tell you. You will find there a cottage where a charcoal-burner lives. Give him this money and get from him a little child. Take the child and on your way back drown it. Do as I say or I shall have you drowned."

The steward went, found the charcoal-burner, and took the child. He put it into a basket and carried it away. As he was crossing a broad river he dropped the basket into the water.

"Goodnight to you, little son-in-law that nobody wanted!" the king said when he heard what the steward had done.

He supposed of course that the baby was drowned. But it wasn't. Its little basket floated in the water like a cradle, and

the baby slept as if the river were singing it a lullaby. It floated down with the current past a fisherman's cottage. The fisherman saw it, got into his boat, and went after it. When he found what the basket contained he was overjoyed. At once he carried the baby to his wife and said: "You have always wanted a little son and here you have one. The river has given him to us."

The fisherman's wife was delighted and brought up the child as her own. They named him Plavachek, which means a little boy who has come floating on the water.

The river flowed on and the days went by and Plavachek grew from a baby to a boy and then into a handsome youth, the handsomest by far in the whole countryside.

One day the king happened to ride that way unattended. It was hot and he was thirsty. He beckoned to the fisherman to get him a drink of fresh water. Plavachek brought it to him. The king looked at the handsome youth in astonishment.

"You have a fine lad," he said to the fisherman. "Is he your own son?"

"He is, yet, he isn't," the fisherman answered. "Just twenty years ago a little baby in a basket floated down the river. We took him in and he has been ours ever since."

A mist rose before the king's eyes and he went deathly pale, for he knew at once that Plavachek was the child that he had ordered drowned.

Soon he recovered himself and jumping from his horse he said: "I need a messenger to send to my palace and I have no one with me. Could this youth go for me?"

"Your majesty has but to command," the fisherman said, "and Plavachek will go."

The king sat down and wrote a letter to the queen. This is what he said: "Have the young man who delivers this letter run through with a sword at once. He is a dangerous enemy. Let him be dispatched before I return. Such is my will."

He folded the letter, made it secure, and sealed it with his

own signet.

Plavachek took the letter and started out with it at once. He had to go through a deep forest where he missed the path and lost his way. He struggled on through underbrush and thicket until it began to grow dark. Then he met an old woman who said to him: "Where are you going, Plavachek?"

"I'm carrying this letter to the king's palace and I've lost my way. Can you put me on the right road, mother?"

"You can't get there today," the old woman said. "It's dark now. Spend the night with me. You won't be with a stranger, for I'm your old godmother."

Plavachek allowed himself to be persuaded and presently he saw before him a pretty little house that seemed at that moment to have sprung out of the ground.

During the night while Plavachek was asleep, the old woman took the letter out of his pocket and put in another that read as follows: "Have the young man who delivers this letter married to our daughter at once. He is my destined son- in-law. Let the wedding take place before I return. Such is my will."

The next day Plavachek delivered the letter and as soon as the queen read it, she gave orders at once for the wedding. Both she and her daughter were much taken with the handsome youth and gazed at him with tender eyes. As for Plavachek he fell instantly in love with the princess and was delighted to marry her.

Some days after the wedding the king returned and when he heard what had happened he flew into a violent rage at the queen.

"But," protested the queen, "you yourself ordered me to have him married to our daughter before you came back. Here is your letter."

The king took the letter and examined it carefully. The handwriting, the seal, the paper all were his own.

He called his son-in-law and questioned him.

Plavachek related how he had lost his way in the forest and spent the night with his godmother.

"What does your godmother look like?" the king asked.

Plavachek described her.

From the description the king recognized her as the same old woman who had promised the princess to the charcoal-burner's son twenty years before.

He looked at Plavachek thoughtfully and at last he said: "What's done can't be undone. However, young man, you can't expect to be my son-in-law for nothing. If you want my daughter you must bring me for dowry three of the golden hairs of old Grandfather Knowitall."

He thought to himself that this would be an impossible task and so would be a good way to get rid of an undesirable son-in-law.

Plavachek took leave of his bride and started off. He didn't know which way to go. Who would know? Everybody talked about old Grandfather Knowitall, but nobody seemed to know where to find him. Yet Plavachek had a Fate for a godmother, so it wasn't likely that he would miss the right road.

He traveled long and far, going over wooded hills and desert plains and crossing deep rivers. He came at last to a black sea.

There he saw a boat and an old ferryman.

"God bless you, old ferryman!" he said.

"May God grant that prayer, young traveler! Where are you going?"

"I'm going to old Grandfather Knowitall to get three of his golden hairs."

"Oho! I have long been hunting for just such a messenger as you! For twenty years I have been ferrying people across this black sea and nobody has come to relieve me. If you promise to ask Grandfather Knowitall when my work will end, I'll ferry you over."

Plavachek promised and the boatman took him across.

Plavachek traveled on until he came to a great city that was in a state of decay. Before the city he met an old man who had a staff in his hand, but even with the staff he could scarcely crawl along.

"God bless you, old grandfather!" Plavachek said.

"May God grant that prayer, handsome youth! Where are you going?"

"I am going to old Grandfather Knowitall to get three of his golden hairs."

"Indeed! We have been waiting a long time for just such a messenger as you! I must lead you at once to the king."

So he took him to the king and the king said: "Ah, so you are going on an errand to Grandfather Knowitall! We have an apple-tree here that used to bear apples of youth. If any one ate one of those apples, no matter how aged he was, he'd become young again. But, alas, for twenty years now our tree has borne no fruit. If you promise to ask Grandfather Knowitall if there is any help for us, I will reward you handsomely."

Plavachek gave the king his promise and the king bid him godspeed.

Plavachek traveled on until he reached another great city that was half in ruins. Not far from the city a man was burying his father, and tears as big as peas were rolling down his cheek.

"God bless you, mournful grave-digger!" Plavachek said.

"May God grant that prayer, kind traveler! Where are you going?"

"I'm going to old Grandfather Knowitall to get three of his golden hairs."

"To Grandfather Knowitall! What a pity you didn't come sooner! Our king has long been waiting for just such a messenger as you! I must lead you to him."

So he took Plavachek to the king and the king said to him: "So you're going on an errand to Grandfather Knowitall. We have a well here that used to flow with the water of life. If any

one drank of it, no matter how sick he was, he would get well. Nay, if he were already dead, this water, sprinkled upon him, would bring him back to life. But, alas, for twenty years now the well has gone dry. If you promise to ask Grandfather Knowitall if there is help for us, I will reward you handsomely."

Plavachek gave the king his promise and the king bid him godspeed.

After that Plavachek traveled long and far into a black forest. Deep in the forest he came upon a broad green meadow full of beautiful flowers and in its midst a golden palace glittering as though it were on fire. This was the palace of Grandfather Knowitall.

Plavachek entered and found nobody there but an old woman who sat spinning in a corner.

"Welcome, Plavachek," she said. "I am delighted to see you again."

He looked at the old woman and saw that she was his godmother with whom he had spent the night when he was carrying the letter to the palace.

"What has brought you here, Plavachek?" she asked.

"The king, godmother. He says I can't be his son-in-law for nothing. I have to give a dowry. So he has sent me to old Grandfather Knowitall to get three of his golden hairs."

The old woman smiled and said: "Do you know who Grandfather Knowitall is? Why, he's the bright Sun who goes everywhere and sees everything. I am his mother. In the morning he's a little lad, at noon he's a grown man, and in the evening an old grandfather. I will get you three of the golden hairs from his golden head, for I must not be a godmother for nothing! But, my lad, you mustn't remain where you are. My son is kind, but if he comes home hungry he might want to roast you and eat you for his supper. There's an empty tub over there and I'll just cover you with it."

Plavachek begged his godmother to get from Grandfather

Knowitall the answers for the three questions he had promised to ask.

"I will," said the old woman, "and do you listen carefully to what he says."

Suddenly there was the rushing sound of a mighty wind outside and the Sun, an old grandfather with a golden head, flew in by the western window. He sniffed the air suspiciously.

"Phew! Phew!" he cried. "I smell human flesh! Have you any one here, mother?"

"Star of the day, whom could I have here without your seeing him? The truth is you've been flying all day long over God's world and your nose is filled with the smell of human flesh. That's why you still smell it when you come home in the evening."

The old man said nothing more and sat down to his supper.

After supper he laid his head on the old woman's lap and fell sound asleep. The old woman pulled out a golden hair and threw it on the floor. It twanged like the string of a violin.

"What is it, mother?" the old man said. "What is it?"

"Nothing, my boy, nothing. I was asleep and had a wonderful dream."

"What did you dream about, mother?"

"I dreamt about a city where they had a well of living water. If any one drank of it, no matter how sick he was, he would get well. Nay, if he were already dead, this water, sprinkled on him, would bring him back to life. For the last twenty years the well has gone dry. Is there anything to be done to make it flow again?"

"Yes. There's a frog sitting on the spring that feeds the well. Let them kill the frog and clean out the well and the water will flow as before."

When he fell asleep again the old woman pulled out another golden hair and threw it on the floor.

"What is it, mother?"

"Nothing, my boy, nothing. I was asleep again and I had a wonderful dream. I dreamt of a city where they had an apple-tree that bore apples of youth. If any one ate one of those apples, no matter how aged he was, he'd become young again. But for twenty years the tree has borne no fruit. Can anything be done about it?"

"Yes. In the roots of the tree there is a snake that takes its strength. Let them kill the snake and transplant the tree. Then it will bear fruit as before."

He fell asleep again and the old woman pulled out a third golden hair.

"Why won't you let me sleep, mother?" he complained, and started to sit up.

"Lie still, my boy, lie still. I didn't intend to wake you, but a heavy sleep fell upon me and I had another wonderful dream. I dreamt of a boatman on the black sea. For twenty years he has been ferrying that boat and no one has offered to relieve him. When will he be relieved?"

"Ah, but that boatman is the son of a stupid mother! Why doesn't he thrust the oar into the hand of some one else and jump ashore himself? Then the other man would have to be ferryman in his place. But now let me be quiet. I must get up early tomorrow morning and go and dry the tears which the king's daughter sheds every night for her husband, the charcoal-burner's son, whom the king has sent to get three of my golden hairs."

In the morning there was again the rushing sound of a mighty wind outside and a beautiful golden child no longer an old man awoke on his mother's lap. It was the glorious Sun. He bade his mother farewell and flew out by an eastern window.

The old woman turned over the tub and said to Plavachek: "Here are the three golden hairs for you. You also have Grandfather Knowitall's answers to your three questions. Now good-by. As you will need me no more, you will

never see me again."

Plavachek thanked his godmother most gratefully and departed.

When he reached the first city the king asked him what news he brought.

"Good news!" Plavachek said. "Have the well cleaned out and kill the frog that sits on its spring. If you do this the water will flow again as it used to."

The king ordered this to be done at once and when he saw the water beginning to bubble up and flow again, he made Plavachek a present of twelve horses, white as swans, laden with as much gold and silver as they could carry.

When Plavachek came to the second city and the king of that city asked him what news he brought, he said: "Good news! Have the apple tree dug up. At its roots you will find a snake. Kill the snake and replant the tree. Then it will bear fruit as it used to."

The king had this done at once and during the night the tree burst into bloom and bore great quantities of fruit. The king was delighted and made Plavachek a present of twelve horses, black as ravens, laden with as much riches as they could carry.

Plavachek traveled on and when he came to the black sea, the boatman asked him had he the answer to his question.

"Yes, I have," said Plavachek, "but you must ferry me over before I tell you."

The boatman wanted to hear the answer at once, but Plavachek was firm. So the old man ferried him across with his twelve white horses and his twelve black horses.

When Plavachek was safely landed, he said: "The next person who comes to be ferried over, thrust the oar into his hand and do you jump ashore. Then the other man will have to be boatman in your place."

Plavachek traveled home to the palace. The king could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw the three golden hairs

of Grandfather Knowitall. The princess wept again, not for sorrow this time but for joy at her bridegroom's return.

"But, Plavachek," the king gasped, "where did you get these beautiful horses and all these riches?"

"I earned them," said Plavachek proudly. Then he related how he helped one king who had a tree of the apples of youth and another king who had a well of the water of life.

"Apples of youth! Water of life!" the king kept repeating softly to himself. "If I ate one of those apples I should become young again! If I were dead the water of life would restore me!"

He lost no time in starting out in quest of the apples of youth and the water of life. And do you know, he hasn't come back yet!

So Plavachek, the charcoal-burner's son, became the king's son-in-law as the old Fate foretold.

As for the king, well, I fear he's still ferrying that boat across the black sea!

The Flaming Horse
The Story of a Country Where the Sun Never Shines

There was once a land that was dreary and dark as the grave, for the sun of heaven never shone upon it. The king of the country had a wonderful horse that had, growing right on his forehead, a flaming sun. In order that his subjects might have the light that is necessary for life, the king had this horse led back and forth from one end of his dark kingdom to the other. Wherever he went his flaming head shone out and it seemed like beautiful day.

Suddenly this wonderful horse disappeared. Heavy darkness that nothing could dispel settled down on the country. Fear spread among the people and soon they were suffering terrible poverty, for they were unable to cultivate the fields or do anything else that would earn them a livelihood. Confusion increased until the king saw that the whole country was likely to perish. In order then, if possible, to save his people, he gathered his army together and set out in search of the missing horse.

Through heavy darkness they groped their way slowly and with difficulty to the far boundaries of the kingdom. At last they reached the ancient forests that bordered the neighboring state and they saw gleaming through the trees faint rays of the sunshine with which that kingdom was blessed.

Here they came upon a small lonely cottage which the king entered in order to find out where he was and to ask directions for moving forward.

A man was sitting at the table reading diligently from a

large open book. When the king bowed to him, he raised his eyes, returned the greeting, and stood up. His whole appearance showed that he was no ordinary man but a seer.

"I was just reading about you," he said to the king, "that you were gone in search of the flaming horse. Exert yourself no further, for you will never find him. But trust the enterprise to me and I will get him for you."

"If you do that, my man," the king said, "I will pay you royally."

"I seek no reward. Return home at once with your army, for your people need you. Only leave here with me one of your serving men."

The king did exactly as the seer advised and went home at once.

The next day the seer and his man set forth. They journeyed far and long until they had crossed six different countries. Then they went on into the seventh country which was ruled over by three brothers who had married three sisters, the daughters of a witch.

They made their way to the front of the royal palace, where the seer said to his man: "Do you stay here while I go in and find out whether the kings are at home. It is they who stole the flaming horse and the youngest brother rides him."

Then the seer transformed himself into a green bird and flew up to the window of the eldest queen and flitted about and pecked until she opened the window and let him into her chamber. When she let him in, he alighted on her white hand and the queen was as happy as a child.

"You pretty thing!" she said, playing with him. "If my husband were home how pleased he would be! But he's off visiting a third of his kingdom and he won't be home until evening."

Suddenly the old witch came into the room and as soon as she saw the bird she shrieked to her daughter: "Wring the neck of that cursed bird, or it will stain you with blood!"

"Why should it stain me with blood, the dear innocent thing!"

"Dear innocent mischief!" shrieked the witch. "Here, give it to me and I'll wring its neck!"

She tried to catch the bird, but the bird changed itself into a man and was already out of the door before they knew what had become of him.

After that he changed himself again into a green bird and flew up to the window of the second sister. He pecked at it until she opened it and let him in. Then he flitted about her, settling first on one of her white hands, then on the other.

"What a dear bird you are!" cried the queen. "How you would please my husband if he were at home. But he's off visiting two-thirds of his kingdom and he won't be back until tomorrow evening."

At that moment the witch ran into the room and as soon as she saw the bird she shrieked out: "Wring the neck of that wretched bird, or it will stain you with blood!"

"Why should it stain me with blood?" the daughter answered. "The dear innocent thing!"

"Dear innocent mischief!" shrieked the witch. "Here, give it to me and I'll wring its neck!"

She reached out to catch the bird, but in less time than it takes to clap a hand, the bird had changed itself into a man who ran through the door and was gone before they knew where he was.

A moment later he again changed himself into a green bird and flew up to the window of the youngest queen. He flitted about and pecked until she opened the window and let him in. Then he alighted at once on her white hand and this pleased her so much that she laughed like a child and played with him.

"Oh, what a dear bird you are!" she cried. "How you would delight my husband if he were home. But he's off visiting all three parts of his kingdom and he won't be back until

the day after tomorrow in the evening."

At that moment the old witch rushed into the room. "Wring the neck of that cursed bird!" she shrieked, "or it will stain you with blood."

"My dear mother," the queen answered, "why should it stain me with blood beautiful innocent creature that it is!"

"Beautiful innocent mischief!" shrieked the witch. "Here, give it to me and I'll wring its neck!"

But at that moment the bird changed itself into a man, disappeared through the door, and they never saw him again.

The seer knew now where the kings were and when they would come home. So he made his plans accordingly. He ordered his servant to follow him and they "set out from the city at a quick pace. They went on until they came to a bridge which the three kings as they came back would have to cross.

The seer and his man hid themselves under the bridge and lay there in wait until evening. As the sun sank behind the mountains, they heard the clatter of hoofs approaching the bridge. It was the eldest king returning home. At the bridge his horse stumbled on a log which the seer had rolled there.

"What scoundrel has thrown a log here?" cried the king angrily.

Instantly the seer leaped out from under the bridge and demanded of the king how he dared to call him a scoundrel. Clamoring for satisfaction he drew his sword and attacked the king. The king, too, drew sword and defended himself, but after a short struggle he fell from his horse dead. The seer bound the dead king to his horse and then with a cut of the whip started the horse homewards.

The seer hid himself again and he and his man lay in wait until the next evening.

On that evening near sunset the second king came riding up to the bridge. When he saw the ground sprinkled with blood, he cried out: "Surely there has been a murder here! Who has dared to commit such a crime in my kingdom!"

At these words the seer leaped out from under the bridge, drew his sword, and shouted: "How dare you insult me? Defend yourself as best you can!"

The king drew, but after a short struggle he, too, yielded up his life to the sword of the seer.

The seer bound the dead king to his horse and with a cut of the whip started the horse homewards.

Then the seer hid himself again under the bridge and he and his man lay there in wait until the third evening.

On the third evening just at sunset the youngest king came galloping home on the flaming steed. He was hurrying fast because he had been delayed. But when he saw red blood at the bridge he stopped short and looked around.

"What audacious villain," he cried, "has dared to kill a man in my kingdom!"

Hardly had he spoken when the seer stood before him with drawn sword demanding satisfaction for the insult of his words.

"I don't know how I've insulted you," the king said, "unless you're the murderer."

When the seer refused to parley, the king, too, drew his sword and defended himself.

To overcome the first two kings had been mere play for the seer, but it was no play this time. They both fought until their swords were broken and still victory was doubtful.

"We shall accomplish nothing with swords," the seer said. "That is plain. I tell you what: let us turn ourselves into wheels and start rolling down the hill and the wheel that gets broken let him yield."

"Good!" said the king. "I'll be a cartwheel and you be a lighter wheel."

"No, no," the seer answered quickly. "You be the light wheel and I'll be the cartwheel."

To this the king agreed. So they went up the hill, turned themselves into wheels and started rolling down. The

cartwheel went whizzing into the lighter wheel and broke its spokes.

"There!" cried the seer, rising up from the cartwheel. "I am victor!"

"Not so, brother, not so!" said the king, standing before the seer. "You only broke my fingers! Now I tell you what: let us change ourselves into two flames and let the flame that burns up the other be victor. I'll be a red flame and do you be a white one."

"Oh, no," the seer interrupted. "You be the white flame and I'll be the red one."

The king agreed to this. So they went back to the road that led to the bridge, turned themselves into flames, and began burning each other mercilessly. But neither was able to burn up the other.

Suddenly a beggar came down the road, an old man with a long gray beard and a bald head, with a scrip at his side and a heavy staff in his hand.

"Father," the white flame said, "get some water and pour it on the red flame and I'll give you a penny."

But the red flame called out quickly: "Not so, father! Get some water and pour it on the white flame and I'll give you a shilling!"

Now of course the shilling appealed to the beggar more than the penny. So he got some water, poured it on the white flame and that was the end of the king.

The red flame turned into a man who seized the flaming horse by the bridle, mounted him and, after he had rewarded the beggar, called his servant and rode off.

Meanwhile at the royal palace there was deep sorrow for the murdered kings. The halls were draped in black and people came from miles around to gaze at the mutilated bodies of the two elder brothers which the horses had carried home.

The old witch was beside herself with rage. As soon as she

had devised a plan whereby she could avenge the murder of her sons-in-law, she took her three daughters under her arm, mounted an iron rake, and sailed off through the air.

The seer and his man had already covered a good part of their journey and were hurrying on over rough mountains and across desert plains, when the servant was taken with a terrible hunger. There wasn't anything in sight that he could eat, not even a wild berry. Then suddenly they came upon an apple tree that was bending beneath a load of ripe fruit. The apples were red and pleasant to the sight and sent out a fragrance that was most inviting.

The servant was delighted. "Glory to God!" he cried. "Now I can feast to my heart's content on these apples!"

He was already running to the tree when the seer called him back.

"Wait! Don't touch them! I will pick them for you myself!"

But instead of picking an apple, the seer drew his sword and struck a mighty blow into the apple tree.

"Just see, my man! You would have perished if you had eaten one apple. This apple tree is the eldest queen, whom her mother, the witch, placed here for our destruction."

Presently they came to a spring. Its water bubbled up clear as crystal and most tempting to the tired traveler.

"Ah," said the servant, "since we can get nothing better, at least we can take a drink of this good water."

"Wait!" cried the seer. "I will draw some for you."

But instead of drawing water he plunged his naked sword into the middle of the spring.

"This is the second queen, whom her mother, the witch, placed here to work our doom."

Presently they came to a rosebush covered with beautiful red roses that scented all the air with their fragrance.

"What beautiful roses!" said the servant. "I have never seen any such in all my life. I'll go pluck a few. As I can't eat

or drink, I'll comfort myself with roses."

"Don't dare to pluck them!" cried the seer. "I'll pluck them for you."

With that he cut into the bush with his sword.

"This is the youngest queen," said the seer, "whom her mother, the witch, placed here in the hope of revenging herself on us for the death of her sons-in-law."

After that they proceeded without further adventures.

When they crossed the boundaries of the dark kingdom, the sun in the horse's forehead sent out its blessed rays in all directions. Everything came to life. The earth rejoiced and covered itself with flowers.

The king felt he could never thank the seer enough and he offered him the half of his kingdom.

But the seer replied: "You are the king. Keep on ruling over the whole of your kingdom and let me return to my cottage in peace."

He bade the king farewell and departed.

The Three Citrons

The Story of a Prince Who Climbed the Glass Hill

Once upon a time there was an aged king who had an only son. One day he called the prince to him and said: "My son, you see that my head is white. Soon I shall be closing my eyes and you are not yet settled in life. Marry, my son, marry at once so that I can bless you before I die."

The prince made no answer but he took the king's words to heart and pondered them. He would gladly have done as his father wished but there was no young girl upon whom his affections were set.

One day when he was sitting in the garden, wondering what to do, an old woman suddenly appeared before him.

"Go," she said, "to the top of the Glass Hill, pluck the Three Citrons, and you will get a wife in whom your heart will delight." With that she disappeared as mysteriously as she had come.

Her words went through the prince's soul like a bright dart. Instantly he determined, come what might, to find the Glass Hill and to pluck the Three Citrons. He told his father his intention and the old king fitted him out for the journey and gave him his blessing.

For a long time the prince wandered over wooded mountains and desert plains without seeing or even hearing anything of the Glass Hill and the Three Citrons. One day, worn out with his long journey, he threw himself down in the shade of a wide-spreading linden tree. As his father's sword, which he wore at his side, clanked on the ground, twelve ravens

began cawing from the top of the tree. Frightened by the clanking of the sword, they raised their wings and flew off.

The prince jumped to his feet. "Those are the first living creatures I have seen for many a day. I'll go in the direction they have taken," he said to himself, "and perhaps I'll have better luck."

So he traveled on and after three days and three nights a high castle came in view.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, pushing joyfully ahead. "I shall soon have human companionship once more."

The castle was built entirely of lead. The twelve ravens circled above it and in front of it stood an old woman leaning on a long leaden staff. She was a Yezibaba. Now you must know that a Yezibaba is an ugly old witch with a hooked nose, a bristly face, and long scrawny hands. She's a bad old thing usually, but sometimes, if you take her fancy, she's kind.

This time when she looked the prince over she shook her head at him in a friendly way.

"Yi, yi, my boy, how did you get here? Why, not even a little bird or a tiny butterfly comes here, much less a human being! You'd better escape if life is dear to you, or my son, when he comes home, will eat you!"

"No, no, old mother, don't make me go," begged the prince. "I have come to you for advice to know whether you can tell me anything about the Glass Hill and the Three Citrons."

"No, I have never heard a word about the Glass Hill," Yezibaba said. "But wait until my son comes. He may be able to tell you something. Yes, yes, I'll manage to save you somehow. Go hide under the besom and stay there until I call you."

The mountains rumbled and the castle trembled and Yezibaba whispered to the prince that her son was coming.

"Phew! Phew! I smell human meat! I'll eat it!" shouted Yezibaba's son while he was still in the doorway. He struck the ground with his leaden club and the whole castle shook.

"No, no, my son, don't talk that way. It's true there is a pretty youth here, but he's come to ask you about something."

"Well, if he wants to ask me something, let him come out and ask."

"Yes, my son, he will, but only when you promise me that you will do nothing to him."

"Well, I won't do anything to him. Now let him come out."

The prince hidden under the besom was shaking like an aspen leaf, for when he peeped through the twigs he saw an ogre so huge that he himself would reach up only to his knees. Happily the ogre had guaranteed his life before Yezibaba ordered him out.

"Well, well, well, you little June bug!" shouted the ogre. "What are you afraid of? Where have you been? What do you want?"

"What do I want?" repeated the prince. "I have been wandering in these mountains a long time and I can't find what I'm seeking. So I've come to you to ask whether you can tell me something about the Glass Hill and the Three Citrons."

Yezibaba's son wrinkled his forehead. He thought for a moment and then, lowering his voice a little, he said: "I've never heard of any Glass Hill around here. But I tell you what you do: go on to my brother in arms who lives in the Silver Castle and ask him. Maybe he'll be able to tell you. But I can't let you go away hungry. That would never do! Hi, mother, bring out the dumplings!"

Old Yezibaba placed a large dish on the table and her giant son sat down.

"Well, come on! Eat!" he shouted to the prince.

When the prince took the first dumpling and bit into it, he almost broke two of his teeth, for the dumpling was made of lead.

"Well," shouted Yezibaba's son, "why don't you eat? Doesn't the dumpling taste good?"

"Oh, yes, very good," said the prince, politely, "but just now I'm not hungry."

"Well, if you're not hungry now you will be later. Put a few in your pocket and eat them on your journey."

So, whether he wanted them or not, the prince had to put some leaden dumplings into his pocket. Then he took his leave of Yezibaba and her son and traveled on.

He went on and on for three days and three nights.

The farther he went, the more inhospitable became the country. Before him stretched a waste of mountains, behind him a waste of mountains with no living creature in sight.

Wearied with his long journey, he threw himself on the ground. His silver sword clanked sharply and at this sound twenty-four ravens circled above him, cawed in fright, and flew away.

"A good sign!" cried the prince. "I'll follow the ravens again!"

So on he went as fast as his legs could carry him until he came in sight of a tall castle. It was still far away, but even at that distance it shone and flashed, for it was built of pure silver.

In front of the castle stood an old woman, bent with age, and leaning on a long silver staff. This was the second Yezibaba.

"Yi, yi, my boy!" she cried. "How did you get here? Why, not even a little bird or a tiny butterfly comes here, much less a human being. You'd better escape if life is dear to you, or my son, when he comes home, will eat you!"

"No, no, old mother, he won't eat me. I bring greetings from his brother of the Leaden Castle."

"Well, if you bring greetings from the Leaden Castle you are safe enough. Come in, my boy, and tell me your business."

"My business? For a long time, old mother, I've been looking for the Glass Hill and the Three Citrons, but I can't find them. So I've come to ask you whether you could tell me

something about them."

"No, my boy, I don't know anything about the Glass Hill. But wait until my son comes. Perhaps he can help you. In the meantime hide yourself under the bed and don't come out until I call you."

The mountains rumbled and the castle trembled and the prince knew that Yezibaba's son was coming home.

"Phew! Phew! I smell human meat! I'll eat it!" bellowed the mighty fellow. He stood in the doorway and banged the ground with his silver club until the whole castle shook.

"No, no, my son," said Yezibaba, "don't talk that way! A pretty little chap has come bringing you greetings from your brother of the Leaden Castle."

"Well, if he's been at the Leaden Castle and came to no harm, he'll have nothing to fear from me either. Where is he?"

The prince slipped out from under the bed and stood before the ogre. Looking up at him was like looking at the top of the tallest pine tree.

"Well, little June bug, so you've been at my brother's, eh?"

"Yes," said the prince. "See, I still have the dumplings he gave me for the journey."

"I believe you. Well, what do you want?"

"What do I want? I came to ask you whether you could tell me something about the Glass Hill and the Three Citrons."

"H'm, it seems to me I used to hear something about them, but I forget. I tell you what you do: go to my brother of the Golden Castle and ask him. But wait! I can't let you go away hungry. Hi, mother, bring out the dumplings!"

Yezibaba brought the dumplings on a large silver dish and put them on the table.

"Eat!" shouted her son.

The prince saw they were silver dumplings, so he said he wasn't hungry just then, but he'd like to take some with him for the journey.

"Take as many as you want," shouted the ogre. "And give my greetings to my brother and my aunt."

So the prince took some silver dumplings, made suitable thanks, and departed.

He journeyed on from the Silver Castle three days and three nights, through dense forests and over rough mountains, not knowing where he was nor which way to turn. At last all worn out he threw himself down in the shade of a beech tree to rest. As the sword clanked on the ground, its silver voice rang out and a flock of thirty-six ravens circled over his head.

"Caw! Caw!" they croaked. Then, frightened by the sound of the sword, they flew away.

"Praise God!" cried the prince. "The Golden Castle can't be far!"

He jumped up and started eagerly off in the direction the ravens had taken. As he left a valley and climbed a little hill he saw before him a beautiful wide meadow in the midst of which stood the Golden Castle shining like the sun. Before the gate of the castle stood a bent old Yezibaba leaning on a golden staff.

"Yi, yi, my boy," she cried to the prince, "how did you get here? Why, not even a little bird or a tiny butterfly comes here, much less a human being! You'd better escape if life is dear to you, or my son, when he comes home, will eat you!"

"No, no, old mother, he won't eat me, for I bring him greetings from his brother of the Silver Castle!"

"Well, if you bring greetings from the Silver Castle you are safe enough. Come in, my boy, and tell me your business."

"My business, old mother? For a long time I've been wandering over these wild mountains in search of the Glass Hill and the Three Citrons. At the Silver Castle they sent me to you because they thought you might know something about them."

"The Glass Hill? No, I don't know where it is. But wait

until my son comes. He will advise you where to go and what to do. Hide under the table and stay there till I call you."

The mountains rumbled and the castle trembled and Yezibaba's son came home.

"Phew! Phew! I smell human meat! I'll eat it!" he roared. He stood in the doorway and pounded the ground with his golden club until the whole castle shook.

"No, no, my son," said Yezibaba, "don't talk that way! A pretty little fellow has come bringing you greetings from your brother of the Silver Castle. If you won't harm him, I'll call him out."

"Well, if my brother didn't do anything to him, I won't either."

So the prince crawled out from under the table and stood before the giant. It was like standing beneath a high tower. He showed the ogre the silver dumplings as proof that he had been at the Silver Castle.

"Well, well, well, my little June bug," shouted the monstrous fellow, "tell me what it is you want! I'll advise you if I can! Don't be afraid!"

So the prince told him the purpose of his journey and asked him how to get to the Glass Hill and pluck the Three Citrons.

"Do you see that blackish lump over yonder?" the ogre said, pointing with his golden club. "That is the Glass Hill. On that hill stands a tree. From that tree hang the Three Citrons which send out fragrance for seven miles around. You will climb the Glass Hill, kneel beneath the tree, and reach up your hands. If the citrons are destined for you they will fall into your hands of their own accord. If they are not destined for you, you will not be able to pluck them no matter what you do. As you return, if you are hungry or thirsty, cut open one of the citrons and you will have food and drink in plenty. Go now with God's blessing. But wait! I can't let you go away hungry! Hi, mother, bring out the dumplings!"

Yezibaba set a large golden dish on the table.

"Eat!" her son shouted. "Or, if you are not hungry just now, put some in your pocket and eat them on the way."

The prince said that he was not hungry but that he would be glad to take some of the golden dumplings with him and eat them later. Then he thanked the ogre most courteously for his hospitality and advice and took his leave.

He trudged quickly on from hill to dale, from dale to hill again, and never stopped until he reached the Glass Hill itself. Then he stood still as if turned into stone. The hill was high and steep and smooth with not so much as a scratch on its surface. Over its top spread out the branches of the magic tree upon which hung the Three Citrons. Their fragrance was so powerful that the prince almost fainted.

"Let it be as God wills!" he thought to himself. "But however the adventure is to come out, now that I'm here I must at least make the attempt."

So he began to claw his way up the smooth glass, but he hadn't gone many yards before his foot slipped and down he went so hard that he didn't know where he was or what had happened to him until he found himself sitting on the ground.

In his vexation he began to throw away the dumplings, thinking that perhaps their weight had dragged him down. He took one and threw it straight at the hill. Imagine his surprise to see it fix itself firmly in the glass. He threw a second and a third and there he had three steps on which he was able to stand with safety!

The prince was overjoyed. He threw dumpling after dumpling and each one of them became a step. First he threw the leaden ones, then the silver ones, and last of all the golden ones. On the steps made in this way he climbed higher and higher until he had reached the very summit of the hill. Then he knelt under the magic tree, lifted up his hands, and into them the Three Citrons dropped of their own accord!

Instantly the tree disappeared, the Glass Hill sank until it

was lost, and when the prince came to himself there was neither tree nor hill to be seen, but only a wide plain.

Delighted with the outcome of his adventure, the prince turned homewards. At first he was too happy even to eat or drink. By the third day his stomach began to protest and he discovered that he was so hungry that he would have fallen ravenously upon a leaden dumpling if he had had one in his pocket. But his pocket, alas, was empty, and the country all about was as bare as the palm of his hand.

Then he remembered what the ogre of the Golden Castle had told him and he took out one of the Three Citrons. He cut it open, and what do you suppose happened? Out jumped a beautiful maiden fresh from the hand of God, who bowed low before him and exclaimed: "Have you food ready for me? Have you drink ready for me? Have you pretty clothes ready for me?"

"Alas, beautiful creature," the prince sighed, "I have not. I have nothing for you to eat or to drink or to put on."

The lovely maiden clapped her hands three times, bowed before him, and disappeared.

"Ah," said the prince, "now I know what kind of citrons you are! I'll think twice before opening one of you again!"

Of the one he had opened he ate and drank his fill, and so refreshed, went on. He traveled three days and three nights and by that time he began to feel three times hungrier than before.

"God help me!" thought he. "I must eat something! There are still two citrons and if I cut open one there would still be one left."

So he took out the second citron, cut it in two, and lo, a maiden twice as beautiful as the first stood before him. She bowed low and said: "Have you food ready for me? Have you drink ready for me? Have you pretty clothes ready for me?"

"No, lovely creature, I haven't! I haven't!"

The maiden clapped her hands thrice, bowed before him,

and disappeared.

Now there was only one citron left. The prince took it in his hand, looked at it, and said: "I won't cut you open until I'm safe at home in my father's house."

He took up his journey again and on the third day he came to his native town and his father's castle. He had been gone a long time and how he ever got back he didn't know himself.

Tears of joy rained down the old king's cheeks.

"Welcome home, my son, welcome a hundred times!" he cried, falling on the prince's neck.

The prince related the adventures of his journey and they at home told him how anxiously they had awaited his return.

On the next day a great feast was prepared. All the nobles in the land were invited. The tables were spread with food and drink the most expensive in the world and many rich dresses embroidered in gold and studded with pearls were laid out.

The guests assembled, seated themselves at the tables, and waited. Music played and when all was ready, the prince took the last citron and cut it in two. Out jumped a beautiful creature, three times lovelier than the others.

"Have you food ready for me?" she cried. "Have you drink ready for me? Have you pretty clothes ready for me?"

"I have indeed, dear heart!" the prince answered. "I have everything ready for you!"

He led her to the gorgeous clothes and she dressed herself in them and every one present marveled at her great beauty.

Soon the betrothal took place and after the betrothal a magnificent wedding.

So now the old king's wish was fulfilled. He blessed his son, gave over the kingdom to him, and not long afterwards he died.

The first thing that faced the young king after his father's death was a war which a neighboring king stirred up against

him. So the young king had to bid farewell to the bride whom he had won so dearly and lead his men to battle. In order that nothing happen to the queen in his absence, he built a golden throne for her in the garden beside the lake. This throne was as high as a tower and no one could ascend it except those to whom the queen let down a silken cord.

Not far from the king's castle lived the old woman who, in the first place, had told him about the Three Citrons. She knew well enough how the young king had won his bride and she was deeply incensed that he had not invited her to the wedding and in fact had not even thanked her for her good advice.

Now this old woman had a gipsy for servant whom she used to send to the lake for water. One day when this gipsy was filling her pitcher, she saw in the lake a beautiful reflection. She supposed it was a reflection of herself.

"Is it right," she cried out, "that so lovely a creature as I should carry water for that old witch?"

In a fury she threw the pitcher on the ground and broke it into a hundred pieces. Then she looked up and discovered that it wasn't her own reflection she had seen in the water but that of the beautiful queen.

Ashamed of herself, she picked up the broken pitcher and went home. The old woman, who knew beforehand what had happened, went out to meet her with a new pitcher.

"It's no matter about the pitcher," the old woman said. "Go back to the lake and beg the lovely lady to let down the silken cord and pull you up. Tell her you will comb her hair. When she pulls you up, comb her hair until she falls asleep. Then stick this pin into her head. After that you can dress yourself up in her clothes and sit there like a queen."

It was easy enough to persuade the gipsy. She took the pitcher and the pin and returned to the lake.

As she drew water she gazed at the lovely queen.

"Oh, how beautiful you are!" she whined, leering up at

the queen with an evil eye. "How beautiful you are! Aye, but you'd be a hundred times more beautiful if you but let me comb out your lovely hair! Indeed, I would so twine those golden tresses that your lord would be delighted!"

With words like these she beguiled and coaxed the queen until she let down the silken cord and drew the gipsy up. Once on the throne, the wicked gipsy combed out the golden tresses and plaited them and arranged them until the queen fell sound asleep. Then the gipsy took the pin and stuck it into the queen's head. Instantly a beautiful white dove flew off the golden throne and not a trace was left of the lovely queen except her rich clothing. The gipsy dressed herself in this, sat in the queen's place, and gazed down into the lake. But in the lake no lovely reflection showed itself, for even in the queen's clothes the gipsy remained a gipsy.

The young king waged a successful war against his enemies and made peace. Scarcely had he got home when he hurried to the garden to see whether anything had happened to his heart's delight. Who can express in words his astonishment and horror when instead of his beautiful wife he saw the evil gipsy!

"Ah, my dearest one, how you have changed!" he murmured and tears flowed down his cheeks.

"Yes, my dear, I have changed, I know I have," the gipsy answered. "It was grief for you that has broken me."

She tried to fall on his neck but the king turned quickly away and left her.

From that time forth he had no peace but day and night he mourned the lost beauty of his wife and nothing consoled him.

Grieving in this way and thinking always the same sad thoughts, he was walking one day in the garden when suddenly a beautiful white dove flew down from a high tree and alighted on his hand. She looked up at him with eyes as mournful as his own.

"Ah, my poor dove," the king said, "why are you so sad? Has your mate also changed?"

As he spoke he stroked the dove gently on the back and on the head. On the head he felt a little lump. He blew aside the feathers and discovered the head of a pin. He pulled out the pin and instantly the sad dove changed into his own beautiful wife.

She told him what had happened to her, how the gipsy had deceived her and stuck the pin into her head. The king had the gipsy and the old witch caught at once and burnt at the stake.

From that time on nothing happened to mar the king's happiness, neither the plots of his enemies nor the spite of evil people. He lived in love and peace with his beautiful wife and he ruled his kingdom wisely. In fact he's ruling it still if he hasn't died.

Prince Bayaya

The Story of a Magic Horse

While the king of a distant country was off at the wars, his wife, the queen, gave birth to twin sons. There was great rejoicing throughout the court and immediately messengers were despatched to the king to carry him news of the happy event.

Both boys were well and vigorous and shot up like little trees. The one who was about a moment the older was the hardier of the two. Even as a toddling child he was forever playing in the courtyard and struggling to climb on the back of a horse that had been given him because it was just his own age.

His brother, on the other hand, liked better to play indoors on the soft carpets. He was always tagging after his mother and never went outdoors except when he followed the queen into the garden. For this reason the younger prince became the mother's favorite.

The boys were seven years old before the king returned from the wars. He looked at his sons with pride and joy and he said to the queen: "But which is the older and which is the younger?"

The queen, thinking that the king was asking in order to know which was the heir to the throne, slipped in her favorite as the older. The king, of course, did not question his wife's word and so, thereafter, he always spoke of the younger one as his heir.

When the boys had grown into handsome youths, the older one wearied of life at home and of hearing his brother

always spoken of as the future king. He longed to go out into the world and seek adventures of his own. One day as he was pouring out his heart to the little horse that had been his companion from infancy, much to his amazement the horse spoke to him with a human voice and said: "Since you are not happy at home, go out into the world. But do not go without your father's permission. I advise you to take no one with you and to mount no horse but me. This will bring you good luck."

The prince asked the horse how it happened that he could talk like a human being.

"Don't ask me about that," the horse said, "for I can't tell you. But I wish to be your friend and counselor and I will be as long as you obey me."

The prince promised to do as the horse advised. He went at once to his father to beg his leave to ride out into the world. At first his father was unwilling to let him go but his mother gave her permission at once. By dint of coaxing he finally won his father's consent. Of course the king wanted the prince to set forth in a manner befitting his rank with a great company of men and horses. But the prince insisted that he wished to go unattended.

"Why, my dear father, do I need any such retinue as you suggest? Let me have some money for the journey and let me ride off alone on my own little horse. This will give me more freedom and less trouble."

Again he had to argue with his father for some time, but at last he succeeded in arranging everything to his liking.

The day of parting came. The little horse stood saddled at the castle gate. The prince bade farewell to his parents and his brother. They all wept on his neck and at the last moment the queen's heart misgave her for the deceit she had practised and she made the prince solemnly promise that he would return home within a year or at least send them word of his whereabouts.

So the prince mounted his little horse and off they trotted.

The horse went at a surprising pace for an animal that was seventeen years old, but of course you have guessed before this that he was no ordinary horse. The years had not touched him at all. His coat was as smooth as satin and his legs were straight and sound. No matter how far he traveled he was always as fresh as a fawn.

He carried the prince a great distance until they came in sight of the towers of a beautiful city. Then the horse left the beaten track and crossed a field to a big rock.

When they reached the rock, the horse kicked it with his hoof three times and the rock opened. They rode inside and the prince found himself in a comfortable stable.

"Now you will leave me here," the horse said, "and go on alone to the nearby town. You must pretend you are dumb and be careful never to betray yourself. Present yourself at court and have the king take you into his service. When you need anything, no matter what it is, come to the rock, knock three times, and the rock will open to you."

The prince thought to himself: "My horse certainly knows what he's about, so of course I'll do exactly as he says."

He disguised himself by bandaging one eye and making his face look pale and sallow. Then he presented himself at court and the king, pitying his youth and his affliction of dumbness, took him into his service.

The prince was capable and quick at affairs and it wasn't long before the king gave over to him the management of the household. His advice was asked in matters of importance and all day long he hurried about the castle going from one thing to another. If the king needed a scribe, there wasn't a cleverer one anywhere than the prince. Everybody liked him and everybody was soon calling him Bayaya, because those were the only sounds he made.

The king had three daughters, each more beautiful than the other. The oldest was called Zdobena, the second Budinka, and the youngest Slavena.

The prince loved to be with the three girls and as he was supposed to be dumb and in his disguise was very ugly, the king made no objection to his spending his days with them. How could the king possibly think that there was any danger of Bayaya's stealing the heart of one of the princesses? They liked him, all three of them, and were always taking him with them wherever they went. He wove garlands for them, spun golden thread, picked them flowers, and drew them designs of birds and flowers for their embroidery. He liked them all, but he liked the youngest one best. Everything he did for her was done a little better than for the others. The garlands he wove her were richer, the designs he drew for her were more beautiful. The two older sisters noticed this and laughed, and when they were alone they teased Slavena. Slavena, who had a sweet and amiable disposition, accepted their joking without retort.

Bayaya had been at the court some time when one morning he found the king sitting sad and gloomy over his breakfast. So by signs he asked him what was the matter.

The king looked at him and sighed. "Is it possible, my dear boy," he said, "that you don't know what's the matter? Don't you know the calamity that threatens us? Don't you know the bitter three days that are at hand for me?"

Bayaya, alarmed by the seriousness of the king's manner, shook his head.

"Then I'll tell you," said the king, "although you can be of no help. Years ago three dragons came flying through the air and alighted on a great rock near here. The first was nine-headed, the second eighteen-headed, and the third twenty-seven-headed. At once they laid waste the country, devouring the cattle and killing the people. Soon the city was in a state of siege. To keep them away we placed all the food we had outside the gates and in a short time we ourselves were starving. In desperation I had an old wise woman called to court and asked her was there any way to drive these monsters from

the land. Alas for me, there was a way and that way was to promise the awful creatures my three beautiful daughters when they reached womanhood. At that time my daughters were only small children and I thought to myself many things might happen in the years before they grew up. So, to relieve my stricken land, I promised the dragons my daughters. The poor queen died at once of grief, but my daughters grew up knowing nothing of their fate. As soon as I made the monstrous bargain, the dragons flew away and until yesterday were never again heard of. Last night, a shepherd, beside himself with terror, brought me the news that the dragons are again settled in their old rock and are sending out fearful roars. Tomorrow I must sacrifice to them my oldest child, the day after tomorrow my second child, and the day after that my youngest. Then I shall be left a poor lonely old man with nothing."

The king strode up and down and tore his hair in grief.

In great distress Bayaya went to the princesses. He found them dressed in black and looking ghastly pale. They were sitting in a row and bewailing their fate most piteously. Bayaya tried to comfort them, telling them by signs that surely some one would appear to rescue them. But they paid no heed to him and kept on moaning and weeping.

Grief and confusion spread throughout the city, for every one loved the royal family. Every house as well as the palace was soon draped in black and the sound of mourning was heard on every side.

Bayaya hurried secretly out of the city and across the field to the rock where his magic horse was stabled. He knocked three times, the rock opened, and he entered.

He stroked the horse's shining mane and kissed his muzzle in greeting.

"My dear horse," he said, "I have come to you for advice. Help me and I shall be happy forever."

So he told the horse the story of the dragons.

"Oh, I know all about those dragons," the horse answered. "In fact, it was that you might rescue the princesses that I brought you here in the first place. Early tomorrow morning come back and I will tell you what to do."

Bayaya returned to the castle with such joy shining in his face that if any one had noticed him he would have been severely rebuked. He spent the day with the princesses trying to comfort and console them, but in spite of all he could do they felt only more terrified as the hours went by.

The next day at the first streak of dawn he was at the rock.

The horse greeted him and said: "Lift up the stone under my trough and take out what you find there."

Bayaya obeyed. He lifted the stone and under the stone he found a large chest. Inside the chest he found three beautiful suits of clothing, with caps and plumes to match, a sword, and a horse's bridle. The first suit was red embroidered in silver and studded with diamonds, the second was pure white embroidered in gold, and the third was light blue richly embroidered with silver and studded with diamonds and pearls.

For all three suits there was but one mighty sword. Its blade was beautifully inlaid and its scabbard shone with precious stones. The horse's bridle was also richly jeweled.

"All three suits are for you," the horse said. "For the first day, put on the red one."

So Bayaya dressed himself in the red suit, buckled on his sword, and threw the bridle over the horse's head.

"Have no fear," the horse said as they left the rock. "Cut bravely into the monster, trusting to your sword. And remember, do not dismount."

At the castle heart-broken farewells were being taken. Zdobena parted from her father and her sisters, stepped into a carriage, and accompanied by a great multitude of her weeping subjects was slowly driven out of town to the Dragon Rock. As they neared the fatal spot the princess alighted. She

took a few steps forward, then sank to the earth in a faint.

At that moment the people saw galloping toward them a knight with a red and white plume. In a voice of authority he ordered them to stand back and leave him to deal alone with the dragon. They were glad enough to lead the princess away and they all went to a hill near by from which they could watch the combat at a safe distance.

Now there was a deep rumbling noise, the earth shook, and the Dragon Rock opened. A nine-headed monster crawled out. He spat fire and poison from all his nine mouths and cast about his nine heads, this way and that, looking for his promised prey. When he saw the knight he let out a horrible roar.

Bayaya rode straight at him and with one blow of his sword cut off three of his heads. The dragon writhed and enveloped Bayaya in flames and poisonous fumes. But the prince, undaunted, struck at him again and again until he had cut off all nine heads. The life that still remained in the loathsome body, the horse finished with his hoofs.

When the dragon had perished the prince turned and galloped back the way he had come.

Zdobena looked after him, wishing she might follow him to thank him for her deliverance. But she remembered her poor father sunk in grief at the castle and she felt it was her duty to hurry back to him as quickly as she could.

It would be impossible to describe in words the king's joy when Zdobena appeared before him safe and uninjured. Her sisters embraced her and wondered for the first time whether a deliverer would rise up for them as well.

Bayaya capered happily about and assured them by signs that he was certain they, too, would be saved. Although the prospect of the morrow still terrified them, yet hope had come to them and once or twice Bayaya succeeded in making them laugh.

The next day Budinka was led out. As on the day before,

the unknown knight appeared, this time wearing a white plume. He attacked the eighteen-headed dragon and, after valiant conflict, despatched him. Then before any one could reach him, he turned and rode away.

The princess returned to the castle, grieving that she had not been able to speak to the knight and express her gratitude.

"You, my sisters," Slavena said, "were backward not to speak to him before he rode off. Tomorrow if he delivers me I shall kneel before him and not get up until he consents to return with me to the castle."

Just then Bayaya began laughing and chuckling and Slavena asked him sharply what was the matter. He capered about and made her understand that he, too, wanted to see the knight.

On the third day Slavena was taken out to the Dragon Rock. This time the king also went. The heart of the poor girl quaked with terror when she thought that if the unknown knight failed to appear she would be handed over to the horrible monster.

A joyous shout from the people told her that the knight was coming. Then she saw him, a gallant figure in blue with a blue and white plume floating in the wind. As he had killed the first dragon, and the second dragon, so he killed the third although the struggle was longer and the little horse had much to do to stand up against the poisonous fumes.

Instantly the dragon was slain, Slavena and the king rushed up to the knight and begged him to return with them to the castle. He scarcely knew how to refuse, especially when Slavena, kneeling before him, grasped the edge of his tunic and looked up at him so bewitchingly that his heart melted and he was ready to do anything she asked.

But the little horse took matters into his own hands, reared up suddenly, and galloped off before the knight had time to dismount.

So Slavena, too, was unable to bring the knight back to the castle. The king and all the court were greatly disappointed but their disappointment was swallowed up in their joy that the princesses had been so miraculously saved.

Shortly after this another disaster threatened the king. A neighboring king of great power declared war against him. The king sent far and wide and summoned together all the nobles of the land. They came, and the king when he had laid before them his cause promised them the hands of his three beautiful daughters in return for their support. This was indeed an inducement and every young noble present swore his allegiance and hurried home to gather his forces.

Troops poured in from all sides and soon the king was ready to set forth.

He handed over the affairs of the castle to Bayaya and also intrusted to him the safety of the three princesses. Bayaya did his duty faithfully, looking after the castle and planning diversions for the princesses to keep them happy and cheerful.

Then one day he complained of feeling sick, but instead of consulting the court physician, he said he would go himself to the fields and hunt some herbs. The princesses laughed at his whim but let him go.

He hurried to the rock where his horse was stabled, knocked three times, and entered.

"You have come in good time," the horse said. "The king's forces are weakening and tomorrow will decide the battle. Put on the white suit, take your sword, and let us be off."

Bayaya kissed his brave little horse and put on his white suit.

That night the king was awake planning the morrow's battle and sending swift messengers to his daughters instructing them what to do in case the day went against him.

The next morning as the battle joined an unknown knight suddenly appeared among the king's forces. He was all in white. He rode a little horse and he wielded a mighty sword.

He struck right and left among the enemy and he caused such havoc that the king's forces were instantly heartened. Gathering around the white knight they fought so valiantly that soon the enemy broke and scattered and the king won a mighty victory.

The knight himself was slightly wounded on the foot. When the king saw this he jumped down from his horse, tore off a piece of his own cape, and bound up the wound. He begged the knight to dismount and come with him to a tent. But the knight, thanking him, refused, spurred his horse, and was gone.

The king nearly wept with disappointment that the unknown knight to whom he was under one more obligation had again ridden off without so much as leaving his name.

With great rejoicing the king's forces marched home carrying vast stores of booty.

"Well, steward," said the king to Bayaya, "how have the affairs of the household gone in my absence?"

Bayaya nodded that everything had gone well, but the princesses laughed at him and Slavena said: "I must enter complaint against your steward, for he was disobedient. He said he was sick but he would not consult the court physician. He said he wanted to go himself and get some herbs. He went and he was gone two whole days and when he came back he was sicker than before."

The king looked at Bayaya to see if he was still sick. Bayaya shook his head and capered about to show the king that he was all right.

When the princesses heard that the unknown knight had again appeared and saved the day they were unwilling to become at once the brides of any of the nobles, for they thought the knight might perhaps come demanding one of them.

Again the king was in a quandary. All the various nobles had helped him valiantly and the question now arose to what three of them would the princesses be awarded. After much

thought the king hit upon a plan which he hoped would decide the matter to the satisfaction of them all. He called a meeting of the nobles and said: "My dear comrades in arms, you remember that I promised the hands of my daughters to those of you who would support me in battle. All of you gave me valiant support. Each of you deserves the hand of one of my daughters. But, alas, I have only three daughters. To decide therefore which three of you my daughters shall marry I make this suggestion: let all of you stand in the garden in a row and let each of my daughters throw down a golden apple from a balcony. Then each princess must wed the man to whom her apple rolls. My lords, do you all agree to this?"

The nobles all agreed and the king sent for his daughters. The princesses, still thinking of the unknown knight, were not enthusiastic over this arrangement, but not to shame their father they, too, agreed.

So each of the girls, dressed in her loveliest, took a golden apple in her hand and went up to a balcony.

Below in the garden the nobles stood in a row. Bayaya, as though he were a spectator, took his place at the end of the line.

First Zdobena threw down her apple. It rolled straight to the feet of Bayaya but he turned quickly aside and it rolled on to a handsome youth who snatched it up with joy and stepped from the line.

Then Budinka threw her apple. It, too, rolled to Bayaya but he cleverly kicked it on so that it seemed to roll straight to the feet of a valiant lord who picked it up and then looked with happy eyes at his lovely bride.

Last Slavena threw her apple. This time Bayaya did not step aside but when the apple rolled to him he stooped and picked it up. Then he ran to the balcony, knelt before the princess, and kissed her hand.

Slavena snatched away her hand and ran to her chamber, where she wept bitterly to think she would have to marry

Bayaya instead of the unknown knight.

The king was much disappointed and the nobles murmured. But what was done was done, and could not be undone.

That night there was a great feast but Slavena remained in her chamber refusing to appear among the guests.

It was moonlight and from the rock in the field the little horse carried his master for the last time. When they reached the castle Bayaya dismounted. Then he kissed his faithful friend farewell, and the little horse vanished.

Slavena still sat in her chamber, sad and unhappy. When a maidservant opened the door and said that Bayaya wished to speak to her, the princess hid her face in the pillows.

Presently some one took her by the hand and when she raised her head she saw standing before her the beautiful knight of her dreams.

"Are you angry with your bridegroom that you hide from him?" he asked.

"Why do you ask me that?" Slavena whispered. "You are not my bridegroom. Bayaya is my bridegroom."

"I am Bayaya. I am the dumb youth who wove you garlands. I am the knight who saved you and your sisters from death and who helped your father in battle. See, here is the piece of your father's cape with which he bound up my wounded foot."

That this was so was joy indeed to Slavena. She led the white knight into the banquet hall and presented him to the king as her bridegroom. When all had been explained, the king rejoiced, the guests marveled, and Zdobena and Budinka looked sideways at each other with little gasps of envy.

After the wedding Bayaya rode away with Slavena to visit his parents. When he reached his native town the first news he got was of the death of his brother. He hurried to the castle to comfort his parents. They were overjoyed at his return, for they had long ago given him up for dead.

After a time Bayaya succeeded to the kingdom. He lived long and prospered and he enjoyed unclouded happiness with his wife.

Katcha and the Devil

The Story of a Clinging Vine

There was once a woman named Katcha who lived in a village where she owned her own cottage and garden. She had money besides but little good it did her because she was such an ill-tempered vixen that nobody, not even the poorest laborer, would marry her. Nobody would even work for her, no matter what she paid, for she couldn't open her mouth without scolding, and whenever she scolded she raised her shrill voice until you could hear it a mile away. The older she grew the worse she became until by the time she was forty she was as sour as vinegar.

Now as it always happens in a village, every Sunday afternoon there was a dance either at the burgomaster's, or at the tavern. As soon as the bagpipes sounded, the boys all crowded into the room and the girls gathered outside and looked in the windows. Katcha was always the first at the window. The music would strike up and the boys would beckon the girls to come in and dance, but no one ever beckoned Katcha. Even when she paid the piper no one ever asked her to dance. Yet she came Sunday after Sunday just the same.

One Sunday afternoon as she was hurrying to the tavern she thought to herself: "Here I am getting old and yet I've never once danced with a boy! Plague take it, today I'd dance with the devil if he asked me!"

She was in a fine rage by the time she reached the tavern, where she sat down near the stove and looked around to see what girls the boys had invited to dance.

Suddenly a stranger in hunter's green came in. He sat

down at a table near Katcha and ordered drink. When the serving maid brought the beer, he reached over to Katcha and asked her to drink with him. At first she was much taken back at this attention, then she pursed her lips coyly and pretended to refuse, but finally she accepted.

When they had finished drinking, he pulled a ducat from his pocket, tossed it to the piper, and called out: "Clear the floor, boys! This is for Katcha and me alone!"

The boys snickered and the girls giggled hiding behind each other and stuffing their aprons into their mouths so that Katcha wouldn't hear them laughing. But Katcha wasn't noticing them at all. Katcha was dancing with a fine young man! If the whole world had been laughing at her, Katcha wouldn't have cared.

The stranger danced with Katcha all afternoon and all evening. Not once did he dance with any one else. He bought her marzipan and sweet drinks and, when the hour came to go home, he escorted her through the village.

"Ah," sighed Katcha when they reached her cottage and it was time to part, "I wish I could dance with you forever!"

"Very well," said the stranger. "Come with me."

"Where do you live?"

"Put your arm around my neck and I'll tell you."

Katcha put both arms about his neck and instantly the man changed into a devil and flew straight down to hell.

At the gates of hell he stopped and knocked.

His comrades came and opened the gates and when they saw that he was exhausted, they tried to take Katcha off his neck. But Katcha held on tight and nothing they could do or say would make her budge.

The devil finally had to appear before the Prince of Darkness himself with Katcha still glued to his neck.

"What's that thing you've got around your neck?" the Prince asked.

So the devil told how as he was walking about on earth

he had heard Katcha say she would dance with the devil himself if he asked her. "So I asked her to dance with me," the devil said. "Afterwards just to frighten her a little I brought her down to hell. And now she won't let go of me!"

"Serve you right, you dunce!" the Prince said. "How often have I told you to use common sense when you go wandering around on earth! You might have known Katcha would never let go of a man once she had him!"

"I beg your Majesty to make her let go!" the poor devil implored.

"I will not!" said the Prince. "You'll have to carry her back to earth yourself and get rid of her as best you can. Perhaps this will be a lesson to you."

So the devil, very tired and very cross, shambled back to earth with Katcha still clinging to his neck. He tried every way to get her off. He promised her wooded hills and rich meadows if she but let him go. He cajoled her, he cursed her, but all to no avail. Katcha still held on.

Breathless and discouraged he came at last to a meadow where a shepherd, wrapped in a great shaggy sheepskin coat, was tending his flocks. The devil transformed himself into an ordinary looking man so that the shepherd didn't recognize him.

"Hi, there," the shepherd said, "what's that you're carrying?"

"Don't ask me," the devil said with a sigh. "I'm so worn out I'm nearly dead. I was walking yonder not thinking of anything at all when along comes a woman and jumps on my back and won't let go. I'm trying to carry her to the nearest village to get rid of her there, but I don't believe I'm able. My legs are giving out."

The shepherd, who was a good-natured chap, said: "I tell you what: I'll help you. I can't leave my sheep long, but I'll carry her halfway."

"Oh," said the devil, "I'd be very grateful if you did!"

So the shepherd yelled at Katcha: "Hi, there, you! Catch hold of me!"

When Katcha saw that the shepherd was a handsome youth, she let go of the devil and leapt upon the shepherd's back, catching hold of the collar of his sheepskin coat.

Now the young shepherd soon found that the long shaggy coat and Katcha made a pretty heavy load for walking. In a few moments he was sick of his bargain and began casting about for some way of getting rid of Katcha.

Presently he came to a pond and he thought to himself that he'd like to throw her in. He wondered how he could do it. Perhaps he could manage it by throwing in his greatcoat with her. The coat was so loose that he thought he could slip out of it without Katcha's discovering what he was doing. Very cautiously he slipped out one arm. Katcha didn't move. He slipped out the other arm. Still Katcha didn't move. He unlooped the first button. Katcha noticed nothing. He unlooped the second button. Still Katcha noticed nothing. He unlooped the third button and kerplunk! he had pitched coat and Katcha and all into the middle of the pond!

When he got back to his sheep, the devil looked at him in amazement.

"Where's Katcha?" he gasped.

"Oh," the shepherd said, pointing over his shoulder with his thumb, "I decided to leave her up yonder in a pond."

"My dear friend," the devil cried, "I thank you! You have done me a great favor. If it hadn't been for you I might be carrying Katcha till doomsday. I'll never forget you and some time I'll reward you. As you don't know who it is you've helped, I must tell you I'm a devil."

With these words the devil vanished.

For a moment the shepherd was dazed. Then he laughed and said to himself: "Well, if they're all as stupid as he is, we ought to be able for them!"

The country where the shepherd lived was ruled over by

a dissolute young duke who passed his days in riotous living and his nights in carousing. He gave over the affairs of state to two governors who were as bad as he. With extortionate taxes and unjust fines they robbed the people until the whole land was crying out against them.

Now one day for amusement the duke summoned an astrologer to court and ordered him to read in the planets the fate of himself and his two governors. When the astrologer had cast a horoscope for each of the three reprobates, he was greatly disturbed and tried to dissuade the duke from questioning him further.

"Such danger," he said, "threatens your life and the lives of your two governors that I fear to speak."

"Whatever it is," said the duke, "speak. But I warn you to speak the truth, for if what you say does not come to pass you will forfeit your life."

The astrologer bowed and said: "Hear then, oh Duke, what the planets foretell: Before the second quarter of the moon, on such and such a day, at such and such an hour, a devil will come and carry off the two governors. At the full of the moon on such and such a day, at such and such an hour, the same devil will come for your Highness and carry you off to hell."

The duke pretended to be unconcerned but in his heart he was deeply shaken. The voice of the astrologer sounded to him like the voice of judgment and for the first time conscience began to trouble him.

As for the governors, they couldn't eat a bite of food and were carried from the palace half dead with fright. They piled their ill-gotten wealth into wagons and rode away to their castles, where they barred all the doors and windows in order to keep the devil out.

The duke reformed. He gave up his evil ways and corrected the abuses of state in the hope of averting if possible his cruel fate.

The poor shepherd had no inkling of any of these things. He tended his flocks from day to day and never bothered his head about the happenings in the great world.

Suddenly one day the devil appeared before him and said: "I have come, my friend, to repay you for your kindness. When the moon is in its first quarter, I was to carry off the former governors of this land because they robbed the poor and gave the duke evil counsel. However, they're behaving themselves now so they're to be given another chance. But they don't know this. Now on such and such a day do you go to the first castle where a crowd of people will be assembled. When a cry goes up and the gates open and I come dragging out the governor, do you step up to me and say: 'What do you mean by this? Get out of here or there'll be trouble!' I'll pretend to be greatly frightened and make off. Then ask the governor to pay you two bags of gold, and if he haggles just threaten to call me back. After that go on to the castle of the second governor and do the same thing and demand the same pay. I warn you, though, be prudent with the money and use it only for good. When the moon is full, I'm to carry off the duke himself, for he was so wicked that he's to have no second chance. So don't try to save him, for if you do you'll pay for it with your own skin. Don't forget!"

The shepherd remembered carefully everything the devil told him. When the moon was in its first quarter he went to the first castle. A great crowd of people was gathered outside waiting to see the devil carry away the governor.

Suddenly there was a loud cry of despair, the gates of the castle opened, and there was the devil, as black as night, dragging out the governor. He, poor man, was half dead with fright.

The shepherd elbowed his way through the crowd, took the governor by the hand, and pushed the devil roughly aside.

"What do you mean by this?" he shouted. "Get out of here or there'll be trouble!"

Instantly the devil fled and the governor fell on his knees before the shepherd and kissed his hands and begged him to state what he wanted in reward. When the shepherd asked for two bags of gold, the governor ordered that they be given him without delay.

Then the shepherd went to the castle of the second governor and went through exactly the same performance.

It goes without saying that the duke soon heard of the shepherd, for he had been anxiously awaiting the fate of the two governors. At once he sent a wagon with four horses to fetch the shepherd to the palace and when the shepherd arrived he begged him piteously to rescue him likewise from the devil's clutches.

"Master," the shepherd answered, "I cannot promise you anything. I have to consider my own safety. You have been a great sinner, but if you really want to reform, if you really want to rule your people justly and kindly and wisely as becomes a true ruler, then indeed I will help you even if I have to suffer hellfire in your place."

The duke declared that with God's help he would mend his ways and the shepherd promised to come back on the fatal day.

With grief and dread the whole country awaited the coming of the full moon. In the first place the people had greeted the astrologer's prophecy with joy, but since the duke had reformed their feelings for him had changed.

Time sped fast as time does whether joy be coming or sorrow and all too soon the fatal day arrived.

Dressed in black and pale with fright, the duke sat expecting the arrival of the devil.

Suddenly the door flew open and the devil, black as night, stood before him. He paused a moment and then he said, politely: "Your time has come, Lord Duke, and I am here to get you!"

Without a word the duke arose and followed the devil to

the courtyard, which was filled with a great multitude of people.

At that moment the shepherd, all out of breath, came pushing his way through the crowd, and ran straight at the devil, shouting out: "What do you mean by this? Get out of here or there'll be trouble!"

"What do you mean?" whispered the devil. "Don't you remember what I told you?"

"Hush!" the shepherd whispered back. "I don't care anything about the duke. This is to warn you! You know Katcha? She's alive and she's looking for you!"

The instant the devil heard the name of Katcha he turned and fled.

All the people cheered the shepherd, while the shepherd himself laughed in his sleeve to think that he had taken in the devil so easily.

As for the duke, he was so grateful to the shepherd that he made him his chief counselor and loved him as a brother. And well he might, for the shepherd was a sensible man and always gave him sound advice.

The Betrothal Gifts

The Story of Kubik and the Frog

A farmer who had three sons was much troubled in his mind as to how he should leave his property. "My farm is too small to divide," he kept thinking to himself. "If I divide it into three equal parts and give each of my sons one part, they will all be poor cottagers, and yet, if I give it all to one son, I shall be unjust to the other two. My grandfather always said that it is a father's duty to treat all his children alike and I'm sure I don't want to depart from his teachings."

At last he called his sons together and said: "I have hit upon a plan whereby fate shall decide which of you shall be my heir. You must all go out into the world and find brides, and he who brings back as a betrothal gift the most beautiful ring shall have the farm."

The sons agreed to this plan and the next day they all set out in different directions in quest of brides.

Now the youngest son, whose name was Kubik, was not considered as bright as his brothers, for he was kind to beggars and he never drove a hard bargain. His brothers often laughed at him and his father pitied him, for he thought that Kubik was too gentle to make his way in the world.

Kubik's path took him into a deep forest. He walked on and on until suddenly a little frog hopped up in front of him and said: "Where are you going, Kubik?"

Now Kubik had never in all his life heard of a frog that could talk. At first he was frightened but even so he was too polite not to answer a civil question. So he told the frog about his father and the farm and the quest for betrothal gifts upon

which he and his brothers were bound.

The frog listened and when he was finished she said: "Come with me, Kubik, and my daughter, Kachenka, will give you a more beautiful ring than any your father or brothers have ever seen."

Kubik hesitated, but at last not to hurt the frog's feelings he agreed. "But if your daughter Kachenka looks like you," he thought to himself, "Heaven help me, for she'll be a pretty dear price to pay for a farm!"

The frog led him to a deep valley at one side of which rose a high rocky cliff that was honey-combed with caverns. The frog hopped into one of these and called out: "Kachenka, my child, where are you? Here is Kubik come to woo you and to beg a betrothal gift. Bring out your little box of rings."

Instantly a second frog appeared dragging a heavy jewel casket. Kachenka, alas, was a hundred times uglier than her mother. Her legs were crooked, her face was all covered with spots, and when she spoke her voice was hoarse and croaking.

For a moment Kubik shivered and turned away in disgust, but only for a moment until he remembered that it wasn't Kachenka's fault that she was a frog.

The two frogs put the casket before him and opened it and Kubik saw that it was filled with a collection of the rarest and most beautiful rings in the world.

"Make your own choice, Kubik," the old frog said.

Kubik selected as plain a ring as there was, for he was ashamed to take one of the handsomest.

"Not that one!" the old frog said, "unless you want your brothers to laugh at you."

Thereupon she herself picked out the ring that had the biggest diamond of them all, wrapped it up carefully in paper, and handed it to Kubik.

"Now hurry home," she said, "for your brothers are already there and your father is waiting for you."

As soon as Kubik reached home the farmer called his

three sons together and demanded to be shown their betrothal gifts.

All the eldest son had was a common brass ring.

"Um," the farmer said, shaking his head. "Well, put it away for a keepsake."

The second son showed a silver ring that was worth a few cents more.

"A little better," the old man mumbled, "but not good enough for a farmer. Put it away for a keepsake. And now," he said, turning to his youngest son, "let us see what Kubik has brought from his promised bride."

They all looked at Kubik, and Kubik blushed as he felt in his pocket for the little package.

"Ho, ho!" his brothers laughed. "Kubik has such a fine ring that he has to keep it wrapped up."

But when he opened the paper they stopped laughing, and well they might, for there was a great diamond that sparkled and blazed until it seemed that the sun was shining in the room.

"Kubik!" the farmer cried when at last he found his voice, "where did you get that ring? You must have stolen it, you wicked boy!" And without waiting to hear what Kubik had to say, he reached for a whip and trounced the poor lad to within an inch of his life. Then he took the ring and hid it carefully away.

"Now, my boys," he said to his sons, "you will all have to make another trial. This time ask of your promised brides the gift of an embroidered kerchief and he who brings back the most beautiful kerchief shall be my heir."

So the next day the three sons again started out, each in a different direction.

Kubik thought to himself: "I won't go the way I went yesterday or I may meet that old frog again and then, when I get home, the only prize I'll get will be another beating."

So he took a different path but he hadn't gone far before

the old frog hopped up in front of him.

"What's the matter, Kubik?" she asked.

At first Kubik didn't want to tell her but she questioned him and finally, not to seem rude, he told her about the beating his father had given him on account of Kachenka's ring and about the new quest for embroidered kerchiefs upon which his father was now sending him and his brothers.

"Now don't think any more about that whipping," the old frog advised him. "And as for an embroidered kerchief, why, Kachenka is the very girl for that! She will give you one that will make your brothers open their eyes!"

Kubik wasn't sure that he wanted to accept another of Kachenka's gifts, but the old frog urged him and at last he agreed. So again they took the path to the rocky cliff. The old frog called her daughter out as before and presently Kachenka appeared dragging a chest that was filled with the most wonderful of kerchiefs, all of fine silk and all richly embroidered and so large that they were more like shawls than kerchiefs.

Kubik reached in and took the first that came to hand.

"Tut, tut!" the old frog said. "That's no way to select a kerchief."

Then she herself picked out the biggest and the most richly embroidered of them all and wrapped it up in paper. She gave it to Kubik and said: "Now hurry home, for your brothers are already there and your father is waiting for you."

As soon as Kubik reached home the farmer called his three sons together and demanded to be shown their betrothal gifts.

All the eldest one had was a small cheap kerchief of no value whatever.

"Um," the farmer said, shaking his head. "Well, put it away for a keepsake."

The kerchief of the second had cost a few cents more.

"A little better," the old man mumbled. "Perhaps it's good enough for a farmer. And now," he said, turning to his

youngest son, "let us see what Kubik has brought from his promised bride."

They all looked at Kubik, and Kubik blushed as he pulled out a parcel from under his shirt.

"Ho, ho!" his brothers laughed. "Kubik has such a fine kerchief that he has to keep it wrapped up in paper!"

But when Kubik opened the paper they stopped laughing, and well they might, for there was a silken kerchief so big that it could have covered the whole room and so richly embroidered that any princess in the world would have been proud to own it.

"Kubik!" the farmer cried when at last he was able to speak, "where did you get that kerchief? You must have stolen it, you wicked boy!" And without waiting to hear what Kubik had to say, he reached down the whip again and trounced the poor boy to within an inch of his life. Then he took the kerchief and hid it carefully away.

"Now, my sons," he said, "you will all have to make another trial. But this time it will not be for a ring or a kerchief. This time bring home your brides and he whose bride is the most beautiful shall be my heir."

So the next day the three sons again started out, each in a different direction.

"I don't want to see Kachenka again," poor Kubik said to himself. "Twice I've brought back the best betrothal gift and each time I've got a beating for it. I wonder what they would say if I brought home a frog for a bride! Then they would have something to laugh at!"

So he took a different path through the forest but again he hadn't gone far before the old frog hopped up in front of him. This time Kubik turned and ran. The old frog called after him but the louder she called the faster he ran.

He ran on and on until suddenly a great snake stopped him. The snake reared high its head, then dropped into a coil. Again it reared up and swayed from side to side threatening

to strike if Kubik went on. So Kubik saw that fate was determined that he should marry a frog and reluctantly he turned back.

The snake led him to the cliff, where the old frog greeted him kindly and thanked the snake for his faithful service.

Poor Kubik! He was very tired and very unhappy. When you come to think of it, who wouldn't be unhappy at the prospect of being united for life to a frog?

Kubik was so tired that presently he fell asleep and it was just as well he did, for at least in dreams he could forget his troubles.

The next morning when he woke and rubbed his eyes, he found himself lying on a soft feather bed, white as snow, in a splendid room with decorations that were fit for a king. A fine silken shirt lay spread out on a chair beside the bed and beyond the chair was a stand with a silver basin. When he got up attendants came running in carrying clothes of richly woven cloth of gold. They dressed Kubik and they combed his hair until they had him looking like a young prince. Then they brought him breakfast and there was cream with the coffee and I would have you know that this was only the second time in his life that Kubik had ever had cream with his coffee!

Kubik did not know what to think of it all. His head went round and round. When he looked out the window he saw no trace of cliff or caverns or forest. Instead he saw a big town with streets and houses and people going to and fro.

Presently music began to play under the window, a great crowd gathered and soon attendants came in to escort Lord Kubik out. As he reached the castle gate, the people cheered and a coach and six drove up. Two ladies were in it, a mother and daughter, both dressed in beautiful silks. They alighted from the coach and when they saw Kubik they smiled and came toward him with outstretched hands.

"You don't know us, do you, Kubik?" the older lady said.

"I was that old frog who coaxed you to the cliff and this, my beautiful daughter, was the other little frog, the very ugly one, that you feared you would have to take home to your father's house as your bride. You see, Kubik, we were all under an evil enchantment. Many years ago a wicked magician brought ruin on us and our kingdom. He changed our subjects into snakes and us into frogs and turned our fine city into a rocky cliff. Nothing could break the enchantment until some one should come and ask a betrothal gift from my daughter. We lived in the forest for years and years and all those years I begged all the people who wandered by to help us but they only trod on us or turned away from us in disgust.

You, Kubik, were the first not to scorn us for our ugly looks. By this you broke the evil spell that held us and now we are all free. As a reward you shall marry my daughter, the Princess Kachenka, and be made king!"

Then the old queen took Kubik by the hand and led him to the royal coach, where she made him sit between her and the princess. Music played and the people cheered, and in this style they drove to Kubik's native village and to his father's house.

The old man was in the yard chopping firewood and his older sons were helping him. They, too, had brought home their brides, plain country girls from poor farms, and at that moment they were all awaiting Kubik's arrival.

"Look, father," the oldest son cried, "some fine folk are turning in here!"

"We're not behind in our taxes, are we?" the second son asked.

"Hush!" the old man whispered. "I have nothing to fear. My affairs are all in good order."

He put his cap respectfully under his arm and stood bare-headed and both his sons followed his example.

The coach drove straight into the yard and a handsome young lord and two beautiful ladies alighted.

The handsome young lord greeted the old man and his sons and they bowed and scraped and pressed their hats under their arms tighter and tighter.

Then they all stepped into the old kitchen that was black with the smoke of many years and the handsome young lord sat down on the bench behind the table as though that was where he always sat. The two brothers and their brides shrank back against the oven and held their breath.

Then the handsome young lord said to the old man: "Don't you know me?"

"Where could I ever have seen your lordship?" the farmer asked, humbly. He kept bobbing so low it was a wonder he didn't bump his head against the floor.

"And do neither of your sons know me? I think these are your sons, aren't they?"

The farmer kept on bowing and the two sons looked down, too embarrassed to speak.

At length the handsome young lord said: "What, don't you know your own son, Kubik, whom you used to beat for stealing when he showed you his betrothal gifts?"

At that the old man looked at him closely and cried out: "Bless my soul, I believe it is our Kubik! But who could recognize the boy! … And is this his bride? That settles it! Kubik shall have the farm! Kubik has brought home the most beautiful bride!"

"Kubik doesn't need the farm," the old queen said, "nor will you need it any longer nor your other sons. You will all come home with us to our kingdom over which Kubik is now king. And may God grant you many years to live on in peace and quiet."

The farmer was overjoyed at this arrangement. He embraced his son, and his son's bride, and his son's royal mother-in-law.

He gave his farm to the poorest man in the village and then he and his sons accompanied Kubik back to his

kingdom. There he lived long in peace and comfort enjoying the thought that good fortune had come to them all on account of his determination not to divide the farm.

The poor man who inherited the farm prayed for him and his sons every night and never tired of telling the story of how Kubik became a king and his brothers courtiers.

So for many years the memory of Kubik was kept green. Now people are beginning to forget him, so I thought it was time that I tell his story again.

Grandfather's Eyes

The Story of Three Wicked Yezinkas

Once upon a time there was a poor boy whom everybody called Yanechek. His father and mother were dead and he was forced to start out alone in the world to make a living. For a long time he could find nothing to do. He wandered on and on and at last he came to a little house that stood by itself near the edge of the woods. An old man sat on the doorstep and Yanechek could see that he was blind, for there were empty holes where his eyes used to be.

Some goats that were penned in a shed near the house began bleating and the old man said: "You poor things, you want to go to pasture, don't you? But I can't see to drive you and I have no one else to send."

"Send me, grandfather," Yanechek said. "Take me as your goatherd and let me work for you."

"Who are you?" the old man asked.

Yanechek told him who he was and the old man agreed to take him.

"And now," he said, "drive the goats to pasture. But one thing, Yanechek: don't take them to the hill over there in the woods or the Yezinkas may get you! That's where they caught me!"

Now Yanechek knew that the Yezinkas were wicked witches who lived in a cave in the woods and went about in the guise of beautiful young women. If they met you they would greet you modestly and say something like "God bless you!" to make you think they were good and kind and then, once they had you in their power, they would put you to sleep

and gouge out your eyes! Oh, yes, Yanechek knew about the Yezinkas.

"Never fear, grandfather, the Yezinkas won't get me!"

The first day and the second day Yanechek kept the goats near home. But the third day he said to himself: "I think I'll try the hill in the woods. There's better grass there and I'm not afraid of the Yezinkas."

Before he started out he cut three long slender switches from a blackberry bramble, wound them into small coils, and hid them in the crown of his hat.

Then he drove the goats through the woods where they nibbled at leaves and branches, beside a deep river where they paused to drink, and up the grassy slopes of the hill.

There the goats scattered this way and that and Yanechek sat down on a stone in the shade. He was hardly seated when he looked up and there before him, dressed all in white, stood the most beautiful maiden in the world. Her skin was red as roses and white as milk, her eyes were black as sloe berries, and her hair, dark as the raven's wing, fell about her shoulders in long waving tresses. She smiled and offered Yanechek a big red apple.

"God bless you, shepherd boy," she said. "Here's something for you that grew in my own garden."

But Yanechek knew that she must be a Yezinka and that, if he ate the apple, he would fall asleep and then she would gouge out his eyes. So he said, politely: "No, thank you, beautiful maiden. My master has a tree in his garden with apples that are bigger than yours and I have eaten as many as I want."

When the maiden saw that Yanechek was not to be coaxed, she disappeared.

Presently a second maiden came, more beautiful, if possible, than the first. In her hand she carried a lovely red rose.

"God bless you, shepherd boy," she said. "Isn't this a lovely rose? I picked it myself from the hedge. How fragrant it is!

Will you smell it?"

She offered him the rose but Yanechek refused it.

"No, thank you, beautiful maiden. My master's garden is full of roses much sweeter than yours and I smell roses all the time."

At that the second maiden shrugged her shoulders and disappeared.

Presently a third one came, the youngest and most beautiful of them all. In her hand she carried a golden comb.

"God bless you, shepherd boy."

"Good day to you, beautiful maiden."

She smiled at Yanechek and said: "Truly you are a handsome lad, but you would be handsomer still if your hair were nicely combed. Come, let me comb it for you."

Yanechek said nothing but he took off his hat without letting the maiden see what was hidden in its crown. She came up close to him and then, just as she was about to comb his hair, he whipped out one of the long blackberry switches and struck her over the hands. She screamed and tried to escape but she could not because it is the fate of a Yezinka not to be able to move if ever a human being strikes her over the hands with a switch of bramble.

So Yanechek took her two hands and bound them together with the long thorny switch while she wept and struggled.

"Help, sisters! Help!" she cried.

At that the two other Yezinkas came running and when they saw what had happened they, too, began to weep and to beg Yanechek to unbind their sister's hands and let her go.

But Yanechek only laughed and said: "No. You unbind them."

"But, Yanechek, how can we? Our hands are soft and the thorns will prick us."

However, when they saw that Yanechek was not to be moved, they went to their sister and tried to help her.

Whereupon Yanechek whipped out the other two blackberry switches and struck them also on their soft pretty hands, first one and then the other. After that they, too, could not move and it was easy enough to bind them and make them prisoners.

"Now I've got the three of you, you wicked Yezinkas!" Yanechek said. "It was you who gouged out my poor old master's eyes, you know it was! And you shall not escape until you do as I ask."

He left them there and ran home to his master to whom he said: "Come, grandfather, for I have found a means of restoring your eyes!"

He took the old man by the hand and led him through the woods, along the bank of the river, and up the grassy hillside where the three Yezinkas were still struggling and weeping.

Then he said to the first of them: "Tell me now where my master's eyes are. If you don't tell me, I'll throw you into the river."

The first Yezinka pretended she didn't know. So Yanechek lifted her up and started down the hill toward the river.

That frightened the maiden and she cried out: "Don't throw me into the river, Yanechek, and I'll find you your master's eyes, I promise you I will!"

So Yanechek put her down and she led him to a cave in the hillside where she and her wicked sisters had piled up a great heap of eyes—all kinds of eyes they were: big eyes, little eyes, black eyes, red eyes, blue eyes, green eyes every kind of eye in the world that you can think of.

She went to the heap and picked out two eyes which she said were the right ones. But when the poor old man tried to look through them, he cried out in fright:

"I see nothing but dark treetops with sleeping birds and flying bats! These are not my eyes! They are owls' eyes! Take

them out! Take them out!"

When Yanechek saw how the first Yezinka had deceived him, without another word he picked her up, threw her into the river, and that was the end of her.

Then he said to the second sister: "Now you tell me where my master's eyes are."

At first she, too, pretended she didn't know, but when Yanechek threatened to throw her likewise into the river, she was glad enough to lead him back to the cave and pick out two eyes that she said were the right ones.

But when the poor old man tried to look through them, again he cried out in fright: "I see nothing but tangled underbrush and snapping teeth and hot red tongues! These are not my eyes! They are wolves' eyes! Take them out! Take them out!"

When Yanechek saw how the second Yezinka had deceived him, without another word he picked her up, and threw her also into the river, and that was the end of her.

Then Yanechek said to the third sister: "Now you tell me where my master's eyes are."

At first she, too, pretended she didn't know, but when Yanechek threatened to throw her likewise into the river, she was glad enough to lead him to the cave and pick out two eyes that she said were the right ones.

But when the poor old man tried to look through them, again he cried out in fright: "I see nothing but swirling waters and flashing fins! These are not my eyes! They are fishes' eyes! Take them out! Take them out!"

When Yanechek saw how the third Yezinka had deceived him, without another word he was ready to serve her as he had served her sisters. But she begged him not to drown her and she said: "Let me try again, Yanechek, and I'll find you the right eyes, I promise you I will!"

So Yanechek let her try again and from the very bottom of the heap she picked out two more eyes that she swore were

the right ones.

When the old man looked through them, he clapped his hands and said: "These are my own eyes, praise God! Now I can see as well as ever!"

After that the old man and Yanechek lived on happily together. Yanechek pastured the goats and the old man made cheeses at home and they ate them together. And you may be sure that the third Yezinka never showed herself again on that hill!

Rattle-Rattle-Rattle and Chink-Chink-Chink

The Story of Long Beard, the Dwarf, and the Two Sisters

There was once a poor man whose wife died leaving him a daughter. The little girl's name was Lenka. She was a good little girl, cheerful and obedient and very industrious, and she did all she could to make her father comfortable.

After some time the man married again. His second wife also had a little girl just Lenka's age. Her name was Dorla. Dorla was a lazy, ill-natured child, always quarreling and bickering. Yet her mother thought Dorla was perfect and she was always praising her to her husband.

"See what a good child my Dorla is," she would say to him. "She works and spins and never says a cross word. Very different from your good-for-nothing Lenka who always breaks everything she touches and does nothing in return for all the good food she eats!"

She never stopped nagging and scolding her poor stepchild and complaining about her to her husband. Lenka was patient and went on quietly doing what was right, and she was always polite to her stepmother, and kind to her ill-natured stepsister.

She and Dorla used to go to spinning bees together. Dorla would play and waste her time and hardly fill one spindle. Lenka always worked industriously and usually filled two or three spools. Yet, when the two girls got home, the mother always took Dorla's half-filled spindle and said to the father: "See what beautiful yarn my Dorla spins!" She would hide

Lenka's spools and say: "Your Lenka did nothing but play and waste her time!"

And before other people she talked the same way, pretending Dorla did everything that she didn't do and saying that good industrious Lenka was lazy and good-for-nothing.

One night when the two girls were walking home together from a spinning bee, they came to a ditch in the road. Dorla jumped quickly across and then reached back her hand and said: "My dear sister, let me hold your spindle. You may fall and hurt yourself."

Poor Lenka, suspecting nothing unkind, handed Dorla her full spindle. Dorla took it and ran home and then boasted to her mother and her stepfather how much she had spun.

"Lenka," she said, "has no yarn at all. She did nothing but play and waste her time."

"You see," said the woman to her husband. "This is what I'm always telling you but you never believe me. That Lenka of yours is a lazy, good-for-nothing girl who expects me and my poor daughter to do all the work. I'm not going to stand her in the house any longer. Tomorrow morning out she goes to make her own way in the world. Then perhaps she'll understand what a good home she's had with me!"

The poor man tried to defend Lenka but his wife would hear nothing. Lenka must go and that was all there was to it.

Early the next morning while it was still dark the woman started Lenka off. She gave her a sack that she said was full of good meal and smoked meat and bread. But instead of meal she put in ashes, instead of smoked meat straw, and instead of bread stones.

"Here is meal and smoked meat and bread for your journey," she said. "You will be a long time finding any one who will be as good to you as I have been! Now be off with you and never let me see you again! Let your father put you out in service if he can!"

The poor man put his ax on his shoulder and started off

with Lenka. He had no place to take her and he hardly knew what to do. He led her off into the mountains, where he built her a little two-room hut. He was ashamed to tell her that he was going to leave her alone, so he said to her: "You stay here, my dear child, while I go farther into the forest and cut you some firewood."

But instead of cutting her firewood, he hung his mallet on a beech tree and whenever the wind blew, the mallet made a knocking sound. All afternoon poor little Lenka hearing the knock-knock of the mallet thought to herself: "There is my dear father chopping wood for me!"

When evening came and he hadn't returned, Lenka went out to find him, but all she could find was the mallet going knock-knock on the tree. Then the poor girl realized that her father had deceived her but she forgave him, for she knew that it was her stepmother's fault.

She went back to the little hut to get her supper, but when she opened the sack her stepmother had given her, instead of meal and smoked meat and bread, she found only ashes and straw and stones. Then indeed did Lenka feel deserted and sitting down she cried with loneliness and hunger.

While she was crying an old beggar with a long beard came into the hut.

"God grant you happiness, my child," he said.

"May He grant you the same, old father," Lenka said, standing up and bowing politely.

"Thank you, my child, thank you. And now will you be so kind as to wash my face and give me a bite of supper?"

"Indeed, old father, I'd gladly wash your face and give you food, but there's no water here and nothing to carry it in. And as for food, my stepmother filled the sack with ashes, straw, and stones."

"That's nothing, my child. Just go behind the hut and you will find a spring."

Lenka went and there, sure enough, was a clear bubbling

spring and on the ground beside it a bucket. She filled the bucket and carried it back to the hut.

As she entered the door she could hardly believe her eyes, for on the wall she saw a row of shining plates, big plates and little plates, and cups, and everything else that ought to be in a kitchen. The old beggar had started a fire, so Lenka at once put on water to boil.

"Look in the sack," the beggar said.

Lenka untied the sack again and here it was full of fine meal and bread and smoked meat!

So now Lenka lost no time in preparing a good supper. Then she washed the old beggar's face and hands and together they ate. After supper Lenka spread out her ragged clothes on the floor of the inner room and put the beggar in there for the night. She herself stretched out on the kitchen bench. It was a hard bed but Lenka made no complaint and presently she fell asleep.

At midnight there was a knocking at the door and a voice called out:

"A man am I
Six inches high,
But a long, long beard
Hangs from my chin.
Open the door
And let me in!"

Lenka jumped down and opened the door and there before her stood a tiny dwarf with a long beard.

He was Long Beard who lived in the mountains and of whom Lenka had often heard stories.

He came in dragging after him a heavy bag of golden ducats.

"I was that old beggar," he said, "whose face you washed and with whom you shared your supper. These ducats are to reward you for your kindness. Now go into your bedroom and

lie down comfortably."

As he said this he vanished.

Lenka went into her bedroom and there, instead of her few rags on the floor, was a fine feather bed and coverlets and a painted chest full of clothes. Lenka lay down on the feather bed and instantly fell asleep.

On the third day her father came, supposing by that time Lenka had either died of hunger or been devoured by wild beasts. At least, he thought, he would gather together her bones.

But when he reached the hut he rubbed his eyes in surprise. Instead of the rough hut, there was a pretty little cottage and instead of a handful of bones there was a happy girl singing away at her spinning.

"My daughter, my daughter!" he cried. "How are you?"

"Very well, dear father. You couldn't have found a better place for me."

She told him how happy she was and how pleasantly she passed the time, spinning and singing and working. Then she took a table-cloth and filled it with golden ducats and gave it to him.

So he went away very happy, thanking God for the good fortune that had come to Lenka.

As he neared home, the old dog that lay at the door said to the stepmother: "Bow-wow, mistress, here comes the master. It's chink-chink the money before him and chink-chink the money behind him!"

"Not so, old dog!" the stepmother cried. "It's rattle-rattle bones before him and rattle-rattle bones behind him!"

Now when the man came into the cottage, he said: "Wife, give me a basket and let me empty this tablecloth."

"What!" she cried. "Do you expect me to give you a basket for your daughter's bones?"

But he began to chink the golden ducats and then she got a basket fast enough.

When she had all the ducats safely put away she said: "Isn't it just like you to find a place like that for your Lenka! But what have you ever done for my poor Dorla? Tomorrow you will take her out into the world and find a good place for her!"

So she got ready for Dorla a fine new bed and stylish clothes and as much good food as she could carry. The next day the man took Dorla out into the mountains and built her a little hut of two rooms.

Dorla sat in the hut and thought about the good supper she was going to cook for herself.

In the evening the same old beggar came and said to her: "May God grant you happiness, my child. Won't you please wash my face?"

"Wash your face, indeed!" cried Dorla in a rage. "This is what I'll do to you!" And she took a stick and drove the old beggar away. "Very well!" he muttered. "Very well! Very well!"

Then Dorla cooked herself a fine supper. After she had eaten every bite of it herself, she lay down on the bed and went soundly to sleep.

At midnight Long Beard knocked at the door and called out:

"A man am I
Six inches high,
But a long, long beard
Hangs from my chin.
Open the door
And let me in!"

Then Dorla was very frightened and she hid in the corner. Long Beard broke open the door and he caught Dorla and he shook her to death. It served her right, too, for she was a wicked, spiteful girl and she had never been kind to anybody in her life.

On the third day Dorla's mother gave her husband a brand new table-cloth and said: "Go now and see how my Dorla is getting on. Here is a table-cloth for the ducats."

So the man took the table-cloth and went to the mountains.

But when he reached the hut all he found of Dorla was a heap of bones on the floor.

Without a word he gathered the bones into the table-cloth and started back.

As he neared home the old dog said: "Bow-wow, mistress, here comes the master and it's rattle-rattle before him and rattle-rattle behind him."

"Not so, old dog!" cried the woman. "It's chink-chink before him, and chink-chink behind him!"

But the old dog kept on barking and saying: "No, no, bow-wow, it's rattle-rattle before him and rattle-rattle behind him!"

In a rage the woman took a stick and beat the dog.

Then the man stepped into the cottage and at once his wife brought out a basket for the ducats. But when he shook out the table-cloth there was only the rattle-rattle of bones.

The Bird with the Golden Gizzard

The Story of Two Brothers

There was once a poor man who had a large family. He was so poor that he had nothing to feed the children. For three days they had had no food. On the third day as the father was out cutting osiers he saw, sitting in a bush, a small bird that shone like gold.

"If I could snare that bird," he thought to himself, "and take it home, the children would be amused and perhaps forget they were hungry."

So he caught the bird and carried it home and, sure enough, the children were so delighted that for two days they didn't cry for food.

On the third day the bird laid a golden egg. The oldest boy took the egg to the goldsmith to sell it. The goldsmith examined it and said: "I don't believe I have money enough to buy this egg."

"Just give me some bread," the boy said. "That will be enough."

The goldsmith gave him two loaves of bread, one under each arm, and filled his pockets with golden ducats. So for once the whole family had all it could eat and still there was money left over.

Two days later the bird laid another golden egg which the boy carried to the goldsmith and sold for the same price.

Now the goldsmith had a son who said he would like to see this wonderful bird. So he went home with the boy. He looked the bird over very carefully and under its wings he discovered an inscription that no one else had seen. The

inscription read:

> Whoever eats my heart will become king.
> Whoever eats my gizzard will find under his head each morning a heap of golden ducats.

The youth went home and told his father about the strange inscription. They talked the matter over and at last decided that it would be well for the young man to marry the poor man's oldest daughter provided he could get the golden bird as dowry.

The goldsmith went to see the girl's father and after some discussion the marriage was arranged.

The wedding day arrived. The bridegroom ordered the bird to be roasted and ready to be put on the table when the bridal party came home from church. It was his intention to eat the heart himself and have his bride eat the gizzard.

The children of the family cried bitterly at the thought of losing their pretty bird, but the bridegroom, of course, had his way.

Now two of the boys stayed home from the wedding and they decided that they would like very much to taste the roast bird if only they could find a piece that nobody would miss. They did not dare take a leg or a wing, but they thought it would be safe to pick out a morsel from the inside. So one boy ate the heart, the other the gizzard. Then they were so frightened at what they had done that they ran away and never came back.

When the bride and groom returned from church, the bird was carried to the table. The groom looked at once for the heart and the gizzard and was greatly shocked at their disappearance.

The two boys who had gone out into the world found work with a merchant. They slept together and every morning the merchant's wife found a heap of golden ducats under the feather bed. She didn't know to which boy they belonged. She

took them and saved them for a whole year until they filled a hogshead.

At the end of a year the boys decided to go out again into the world. The merchant showed them all the ducats his wife had found in their bed and he said to them: "Take with you as many as you want now and when you come back you may have the rest."

The brothers parted company and each set out alone, the one to the left, the other to the right.

The younger brother came to a tavern. The landlady had two daughters who were so sharp at cards that they very soon won all the money he had. When he was picked clean he asked them to stop playing until the next morning when he would again have plenty of money.

Sure enough in the morning when he got up he had all the money he wanted. The girls asked him where it came from and he told them.

When they heard about the gizzard he had swallowed, they put something in his wine that made him sick at his stomach and he threw up the gizzard. The younger girl instantly snatched it, washed it, and swallowed it herself. Then as he had no more money they drove the poor boy away.

As he wandered in the fields he grew very hungry. He came to a meadow where he found a kind of sorrel that he ate. As soon as he ate it he turned into a goat and went jumping about the bushes nibbling at the leaves. He chanced to eat a kind of leaf that changed him back into himself.

"Ah," he thought, "now I know what to do!"

He picked some of the sorrel and some of the other leaves and went straight back to the tavern. He told them there that he was bringing them a present of a new kind of spinach that tasted very good. They asked him would he cook it for them.

The cook tasted it and at once she turned into a goat. The serving maid came into the kitchen and when she saw a goat there she drove it out. The youth asked the maid would she

like to taste the new spinach. She tasted it and immediately she turned into a goat. Then when the landlady and her two daughters tasted it they, too, turned into goats.

He fed the cook and the serving maid some of the other leaves and they turned back into themselves. But the other three he left as goats.

He made halters for them and then he hitched them up and drove off.

He drove on and on until he came to a town where the king was building himself a castle. Now this king was his brother who had eaten the magic bird's heart. The king's workmen were hauling stone for the new castle, so he decided to put his goats to work hauling stone. He loaded his cart heavier than all the other carts.

The king noticed him and recognized him and asked him where he got those goats. So he told the king the whole story. The king thought the goats had been punished long enough and begged his brother to have pity on them and restore them. He took the king's advice and did so.

When they were once more human beings, he married the girl who had swallowed the gizzard. They soon became very rich, for every morning there was a heap of golden ducats under her head.

The Wood Maiden

The Story of Betushka and the Golden Birch Leaves

Betushka was a little girl. Her mother was a poor widow with nothing but a tumble-down cottage and two little nanny-goats. But poor as they were Betushka was always cheerful. From spring till autumn she pastured the goats in the birch wood. Every morning when she left home her mother gave her a little basket with a slice of bread and a spindle.

"See that you bring home a full spindle," her mother always said.

Betushka had no distaff, so she wound the flax around her head. Then she took the little basket and went romping and singing behind the goats to the birch wood. When they got there she sat down under a tree and pulled the fibers of the flax from her head with her left hand, and with her right hand let down the spindle so that it went humming along the ground. All the while she sang until the woods echoed and the little goats nibbled away at the leaves and grass.

When the sun showed midday, she put the spindle aside, called the goats and gave them a mouthful of bread so that they wouldn't stray, and ran off into the woods to hunt berries or any other wild fruit that was in season. Then when she had finished her bread and fruit, she jumped up, folded her arms, and danced and sang.

The sun smiled at her through the green of the trees and the little goats, resting on the grass, thought: "What a merry little shepherdess we have!"

After her dance she went back to her spinning and

worked industriously. In the evening when she got home her mother never had to scold her because the spindle was empty.

One day at noon just after she had eaten and, as usual, was going to dance, there suddenly stood before her a most beautiful maiden. She was dressed in white gauze that was fine as a spider's web. Long golden hair fell down to her waist and on her head she wore a wreath of woodland flowers.

Betushka was speechless with surprise and alarm.

The maiden smiled at her and said in a sweet voice: "Betushka, do you like to dance?"

Her manner was so gracious that Betushka no longer felt afraid, and answered: "Oh, I could dance all day long!"

"Come, then, let us dance together," said the maiden. "I'll teach you."

With that she tucked up her skirt, put her arm about Betushka's waist, and they began to dance. At once such enchanting music sounded over their heads that Betushka's heart went one-two with the dancing. The musicians sat on the branches of the birch trees. They were clad in little frock coats, black and gray and many-colored. It was a carefully chosen orchestra that had gathered at the bidding of the beautiful maiden: larks, nightingales, finches, linnets, thrushes, blackbirds, and showy mocking-birds.

Betushka's cheeks burned, her eyes shone. She forgot her spinning, she forgot her goats. All she could do was gaze at her partner who was moving with such grace and lightness that the grass didn't seem to bend under her slender feet.

They danced from noon till sundown and yet Betushka wasn't the least bit tired. Then they stopped dancing, the music ceased, and the maiden disappeared as suddenly as she had come.

Betushka looked around. The sun was sinking behind the wood. She put her hands to the unspun flax on her head and remembered the spindle that was lying unfilled on the grass. She took down the flax and laid it with the spindle in the little

basket. Then she called the goats and started home.

She reproached herself bitterly that she had allowed the beautiful maiden to beguile her and she told herself that another time she would not listen to her. She was so quiet that the little goats, missing her merry song, looked around to see whether it was really their own little shepherdess who was following them. Her mother, too, wondered why she didn't sing and questioned her.

"Are you sick, Betushka?"

"No, dear mother, I'm not sick, but I've been singing too much and my throat is dry."

She knew that her mother did not reel the yarn at once, so she hid the spindle and the unspun flax, hoping to make up tomorrow what she had not done today. She did not tell her mother one word about the beautiful maiden.

The next day she felt cheerful again and as she drove the goats to pasture she sang merrily. At the birch wood she sat down to her spinning, singing all the while, for with a song on the lips work falls from the hands more easily.

Noonday came. Betushka gave a bit of bread to each of the goats and ran off to the woods for her berries. Then she ate her luncheon.

"Ah, my little goats," she sighed, as she brushed up the crumbs for the birds, "I mustn't dance today."

"Why mustn't you dance today?" a sweet voice asked, and there stood the beautiful maiden as though she had fallen from the clouds.

Betushka was worse frightened than before and she closed her eyes tight. When the maiden repeated her question, Betushka answered timidly: "Forgive me, beautiful lady, for not dancing with you. If I dance with you I cannot spin my stint and then my mother will scold me. Today before the sun sets I must make up for what I lost yesterday."

"Come, child, and dance," the maiden said. "Before the sun sets we'll find some way of getting that spinning done!"

She tucked up her skirt, put her arm about Betushka, the musicians in the treetops struck up, and off they whirled. The maiden danced more beautifully than ever. Betushka couldn't take her eyes from her. She forgot her goats, she forgot her spinning. All she wanted to do was to dance on forever.

At sundown the maiden paused and the music stopped. Then Betushka, clasping her hands to her head, where the unspun flax was twined, burst into tears. The beautiful maiden took the flax from her head, wound it round the stem of a slender birch, grasped the spindle, and began to spin. The spindle hummed along the ground and filled in no time. Before the sun sank behind the woods all the flax was spun, even that which was left over from the day before. The maiden handed Betushka the full spindle and said: "Remember my words:

"Reel and grumble not!
Reel and grumble not!"

When she said this, she vanished as if the earth had swallowed her.

Betushka was very happy now and she thought to herself on her way home: "Since she is so good and kind, I'll dance with her again if she asks me. Oh, how I hope she does!"

She sang her merry little song as usual and the goats trotted cheerfully along.

She found her mother vexed with her, for she had wanted to reel yesterday's yarn and had discovered that the spindle was not full.

"What were you doing yesterday," she scolded, "that you didn't spin your stint?"

Betushka hung her head. "Forgive me, mother. I danced too long." Then she showed her mother today's spindle and said: "See, today I more than made up for yesterday."

Her mother said no more but went to milk the goats and Betushka put away the spindle. She wanted to tell her mother

her adventure, but she thought to herself: "No, I'll wait. If the beautiful lady comes again, I'll ask her who she is and then I'll tell mother."

So she said nothing.

On the third morning she drove the goats as usual to the birch wood. The goats went to pasture and Betushka, sitting down under a tree, began to spin and sing. When the sun pointed to noon, she laid her spindle on the grass, gave the goats a mouthful of bread, gathered some strawberries, ate her luncheon, and then, giving the crumbs to the birds, she said cheerily: "Today, my little goats, I will dance for you!"

She jumped up, folded her arms, and was about to see whether she could move as gracefully as the beautiful maiden, when the maiden herself stood before her.

"Let us dance together," she said. She smiled at Betushka, put her arm about her, and as the music above their heads began to play, they whirled round and round with flying feet. Again Betushka forgot the spindle and the goats. Again she saw nothing but the beautiful maiden whose body was lithe as a willow shoot. Again she heard nothing but the enchanting music to which her feet danced of themselves.

They danced from noon till sundown. Then the maiden paused and the music ceased. Betushka looked around. The sun was already set behind the woods. She clasped her hands to her head and looking down at the unfilled spindle she burst into tears.

"Oh, what will my mother say?" she cried.

"Give me your little basket," the maiden said, "and I will put something in it that will more than make up for today's stint."

Betushka handed her the basket and the maiden took it and vanished. In a moment she was back. She returned the basket and said:

"Look not inside until you're home!

Look not inside until you're home!"

As she said these words she was gone as if a wind had blown her away.

Betushka wanted awfully to peep inside but she was afraid to. The basket was so light that she wondered whether there was anything at all in it. Was the lovely lady only fooling her? Halfway home she peeped in to see.

Imagine her feelings when she found the basket was full of birch leaves! Then indeed did Betushka burst into tears and reproach herself for being so simple. In her vexation she threw out a handful of leaves and was going to empty the basket when she thought to herself: "No, I'll keep what's left as litter for the goats."

She was almost afraid to go home. She was so quiet that again the little goats wondered what ailed their shepherdess.

Her mother was waiting for her in great excitement.

"For heaven's sake, Betushka, what kind of a spool did you bring home yesterday?"

"Why?" Betushka faltered.

"When you went away this morning I started to reel that yarn. I reeled and reeled and the spool remained full. One skein, two skeins, three skeins, and still the spool was full. 'What evil spirit has spun that?' I cried out impatiently, and instantly the yarn disappeared from the spindle as if blown away. Tell me, what does it mean?"

So Betushka confessed and told her mother all she knew about the beautiful maiden.

"Oh," cried her mother in amazement, "that was a wood maiden! At noon and midnight the wood maidens dance. It is well you are not a little boy or she might have danced you to death! But they are often kind to little girls and sometimes make them rich presents. Why didn't you tell me? If I hadn't grumbled, I could have had yarn enough to fill the house!"

Betushka thought of the little basket and wondered if

there might be something under the leaves. She took out the spindle and unspun flax and looked in once more.

"Mother!" she cried. "Come here and see!"

Her mother looked and clapped her hands. The birch leaves were all turned to gold!

Betushka reproached herself bitterly: "She told me not to look inside until I got home, but I didn't obey."

"It's lucky you didn't empty the whole basket," her mother said.

The next morning she herself went to look for the handful of leaves that Betushka had thrown away. She found them still lying in the road but they were only birch leaves.

But the riches which Betushka brought home were enough. Her mother bought a farm with fields and cattle. Betushka had pretty clothes and no longer had to pasture goats.

But no matter what she did, no matter how cheerful and happy she was, still nothing ever again gave her quite so much pleasure as the dance with the wood maiden. She often went to the birch wood in the hope of seeing the maiden again. But she never did.

The Golden Spinning Wheel

The Story of King Dobromil and the Good Dobrunka

Alike in Feature but Utterly Different in Disposition

There was once a poor woman who had twin daughters. The girls were exactly alike in face and feature but utterly different in disposition. Dobrunka was kind, industrious, obedient, and everything a good girl ought to be. Zloboha, her sister, was spiteful, disobedient, lazy, and proud. In fact, she had just about as many faults as a person could have. Yet strange to say the mother loved Zloboha much better and made everything easy for her.

They lived in a cottage a few miles from town. The cottage stood by itself in a little clearing in the woods. Hardly any one ever passed it except occasionally some man who had lost his way in the woods.

The mother put her favorite, Zloboha, out to service so that she might learn city ways, but she kept Dobrunka at home to do the housework and take care of the garden. Dobrunka always began the day by feeding the goats, then she prepared the breakfast, swept the kitchen, and when everything else was done she sat down at her spinning wheel and spun.

She seldom benefited from the yarn she spun so carefully, for her mother always sold it in town and spent the money on clothes for Zloboha. Yet Dobrunka loved her mother although she never had a kind word or a kind look from her the whole day long. She always obeyed her mother instantly and

without a frown and no one ever heard her complain about all the work she had to do.

One day when her mother was going to town Dobrunka went part of the way with her, carrying her yarn wrapped up in a kerchief.

"Now see that you're not lazy while I'm away," her mother said, crossly.

"You know, mother, you never have to nag at me. Today when I finish the housework, I'll spin so industriously that you'll be more than satisfied when you get home."

She handed her yarn to her mother and went back to the cottage. Then when she had put the kitchen in order, she sat down to her wheel and began to spin. Dobrunka had a pretty voice, as pretty as any of the song-birds in the forest, and always when she was alone she sang. So today as she sat spinning she sang all the songs she knew, one after the other.

Suddenly she heard outside the trample of a horse.

"Some one is coming," she thought to herself, "someone who has lost his way in the woods. I'll go see."

She got up from her wheel and peeped out through the small window. A young man was just dismounting from a spirited horse.

"Oh," thought Dobrunka to herself, "what a handsome young lord he is! How well his leather coat fits him! How well his cap with its white feather looks on his black hair! Ah, he is tying his horse and is coming in. I must slip back to my spinning."

The next moment the young man opened the door and stepped into the kitchen. All this happened a long time ago, you see, when there were no locks or bars on the doors, and there didn't have to be because nothing was ever stolen.

"Good day to you, my girl," the young man said to Dobrunka.

"Good day, sir," Dobrunka answered. "What is it, sir, you want?"

"Will you please get me a little water. I'm very thirsty."

"Certainly," Dobrunka said. "Won't you sit down while I'm getting it?"

She ran off, got the pitcher, rinsed it out, and drew some fresh water from the well.

"I wish I could give you something better, sir."

"Nothing could taste better than this," he said, handing her back the empty pitcher. "See, I have taken it all."

Dobrunka put the pitcher away and the young man, while her back was turned, slipped a leather bag, full of money, into the bed.

"I thank you for the drink," he said, as he rose to go. "I'll come again tomorrow if you'll let me."

"Come if you want to," Dobrunka said, modestly.

He took her hand, held it a moment, then leaped upon his horse and galloped off.

Dobrunka sat down again to her wheel and tried to work, but her mind wandered. The image of the young man kept rising before her eyes and I have to confess that, for an expert spinner, she broke her thread pretty often.

Her mother came home in the evening full of praises of Zloboha, who, she said, was growing prettier day by day. Everybody in town admired her and she was fast learning city ways and city manners. It was Zloboha this and Zloboha that for hours.

Finally the old woman remarked: "They say there was a great hunting party out today. Did you hear anything of it?"

"Oh, yes," Dobrunka said. "I forgot to tell you that a young huntsman stopped here to ask for a drink. He was handsomely dressed in leather. You know once when I was in town with you we saw a whole company of men in leather coats with white feathers in their caps. No doubt this young man belonged to the hunting party. When he had his drink, he jumped on his horse and rode off."

Dobrunka forgot to mention that he had taken her hand

in parting and promised to come back next day.

When Dobrunka was preparing the bed for the night, the bag of money fell out. In great surprise she picked it up and handed it to her mother.

The old woman looked at her sharply.

"Dobrunka, who gave you all this money?"

"Nobody gave it to me, mother. Perhaps the huntsman slipped it into the bed. I don't know where else it could have come from."

The old woman emptied the bag on the table. They were all gold pieces.

"Good heavens, so much!" she murmured in amazement. "He must be a very rich young lord! Perhaps he saw how poor we were and thought to do a kind deed. May God grant him happiness!"

She gathered the money together and hid it in the chest.

Usually when Dobrunka went to bed after her day's work she fell asleep at once, but tonight she lay awake thinking of the handsome young rider. When she did at last fall asleep it was to dream of him. He was a powerful young lord, it seemed to her, in her dream. He lived in a great palace and she, Dobrunka, was his wife. She thought that they were giving a fine banquet to which all the nobles in the land had been invited. She and her husband arose from the table and went together into another room. He was about to put his arms about her and embrace her when suddenly a black cat sprang between them and buried its claws in Dobrunka's breast. Her heart's blood spurted out and stained her white dress. She cried out in fright and pain and the cry awoke her.

"What a strange dream," she thought to herself. "I wonder what it means. It began so beautifully but the cruel cat spoiled it all. I fear it bodes something ill."

In the morning when she got up, she was still thinking of it.

On other mornings it didn't take Dobrunka long to dress

but this morning she was very slow. She shook out her fresh skirt again and again. She had the greatest trouble in putting on her bodice just right. She spent much time on her hair, into which she plaited the red ribbon that she usually kept for holidays. When at last she was dressed and ready to go about her household duties she looked very fresh and sweet.

As midday came, she found it hard to sit still at her wheel, but kept jumping up on any pretext whatever to run outdoors a moment to see if the young horseman was in sight.

At last she did see him at a distance and, oh, how she hurried back to her stool so that he would never think that she was watching for him.

He rode into the yard, tied his horse, and came into the cottage.

"Good day, Dobrunka," he said, speaking very gently and very respectfully.

Dobrunka's heart was beating so fast that she feared it would jump out of her body. Her mother was in the woods gathering fagots, so she was again alone with him. She managed to return his greeting and to ask him to sit down. Then she went back to her spinning.

The young man came over to her and took her hand.

"How did you sleep, Dobrunka?"

"Very well, sir."

"Did you dream?"

"Yes, I had a very strange dream."

"Tell me about it. I can explain dreams very well."

"But I can't tell this dream to you," Dobrunka said.

"Why not?"

"Because it's about you."

"That's the very reason you ought to tell me," the young man said.

He urged her and begged her until at last Dobrunka did tell him the dream.

"Well now," he said, "that dream of yours except the part

about the cat can be realized easily enough."

Dobrunka laughed. "How could I ever become a fine lady?"

"By marrying me," the young man said.

Dobrunka blushed. "Now, sir, you are joking."

"No, Dobrunka, this is no joke. I really mean it. I came back this morning to ask you to marry me. Will you?"

Dobrunka was too surprised to speak, but when the young man took her hand she did not withdraw it.

Just then the old woman came in. The young man greeted her and without any delay declared his intentions. He said he loved Dobrunka and wished to make her his wife and that all he and Dobrunka were waiting for was the mother's consent.

"I have my own house," he added, "and am well able to take care of a wife. And for you too, dear mother, there will always be room in my house and at my table."

The old woman listened to all he had to say and then very promptly gave her blessing.

"Then, my dear one," the young man said to Dobrunka, "go back to your spinning and when you have spun enough for your wedding shift, I shall come for you."

He kissed her, gave his hand to her mother, and, springing on his horse, rode away.

From that time the old woman treated Dobrunka more kindly. She even went so far as to spend on Dobrunka a little of the money the young man had given them, but most of it, of course, went for clothes for Zloboha.

But in those happy days Dobrunka wasn't worrying about anything as unimportant as money. She sat at her wheel and spun away thinking all the while of her fine young lover. Time sped quickly and before she knew it she had spun enough for her wedding shift.

The very day she was finished her lover came. She heard the trample of his horse and ran out to meet him.

"Have you spun enough for your wedding shift?" he asked

her as he took her to his heart.

"Yes," Dobrunka said, "I have."

"Then you can ride away with me this moment."

"This moment!" Dobrunka gasped. "Why so quickly?"

"It has to be, my dear one. Tomorrow I go off to war and want you to take my place at home. Then when I come back you'll be there to greet me as my wife."

"But what will my mother say to this?"

"She will have to consent."

They went into the cottage and spoke to the old woman. She was far from pleased with this arrangement, for she had worked out a very different plan in her mind. But what could she do? A rich young bridegroom always has his own way. So she hid her disappointment with a false smile and gave them her blessing.

Then the young man said to her: "Get your things together, mother, and follow Dobrunka, for I don't want her to be lonely while I'm gone. When you get to the city, go to the palace and ask for Dobromil. The people there will tell you where to go."

Dobrunka with tears streaming down her cheeks bid her mother good-by. Dobromil lifted her to the saddle in front of him and away they went like the wind.

The town was in great excitement. There was much hurrying to and fro as the troops were being put in readiness for the morrow. A crowd had gathered at the palace gates and as a young man came galloping up, holding in front of him a lady lovely as the day, the shout went up: "Here he is! Here he is!"

The people in the courtyard took up the cry and as Dobromil rode through the gate all of them with one voice shouted out: "Long live our beautiful queen! Long live our noble king!"

Dobrunka was struck with amazement.

"Are you really the king, Dobromil?" she asked, looking into his proud and happy face.

"Yes," he said. "Aren't you glad that I am?"

"I love you," Dobrunka said, "and so whatever you are makes no difference to me. But why did you deceive me?"

"I did not deceive you. I told you that your dream would be realized if you took me for your husband."

In those early times marriage was a simple affair. When a man and woman loved each other and their parents consented to their union, they were looked upon as married. So Dobromil now was able to present Dobrunka to his people as his wife.

There was great rejoicing, music played, and there was feasting and drinking in the banquet hall until dawn. The next day the young husband kissed his lovely bride farewell and rode off to war.

Left alone the young queen strayed through the magnificent palace like a lost lamb. She would have felt more at home rambling through the woods and awaiting the return of her husband in a little cottage than here where she was a lonely stranger. Yet she was not a stranger long, for within half a day she had won every heart by her sweetness and goodness.

The next day she sent for her mother and the old woman soon arrived bringing with her Dobrunka's spinning wheel. So now there was no more excuse for loneliness.

Dobrunka supposed that her mother would be made very happy to find what good fortune had befallen her daughter. The old woman pretended she was, but in her heart she was furious that a king had married Dobrunka and not Zloboha.

After a few days she said, very artfully, to Dobrunka: "I know, my dear daughter, that you think your sister, Zloboha, was not always kind to you in times past. She's sorry now and I want you to forgive her and invite her here to the palace."

"I should have asked her before this," said Dobrunka, "but I didn't suppose she wanted to come. If you wish it, we'll go for her at once."

"Yes, dear daughter, I do wish it."

So the queen ordered the carriage and off they went to fetch Zloboha. When they came to the edge of the woods they alighted and ordered the coachman to await them there. They went on afoot to the cottage where Zloboha was expecting them.

Zloboha came running out to meet them. She threw her arms about her sister's neck and kissed her and wished her happiness. Then the wicked sister and the wicked mother led poor unsuspecting Dobrunka into the house. Once inside Zloboha took a knife that she had ready and struck Dobrunka. Then they cut off Dobrunka's hands and feet, took out her eyes, and hid her poor body in the woods. Zloboha and her mother wrapped up the hands and the feet and the eyes to carry them back with them to the palace because they believed that it would be easier for them to deceive the king if they had with them something that had belonged to Dobrunka.

Then Zloboha put on Dobrunka's clothes and she and her mother rode back to town in the carriage and nobody could tell that she wasn't Dobrunka. In the palace the attendants soon whispered to each other that their mistress was kinder to them at first, but they suspected nothing.

In the meantime poor Dobrunka, who was not quite dead, had been found by a hermit and carried by him to a cave. She awoke to feel a kind hand soothing her wounds and putting some reviving drops between her lips. Of course, she could not see who it was, for she had no eyes. As she regained consciousness she remembered what had happened and began bitterly to upbraid her unnatural mother and her cruel sister.

"Be quiet. Do not complain," a low voice said. "All will yet be well."

"How can all be well," wept poor Dobrunka, "when I have no eyes and no feet and no hands? I shall never again see the bright sun and the green woods. I shall never again hold in

my arms my beloved Dobromil. Nor shall I be able to spin fine flax for his shirts! Oh, what did I ever do to you, wicked mother, or to you, cruel sister, that you have done this to me?"

The hermit went to the entrance of the cave and called three times. Soon a boy came running in answer to the call.

"Wait here till I come back," the hermit said.

He returned in a short time with a golden spinning wheel in his arms. He said to the boy: "My son, take this spinning wheel to town to the king's palace. Sit down in the courtyard near the gate and if any one asks you for how much you will sell the wheel, say: 'For two eyes.' Unless you are offered two eyes for it bring it back."

The boy took the spinning wheel and carried it to town as the hermit directed. He went to the palace and sat down in the courtyard near the gate, just as Zloboha and her mother were returning from a walk.

"Look, mother!" Zloboha cried. "What a gorgeous spinning wheel! I could spin on that myself! Wait. I'll ask whether it's for sale."

She went over to the boy and asked him would he sell the spinning wheel.

"Yes," he said, "if I get what I want."

"What do you want?"

"I want two eyes."

"Two eyes?"

"Yes, two eyes. My father told me to accept nothing for it but two eyes. So I can't sell it for money."

The longer Zloboha looked at the spinning wheel the more beautiful it seemed to her and the more she wanted it. Suddenly she remembered Dobrunka's eyes that she had hidden away.

"Mother," she said, "as a queen I ought to have something no one else has. When the king comes home he will want me to spin, and just think how lovely I should look sitting at this golden wheel. Now we've got those eyes of Dobrunka's. Let

us exchange them for the golden spinning wheel. We'll still have the hands and feet."

The mother, who was as foolish as the daughter, agreed. So Zloboha got the eyes and gave them to the boy for the spinning wheel.

The boy hurried back to the forest and handed the eyes to the hermit. The old man took them and gently put them into place. Instantly Dobrunka could see.

The first thing she saw was the old hermit himself with his tall spare figure and long white beard. The last rays of the setting sun shone through the opening of the cave and lighted up his grave and gentle face. He looked to Dobrunka like one of God's own saints.

"How can I ever repay you?" she said, "for all your loving kindness? Oh, that I could cover your hands with kisses!"

"Be quiet, my child," the old man said. "If you are patient all will yet be well."

He went out and soon returned with some delicious fruit on a wooden plate. This he carried over to the bed of leaves and moss upon which Dobrunka was lying and with his own hands he fed Dobrunka as a mother would feed her helpless child. Then he gave her a drink from a wooden cup.

Early the next morning the hermit again called three times and the boy came running at once. This time the hermit handed him a golden distaff and said: "Take this distaff and go to the palace. Sit down in the courtyard near the gate. If any one asks you what you want for the distaff, say two feet and don't exchange it for anything else."

Zloboha was standing at a window of the palace looking down into the courtyard when she saw the boy with a golden distaff.

"Mother!" she cried. "Come and see! There's that boy again sitting near the gate and this time he has a golden distaff!"

Mother and daughter at once went out to question the

boy.

"What do you want for the distaff?" Zloboha asked.

"Two feet," the boy said.

"Two feet?"

"Yes, two feet."

"Tell me, what will your father do with two feet?"

"I don't know. I never ask my father what he does with anything. But whatever he tells me to do, I do. That is why I can't exchange the distaff for anything but two feet."

"Listen, mother," Zloboha said, "now that I have a golden spinning wheel, I ought to have a golden distaff to go with it. You know we have those two feet of Dobrunka's hidden away. What if I gave them to the boy? We shall still have Dobrunka's hands."

"Well, do as you please," the old woman said.

So Zloboha went and got Dobrunka's feet, wrapped them up, and gave them to the boy in exchange for the distaff. Delighted with her bargain, Zloboha went to her chamber and the boy hurried back to the forest.

He gave the feet to the hermit and the old man carried them at once inside the cave. Then he rubbed Dobrunka's wounds with some healing salve and stuck on the feet. Dobrunka wanted to jump up from the couch and walk but the old man restrained her.

"Lie quiet where you are until you are all well and then I'll let you get up."

Dobrunka knew that whatever the old hermit said was for her good, so she rested as he ordered.

On the third morning the hermit called the boy and gave him a golden spindle.

"Go to the palace again," he said, "and today offer this spindle for sale. If any one asks you what you want for the spindle, say two hands. Don't accept anything else."

The boy took the golden spindle and when he reached the palace and sat down in the courtyard near the gate, Zloboha

ran up to him at once.

"What do you want for that spindle?" she asked.

"Two hands," the boy said.

"It's a strange thing you won't sell anything for money."

"I have to ask what my father tells me to ask."

Zloboha was in a quandary. She wanted the golden spindle, for it was very beautiful. It would go well with the spinning wheel and would be something to be proud of. Yet she didn't want to be left without anything that had belonged to Dobrunka.

"But really, mother," she whined, "I don't see why I have to keep something of Dobrunka's so that Dobromil will love me as he loved her. I'm sure I'm as pretty as Dobrunka ever was."

"Well," said the old woman, "it would be better if you kept them. I've often heard that's a good way to guard a man's love. However, do as you like."

For a moment Zloboha was undecided. Then, tossing her head, she ran and got the hands and gave them to the boy.

Zloboha took the spindle and, delighted with her bargain, carried it into her chamber where she had the wheel and distaff. The old woman was a little troubled, for she feared Zloboha had acted foolishly. But Zloboha, confident of her beauty and her ability to charm the king, only laughed at her.

As soon as the boy had delivered the hands to the hermit, the old man carried them into the cave. Then he anointed the wounds on Dobrunka' s arms with the same healing salve that he used before, and stuck on the hands.

As soon as Dobrunka could move them she jumped up from the couch and, falling at the hermit's feet, she kissed the hands that had been so good to her.

"A thousand thanks to you, my benefactor!" she cried with tears of joy in her eyes. "I can never repay you, I know that, but ask of me anything I can do and I'll do it."

"I ask nothing," the old man said, gently raising her to her

feet. "What I did for you I would do for any one. I only did my duty. So say no more about it. And now, my child, farewell. You are to stay here until some one comes for you. Have no concern for food. I shall send you what you need."

Dobrunka wanted to say something to him, but he disappeared and she never saw him again.

Now she was able to run out of the cave and look once more upon God's green world. Now for the first time in her life she knew what it meant to be strong and well. She threw herself on the ground and kissed it. She hugged the slender birches and danced around them, simply bursting with love for every living thing. She reached out longing hands towards the town and would probably have gone there running all the distance but she remembered the words of the old hermit and knew that she must stay where she was.

Meanwhile strange things were happening at the palace. Messengers brought word that the king was returning from war and there was great rejoicing on every side. The king's own household was particularly happy, for service under the new mistress was growing more unpleasant every day. As for Zloboha and her mother, it must be confessed that they were a little frightened over the outcome of their plot.

Finally the king arrived. Zloboha with smiling face went to meet him. He took her to his heart with great tenderness and from that moment Zloboha had no fear that he would recognize her.

A great feast was at once prepared, for the king had brought home with him many of his nobles to rest and make merry after the hardships of war.

Zloboha as she sat at Dobromil's side could not take her eyes off him. The handsome young soldier caught her fancy and she was rejoiced that she had put Dobrunka out of the way.

When they finished feasting, Dobromil asked her: "What have you been doing all this time, my dear Dobrunka? I'm

sure you've been spinning."

"That's true, my dear husband," Zloboha said in a flattering tone. "My old spinning wheel got broken, so I bought a new one, a lovely golden one."

"You must show me it at once," the king said, and he took Zloboha's arm and led her away.

He went with her to her chamber where she had the golden spinning wheel and she took it out and showed it to him. Dobromil admired it greatly.

"Sit down, Dobrunka," he said, "and spin, I should like to see you again at the distaff."

Zloboha at once sat down behind the wheel. She put her foot to the treadle and started the wheel. Instantly the wheel sang out and this is what it sang:

"Master, master, don't believe her!
She's a cruel and base deceiver!
She is not your own sweet wife!
She destroyed Dobrunka's life!"

Zloboha sat stunned and motionless while the king looked wildly about to see where the song came from.

When he could see nothing, he told her to spin some more. Trembling, she obeyed. Hardly had she put her foot to the treadle when the voice again sang out:

"Master, master, don't believe her!
She's a cruel and base deceiver!
She has killed her sister good
And hid her body in the wood!"

Beside herself with fright, Zloboha wanted to flee the spinning wheel, but Dobromil restrained her. Suddenly her face grew so hideous with fear that Dobromil saw she was not his own gentle Dobrunka. With a rough hand he forced her back to the stool and in a stern voice ordered her to spin.

Again she turned the fatal wheel and then for the third

time the voice sang out:

"Master, master, haste away!
To the wood without delay!
In a cave your wife, restored,
Yearns for you, her own true lord!"

At those words Dobromil released Zloboha and ran like mad out of the chamber and down into the courtyard where he ordered his swiftest horse to be saddled instantly. The attendants, frightened by his appearance, lost no time and almost at once Dobromil was on his horse and flying over hill and dale so fast that the horse's hoofs scarcely touched the earth.

When he reached the forest he did not know where to look for the cave. He rode straight into the wood until a white doe crossed his path. Then the horse in fright plunged to one side and pushed through bushes and undergrowth to the base of a big rock. Dobromil dismounted and tied the horse to a tree.

He climbed the rock and there he saw something white gleaming among the trees. He crept forward cautiously and suddenly found himself in front of a cave. Imagine then his joy, when he enters and finds his own dear wife Dobrunka.

As he kisses her and looks into her sweet gentle face he says: "Where were my eyes that I was deceived for an instant by your wicked sister?"

"What have you heard about my sister?" asked Dobrunka, who as yet knew nothing of the magic spinning wheel.

So the king told her all that had happened and she in turn told him what had befallen her.

"And from the time the hermit disappeared," she said in conclusion, "the little boy has brought me food every day."

They sat down on the grass and together they ate some fruit from the wooden plate. When they rose to go they took the wooden plate and the cup away with them as keepsakes.

Dobromil seated his wife in front of him on the horse and sped homewards with her. All his people were at the palace gate waiting to tell him what had happened in his absence.

It seems that the devil himself had come and before their very eyes had carried off his wife and mother-in-law. They looked at each other in amazement as Dobromil rode up with what seemed to be the same wife whom the devil had so recently carried off.

Dobromil explained to them what had happened and with one voice they called down punishment on the head of the wicked sister.

The golden spinning wheel had vanished. So Dobrunka hunted out her old one and set to work at once to spin for her husband's shirts. No one in the kingdom had such fine shirts as Dobromil and no one was happier.

The Golden Godmother

The Story of Poor Lukas

There was once a wealthy farmer named Lukas who was so careless in the management of his affairs that there came a time when all his property was gone and he had nothing left but one old tumble-down cottage. Then when it was too late he realized how foolish he had been.

He had always prayed for a child but during the years of his prosperity God had never heard him. Now when he was so poor that he had nothing to eat, his wife gave birth to a little daughter. He looked at the poor unwelcome little stranger and sighed, for he didn't know how he was going to take care of it.

The first thing to be thought about was the christening. Lukas went to the wife of a laborer who lived nearby and asked her to be godmother. She refused because she didn't see that it would do her any good to be godmother to a child of a man as poor as Lukas.

"You see, Lukas, what happens to a man who has wasted his property," his wife said. "While we were rich the burgomaster himself was our friend, but now even that poverty-stricken woman won't raise a finger to help us…. See how the poor infant shivers, for I haven't even any old rags in which to wrap it! And it has to lie on the bare straw! God have mercy on us, how poor we are!" So she wept over the baby, covering it with tears and kisses.

Suddenly a happy thought came to her. She wiped away her tears and said to her husband: "I beg you, Lukas, go to our old neighbor, the burgomaster's wife. She is wealthy. I'm sure

she hasn't forgotten that I was godmother to her child. Go and ask her if she will be godmother to mine."

"I don't think she will," Lukas answered, "but I'll ask her."

With a heavy heart he went by the fields and the barns that had once been his own and entered the house of his old friend, the burgomaster.

"God bless you, neighbor," he said to the burgomaster's wife. "My wife sends her greeting and bids me tell you that God has given us a little daughter whom she wants you to hold at the christening."

The burgomaster's wife looked at him and laughed in his face.

"My dear Lukas, of course I should like to do this for you, but times are hard. Nowadays a person needs every penny and it would take a good deal to help such poor beggars as you. Why don't you ask some one else? Why have you picked me out?"

"Because my wife was godmother to your child."

"Oh, that's it, is it? What you did for me at that time was a loan, was it? And now you want me to give you back as much as you gave me, eh? I'll do no such thing! If I were as generous as you used to be, I'd soon go the way you have gone. No! I shall not walk one step toward that christening!"

Without answering her, Lukas turned and went home in tears.

"You see, dear wife," he said when he got there, "it turned out as I knew it would. But don't be discouraged, for God never entirely forsakes any one. Give me the child and I myself will carry it to the christening and the first person I meet I shall take for godmother."

Weeping all the while, the wife wrapped the baby in a piece of old skirt and placed it in her husband's arms.

On the way to the chapel, Lukas came to a crossroads where he met an old woman.

"Grandmother," he said, "will you be godmother to my

child?" And he explained to her how every one else had refused on account of his poverty and how in desperation he had decided to ask the first person he met. "And so, dear grandmother," he concluded, "I am asking you."

"Of course I'll be godmother," the old woman said. "Here, give me the dear wee thing!"

So Lukas gave her the child and together they went on to the chapel.

As they arrived the priest was just ready to leave. The sexton hurried up to him and whispered that a christening party was coming.

"Who is it?" he asked, impatiently.

"Oh, it's only that good-for-nothing of a Lukas who is poorer than a church mouse."

The godmother saw that the sexton was whispering something unfriendly, so she pulled out a shining ducat from her pocket, stepped up to the priest, and pressed it into his hand.

The priest blinked his eyes in amazement, looking first at the ducat and then at the shabby old woman who had given it. He stuffed the ducat into his pocket, whispered hurriedly to the sexton to bring him the font, and then christened the child of poor Lukas with as much ceremony as the child of the richest townsman. The little girl received the name Marishka.

After the christening the priest accompanied the godmother to the door of the chapel and the sexton went even farther until he, too, received the reward for which he was hoping.

When Lukas and the old woman came to the crossroads where they had met, she handed him the child. Then she reached into her pocket, drew out another golden ducat which she stuck into a fold of the child's clothes, and said: "From this ducat with which I endow my godchild, you will have enough to bring her up properly. She will always be a joy and a comfort to you, and when she grows up she will make a happy marriage. Now good-by."

She drew a green wand from her bosom and touched the earth. Instantly a lovely rosebush appeared, covered with blooms. At the same moment the old woman vanished.

In bewilderment Lukas looked this way and that but she was gone. He was so surprised that he didn't know what had happened. I really think he would be standing on that same spot to this day if little Marishka had not begun to cry and by this reminded him of home.

His wife, meantime, was anxiously awaiting him. She, poor soul, was suffering the pangs of hunger, thirst, and bodily pain. There wasn't a mouthful of bread in the house, nor a cent of money.

As Lukas entered the room, he said: "Weep no more, dear wife. Here is your little Marishka. But before you kiss the child, take out the christening gift that you will find tucked away in her clothes. From it you will know what an excellent godmother she has."

The wife reached into the clothes and pulled out not one ducat but a whole handful of ducats!

"Oh!" she gasped and in her surprise she dropped the ducats and they rolled about in the straw that littered the wretched floor.

"Husband! Husband! Who gave you so much money? Just look!"

"I have already looked and at first when I saw them I was more surprised than you are. Now let me tell you where they come from."

So Lukas related to his wife all that had happened at the christening. In conclusion he said: "When I saw the old woman was really gone, I started home. On the way curiosity overcame me and I drew out the christening present and instead of one ducat I found a handful. I can tell you I was surprised but instead of letting them drop on the ground I let them slip back into the baby's clothes. I said to myself: 'Let your wife also have the pleasure of pulling out those golden

horses.' And now, dear wife, leave off exclaiming. Give thanks to God for that which he has bestowed upon us and help me gather up the golden darlings, for we don't want any one coming in and spying on us just now."

As they began picking them up, they had a new surprise. Wherever there was one ducat, there they found ten! When they got them all together they made a fine big heap.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" said the woman as she gazed at the pile. "Who knows whether this money will be blessed to our use? Perhaps that old woman was an evil spirit who just wants to buy our souls!"

Lukas looked at his wife reprovingly. "How can you be so foolish? Do you suppose an evil spirit would have gone with me to church, allowed herself to be sprinkled with holy water, yes, and even herself make the sign of the cross! Never! I don't say that she is just an ordinary human being, but I do say that she must be a good spirit whom God has sent to us to help us. I'm sure we can keep this money with a clear conscience. The first question is where to hide it so that no one can find it. For the present I shall put it into the chest, but tomorrow night I shall bury it under the pear tree. And one thing, wife, I warn you: don't say anything about it to any one. I shall take one ducat and go to the burgomaster's wife and ask her to change it. Then I shall go buy some milk and eggs and bread and flour, and I'll bring back a woman with me who will make us a fine supper. Tomorrow I'll go to town and buy some clothes and feather beds. After that what else shall I buy? Can you guess?"

"The best thing to do would be to buy back our old property the house, the fields, and the live stock, and then manage it more wisely than before."

"You're right, wife, that's just what I'll do. And I will manage prudently this time! I have learned my lesson, I can tell you, for poverty is a good teacher."

When Lukas had hidden the money in the chest and

turned the key, he took one ducat and went out to make his purchases. While he was gone his wife spent the time nursing the child and weaving happy dreams that now, she was sure, would come to pass.

After a short hour the door opened and Lukas and a red-cheeked maid entered. The maid carried a great pail of foaming milk. Lukas followed her with a basket of eggs in one hand and on top of the eggs two big round brown cakes, and in the other hand a load of feather beds tied in a knot.

"God be with you!" said the maid, placing the milk pail on the bench. "My mistress, the burgomaster's wife, greets you and sends you some milk for pudding. If there is anything else you need you are to let her know." The maid curtsied and went away before the poor woman could express her thanks.

Lukas laughed and said: "You see, wife, what just one ducat did! If they knew how many more we had they would carry us about in their arms! The burgomaster's wife has sent us all these things. She is lending us feather beds until tomorrow and she is going to send us an old woman to help us out. I told her our child had received a handful of ducats as a christening gift. If she comes here to see you, make up your mind what you're going to say."

Then Lukas built a fire. Presently the old woman came and soon good hot soup was ready. It was just plain milk soup, but I can tell you it tasted better to hungry Lukas and his wife than the rich food which the king himself ate that day from a golden platter.

The next day after breakfast Lukas set out for town. The burgomaster's wife took advantage of his absence to visit his wife and find out what she could about the money.

"My dear neighbor," she said, after she had made the necessary inquiries about health, "the blessing of God came into your house with that child."

"Oh," said the other, "if you mean the christening gift, it isn't so very much. A handful of ducats soon roll away.

However, may God repay that good woman, the godmother. At least we can now buy back our old farm and live like respectable people."

On the way home the burgomaster's wife stopped at the houses of her various friends and gave them a full account of Lukas' wealth. Before noon every small boy in the village knew that at Lukas' house they had a hogshead of ducats.

In the evening Lukas came back from town driving a cart that was piled high with furniture and clothing and feather beds and food. The next day he bought back his old farm with the cattle and the implements.

This marked the beginning of a new life for Lukas. He set to work with industry and put into practice all the lessons that poverty had taught him.

He and his wife lived happily. Their greatest joy was Marishka, a little girl so charming and so pretty that every one loved her on sight.

"Dear neighbor," all the old women used to say to the child's mother, "that girl of yours will never grow up. She's far too wise for her years!"

But Marishka did very well. She grew up into a beautiful young woman and one day a prince saw her, fell in love with her, and married her. So the old godmother's prophecy that Marishka would make a happy marriage was fulfilled.

The Golden Duck

The Story of Prince Raduz and the Faithful Ludmila

Once upon a time there was a king who had four sons. One day the queen said to him: "It is time that one of our boys went out into the world to make his fortune."

"I have been thinking that very same thing," the king said. "Let us get ready Raduz, our youngest, and send him off with God's blessing."

Preparations were at once made and in a few days Raduz bid his parents farewell and set forth.

He traveled many days and many nights over desert plains and through dense forests until he came to a high mountain. Halfway up the mountain he found a house.

"I'll stop here," he thought to himself, "and see if they'll take me into service."

Now this house was occupied by three people: old Yezibaba, who was a bad old witch; her husband, who was a wizard but not so bad as Yezibaba; and their daughter, Ludmila, the sweetest, kindest girl that two wicked parents ever had.

"Good day to you all," Raduz said, as he stepped into the house and bowed.

"The same to you," old Yezibaba answered. "What brings you here?"

"I'm looking for work and I thought you might have something for me to do."

"What can you do?" Yezibaba asked.

"I'll do anything you set me to. I'm trustworthy and industrious."

Yezibaba didn't want to take him, but the old man wanted him and in the end Yezibaba with very ill grace consented to give him a trial.

He rested that night and early next morning presented himself to the old witch and said: "What work am I to do today, mistress?"

Yezibaba looked him over from head to foot. Then she took him to a window and said: "What do you see out there?"

"I see a rocky hillside."

"Good. Go to that rocky hillside, cultivate it, plant it in trees that will grow, blossom, and bear fruit tonight. Tomorrow morning bring me the ripe fruit. Here is a wooden hoe with which to work."

"Alas," thought Raduz to himself, "did ever a man have such a task as this? What can I do on that rocky hillside with a wooden hoe? How can I finish my task in so short a time?"

He started to work but he hadn't struck three blows with the wooden hoe before it broke. In despair he tossed it aside and sat down under a beech tree.

In the meantime wicked old Yezibaba had cooked a disgusting mess of toads which she told Ludmila to carry out to the serving man for his dinner. Ludmila was sorry for the poor young man who had fallen into her mother's clutches and she said to herself: "What has he done to deserve such unkind treatment? I won't let him eat this nasty mess. I'll share my own dinner with him."

She waited until her mother was out of the room, then she took Yezibaba's magic wand and hid it under her apron. After that she hurried out to Raduz, whom she found sitting under the beech tree with his face in his hands.

"Don't be discouraged," she said to him. "It is true your mistress cooked you a mess of toads for your dinner but, see, I have thrown them away and have brought you my own dinner instead. As for your task," she continued, "I will help you with that. Here is my mother's magic wand. I have but to

strike the rocky hillside and by tomorrow the trees that my mother has ordered will spring up, blossom, and bear fruit."

Ludmila did as she promised. She struck the ground with the magic wand and instantly instead of the rocky hillside there appeared an orchard with rows on rows of trees that blossomed and bore fruit as you watched them.

Raduz looked from Ludmila to the orchard and couldn't find words with which to express his surprise and gratitude. Then Ludmila spread out her dinner and together they ate it, laughing merrily and talking. Raduz would have kept Ludmila all the afternoon but she remembered that Yezibaba was waiting for her and she hurried away.

The next morning Raduz presented Yezibaba a basket of ripe fruit. She sniffed it suspiciously and then very grudgingly acknowledged that he had accomplished his task.

"What am I to do today?" Raduz asked.

Yezibaba led him to a second window and asked him what he saw there.

"I see a rocky ravine covered with brambles," he said.

"Right. Go now and clear away the brambles, dig up the ravine, and plant it in grape vines. Tomorrow morning bring me the ripe grapes. Here is another wooden hoe with which to work."

Raduz took the hoe and set to work manfully. At the first blow the hoe broke into three pieces.

"Alas," he thought, "what is going to happen to me now? Unless Ludmila helps me again, I am lost."

At home Yezibaba was busy cooking a mess of serpents. When noonday came she said to Ludmila: "Here, my child, is dinner for the serving man. Take it out to him."

Ludmila took the nasty mess and, as on the day before, threw it away. Then again hiding Yezibaba's wand under her apron, she went to Raduz, carrying in her hands her own dinner.

Raduz saw her coming and at once his heart grew light

and he thought to himself how kind Ludmila was and how beautiful.

"I have been sitting here idle," he told her, "for at the first blow my hoe broke. Unless you help me, I don't know what I shall do."

"Don't worry," Ludmila said. "It is true your mistress sent you a mess of serpents for your dinner, but I threw them out and have brought you my own dinner instead. And I've brought the magic wand, too, so it will be easy enough to plant a vineyard that will produce ripe grapes by tomorrow morning."

They ate together and after dinner Ludmila took the wand and struck the earth. At once a vineyard appeared and, as they watched, the vines blossomed and the blooms turned to grapes.

It was harder than before for Raduz to let Ludmila go, for he wanted to keep on talking to her forever, but she remembered that Yezibaba was waiting for her and she hurried away.

The next morning when Raduz presented a basket of ripe grapes, old Yezibaba could scarcely believe her eyes. She sniffed the grapes suspiciously and then very grudgingly acknowledged that he had accomplished his second task.

"What am I to do today?" Raduz asked.

Yezibaba led him to a third window and told him to look out and tell her what he saw.

"I see a great rocky cliff."

"Right," she said. "Go now to that cliff and grind me flour out of the rocks and from the flour bake me bread. Tomorrow morning bring me the fresh loaves. Today you shall have no tools of any kind. Go now and do this task or suffer the consequences."

As Raduz started off, Yezibaba looked after him and shook her head suspiciously.

"I don't understand this," she said to her husband. "He could never have done these two tasks alone. Do you suppose

Ludmila has been helping him? I'll punish her if she has!"

"Shame on you," the old man said, "to talk so of your own daughter! Ludmila is a good girl and has always been loyal and obedient."

"I hope so," Yezibaba said, "but just the same I think I myself will carry him out his dinner today."

"Nonsense, old woman! You'll do no such thing! You're always smelling a rat somewhere! Let the boy alone and don't go nagging at Ludmila either!"

So Yezibaba said no more. This time she cooked a mess of lizards for Raduz' dinner.

"Here, Ludmila," she said, "carry this out to the young man. But see that you don't talk to him. And hurry back."

Poor Raduz had been pounding stones one on another as well as he could, but he hadn't been able to grind any of them into flour. As noonday approached he kept looking up anxiously to see whether beautiful Ludmila was again coming to help him.

"Here I am," she called while she was yet some distance away. "You were to have lizard stew today but, see, I am bringing you my own dinner!"

Then she told him what she had heard Yezibaba say to her father.

"Today she almost brought you your dinner herself, for she suspects that I have been helping you. If she knew that I really had she would kill you."

"Dear Ludmila," Raduz said, "I know very well that without you I am lost! How can I ever thank you for all you have done for me?"

Ludmila said she didn't want thanks. She was helping Raduz because she was sorry for him and loved him.

Then she took Yezibaba's wand and struck the rocky cliff. At once, instead of the bare rock, there were sacks of grain and a millstone that worked merrily away grinding out fine flour. As you watched, the flour was kneaded up into loaves

and then, pop went the loaves into a hot oven and soon the air was sweet with the smell of baking bread.

Raduz begged Ludmila to stay and talk to him, but she remembered that the old witch was waiting for her and she hurried home.

The next morning Raduz carried the baked loaves to Yezibaba. She sniffed at them suspiciously and then her wicked heart nearly cracked with bitterness to think that Raduz had accomplished his third task. But she hid her disappointment and pretending to smile, she said: "I see, my dear boy, that you have been able to do all the tasks that I have set you. This is enough for the present. Today you may rest."

That night the old witch hatched the plot of boiling Raduz alive. She had him fill a big cauldron with water and put it on the fire. Then she said to her husband: "Now, old man, I'm going to take a nap but when the water boils wake me up."

As soon as Yezibaba was asleep Ludmila gave the old man strong wine until he, too, fell asleep. Then she called Raduz and told him what Yezibaba was planning to do.

"You must escape while you can," she said, "for if you are here tomorrow you will surely be thrown into the boiling cauldron."

But Raduz had fallen too deeply in love with Ludmila to leave her and now he declared that he would never go unless she went with him.

"Very well," Ludmila said, "I will go with you if you swear you will never forget me."

"Forget you? How could I forget you," Raduz said, "when I wouldn't give you up for the whole world!"

So Raduz took a solemn oath and they made ready to flee. Ludmila threw down her kerchief in one corner of the house and Raduz' cap in another. Then she took Yezibaba's wand and off they started.

The next morning when the old man awoke, he called

out: "Hi, there, boy! Are you still asleep?"

"No, I'm not asleep," answered Raduz' cap. "I'm just stretching."

Presently the old man called out again: "Here, boy, hand me my clothes."

"In a minute," the cap answered. "Just wait till I put on my slippers."

Then old Yezibaba awoke. "Ludmila!" she cried. "Get up, you lazy girl, and hand me my skirt and bodice."

"In a minute! In a minute!" the kerchief answered.

"What's the matter?" Yezibaba scolded. "Why are you so long dressing?"

"Just one more minute!" the kerchief said.

But Yezibaba, who was an impatient old witch, sat up in bed and then she could see that Ludmila's bed was empty. That threw her into a fine rage and she called out to her husband: "Now, old man, what have you got to say? As sure as I'm alive that good-for-nothing boy is gone and that precious daughter of yours has gone with him!"

"No, no," the old man said. "I don't think so."

Then they both got up and sure enough neither Raduz nor Ludmila was to be found.

"What do you think now, you old booby!" Yezibaba shouted. "A mighty good and loyal and obedient girl that daughter of yours is! But why do you stand there all day? Mount the black steed and fly after them and when you overtake them bring them back to me and I'll punish them properly!"

In the meantime Raduz and Ludmila were fleeing as fast as they could.

Suddenly Ludmila said: "Oh, how my left cheek burns! I wonder what it means? Look back, dear Raduz, and see if there is any one following us."

Raduz turned and looked. "There's nothing following us," he said, "but a black cloud in the sky."

"A black cloud? That's the old man on the black horse

that rides on the clouds. Quick! We must be ready for him!"

Ludmila struck the ground with Yezibaba's wand and changed it into a field. She turned herself into the growing rye and made Raduz the reaper who was cutting the rye. Then she instructed him how to answer the old man with cunning.

The black cloud descended upon them with thunder and a shower of hailstones that beat down the growing rye.

"Take care!" Raduz cried. "You're trampling my rye! Leave some of it for me."

"Very well," the old man said, alighting from his steed, "I'll leave some of it for you. But tell me, reaper, have you seen anything of two young people passing this way?"

"Not a soul has passed while I've been reaping, but I do remember that while I was planting this field two such people did pass."

The old man shook his head, mounted his steed, and flew home again on the black cloud.

"Well, old wiseacre," said Yezibaba, "what brings you back so soon?"

"No use my going on," the old man said. "The only person I saw was a reaper in a field of rye."

"You booby!" cried Yezibaba, "not to know that Raduz was the reaper and Ludmila the rye! How they fooled you! And didn't you bring me back just one stalk of rye? Go after them again and this time don't let them fool you!"

In the meantime Raduz and Ludmila were hurrying on. Suddenly Ludmila said: "I wonder why my left cheek burns? Look back, dear Raduz, and see if there is any one following us."

Raduz turned and looked. "There's nothing following us but a gray cloud in the sky."

"A gray cloud? That's the old man on the gray horse that rides on the clouds. But don't be afraid. Only have ready a cunning answer."

Ludmila struck her hat with the wand and changed it into

a chapel. Herself she changed into a fly that attracted a host of other flies. She changed Raduz into a hermit. All the flies flew into the chapel and Raduz began preaching to them.

Suddenly the gray cloud descended on the chapel with a flurry of snow and such cold that the shingles of the roof crackled.

The old man alighted from the gray steed and entered the chapel.

"Hermit," he said to Raduz, "have you seen two travelers go by here, a girl and a youth?"

"As long as I've been preaching here," Raduz said, "I've had only flies for a congregation. But I do remember that while the chapel was building two such people did go by. But now I must beg you, good sir, to go out, for you are letting in so much cold that my congregation is freezing."

At that the old man mounted his steed and flew back home on the gray cloud.

Old Yezibaba was waiting for him. When she saw him coming she called out: "Again you bring no one, you good-for-nothing! Where did you leave them this time?"

"Where did I leave them?" the old man said. "How could I leave them when I didn't even see them? All I saw was a little chapel and a hermit preaching to a congregation of flies. I almost froze the congregation to death!"

"Oh, what a booby you are!" Yezibaba cried. "Raduz was the hermit and Ludmila one of the flies! Why didn't you bring me just one shingle from the roof of the chapel? I see I'll have to go after them myself!"

In a rage she mounted the third magic steed and flew off.

In the meantime Raduz and Ludmila were hurrying on. Suddenly Ludmila said: "I wonder why my left cheek burns? Look back, dear Raduz, again, and see if there is any one following us."

Raduz turned and looked. "There's nothing following us but a red cloud in the sky."

"A red cloud? That must be Yezibaba herself on the steed of fire. Now indeed we must be careful. Up to this it has been easy enough but it won't be easy to deceive her. Here we are beside a lake. I will change myself into a golden duck and float on the water. Do you dive into the water so that she can't burn you. When she alights and tries to catch me, do you jump up and get the horse by the bridle. Don't be afraid at what will happen."

The fiery cloud descended, burning up everything it touched. At the edge of the water Yezibaba alighted from her steed and tried to catch the golden duck. The duck fluttered on and on just out of her reach and Yezibaba went farther and farther from her horse.

Then Raduz leaped out of the water and caught the horse by its bridle. At once the duck rose on its wings and flew to Raduz and became again Ludmila. Together they mounted the fiery steed and flew off over the lake.

Yezibaba, helpless with rage and dismay, called after them a bitter curse: "If you, Raduz, are kissed by woman before you wed Ludmila, then will you forget Ludmila! And you, ungrateful girl, if once Raduz forgets you then he shall not remember you again until seven long years have come and gone!"

Raduz and Ludmila rode on and on until they neared Raduz' native city. There they met a man of whom Raduz asked the news.

"News indeed!" the man said. "The king and his three older sons are dead. Only the queen is alive and she cries night and day for her youngest son who went out into the world and has never been heard of since. The whole city is in an uproar as to who shall be the new king."

When Raduz heard this he said to Ludmila: "Do you, my dear Ludmila, wait for me here outside the city while I go quickly to the palace and let it be known that I am alive and am returned. It would not be fitting to present you to my

mother, the queen, in those ragged clothes. As soon as I am made king I shall come for you, bringing you a beautiful dress."

Ludmila agreed to this and Raduz left her and hurried to the castle. His mother recognized him at once and ran with open arms to greet him. She wanted to kiss him but he wouldn't let her. The news of his return flew abroad and he was immediately proclaimed king. A great feast was spread and all the people ate and drank and made merry.

Fatigued with his journey and with the excitement of his return, Raduz lay down to rest. While he slept his mother came in and kissed him on both cheeks. Instantly Yezibaba's curse was fulfilled and all memory of Ludmila left him.

Poor Ludmila waited for his return but he never came. Then she knew what must have happened. Heartbroken and lonely she found a spot near a farmhouse that commanded a view of the castle, and she stood there day after day hoping to see Raduz. She stood there so long that finally she took root and grew up into a poplar tree that was so beautiful that soon throughout the countryside people began talking about it. Every one admired it but the young king. He when he looked at it always felt unhappy and he supposed this was because it obstructed the view from his window. At last he ordered it to be cut down.

The farmer near whose house it stood begged hard to have it saved, but the king was firm.

Shortly after the poplar was cut down there grew up under the king's very window a pretty little pear tree that bore golden pears. It was a wonderful little tree. No matter how many pears you picked in the evening, by the next morning the tree would again be full.

The king loved the little tree and was forever talking about it. The old queen, on the other hand, disliked it.

"I wish that tree would die," she used to say. "There's something strange about it that makes me nervous."

The king begged her to leave the tree alone but she worried and complained and nagged until at last for his own peace of mind he had the poor little pear tree cut down.

The seven years of Yezibaba's curse at last ran out. Then Ludmila changed herself again into a little golden duck and went swimming about on the lake that was under the king's window.

Suddenly the king began to remember that he had seen that duck before. He ordered it to be caught and brought to him. But none of his people could catch it. Then he called together all the fishermen and birdcatchers in the country but none of them could catch the strange duck.

The days went by and the king's mind was more and more engrossed with the thought of the golden duck. "If no one can catch it for me," he said at last, "I must try to catch it myself."

So he went to the lake and reached out his hand after the golden duck. The duck led him on and on but at last she allowed herself to be caught. As soon as she was in his hand she changed to herself and Raduz recognized her as his own beautiful Ludmila.

She said to him: "I have been true to you but you have forgotten me all these years. Yet I forgive you, for it was not your fault."

In Raduz' heart his old love returned a hundred-fold and he was overjoyed to lead Ludmila to the castle. He presented her to his mother and said: "This is she who saved my life many times. She and no one else will be my wife."

A great wedding feast was prepared and so at last Raduz married the faithful Ludmila.

The Story That Never Ends

(To be told very seriously)

Once upon a time there was a shepherd who had a great flock of sheep. He used to pasture them in a meadow on the other side of a brook. One day the sun had already set before he started home. Recent rains had swollen the brook so that he and the sheep had to cross on a little footbridge. The bridge was so narrow that the sheep had to pass over one by one.

Now we'll wait until he drives them all over. Then I'll go on with my story.

(When the children grow impatient and beg for a continuation of the story, they are told that there are many sheep and that up to this time only a few have crossed. A little later when their impatience again breaks out, they are told that the sheep are still crossing. And so on indefinitely. In conclusion:)

In fact there were so many sheep that when morning came they were still crossing, and then it was time for the shepherd to turn around and drive them back again to pasture!

Polish Fairy Tales

By Maude Ashurst Biggs & A.J. Glinksi

The Frog Princess

There was once a king, who was very old; but he had three grown-up sons. So he called them to him, and said: "My dear sons, I am very old, and the cares of government press heavily upon me. I must therefore give them over to one of you. But as it is the law among us, that no unmarried prince may be King, I wish you all to get married, and whoever chooses the best wife shall be my successor."

So they determined each to go a different way, and settled it thus. They went to the top of a very high tower, and each one at a given signal shot an arrow in a different direction to the others. Wherever their arrows fell they were to go in search of their future wives.

The eldest prince's arrow fell on a palace in the city, where lived a senator, who had a beautiful daughter; so he went there, and married her.

The second prince's arrow struck upon a country-house, where a very pretty young lady, the daughter of a rich gentleman, was sitting; so he went there, and proposed to her, and they were married.

But the youngest prince's arrow shot through a green wood, and fell into a lake. He saw his arrow floating among the reeds, and a frog sitting thereon, looking fixedly at him.

But the marshy ground was so unsafe that he could not venture upon it; so he sat down in despair.

"What is the matter, prince?" asked the frog.

"What is the matter? Why, I cannot reach that arrow on which you are sitting."

"Take me for your wife, and I will give it to you."

"But how can you be my wife, little frog?"

"That is just what has got to be. You know that you shot your arrow from the tower, thinking that where it fell, you would find a loving wife; so you will have her in me."

"You are very wise, I see, little frog. But tell me, how can I marry you, or introduce you to my father? And what will the world say?"

"Take me home with you, and let nobody see me. Tell them that you have married an Eastern lady, who must not be seen by any man, except her husband, nor even by another woman."

The prince considered a little. The arrow had now floated to the margin of the lake; he took the arrow from the little frog, put her in his pocket, carried her home, and then went to bed, sighing very deeply.

Next morning the king was told that all his sons had got married; so he called them all together, and said: "Well children, are you all pleased with your wives?"

"Very pleased indeed, father and king."

"Well, we shall see who has chosen best. Let each of my daughters-in-law weave me a carpet by to-morrow, and the one whose carpet is the most beautiful shall be queen."

The elder princes hastened at once to their ladies; but the youngest, when he reached home, was in despair.

"What is the matter, prince?" asked the frog.

"What is the matter? My father has ordered that each of his daughters-in-law shall weave him a carpet, and the one whose carpet proves the most beautiful shall be first in rank. My brothers' wives are most likely working at their looms already. But you, little frog, although you can give back an arrow, and talk like a human being, will not be able to weave a carpet, as far as I can see."

"Don't be afraid," she said; "go to sleep, and before you wake the carpet shall be ready."

So he lay down, and went to sleep.

But the little frog stood on her hind-legs in the window

and sang:

"Ye breezes that blow, ye winds that sigh,
Come hither on airy wing;
And all of you straight to my dwelling hie,
And various treasures bring.
Two fleeces I crave of the finest wool,
And of the loveliest flowers a basketful;
From the depths of the ocean bring sands of gold,
And pearl-drops of lustre manifold;
That so I may fashion a carpet bright,
Adorned with fair flow'rets and gems of light,
And weave it in one short day and night,
When my true love's hands must the treasure hold."

There was a gentle murmur of the breezes, and from the sunbeams descended seven lovely maidens, who floated into the room, carrying baskets of various coloured wools, pearls, and flowers. They curtsied deeply to the little frog, and in a few minutes they wove a wonderfully beautiful carpet; then they curtsied again, and flew away.

Meanwhile the wives of the other princes bought the most beautifully coloured wools, and the best designs they could find, and worked hard at their looms all the next day.

Then all the princes came before the king, and spread out their carpets before him.

The king looked at the first and the second; but when he came to the third, he exclaimed: "That's the carpet for me! I give the first place to my youngest son's wife; but there must be another trial yet."

And he ordered that each of his daughters-in-law should make him a cake next day; and the husband of the one whose cake proved the best should be his successor.

The youngest prince came back to his frog wife; he looked very thoughtful, and sighed deeply.

"What is the matter, prince?" she asked.

"My father demands another proof of skill; and I am not so sure that we shall succeed so well as before; for how can you bake a cake?"

"Do not be afraid," she said: "Lie down, and sleep; and when you wake you will be in a happier frame of mind."

The prince went to sleep; and the frog sprang up to the window, and sang:

"Ye breezes that blow, ye winds that sigh,
Come hither on airy wing;
And all of you straight to my dwelling hie,
These various gifts to bring.
From the sunbeams bright
Bring me heat and light;
And soft waters distil
From the pure flowing rill.
From the flowers of the field
The sweet odours they yield.
From the wheatfields obtain
Five full measures of grain,
That so I may bake
In the night-time a cake,
For my true love's sake."

The winds began to rise, and the seven beautiful maidens floated down into the room, carrying baskets, with flour, water, sweetmeats, and all sorts of dainties. They curtsied to the little frog, and got the cake ready in a few minutes; curtsied again, and flew away.

The next day the three princes brought their cakes to the king. They were all very good; but when he tasted the one made by his youngest son's wife, he exclaimed: "That is the cake for me! light, floury, white, and delicious! I see, my son, you have made the best choice; but we must wait a little longer."

The two elder sons went away much depressed; but the

youngest greatly elated. When he reached home he took up his little frog, stroked and kissed her, and said: "Tell me, my love, how it was that you, being only a little frog, could weave such a beautiful carpet, or make such a delicious cake?"

"Because, my prince, I am not what I seem. I am a princess, and my mother is the renowned Queen of Light, and a great enchantress. But she has many enemies, who, as they could not injure her, were always seeking to destroy me. To conceal me from them she was obliged to turn me into a frog; and for seven years I have been forced to stay in the marsh where you found me. But under this frog-skin I am really more beautiful than you can imagine; yet until my mother has conquered all her enemies I must wear this disguise; after that takes place you shall see me as I really am."

While they were talking two courtiers entered, with the king's orders to the young prince, to come to a banquet at the king's palace, and bring his wife with him, as his brothers were doing by theirs.

He knew not what to do; but the little frog said: "Do not be afraid, my prince. Go to your father alone; and when he asks for me, it will begin to rain. You must then say that your wife will follow you; but she is now bathing in May-dew. When it lightens say that I am dressing; and when it thunders, that I am coming."

The prince, trusting to her word, set out for the palace; and the frog jumped up to the window, and standing on her hind-legs, began to sing:

"Ye breezes that blow, ye winds that sigh,
Come hither on airy wing;
And all of you straight to my dwelling hie,
These several gifts to bring.
My beauty of yore;
And my bright youth once more;
All my dresses so fair;

And my jewels so rare;
And let me delight
My dear love by the sight."

Then the seven beautiful damsels, who were the hand-maidens of the princess when she lived with her mother floated on the sunbeams into the room. They curtsied, walked three times round her, and pronounced some magical words.

Then the frog-skin fell off her, and she stood among them a miracle of beauty, and the lovely princess she was.

Meanwhile the prince, her husband, had arrived at the royal banquet-hall, which was already full of guests. The old king welcomed him warmly, and asked him: "Where is your wife, my son?"

Then a light rain began to fall, and the prince said: "She will not be long; she is now bathing herself in May-dew."

Then came a flash of lightning, which illuminated all the palace, and he said: "She is now adorning herself."

But when it thundered, he ran to the door exclaiming: "Here she is!"

And the lovely princess came in, seeming to bring the sunshine with her. They all stood amazed at her beauty.

The king could not contain his delight; and she seemed to him all the more beautiful, because he thought her the very image of his long-deceased queen. The prince himself was no less astonished and overjoyed to find such loveliness in her, whom he had only as yet seen in the shape of a little frog.

"Tell me, my son," said the king, "why you did not let me know what a fortunate choice you had made?"

The prince told him everything in a whisper; and the king said: "Go home then, my son, at once, and pick up that frog-skin of hers; throw it in the fire, and come back here as fast as you can. Then she will have to remain just as she is now."

The prince did as his father told him, went home, and threw the frog-skin into the fire, where it was at once

consumed.

But things did not turn out as they expected; for the lovely princess, on coming home, sought for her frog-skin, and not finding it, began to cry bitterly. When the prince confessed the truth, she shrieked aloud, and taking out a green poppy-head, threw it at him. He went to sleep at once; but she sprang up to the window, sang her songs to the winds; upon which she was changed into a duck, and flew away.

The prince woke up in the morning, and grieved sadly, when he found his beautiful princess gone.

Then he got on horseback, and set out to find her, inquiring everywhere for the kingdom of the Queen of Light his princess's mother to whom he supposed she must have fled.

He rode on for a very, very long time, till one day he came into a wide plain, all covered with poppies in full flower, the odour of which so overpowered him, that he could scarce keep upright in his saddle. Then he saw a queer little house, supported on four crooked legs. There was no door to the house; but knowing what he ought to do, he said:

"Little house, move
On your crooked legs free;
Turn your back to the wood,
And your front door to me."

The hut with the crooked legs made a creaking noise, and turned round, with its door towards the prince. He went straight in, and found an old fury, whose name was Jandza, inside; she was spinning from a distaff, and singing.

"How are you, prince?" she said, "what brings you here?"

So the prince told her, and she said: "You have done wisely to tell me the truth. I know your bride, the beautiful daughter of the Queen of Light; she flies to my house daily, in the shape of a duck, and this is where she sits. Hide yourself under the table, and watch your opportunity to lay hold of her. Hold her fast, whatever shapes she assumes; when she is tired she

will turn into a spindle; you must then break the spindle in two, and you will find that which you are seeking."

Presently the duck flew in, sat down beside the old fury, and began to preen her feathers with her beak. The prince seized her by the wing. The duck quacked, fluttered, and struggled to get loose. But seeing this was useless she changed herself into a pigeon, then into a hawk, and then into a serpent, which so frightened the prince, that he let her go; on which she became a duck again, quacked aloud, and flew out of the window.

The prince saw his mistake, and the old woman cried aloud: "What have you done, you careless fellow! you have frightened her away from me for ever. But as she is your bride, I must find some other way to help you. Take this ball of thread, throw it before you, and wherever it goes follow after it; you will then come to my sister's house, and she will tell you what to do next."

So the prince went on day and night, following the ball of thread, till he came to another queer little house, like the first, to which he said the same rhyme, and going in, found the second old fury, and told her his story.

"Hide under the bench," she exclaimed; "your bride is just coming in."

The duck flew in, as before, and the prince caught her by the wing; she quacked, and tried to get away. Then she changed herself into a turkey, then into a dog, then into a cat, then into an eel, so that she slipped through his hands, and glided out of the window.

The prince was in despair; but the old woman gave him another ball of thread, and he again followed it, determining not to let the princess escape again so easily. So going on after the thread, as it kept unwinding, he came to a funny little house, like the two first, and said:

"Little house, move

On your crooked legs free;
Turn your back to the wood,
And your front door to me."

The little house turned round, so that he could go in, and he found a third old fury inside; much older than her sisters, and having white hair. He told her his story, and begged for help.

"Why did you go against the wishes of your clever and sensible wife?" said the old woman. "You see she knew better than you what her frog-skin was good for; but you must needs be in such a hurry to display her beauty, to gain the world's applause, that you have lost her; and she was forced to fly away from you."

The prince hid himself under the bench: the duck flew in and sat at the old woman's feet; on which he caught her by the wings.

She struggled hard; but she felt his strength was too great for her to resist; so she turned herself into a spindle at once. He broke it across his knee…. And lo! and behold! instead of the two halves of the spindle he held the hands of his beautiful princess, who looked at him lovingly with her beautiful eyes, and smiled sweetly.

And she promised him that she would always remain as she was then, for since her mother's enemies were all dead she had nothing to fear.

They embraced each other, and went out of the old fury's hut. Then the princess spoke some magical spells; and in the twinkling of an eye there appeared a wonderful bridge, reaching from where they stood hundreds of miles, up to the very gallery of the palace, belonging to the prince's father. It was all made of crystal, with golden hand-rails, and diamond bosses upon them.

The princess spoke some more magical words, and a golden coach appeared, drawn by eight horses, and a coachman,

and two tall footmen, all in golden liveries. And there were four outriders on splendid horses, riding by the side of the coach, and an equerry, riding in front, and blowing a brazen trumpet. And a long procession of followers, in splendid dresses, came after them.

Then the prince and princess got into the golden coach, and drove away, thus accompanied, along the crystal bridge, till they reached home, when the old king came out to meet them, and embraced them both tenderly. He appointed the prince his successor; and such magnificent festivities were held on the occasion, as never were seen or heard of before.

Princess Miranda and Prince Hero

Far away, in the wide ocean there was once a green island where lived the most beautiful princess in the world, named Miranda. She had lived there ever since her birth, and was queen of the island. Nobody knew who were her parents, or how she had come there. But she was not alone; for there were twelve beautiful maidens, who had grown up with her on the island, and were her ladies-in-waiting.

But a few strangers had visited the island, and spoken of the princess's great beauty; and many more came in time, and became her subjects, and built a magnificent city, in which she had a splendid palace of white marble to live in.

And in course of time a great many young princes came to woo her. But she did not care to marry any of them; and if anyone persisted, and tried to compel her by force to be his wife, she could turn him and all his soldiers into ice, by merely fixing her eyes upon them.

One day the wicked Kosciey, the king of the Underground realm, came out into the upper world, and began to gaze all round it with his telescope. Various empires and kingdoms passed in review before him; and at last he saw the green island, and the rich city upon it; and the marble palace in this city, and in this palace the twelve beautiful young ladies-of-honour, and among them he beheld, lying on a rich couch of swansdown, the Princess Miranda asleep. She slept like an innocent child, but she was dreaming of a young knight, wearing a golden helmet, on a gallant steed, and carrying an invisible mace, that fought of itself; … and she loved him better than life.

Kosciey looked at her; he was delighted with her beauty;

he struck the earth three times, and stood upon the green island.

Princess Miranda called together her brave army, and led them into the field, to fight the wicked Kosciey. But he, blowing on them with his poisonous breath, sent them all fast asleep, and he was just going to lay hands upon the princess, when she, throwing a glance of scorn at him, changed him into a lump of ice, and fled to her capital.

Kosciey did not long remain ice. So soon as the princess was away, he freed himself from the power of her glance, and regaining his usual form, followed her to her city. Then he sent all the inhabitants of the island to sleep, and among them the princess's twelve faithful damsels.

She was the only one whom he could not injure; but being afraid of her glances, he surrounded the castle which stood upon a high hill with an iron rampart, and placed a dragon with twelve heads on guard before the gate, and waited for the princess to give herself up of her own accord.

The days passed by, then weeks, then months, while her kingdom became a desert; all her people were asleep, and her faithful soldiers also lay sleeping on the open fields, their steel armour all rusted, and wild plants were growing over them undisturbed. Her twelve maidens were all asleep in different rooms of the palace, just where they happened to be at the time; and she herself, all alone, kept walking sadly to and fro in a little room up in a tower, where she had taken refuge wringing her white hands, weeping, and her bosom heaving with sighs.

Around her all were silent, as though dead; only every now and then, Kosciey, not daring to encounter her angry glance, knocked at the door asking her to surrender, promising to make her queen of his Underground realm. But it was all of no use; the princess was silent, and only threatened him with her looks.

But grieving in her lonely prison Princess Miranda could

not forget the lover of whom she had been dreaming; she saw him just as he had appeared to her in her dream.

And she looked up with her blue eyes to heaven, and seeing a cloud floating by, she said:

"O cloud! through the bright sky flying!
Stay, and hearken my piteous sighing!
In my sorrow I call upon thee;
Oh! where is my loved one? say!
Oh! where do his footsteps stray?
And does he now think of me?"

"I know not?" the cloud replied. "Ask the wind."

And she looked out into the wide plain, and seeing how the wind was blowing freely, she said:

"O wind! o'er the wide world flying!
Do thou pity my grief and crying!
Have pity on me!
Oh! where is my loved one? say!
Oh! where do his footsteps stray?
And does he now think of me?"

"Ask the stars," the wind replied; "they know more than I do."

So she cried to the stars:

"O stars! with your bright beams glowing!
Look down on my tears fast flowing!
Have pity, have pity on me!
Oh! where is my loved one? say!
Oh! where do his footsteps stray?
And does he now think of me?"

"Ask the moon," said the stars; "who being nearer to the earth, knows more of what happens there than we do."

So she said to the moon:

"Bright moon, as your watch you keep,
From the starry skies, o'er this land of sleep,
Look down now, and pity me!
Oh! where is my loved one? say!
Where? where do his footsteps stray?
And does he now think of me?"

"I know nothing about your loved one, princess," replied the moon; "but here comes the sun, who will surely be able to tell you."

And the sun rose up in the dawn, and at noontide stood just over the princess's tower, and she said:

"Thou soul of the world! bright sun!
Look on me, in this prison undone!
Have pity on me!
Oh! where is my loved one? say!
Through what lands do his footsteps stray?
And does he now think of me?"

"Princess Miranda," said the sun; "dry your tears, comfort your heart; your lover is hastening to you, from the bottom of the deep sea, from under the coral reefs; he has won the enchanted ring; when he puts it on his finger, his army will increase by thousands, regiment after regiment, with horse and foot; the drums are beating, the sabres gleaming, the colours flying, the cannon roaring, they are bearing down on the empire of Kosciey. But he cannot conquer him by force of mortal weapons. I will teach him a surer way; and there is good hope that he will be able to deliver you from Kosciey, and save your country. I will hasten to your prince. Farewell."

The sun stood over a wide country, beyond the deep seas, beyond high mountains, where Prince Hero in a golden helmet, on a gallant horse, was drawing up his army, and preparing to march against Kosciey, the besieger of the fair princess. He had seen her three times in a dream, and had heard much

about her, for her beauty was famous throughout the world.

"Dismiss your army," said the sun. "No army can conquer Kosciey, no bullet can reach him; you can only free Princess Miranda by killing him, and how you are to do it, you must learn from the old woman Jandza; I can only tell you where you will find the horse, that must carry you to her. Go hence towards the East; you will come to a green meadow, in which there are three oak trees; and among them you will find hidden in the ground an iron door, with a brazen padlock; behind this door you will find a battle charger, and a mace; the rest you will learn afterwards; … farewell!"

Prince Hero was most surprised; but he took off his enchanted ring and threw it into the sea; with it all his great army vanished directly into mist, leaving no trace behind. He turned to the East and travelled onwards.

After three days he came to the green meadow, where he found the three oak trees, and the iron door, as he had been told. It opened upon a narrow, crooked stairway, going downwards, leading into a deep dungeon, where he found another iron door, closed by a heavy iron padlock. Behind this he heard a horse neighing, so loudly that it made the door fall to the ground, and at the same moment eleven other doors flew open and there came out a warhorse, which had been shut up there for ages by a wizard.

The prince whistled to the horse; the horse tugged at his fastenings, and broke twelve chains by which he had been fettered. He had eyes like stars, flaming nostrils, and a mane like a thunder-cloud; … he was a horse of horses, the wonder of the world.

"Prince Hero!" said the horse, "I have long waited for such a rider as you, and I am ready to serve you for ever. Mount on my back, take that mace in your hand, which you see hanging to the saddle; you need not fight with it yourself, for it will strike wherever you command it, and beat a whole army. I know the way everywhere; tell me where you want to

go, and you will presently be there."

The prince told him everything; took the self-fighting mace in his hand, and sprang on his back.

The horse reared, snorted, spurned the ground, and they flew over mountains and forests, higher than the flying clouds, over rapid rivers, and deep seas; but when they flew along the ground the charger's light feet never trampled down a blade of grass, nor raised an atom of dust on the sandy soil.

Before sunset Prince Hero had reached the primeval forest in which the old woman Jandza lived.

He was amazed at the size and age of the mighty oaks, pine trees and firs, where there reigned a perpetual twilight. And there was absolute silence not a leaf or a blade of grass stirring; and no living thing, not so much as a bird, or the hum of an insect; only amidst this grave-like stillness the sound of his horse's hoofs.

The prince stopped before a little house, supported on crooked legs, and said:

"Little house, move
On your crooked legs free:
Turn your back to the wood,
And your front to me."

The house turned round, with the door towards him; the prince went in, and the old woman Jandza asked him: "How did you get here, Prince Hero, where no living soul has penetrated till now?"

"Don't ask me; but welcome your guest politely." So the old woman gave the prince food and drink, made up a soft bed for him, to rest on after his journey, and left him for the night. Next morning he told her all, and what he had come for.

"You have undertaken a great and splendid task, prince; so I will tell you how to kill Kosciey. In the Ocean-Sea, on the island of Everlasting Life, there is an old oak tree; under this

tree is buried a coffer bound with iron; in this coffer is a hare; under the hare sits a grey duck; this duck carries within her an egg; and in this egg is enclosed the life of Kosciey. When you break the egg he will die at once. Now good-bye, prince; and good luck go with you; your horse will show you the way."

The prince got on horseback, and they soon left the forest behind them, and came to the shore of the ocean.

On the beach was a fisherman's net, and in the net was a great fish, who when he saw the prince, cried out piteously: "Prince Hero! take me out of the net, and throw me back into the sea; I will repay you!"

The prince took the fish out of the net, and threw it into the sea; it splashed in the water, and vanished.

The prince looked over the sea, and saw the island in the grey distance, far, far away; but how was he to get there? He leaned upon his mace, deep in thought.

"What are you thinking of, prince?" asked the horse.

"I am thinking how I am to get to the island, when I cannot swim over that breadth of sea."

"Sit on my back, prince, and hold fast."

So the prince sat firm on the horse's back, and held fast by the thick mane; a wind arose, and the sea was somewhat rough; but rider and horse pushed on, through the billows, and at last came to shore on the island of Everlasting Life.

The prince took off his horse's bridle, and let him loose to feed in a meadow of luxuriant grass, and walked on quickly to a high hill, where grew the old oak tree. Taking it in both hands he tugged at it; the oak resisted all his efforts; he tugged again, the oak began to creak, and moved a little; he mustered all his strength, and tugged again. The oak fell with a crash to the ground, with its roots uppermost, and there, where they had stood firmly fixed so many hundred years, was a deep hole.

Looking down he saw the iron-bound coffer; he fetched it up, broke open the lock with a stone, raised the lid, picked up

the hare lying in it by its ears; but at that moment the duck, which had been sitting under the hare, took the alarm, and flew off straight to sea.

The prince fired a shot after her; the bullet hit the duck; she gave one loud quack, and fell; but in that same instant the egg fell from her down to the bottom of the sea. The prince gave a cry of despair; but just then a great fish came swimming, dived down to the depths of the sea, and coming to the shore, with the egg in its jaws, left it on the sand.

The fish swam away; but the prince, taking up the egg, mounted his horse once more; and they swam till they reached Princess Miranda's island, where they saw a great iron wall stretching all round her white marble palace.

There was only one entrance through this iron wall to the palace, and before this lay the monstrous dragon with the twelve heads, six of which kept guard alternately; when the one half slept the other six remained awake. If anyone were to approach the gate he could not escape the horrid jaws. Nobody could hurt the dragon; for he could only suffer death by his own act.

The prince stood on the hill before that gate, and commanded his self-fighting mace, which also had the faculty of becoming invisible, to go and clear his entrance to the palace.

The invisible, self-fighting mace fell upon the dragon and began to thunder on all his heads with such force, that all his eyes became bloodshot, and he began to hiss fiercely; he shook his twelve heads, and stretched wide his twelve horrid jaws; he spread out his forest of claws; but this helped him not at all, the mace kept on smiting him, moving about so fast, that not a single head escaped, but could only hiss, groan, and shriek wildly! Now it had given a thousand blows, the blood gushed from a thousand wounds, and there was no help for the dragon; he raged, writhed about, and shrieked in despair; finally, as blow followed blow, and he could not see who gave them, he gnashed his teeth, belched forth flame, and at length

turned his claws upon himself, plunging them deep into his own flesh, struggled, writhed, twisted himself round, and in and out; his blood flowed freely from his wounds … and now it was all over with the dragon.

The prince, seeing this, went into the courtyard of the palace, put his horse into the stable, and went up by a winding stair, towards the tower, whence the Princess Miranda, having seen him, addressed him: "Welcome, Prince Hero! I saw how you disposed of the dragon; but do be careful, for my enemy, Kosciey, is in this palace; he is most powerful, both through his own strength, and through his sorceries; and if he kill you I can live no longer."

"Princess Miranda, do not trouble about me. I have the life of Kosciey in this egg." Then he called out: "Invisible self-fighting mace, go into the palace and beat Kosciey."

The mace bestirred itself quickly, battered in the iron doors, and set upon Kosciey; it smote him on the neck, till he crouched all together, the sparks flew from his eyes, and there was a noise of so many mills in his ears.

If he had been an ordinary mortal it would have been all over with him at once; as it was, he was horribly tormented, and puzzled feeling all these blows, and never seeing whence they came. He sprang about, raved, and raged, till the whole island resounded with his roaring.

At last he looked through the window, and behold there he saw Prince Hero. "Ah! that is all your doing!" he exclaimed; and sprang out into the courtyard, to rush straight at him, and beat him to a jelly! But the prince held the egg in one hand ready; and he squeezed it so hard, that the shell cracked and the yolk and the white were all spilled together … and Kosciey fell lifeless!

And with the death of the enchanter all his charms were dissolved at once; all the people in the island who were asleep woke up, and began to stir. The soldiers woke from sleep, and the drums began to beat; they formed their ranks, massed

themselves in order, and began to march towards the palace.

And in the palace there was great joy; for Princess Miranda came towards the prince, gave him her white hand, and thanked him warmly. They went to the throne-room, and following the princess's example, her twelve waiting-maids paired off with twelve young officers of the army, and the couples grouped themselves round the throne, on which the prince and princess were sitting.

And then a priest, arrayed in all his vestments, came in at the open door, and the prince and princess exchanged rings, and were married.

And all the other couples were married at the same time, and after the wedding there was a feast, dancing, and music, which it is a pleasure to think of. Everywhere there was rejoicing.

The Eagles

There was once a king, who had lost his wife. They had a family of thirteen twelve gallant sons, and one daughter, who was exquisitely beautiful. For twelve years after his wife's death the king grieved very much; he used to go daily to her tomb, and there weep, and pray, and give away alms to the poor. He thought never to marry again; for he had promised his dying wife never to give her children a stepmother.

One day, when visiting his dead wife's grave as usual, he saw beside him a maiden so entrancingly fair, that he fell in love with her, and soon made her his second queen. But before long he found out that he had made a great mistake.

Though she was so beautiful she turned out to be a wicked sorceress, and not only made the king himself unhappy, but proved most unkind to his children, whom she wished out of the way, so that her own little son might inherit the kingdom.

One day, when the king was far away, at war against his enemies, the queen went into her stepchildren's apartments, and pronounced some magical words on which every one of the twelve princes flew away in the shape of an eagle, and the princess was changed into a dove.

The queen looked out of the window, to see in what direction they would fly, when she saw right under the window an old man, with a beard as white as snow.

"What are you here for, old man?" she asked.

"To be witness of your deed," he answered.

"Then you saw it?"

"I saw it."

"Then be what I command!"

She whispered some magical words. The old man

disappeared in a blaze of sunshine; and the queen, as she stood there, dumb with terror, was changed into a basilisk.

The basilisk ran off in fright; trying to hide herself underground. But her glance was so deadly, that it killed every one she looked at; so that all the people in the palace were soon dead, including her own son, whom she slew by merely looking at him. And this once populous and happy royal residence quickly became an uninhabited ruin, which no one dared approach, for fear of the basilisk lurking in its underground vaults.

Meanwhile the princess, who had been changed into a dove, flew after her brothers the eagles, but not being able to overtake them, she rested under a wayside cross, and began cooing mournfully.

"What are you grieving for, pretty dove?" asked an old man, with a snow-white beard, who just then came by.

"I am grieving for my poor dear father, who is fighting in the wars far away; for my loved brothers, who have flown away from me into the clouds. I am grieving also for myself. Not long ago I was a happy princess; and now I must wander over the world as a dove, to hide from the birds of prey and be parted for ever from my dear father and brothers!"

"You may grieve and weep, little dove; but do not lose hope," said the old man. "Sorrow is only for a time, and all will come right in the end."

So saying he stroked the little dove, and she at once regained her natural shape. She kissed the old man's hand in her gratitude, saying: "How can I ever thank you enough! But since you are so kind, will you not tell me how to rescue my brothers?"

The old man gave her an ever-growing loaf, and said: "This loaf is enough to sustain, not only you, but a thousand people for a thousand years, without ever diminishing. Go towards the sunset, and weep your tears into this little bottle. And when it is full…"

And the old man told her what else to do, blessed her, and disappeared.

The princess travelled on towards the sunset; and in about a year she reached the boundary of the next world, and stood before an iron door, where Death was keeping guard with his scythe.

"Stop, princess!" he said; "You can proceed no further, for you are not yet parted by death from your own world."

"But what am I to do?" she asked. "Must I go back without my poor brothers?"

"Your brothers," said Death, "fly here every day in the guise of eagles. They want to reach the other side of this door, which leads into the other world; for they hate the one they live in; nevertheless they, and you also, must remain there, until your time be come. Therefore every day I must compel them to go back, which they can do, because they are eagles. But how are you going to get back yourself? look there!"

The princess looked around her, and wept bitterly. For though she had not perceived this before, nor seen how she got there, she saw now that she was in a deep abyss, shut in on all sides by such high precipices, that she wondered how her brothers, even with eagle wings, could fly to the top.

But remembering what the mysterious old man had said she took courage, and began to pray and weep, till she had filled the little bottle with her tears. Soon she heard the sound of wings over her head, and saw twelve eagles flying.

The eagles dashed themselves against the iron portal, beating their wings upon it, and imploring Death to open it to them. But Death only threatened them with his scythe, saying: "Hence! ye enchanted princes! you must fulfil your penance on earth, till I come for you myself."

The eagles were about to turn and fly, when all at once they perceived their sister. They came round her, and caressed her hands lovingly with their beaks.

She at once began to sprinkle them with her tears from

the lachrymatory; and in one moment the twelve eagles were changed back into the twelve princes, and joyfully embraced their sister.

The princess then fed them all round from her ever-growing loaf; but when their hunger was appeased they began to be troubled as to how they were to ascend from the abyss, since they had no longer eagles' wings to fly up.

But the princess knelt down and prayed:

"Bird of heavenly pity here,
By each labour, prayer and tear,
Come in thine unvanquished power,
Come and aid us in this hour!"

And all at once there shot down from heaven to the depth of the abyss a ray of sunshine, on which descended a gigantic bird, with rainbow wings, a bright sparkling crest, and peacock's eyes all over his body, a golden tail, and silvery breast.

"What are your commands, princess?" asked the bird.

"Carry us from this threshold of eternity to our own world."

"I will, but you must know, princess, that before I can reach the top of this precipice with you on my back, three days and nights must pass; and I must have food on the way, or my strength will fail me, and I shall fall down with you to the bottom, and we shall all perish."

"I have an ever-growing loaf, which will suffice both for you and ourselves," replied the princess.

"Then climb upon my back, and whenever I look round, give me some bread to eat."

The bird was so large that all the princes, and the princess in the midst of them, could easily find place on his back, and he began to fly upwards.

He flew higher and higher, and whenever he looked round at her, she gave him bits of the loaf, and he flew on, and upwards.

So they went on steadily for two nights and days; but upon the third day, when they were hoping in a short time to view the summit of the precipice, and to land upon the borders of this world, the bird looked round as usual for a piece of the loaf.

The princess was just going to break off some to give him, when a sudden violent gust of wind from the bottom of the abyss snatched the loaf from her hand, and sent it whistling downwards.

Not having received his usual meal the bird became sensibly weaker, and looked round once more.

The princess trembled with fear; she had nothing more to give him, and she felt that he was becoming exhausted. In utter desperation she cut off a piece of her flesh, and gave it to him.

Having eaten this the bird recovered strength, and flew upwards faster than before; but after an hour or two he looked round once more.

So she cut off another piece of her flesh; the bird seized it greedily, and flew on so fast that in a few minutes he reached the ground at the top of the precipice. When they alighted, and he asked her: "Princess, what were those two delicious morsels you gave me last? I never ate anything so good before."

"They were part of my flesh, I had nothing else for you," replied the princess in a faint voice, for she was swooning away with pain and loss of blood. The bird breathed upon her wounds; and the flesh at once healed over, and grew again as before. Then he flew up again to heaven, and was lost in the clouds.

The princess and her brothers resumed their journey, this time towards the sunrise, and at last arrived in their own country, where they met their father, returning from the wars.

The king was coming back victorious over his enemies, and on his way home had first heard of the sudden

disappearance of his children and of the queen, and how his palace was tenanted only by a basilisk with a death-dealing glance.

He was therefore most surprised and overjoyed to meet his dear children once more, and on the way his daughter told him all that had come to pass.

When they got back to the palace the king sent one of his nobles with a looking-glass down into the underground vaults. The basilisk saw herself reflected in this mirror, and her own glance slew her immediately.

They gathered up the remains of the basilisk, and burnt them in a great fire in the courtyard, afterwards scattering the ashes to the four winds. When this was done the king, his sons, and his daughter, returned to live in their former home and were all as happy as could be ever after.

The Whirlwind

In a far-off country, beyond the sea and the mountains, there lived a king and queen, with a beautiful daughter, who was called Princess Ladna.

A great many princes came to woo her; but she liked only one of them, called Prince Dobrotek; so they confessed their love for one another to the king, who gave his consent, and the wedding-day was fixed.

Now among the princess's rejected suitors there was one, who though he had changed himself into the shape of a prince, in order to come to court and make the princess love him, really was an ugly dwarf, only seven inches high, but with a beard more than seven feet long, and a great hump on his back. He was so offended with the princess for refusing him, that he determined to carry her off; so he watched his opportunity.

As the young couple, with all their followers and their guests, were leaving the palace to go to church, a violent wind began to blow, a regular whirlwind, raising a column of sand, and lifting the princess off her feet. She was carried up over the clouds, to the top of some inaccessible mountains, and dropped down into a magnificent palace, with a golden roof, and a high wall all round.

After a while the princess woke up from the fainting-fit into which she had fallen. She looked round the splendid apartment in which she was, and came to the conclusion that some young and handsome prince must have carried her off.

In the room there was a table ready spread; all the plates and dishes, as well as the knives, forks, and spoons, were of silver and gold; and the dinner itself was so good, that in spite

of her grief and terror, she could not refrain from tasting it; and she had no sooner tasted, than she ate, till her appetite was appeased.

Then the doors opened, and there came in a company of servants, bearing a great chair, in which sat the ugly dwarf, with the long beard and the great hump.

The dwarf now began to pay his court to the princess, and explain how he had carried her off in the guise of the whirlwind, because he loved her so much. But she would not listen to him, and gave him a sounding slap with her open hand right in his face, so that sparks danced before his eyes. Of course he was in a great passion; but for love of her he managed to keep his temper, and turned round to leave the room. But in his haste he caught his feet in his long beard, and was thrown down on the threshold, and in his fall he dropped his cap, which he was holding in one hand.

The servants helped him again into the chair, and carried him out; but the princess jumped up, locked the door, and took up the cap that was lying on the ground. She put it on; and went to the glass to see how she looked in it. But what was her surprise to find that she could not see herself, till she took it off! So she came to the wise conclusion that this was an invisible cap; at which she was highly delighted; she put on the cap again, and began to walk about the room.

The door opened once more with a loud noise, and the dwarf came in with his long beard thrown back and twisted all round his hump, to be out of the way. But not seeing either his cap, or the princess, he guessed what had happened; so full of wild despair he began to rush madly about the room, knocking himself against the tables and chairs, while the princess made her escape through the door, and ran out into the garden.

The garden was very extensive, and full of beautiful fruit-trees; so she lived upon these fruits, and drank the water of a spring in the garden for some time. She used to make fun of

the dwarfs impotent rage. Sometimes when he rushed wildly about the garden, she would tease him by taking off the invisible cap, so that he saw her before him, in all her beauty; but when he made a rush after her she would put it on again, and become invisible to him; she would then throw cherry-stones at him, come close to him, and laugh loudly: and then run away again.

One day, when she was playing about in this manner, her cap got caught in the boughs of a tree, and fell upon a gooseberry bush. The dwarf saw it, and seized hold of the princess with one hand, and of the cap with the other. But just then from the summit of the mountain, above the garden itself, was heard the sound of a trumpet-challenge, three times repeated.

At this the dwarf trembled with rage; but first breathing upon the princess, he put her to sleep with his breath, then placed his invisible cap on her head. Having done this he seized his two-edged sword, and flew up into the clouds, so as to strike the knight who had challenged him from above, and destroy him at one stroke.

But where did this knight come from?

When Princess Ladna had been carried off on her wedding-day by the whirlwind, there was the greatest consternation among all the bystanders. Her distracted father and her bridegroom rushed about in all directions, and sent courtiers everywhere in search of her; but the princess had been neither seen nor heard of, nor was any trace left of her.

The king (very unnecessarily) told Prince Dobrotek that if he did not get back his daughter, the princess, he would not only put him to death, but would reduce his whole country to ashes. He also told all the princes there that whoever should bring back his daughter should have her to wife, and receive half of his kingdom into the bargain.

When they heard this they all got to horse, and galloped in various directions; among them Prince Dobrotek.

He went on for three days, never stopping for food or rest;

but on the fourth day, at dusk, he felt overcome by sleep; so he let his horse go free in a meadow, and himself lay down on the grass. Then all at once he heard a piercing shriek, and straight before him beheld a hare, and an owl perched upon it its claws digging into the poor creature's side.

The prince caught up the first thing that lay near him, and aimed at the screech-owl, so truly that he killed it on the spot, and the hare ran up to him, like a tame creature, licked his hands, and ran away.

Then the prince saw that the thing he had thrown at the owl was a human skull. And it spoke to him, in these words: "Prince Dobrotek, I thank you for what you have done for me. When I was alive I committed suicide, and was therefore condemned to lie unburied at this cross-way, till I should be the means of saving life. I have lain here for seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and Heaven knows how much longer I should have had to remain, if you had not chanced to throw me at the screech-owl, and so saved the life of the poor hare. Now bury me, so that I may lie peacefully in the ground at this same place, and I will tell you how to summon the Grey Seer-horse, with the golden mane, who will always help you in case of need. Go out into a plain, and without looking behind you, call out:

"Grey Seer-horse, with golden mane!
Like a bird and not like steed,
On the blast and not the mead,
Fly thou hither unto me!"

Thus having spoken, the head was silent; but a blue light shot up from it towards the sky; it was the soul of the deceased, which having now expiated its sin by its long imprisonment in the skull, had attained heaven.

The prince then dug a grave, and buried the skull. He then called out:

"Grey Seer-horse, with golden mane!
Like a bird and not like steed,
On the blast and not the mead,
Do thou hither fly to me!"

The wind rose, the lightning flashed, the thunder roared, and the wonderful horse with the golden mane appeared. He flew as fast as the storm-wind, flames shot from his nostrils, sparks from his eyes, and clouds of smoke from his mouth. He stood still, and said in human tones: "What are your commands, Prince Dobrotek?"

"I am in trouble; I wish you to help me."

And he told him all that had occurred.

"Creep in at my left ear," said the horse, "and creep out again at the right."

So the prince crept in at the horse's left ear, and came out again at the right one, all clad in golden armour. He also found himself miraculously increased in strength, so that when he stamped on the ground it trembled; and when he shouted a storm arose, which shook the leaves from the trees.

Then he asked the horse: "What is to be done next?"

"Your betrothed, Princess Ladna," said the horse, "was carried off by the seven-inch-high dwarf, with the seven-foot-long beard; he is a powerful magician; he dwells beyond the seven seas, among inaccessible mountains. He can only be conquered by the All-Cutting Sword, which sword is jealously guarded by his own brother, the Giant-Head, with basilisk eye. To this Giant-Head we must therefore go."

Prince Dobrotek mounted on horseback, and they flew like an arrow, over lands and seas, high mountains and wide oceans. They stopped at length upon a wide plain strewn with bones, before a moving mountain. And the horse said: "This moving mountain, which you see before you, is the giant's head with the basilisk eyes; and the bones strewn so thickly hereabouts prove how deadly his looks are so be careful. He

is now asleep from the heat of the sun; but only two steps before him lies the sword, with which alone you can conquer your enemy. Lie down along my back, so that his glance cannot reach you through my neck and mane; but when you get near to it, lay hold of the sword; when you have it you will not only be safe from his basilisk glances, but you will even have the giant's head at your mercy."

And the horse drew near lightly, and the prince bent down, and secured the wonderful sword; but he shouted so loud that the Giant-Head woke up, sniffed hard, and looked about with his bloodshot eyes; and seeing the wonderful sword in the prince's hand, he called out: "Sir knight! are you weary of the world, that you court speedy death?"

"You need not boast like that, you empty head!" replied Prince Dobrotek. "Your looks cannot hurt me now; and you shall die by this All-Cutting Sword! But I would first know who, and what you are."

"Then I confess, prince," replied the head; "that I am in your power; but be merciful to me, for I am worthy of pity. I am a knight of the race of giants, and were it not for the envy of my brother, I should still have been happy. He was the black sheep of our family, and was born an ugly dwarf, with a long beard; and my handsome giant-like proportions caused him to hate me bitterly. His only good point is his great strength, and it all resides in his long beard, and so long as it is not cut he cannot be conquered, and this can only be done by that sword, which you now hold.

"One day, being bent upon my destruction, he said to me: 'Brother, do not refuse to help me. I have read in my books of magic that beyond the mountains, on a plain lies buried a certain sword, whereby a knight, seeking for his betrothed, shall compass the destruction of us both; let us therefore go and dig it up, so that we shall escape the threatened doom!'

"To this I agreed. I took a hundred-year-old pine torn up from its roots on one arm, and carried my brother on my

other. We set out; he showed me the spot, and I dug up the sword, on this same plain. Then we began to quarrel about who should possess it. After a long dispute he said: 'We were best decide it by lot, brother. Let each of us lay his ear to the ground, and whoever first hears the sound of the evening bell shall have the sword.'

"So he laid his ear to the ground, and I mine. I listened; but heard nothing; and he meantime, having got hold of the sword, crept up to me, and cut my head from my shoulders.

"My headless trunk, left unburied, rotted away, and the grass grew over it; but my head, endowed with supernatural life by the malicious dwarf, my brother, was left here, with charge to guard this sword, and kill every one who came near with my deadly glance. After many centuries you have won it; so I implore you to cut off his seven-foot beard, and make him into mince-meat; and avenge me."

"You shall be avenged," said the prince; "and at once. Grey Seer-Horse, carry me to the kingdom of the dwarf magician, with the seven-foot-long beard."

So they set off at once, flying with lightning speed through the air, over the seas and over the forests. In an hour or two they halted on the summit of a high mountain, and the horse said: "These mountains are the kingdom of the dwarf magician, who carried off your betrothed, and they are both now in the garden; challenge him to fight."

Prince Dobrotek sounded a challenge three times, and the dwarf, as we have seen, flew up into the air, so as to swoop down upon his antagonist, unperceived of him.

All at once the prince heard a murmuring sound above him, and he saw when he looked up, the dwarf soaring above him, like an eagle in the clouds for he had the magic power of increasing his size and strength with his sword drawn, ready to fall upon him.

The prince sprang aside, and the dwarf came down, with such an impetus, that his head and neck were rammed into

the ground.

The prince dismounted, seized the dwarf by the beard, wound it about his left hand, and began to sever it with the All-Cutting Sword.

The dwarf saw that he had to do with no feather-bed knight; so he tugged with all his strength, and flew up again into the clouds; but the prince, holding fast with his left hand to the beard, kept on severing it with his sword, so that he had nearly cut half of it through; and the dwarf became weaker and weaker the more hair he lost, so he began to cry for mercy.

"Drop down to the ground, off which you took me," said the prince.

The dwarf dropped down slowly, but the prince cut off the remainder of his beard and threw him when thus deprived of his charms and his strength alike on to the ground, wreathed the severed beard round his own helmet, and entered the palace.

The invisible servants of the dwarf, seeing their master's beard, wreathed about the prince's helmet, threw open all the doors to him at once.

He went through all the rooms; but not finding his princess anywhere, went into the garden, traversing all the paths and lawns, and calling her name. He could find her nowhere.

But thus running from one place to another he chanced to touch the invisible cap; he caught hold of it, and pulled it away from where it was, on the head of the princess, and saw her at once in all her loveliness, but fast asleep.

Overcome with joy, he called her by her name; but she had been cast into such a deep sleep by the dwarf's poisonous breath, that he could not rouse her.

He took her up in his arms, put the invisible cap into his pocket, also picking up the wicked dwarf, whom he carried along with him. He then mounted his horse, flew like an arrow, and in a few minutes stood before the Giant-Head,

with the basilisk eyes.

He threw the dwarf into its open jaws, where he was ground at once into powder; the prince then cut up the monstrous head into small pieces, and scattered them all over the plain.

Thus having got rid of both the dwarf and the giant, the prince rode on with the sleeping princess, upon the Golden-Mane horse, and at sunset they came to the same cross-roads, where he had first summoned him.

"Here, prince, we must part," said the Golden-Mane; "but here in the meadow is your own horse, and it is not far to your own home, so creep into my right ear, and come out at my left."

The prince did as he was told, and came out as he was before. His own horse recognized him, and came running with a joyful neigh to meet his master.

The prince was tired out with the long journey, so, having laid down his betrothed wife, still sleeping, on the soft grass, and covered her up from the cold, he laid down himself and went to sleep.

But that very night, one of Princess Ladna's rejected suitors, riding that way, saw by the light of the moon those two asleep, and he recognized in them the princess, and the prince, his fortunate rival. So first stabbing the latter through with his sabre, he carried off the princess, and bore her on horseback before him to her father.

The king welcomed him rapturously, as his daughter's deliverer. But when he found, to his dismay, that he could not awake her, with all his caresses, he asked the supposed rescuer what this meant.

"I do not know, Sir King," replied the knight. "After I had overtaken and slain the great enchanter, who was carrying off the princess, I found her as she is now, sound asleep."

Prince Dobrotek meanwhile, mortally wounded, had just strength enough left to summon the Wonderful Grey Horse,

who came instantly; and seeing what was the matter, flew off to the top of the mountain of Everlasting Life. On its summit were three springs the Water of Loosening, the Water of Healing, and the Water of Life. He sprinkled the dead prince with all three; Prince Dobrotek opened his eyes, and exclaimed: "Oh! how well I have slept!"

"You were sleeping the sleep of death," returned the Golden-Mane; "one of your rivals killed you sleeping, and carried off your princess home to her father, pretending to be her deliverer, in the hope of gaining her hand. But do not be afraid; she is still asleep, and only you can awaken her, by touching her forehead with the beard of the dwarf, which you have with you. Go then to her; I must be elsewhere."

The Golden-Mane vanished, and the prince, calling his own horse, and taking with him his invisible cap, betook himself to the court of his loved one's father.

But when he drew near he found that the city was all surrounded by enemies, who had already mastered the outer defences, and were threatening the town itself; and half of its defenders being slain, the rest were thinking of surrender.

Prince Dobrotek put on his invisible cap, and drawing his All-Cutting Sword, fell upon the enemy.

They fell to right and left as the sword smote them on each side, till one half of them were slain, and the rest ran away into the forest.

Unseen by anyone the prince entered the city, and arrived at the royal palace, where the king, surrounded by his knights, was hearing the account of this sudden attack, whereby his foes had been discomfited; but by whom no one could inform him.

Then Prince Dobrotek took off his invisible cap, and appearing suddenly in the midst of the assembly, said: "King and father! it was I who beat your enemies. But where is my bethrothed, Princess Ladna, whom I rescued from the wizard dwarf, with the seven-foot beard? whom one of your knights

treacherously stole from me? Let me see her, that I may waken her from her magic sleep."

When the traitor knight heard this he took to his heels; Prince Dobrotek touched the sleeping princess's forehead with the beard, she woke up directly, gazed at him fondly with her lovely eyes, but could not at first understand where she was, or what had happened to her.

The king caught her in his arms, pressed her to his heart, and that very evening he married her to Prince Dobrotek. He gave them half his kingdom, and there was a splendid wedding, such as had never been seen or heard of before.

The Good Ferryman and the Water Nymphs

There was once an old man, very poor, with three sons. They lived chiefly by ferrying people over a river; but he had had nothing but ill-luck all his life. And to crown all, on the night he died, there was a great storm, and in it the crazy old ferry-boat, on which his sons depended for a living, was sunk.

As they were lamenting both their father and their poverty, an old man came by, and learning the reason of their sorrow said: "Never mind; all will come right in time. Look! there is your boat as good as new."

And there was a fine new ferry-boat on the water, in place of the old one, and a number of people waiting to be ferried over.

The three brothers arranged to take turns with the boat, and divide the fares they took.

They were however very different in disposition. The two elder brothers were greedy and avaricious, and would never take anyone over the river, without being handsomely paid for it.

But the youngest brother took over poor people, who had no money, for nothing; and moreover frequently relieved their wants out of his own pocket.

One day, at sunset, when the eldest brother was at the ferry the same old man, who had visited them on the night their father died, came, and asked for a passage.

"I have nothing to pay you with, but this empty purse," he said.

"Go and get something to put in it then first," replied the

ferry-man; "and be off with you now!"

Next day it was the second brother's turn; and the same old man came, and offered his empty purse as his fare. But he met with a like reply.

The third day it was the youngest brother's turn; and when the old man arrived, and asked to be ferried over for charity, he answered: "Yes, get in, old man."

"And what is the fare?" asked the old man.

"That depends upon whether you can pay or not," was the reply; "but if you cannot, it is all the same to me."

"A good deed is never without its reward," said the old man: "but in the meantime take this empty purse; though it is very worn, and looks worth nothing. But if you shake it, and say: 'For his sake who gave it, this purse I hold, I wish may always be full of gold;' it will always afford you as much gold as you wish for."

The youngest brother came home, and his brothers, who were sitting over a good supper, laughed at him, because he had taken only a few copper coins that day, and they told him he should have no supper. But when he began to shake his purse and scatter gold coins all about, they jumped up from the table, and began picking them up eagerly.

And as it was share and share alike, they all grew rich very quickly. The youngest brother made good use of his riches, for he gave away money freely to the poor. But the greedy elder brothers envied him the possession of the wonderful purse, and contrived to steal it from him. Then they left their old home; and the one bought a ship, laded it with all sorts of merchandize, for a trading voyage. But the ship ran upon a rock, and every one on board was drowned. The second brother was no more fortunate, for as he was travelling through a forest, with an enormous treasure of precious stones, in which he had laid out his wealth, to sell at a profit, he was waylaid by robbers, who murdered him, and shared the spoil among them.

The youngest brother, who remained at home, having lost his purse, became as poor as before. But he still did as formerly, took pay from passengers who could afford it, ferried over poor folks for nothing, and helped those who were poorer than himself so far as he could.

One day the same old man with the long white beard came by; the ferry-man welcomed him as an old friend, and while rowing him over the river, told him all that had happened since he last saw him.

"Your brothers did very wrong, and they have paid for it," said the old man; but you were in fault yourself. Still, I will give you one more chance. Take this hook and line; and whatever you catch, mind you hold fast, and not let it escape you; or you will bitterly repent it."

The old man then disappeared, and the ferry-man looked in wonder at his new fishing-tackle a diamond hook, a silver line, and a golden rod.

All at once the hook sprang of itself into the water; the line lengthened out along the river current, and there came a strong pull upon it. The fisherman drew it in, and beheld a most lovely creature, upwards from the waist a woman, but with a fish's tail.

"Good ferry-man, let me go," she said; "take your hook out of my hair! The sun is setting, and after sunset I can no longer be a water-nymph again."

But without answering, the ferry-man only held her fast, and covered her over with his coat, to prevent her escaping. Then the sun set, and she lost her fish-tail.

"Now," she said: "I am yours; so let us go to the nearest church and get married."

She was already dressed as a bride, with a myrtle garland on her head, in a white dress, with a rainbow-coloured girdle, and rich jewels in her hair and on her neck. And she held in her hand the wonderful purse, that was always full of gold.

They found the priest and all ready at the church; were

married in a few minutes; and then came home to their wedding-feast, to which all the neighbours were invited. They were royally entertained, and when they were about to leave the bride shook the wonderful purse, and sent a shower of gold pieces flying among the guests; so they all went home very well pleased.

The good ferry-man and his marvellous wife lived most happily together; they never wanted for anything, and gave freely to all who came. He continued to ply his ferry-boat; but he now took all passengers over for nothing, and gave them each a piece of gold into the bargain.

Now there was a king over that country, who a year ago had just succeeded to his elder brother. He had heard of the ferry-man, who was so marvellously rich, and wishing to ascertain the truth of the story he had heard, came on purpose to see for himself. But when he saw the ferry-man's beautiful young wife, he resolved to have her for himself, and determined to get rid of her husband somehow.

At that time there was an eclipse of the sun; and the king sent for the ferry-man, and told him he must find out the cause of this eclipse, or be put to death.

He came home in great distress to his wife; but she replied: "Never mind, my dear. I will tell you what to do, and how to gratify the king's curiosity."

So she gave him a wonderful ball of thread, which he was to throw before him, and follow the thread as it kept unwinding towards the East.

He went on a long way, over high mountains, deep rivers, and wide regions. At last he came to a ruined city, where a number of corpses were lying about unburied, tainting the air with pestilence.

The good man was sorry to see this, and took the pains to summon men from the neighbouring cities, and get the bodies properly buried. He then resumed his journey.

He came at last to the ends of the earth. Here he found a

magnificent golden palace, with an amber roof, and diamond doors and windows.

The ball of thread went straight into the palace, and the ferry-man found himself in a vast apartment, where sat a very dignified old lady, spinning from a golden distaff.

"Wretched man! what are you here for?" she exclaimed, when she saw him. "My son will come back presently and burn you up."

He explained to her how he had been forced to come, out of sheer necessity.

"Well, I must help you," replied the old lady, who was no less than the Mother of the Sun, "because you did Sol that good turn some days ago, in burying the inhabitants of that town, when they were killed by a dragon. He journeys every day across the wide arch of heaven, in a diamond car, drawn by twelve grey horses, with golden manes, giving heat and light to the whole world. He will soon be back here, to rest for the night…. But…here he comes; hide yourself, and take care to observe what follows."

So saying she changed her visitor into a lady-bird, and let him fly to the window.

Then the neighing of the wonderful horses and the rattling of chariot wheels were heard, and the bright Sun himself presently came in, and stretching himself upon a coral bed, remarked to his mother: "I smell a human being here!"

"What nonsense you talk!" replied his mother. "How could any human being come here? You know it is impossible."

The Sun, as if he did not quite believe her, began to peer anxiously about the room.

"Don't be so restless," said the old lady; "but tell me why you suffered eclipse a month or two ago."

"How could I help it?" answered the Sun; "When the dragon from the deep abyss attacked me, and I had to fight him? Perhaps I should have been fighting with the monster till now,

if a wonderful mermaid had not come to help me. When she began to sing, and looked at the dragon with her beautiful eyes, all his rage softened at once; he was absorbed in gazing upon her beauty, and I meanwhile burnt him to ashes, and threw them into the sea."

The Sun then went to sleep, and his mother again touched the ferry-man with her spindle; he then returned to his natural shape, and slipped out of the palace. Following the ball of thread he reached home at last, and next day went to the king, and told him all.

But the king was so enchanted at the description of the beautiful sea-maiden, that he ordered the ferry-man to go and bring her to him, on pain of death.

He went home very sad to his wife, but she told him she would manage this also. So saying she gave him another ball of thread, to show him which way to go, and she also gave him a carriage-load of costly lady's apparel and jewels, and ornaments told him what he was to do, and they took leave of one another.

On the way the ferry-man met a youth, riding on a fine grey horse, who asked: "What have you got there, man?"

"A woman's wearing apparel, most costly and beautiful," he had several dresses, not simply one.

"I say, give me some of those as a present for my intended, whom I am going to see. I can be of use to you, for I am the Storm-wind. I will come, whenever you call upon me thus:

> 'Storm-wind! Storm-wind! come with speed!
> Help me in my sudden need!'"

The ferry-man gave him some of the most beautiful things he had, and the Storm-wind passed.

A little further on he met an old man, grey-haired, but strong and vigorous-looking, who also said: "What have you got there?"

"Women's garments costly and beautiful."

"I am going to my daughter's wedding; she is to marry the Storm-wind; give me something as a wedding present for her, and I will be of use to you. I am the Frost; if you need me call upon me thus:

'Frost, I call thee; come with speed;
Help me in my sudden need!'"

The ferry-man let him take all he wanted and went on. And now he came to the sea-coast; here the ball of thread stopped, and would go no further.

The ferry-man waded up to his waist into the sea, and set up two high poles, with cross-bars between them, upon which he hung dresses of various colours, scarves, and ribbons, gold chains, and diamond earrings and pins, shoes, and looking-glasses, and then hid himself, with his wonderful hook and line ready.

As soon as the morning rose from the sea, there appeared far away on the smooth waters a silvery boat, in which stood a beautiful maiden, with a golden oar in one hand, while with the other she gathered together her long golden hair, all the while singing so beautifully to the rising sun, that, if the ferry-man had not quickly stopped his ears, he would have fallen into a delicious reverie, and then asleep.

She sailed along a long time in her silver boat, and round her leaped and played golden fishes with rainbow wings and diamond eyes. But all at once she perceived the rich clothes and ornaments, hung up on the poles, and as she came nearer, the ferry-man called out:

"Storm-wind! Storm-wind! come with speed!
Help me in my sudden need!"

"What do you want?" asked the Storm-wind. The ferry-man without answering him, called out:

"Frost, I call thee; come with speed,

Help me in my sudden need!"

"What do you want?" asked the Frost.
"I want to capture the sea-maiden."

Then the wind blew and blew, so that the silver boat was capsized, and the frost breathed on the sea till it was frozen over.

Then the ferryman rushed up to the sea-maiden, entangling his hook in her golden hair; lifted her on his horse, and rode off as swift as the wind after his wonderful ball of thread.

She kept weeping and lamenting all the way; but as soon as they reached the ferry-man's home, and saw his wife, all her sorrow changed into joy; she laughed with delight, and threw herself into her arms.

And then it turned out that the two were sisters.

Next morning the ferry-man went to court with both his wife and sister-in-law, and the king was so delighted with the beauty of the latter, that he at once offered to marry her. But she could give him no answer until he had the Self-playing Guitar.

So the king ordered the ferry-man to procure him this wonderful guitar, or be put to death.

His wife told him what to do, and gave him a handkerchief of hers, embroidered with gold, telling him to use this in case of need.

Following the ball of thread he came at last to a great lake, in the midst of which was a green island.

He began to wonder how he was to get there, when he saw a boat approaching, in which was an old man, with a long white beard, and he recognized him with delight, as his former benefactor.

"How are you, ferry-man?" he asked. "Where are you going?"

"I am going wherever the ball of thread leads me, for I must fetch the Self-playing Guitar."

"This guitar," said the old man, "belongs to Goldmore, the lord of that island. It is a difficult matter to have to do with him; but perhaps you may succeed. You have often ferried me over the water; I will ferry you now."

The old man pushed off, and they reached the island.

On arriving the ball of thread went straight into a palace, where Goldmore came out to meet the traveller, and asked him where he was going and what he wanted.

He explained: "I am come for the Self-playing Guitar."

"I will only let you have it on condition that you do not go to sleep for three days and nights. And if you do, you will not only lose all chance of the Self-playing Guitar; but you must die."

What could the poor man do, but agree to this?

So Goldmore conducted him to a great room, and locked him in. The floor was strewn with sleepy-grass, so he fell asleep directly.

Next morning in came Goldmore, and on waking him up said: "So you went to sleep! Very well, you shall die!"

And he touched a spring in the floor, and the unhappy ferry-man fell down into an apartment beneath, where the walls were of looking-glass, and there were great heaps of gold and precious stones lying about.

For three days and nights he lay there; he was fearfully hungry. And then it dawned upon him that he was to be starved to death!

He called out, and entreated in vain; nobody answered, and though he had piles of gold and jewels about him, they could not purchase him a morsel of food.

He sought in vain for any means of exit. There was a window, of clearest crystal, but it was barred by a heavy iron grating. But the window looked into a garden whence he could hear nightingales singing, doves cooing, and the murmur of a brook. But inside he saw only heaps of useless gold and jewels, and his own face, worn and haggard, reflected a thousand

times.

He could now only pray for a speedy death, and took out a little iron cross, which he had kept by him since his boyhood. But in doing so he also drew out the gold-embroidered handkerchief, given him by his wife, and which he had quite forgotten till now.

Goldmore had been looking on, as he often did, from an opening in the ceiling to enjoy the sight of his prisoner's sufferings. All at once he recognized the handkerchief, as belonging to his own sister, the ferry-man's wife.

He at once changed his treatment of his brother-in-law, as he had discovered him to be; took him out of prison, led him to his own apartments, gave him food and drink, and the Self-playing Guitar into the bargain.

Coming home, the ferry-man met his wife half-way.

"The ball of thread came home alone," she explained; "so I judged that some misfortune had befallen you, and I was coming to help you."

He told her all his adventures, and they returned home together.

The king was all eagerness to see and hear the Self-playing Guitar; so he ordered the ferry-man, his wife, and her sister to come with it to the palace at once.

Now the property of this Self-playing Guitar was such that wherever its music was heard, the sick became well, those who were sad merry, ugly folks became handsome, sorceries were dissolved, and those who had been murdered rose from the dead, and slew their murderers.

So when the king, having been told the charm to set the guitar playing, said the words, all the court began to be merry, and dance except the king himself! … For all at once the door opened, the music ceased, and the figure of the late king stood up in his shroud, and said:

"I was the rightful possessor of the throne! and you, wicked brother, who caused me to be murdered, shall now

reap your reward!"

So saying he breathed upon him, and the king fell dead on which the phantom vanished.

But as soon as they recovered from their fright, all the nobility who were present acclaimed the ferry-man as their king.

The next day, after the burial of the late king, the beautiful sea-maiden, the beloved of the Sun, went back to the sea, to float about in her silvery canoe, in the company of the rainbow fishes, and to rejoice in the sunbeams.

But the good ferry-man and his wife lived happily ever after, as king and queen. And they gave a grand ball to the nobility and to the people…. The Self-playing Guitar furnished the music, the wonderful purse scattered gold all the time, and the king entertained all the guests right royally.

The Princess of the Brazen Mountain

There was a young prince, who was not only most handsome and well-grown, but also most kind-hearted and good. Now sooner or later kindness always meets its reward, though it may not seem so at first.

One summer's evening the prince was walking on the banks of a lake, when he looked up, and saw to his great surprise, in the air, against the rosy clouds of the sunset, three beautiful beings with wings, not angels, nor birds but three beautiful damsels.

And having alighted on the ground they dropped their wings and their garments, and left them lying on the shore and leaped into the cool water, and began splashing and playing about in it, like so many waterfowl.

As soon as the prince saw this he came out from his hiding-place in the bushes, picked up one pair of wings and hid himself again.

When they had been long enough in the water, the beautiful damsels came again to land, and dressed themselves quickly.

Two of them soon had on both their white dresses and their wings; but the youngest could not find hers.

They held a short consultation, and the result was, that the two elder flew away in the shape of birds, as fast as they could, to fetch another pair of wings for their younger sister.

They soon vanished in the blue sky; but she remained alone, wringing her hands, and crying.

"What are you crying for, you lovely maiden?" asked the prince, emerging from the bushes.

"Oh! I am so unhappy!" she replied. "I am a princess of

the Brazen Mountain; my sisters and I came here to bathe in the lake; and somebody has stolen my wings; so I must wait here, until they bring me another pair."

"I am a prince," he replied; "this is my father's kingdom; be my wife, and I will give you back your wings."

"Very well," she said; "I consent, only you must give me back my wings at once."

"Let us first go to church, and get married," he answered, and taking the lovely princess by the hand, he brought her to his father and mother, and asked their permission to marry her.

The king and queen were delighted with their beautiful daughter-in-law, gave them their blessing, and all was got ready for the wedding.

And directly they came back from church the prince, overcome with joy, kissed his bride, and gave her back her wings.

She took them joyfully, fastened them to her shoulders; then flew out of the window, and vanished.

All the wedding-guests were in consternation; the king looked very serious; the queen wept bitterly; but the prince so grieved after his bride, that, having obtained his parents' consent, he went out into the wide world to search for that Brazen Mountain, where he hoped to find her.

He travelled for a long time, inquiring about it of every one he met; but nobody had ever heard of such a mountain; and he began to give up all hope of ever finding it.

Late one evening he saw a twinkling light before him, which he followed, in the hope of coming to some habitation. It led him on a long way, across level plains, through deep defiles, and at length some way into a dark forest. But at last he came to whence the light proceeded from a solitary hermitage.

He went in; but found the hermit lying dead, with six wax candles burning around him. He had evidently been dead for

some time. Yet there seemed to be nobody near him, nor any inhabitants at all in this desolate region.

The prince's first thought was how to get him buried, and with proper rites, when there was no priest nor indeed any people at all to be found in the neighbourhood.

While he was thinking over this, something fell from a peg in the wall, close beside him; it was a leather whip.

The prince took it up, and read on the handle these words: "The Magic Whip."

As he knew its virtue, he called out:

"Ho! Magical Whip!
To right and left skip!
And do what I will!"

The whip jumped from his hand, became invisible, and flew away.

In a short time there was the hum of a multitude through the forest; and the head-forester entered, breathless, followed by a crowd of under-keepers, and many more people with them.

Some set about making a coffin, others began digging a grave, and the head-keeper rode off to fetch a priest.

And as soon as it was dawn mass was said; the bells began ringing from several far-distant churches; and at sunrise the corpse was decently buried. When the funeral was over all the people dispersed to their homes, and the Magical Whip returned of itself to the prince's hand.

He stuck it into his girdle, and went on, till after an hour or two he came to a clearing in the forest, where twelve men were fighting desperately among themselves.

"Stop, you fellows!" exclaimed the prince. "Who are you? and what are you fighting about?"

"We are robbers," they replied, "and we are fighting for these boots, which were the property of our deceased leader. Whoever has them can go seven leagues at one step; and he

who gets them will be our leader. As you are a stranger we will abide by your decision, as to whom this pair of boots shall belong, and give you a heap of gold into the bargain for your trouble."

The prince drew on the boots, took the Magical Whip from his girdle, and said:

"Ho! Magical Whip!
To right and left skip!
And do what I will!"

The whip jumped from his hand, became invisible, and well thrashed the robbers. In the midst of the confusion the prince made his escape, and having the boots on he went seven miles at every step, and was soon far enough away from the robbers' den.

But as he was no nearer to finding out where the Brazen Mountain was, he had no need to go quite so fast; so he took off the seven-league boots, put them under his arm, and the Magic Whip in his girdle, and went at his ordinary pace, till he came to a narrow path between some rocks, where again he came upon twelve men fighting.

They explained that they were fighting for an invisible cap, which had belonged to their late leader; and asked him, as a stranger, to decide who should have it.

So he set the Magical Whip, as before, to work; and there was a nice confusion among these robbers, for not seeing where the blows came from they fell upon one another; and at last, frightened out of their senses, they took flight, and scattered in all directions. The prince, having put on the invisible cap, was able to walk among them, and talk to them; and they all heard, though they could not see him.

He now began to consider whether he could not use all these treasures to help him to find the Brazen Mountain. So he drew on the seven-league boots, settled the invisible cap on his forehead, and taking the Magical Whip from his girdle,

said:

"Oh! thou wondrous Magic Whip!
Lead me on; I'll follow thee!
Onward to the Brazen Mountain
Lead me, where I fain would be!"

The whip sprang from his hand. It did not become invisible this time, but glided rapidly a little above the ground, like a boat over a calm sea. Though it flew like a bird, the prince was quite able to keep pace with it, because he had on the seven-league boots. He was scarcely aware of the fact, when in less than a quarter of an hour they came to a standstill at the Brazen Mountain.

At first the prince was overjoyed at having reached the goal of his wishes; but when he looked more closely at its smooth perpendicular sides, hard as adamant its summit lost in the clouds he was in despair; for how was he ever to get to the top of it?

However, he thought there must be some way up after all; so taking off his boots and cap, he set off to walk round the base of the mountain.

In half an hour he came to a mill, with twelve millstones. The miller was an old wizard, with a long beard down to the ground. He stood beside a stove whereupon a kettle was boiling stirring the contents with a long iron spoon, and piling wood on the fire.

The prince looked into the kettle.

"Good morning to you, gaffer. What are you doing there?"

"That's my own business," replied the miller gruffly.

"What mill is this?" the prince next asked.

"That's no business of yours," replied the miller.

The prince was not going to be satisfied with this; so he gave his usual orders to the Magical Whip, which forthwith became invisible, and began to lash the miller soundly. He tried to run away; but it was no use; till the prince took pity

on him, and called the whip back again. He put it up, and then said: "Whose mill is this?"

"It belongs to the three princesses of the Brazen Mountain," replied the miller. "They let down a rope here every day, and draw up all the flour they want by the rope."

As he said this a thick silken rope came down, with a loop at the end, which struck the threshold of the mill.

The prince made ready; and when the usual sack of wheat flour was bound fast in the loop, he climbed upon it, having first put on his invisible cap, and was thus drawn up to the top of the Brazen Mountain.

The three princesses, having drawn up their supply of flour, put it into their storehouse, and went back to their dwelling.

Their palace was most beautiful, all silver without, and all gold within. All the windows were of crystal; the chairs and tables were made of diamonds, and the floors of looking-glass. The ceilings were like the sky, with mimic stars and moon shining therein; and in the principal saloon there was a sun, with rays all round; beautiful birds were singing, monkeys were telling fairy tales; and in their midst amongst all this sat three most beautiful princesses.

The two eldest were weaving golden threads in their looms; but the youngest, the prince's wife, sat silently apart from her sisters, listening to the murmur of a fountain, her head leaning on her hand, in deep thought. And as she sat there two pearly tears coursed down her lovely face.

"What are you thinking of, sister?" asked the two elder princesses.

"I am thinking of the prince, my husband. I love to think of him, and I am so sorry for him, poor fellow! To think I left him for no fault at all; and when we loved one another so dearly! Oh! sisters! I shall have to leave you, and go back to him; only I fear he will never forgive me, however I entreat him, for having behaved so unkindly to him."

"I forgive you, I forgive you everything, darling!" exclaimed the prince throwing off the invisible cap, and embracing her rapturously.

Then she gave him wings like her own, and they flew away together. In an hour or two they arrived in his father's kingdom.

The king and queen welcomed them joyfully, and all was greatest joy and happiness henceforward.

The Bear in the Forest Hut

There was once an old man, who was a widower, and he had married an old woman, who was a widow. Both had had children by their first marriage; and now the old man had a daughter of his own still living, and the old woman also had a daughter.

The old man was an honest, hard-working, and good-natured old fellow, but too much under his wife's thumb. This was very unfortunate, because she was wicked, cunning, and sly, and a bad old witch.

Her daughter was only too like her in disposition; but she was her mother's darling.

But the old man's daughter was a very good sweet girl; nevertheless her stepmother hated her; she was always tormenting her, and wishing her dead.

One day she had beaten her very cruelly, and pushed her out of doors; then she said to the old man: "Your wretched daughter is always giving me trouble; she is such an ill-tempered, spoilt hussy, that I cannot do anything with her. So if you wish for peace in the house, you must put her into your waggon, drive her away into the forest, and come back without her."

The old man was very sorry to have to do this; for he loved his own little daughter most dearly. But he was so afraid of his wife that he dared not refuse; so he put the poor girl into his waggon, drove a long way into the forest, took her out, and left her there alone.

She wandered about a long time, gathering wild strawberries, to eat with a little piece of bread, which her father had given her. Towards evening she came to the door of a hut

in the forest, and knocked at the door.

Nobody answered her knock. So she lifted the latch, went in, and looked round there was nobody there.

But there was a table in one corner, and benches all round the walls, and an oven by the door. And near the table, close to the window, was a spinning-wheel, and a quantity of flax.

The girl sat down to the spinning-wheel, and opened the window, looked out, and listened; but nobody came.

But as it grew dusk she heard a rustle not far off, and from somewhere not far from the hut, a voice was heard, singing:

"Wanderer, outcast, forsaken!
Whom the night has overtaken;
If no crime your conscience stain,
In this hut to-night remain."

When the voice ceased, she answered:

"I am outcast and forsaken;
Yet unstained by crime am I:
Be you rich, or be you poor;
For this night here let me lie!"

Once more there was a rustle in the branches; the door opened, and there came into the room a bear!

The girl started up, very frightened; but the bear only said: "Good evening, pretty maiden!"

"Good evening to you, whoever you are," she replied, somewhat reassured.

"How did you come here?" he asked. "Was it of your own free will, or by compulsion?"

The maiden told him all, weeping; but the bear sat down beside her, and stroking her face with his paw, replied: "Do not cry, pretty one; you shall be happy yet. But in the meantime you must do just what I tell you. Do you see that flax? You must spin it into thread; of that thread you must weave cloth, and of that cloth you must make me a shirt. I shall come

here to-morrow at this same time, and if the shirt is ready I will reward you. Good-bye!"

So saying the bear made her a parting bow, and went out. At first the girl began to cry, and said to herself: "How can I do this in only twenty-four hours spin all that flax, weave it into cloth, and make a shirt out of it? Well! I must set to work! and do what I can.... He will at least see that my will was good, though I was unable to perform the task."

Thus saying, she dried her tears, ate some of her bread and strawberries, sat down to the spinning-wheel, and began to spin by the light of the moon.

The time went by quickly, as she worked, and it was daylight before she knew.

And there was no more flax left; she had spun out the last distaff-full.

She was astonished to see how fast the work had gone, and began to wonder how she was to weave the thread without any loom.

Thinking, she fell asleep.

When she woke the sun was already high in the heavens. There was breakfast ready on the table, and a loom under the window.

She ran down to the neighbouring brook, washed her face and hands, came back, said grace, and ate her breakfast; then she sat down to the loom.

The shuttle flew so fast that the cloth was all ready by noon.

She took it out into a meadow, sprinkled it from the brook, spread it out in the sun, and in one hour the cloth was bleached.

She came back with it to the hut, cut out the shirt, and began to stitch at it diligently.

The twilight was falling, and she was just putting in the last stitch, when the door opened, and the bear came in, and asked: "Is the shirt ready?"

She gave it to him.

"Thank you, my good girl; now I must reward you. You told me you had a bad stepmother; if you like, I will send my bears to tear her and her daughter in pieces."

"Oh! don't do that! I don't want to be revenged; let them live!"

"Let it be so then! Meanwhile make yourself useful in the kitchen; get me some porridge for supper. You will find everything you want in the cupboard in the wall; but I will go and fetch my bedding, for I shall spend to-night at home."

The bear left the room, and the maiden made up the fire in the oven, and began to get the porridge ready.

Just then she heard a sound under the bench, and there ran out a poor, lean little mouse, which stood up on its hind-legs, and said in human tones:

"Mistress! help me lest I die
A poor weak, little mouse am I!
I am hungry, give me food;
And to you will I be good."

The girl was sorry for the mouse, and threw it a spoonful of porridge.

The mouse ate it, thanked her, and ran away to its hole.

The bear soon came in, with a load of wood and stones; these he laid upon the stove, and having eaten a basin of porridge, he climbed upon the stove, and said: "Here, girl, is a bunch of keys on a steel ring. Put out the fire; but you must walk about the room all night, and keep on jingling these keys, till I get up; and if I find you alive in the morning you shall be happy."

The bear began snoring directly, and the old man's daughter kept walking about the hut, jingling the keys.

Soon the mouse ran out of its hole, and said: "Give me the keys, mistress, I will jingle them for you; but you must hide yourself behind the stove, for the stones will soon be flying

about."

So the mouse began to run up and down by the wall, under the bench. The maiden hid behind the oven, and about midnight the bear woke up, and threw out a stone into the middle of the room.

But the mouse kept running about, and jingling the keys. And the bear asked: "Are you alive?"

"I am," replied the girl, from behind the oven.

The bear began to throw stones and billets of wood, thick and fast from the stove, and every time he did so, he asked: "Are you alive?"

"I am," replied the girl's voice from behind the oven; and the mouse still ran up and down, jingling the keys.

With the dawn the cocks began to crow, but the bear did not wake. The mouse gave up the keys, and ran back to its hole; but the old man's daughter began to walk about the room, and jingled the keys.

At sunrise the bear came off the stove, and said: "O daughter of the old man! you are blest of heaven! For here was I, a powerful monarch, changed by enchantment into a bear, until some living soul should spend two nights in this hut. And now I shall soon become a man again, and return to my kingdom, taking you for my wife. But before this comes to pass, do you look into my right ear."

The old man's daughter threw back her hair, and looked into the right ear of the bear. And she saw a beautiful country, with millions of people, with high mountains, deep rivers, impenetrable forests, and pastures covered with flocks, well-to-do villages, and rich cities.

"What seest thou?" asked the bear.

"I see a lovely country."

"That is my kingdom. Look into my left ear."

She looked, and could not enough admire what she saw a magnificent palace, with many carriages and horses in the courtyard, and in the carriages rich robes, jewels, and all kinds

of rarities.

"What do you see?" asked the bear.

She described it all.

"Which of those carriages do you prefer?"

"The one with four horses," she replied.

"That is yours then," answered the bear, as he opened the window.

There was a sound of wheels in the forest, and a golden carriage presently drew up before the cottage drawn by four splendid horses, although there was no driver.

The bear adorned his beloved with a gown of cloth-of-gold, with diamond ear-rings, a necklace set with various precious stones, and diamond rings, saying: "Wait here a little while; your father will come for you presently; and in a few days, when the power of the enchantment is over, and I am a king again, I will come for you, and you shall be my queen."

So saying the bear disappeared into the forest, and the old man's daughter looked out of the window to watch for her father's coming.

The old man, having left his daughter in the wood, came home very sad; but on the third day he harnessed his waggon again, and drove into the forest, to see if she were alive or dead; and if she were dead at least to bury her.

Towards evening the old woman and her own daughter looked out of the window, and a dog, the favourite of the old man's daughter, suddenly rushed to the door, and began to bark:

"Bow! wow! wow! the old man's here!
Bringing home his daughter dear,
Decked with gold and diamonds' sheen,
Gifts to please a royal queen."

The old woman gave the dog an angry kick. "You lie, you big ugly dog! Bark like this!

'Bow! wow! wow! the old man's come!
His daughter's bones he's bringing home!'"

So saying she opened the door; the dog leaped forth; and she went with her daughter into the courtyard. They stood as if transfixed!

For in drove the carriage with four galloping horses, the old man sitting on the box, cracking his whip, and his daughter sat inside, dressed in cloth of gold, and adorned with jewels.

The old woman pretended she was overjoyed to see her, welcomed her with many kisses, and was anxious to know where she got all these rich and beautiful things.

The girl told her that they were all given to her by the bear in the forest hut.

Next day the old woman baked some delicious cakes, and gave them to her own daughter, saying to the old man: "If your wretched, worthless daughter has had such good luck, I am sure my sweet, pretty darling will get a deal more from the bear, if he can only see her. So you must drive her out in the waggon, leave her in the forest, and come back without her."

And she gave the old man a good push, to hasten his departure, shut the door of the cottage in his face, and looked out of the window to see what would happen.

The old man went to the stable, got out the waggon, put the horse to, helped his stepdaughter in, and drove away with her into the forest.

There he left her, turned his horse's head, and drove quickly home.

The old woman's daughter was not long in finding out the hut in the forest. Confident in the power of her charms she went straight into the little room. There was nobody within; but there was the same table in one corner, the benches round the walls, the oven by the door, and the spinning-wheel, under the window, with a great bundle of flax.

She sat down on one of the benches, undid her bundle, and began eating the cakes with great relish, looking from the window all the time.

It soon began to get dark, a strong wind began to blow, and a voice was heard singing outside:

"Wanderer! outcast, forsaken!
Whom the night has overtaken;
If no crime your conscience stain,
Here this night you may remain."

When the voice ceased she answered:

"I am outcast and forsaken;
Yet unstained by crime am I:
Be you rich, or be you poor,
For this night here let me lie."

Then the door opened, and the bear walked in.

The girl stood up, gave him a winning smile, and waited for him to bow first.

The bear looked at her narrowly, made a bow, and said: "Welcome, maiden…but I have not much time to stay here. I must go back to the forest; but between now and to-morrow evening you must make me a shirt, out of this flax; so you must set at once about spinning, weaving, bleaching, washing, and then about sewing it. Good-bye!"

So saying the bear turned, and went out.

"That's not what I came here for," said the girl, so soon as his back was turned, "to do your spinning, weaving, and sewing! You may do without a shirt for me!"

So saying, she made herself comfortable on one of the benches, and went to sleep.

Next day, at evening twilight, the bear came back, and asked: "Is the shirt ready?"

She made no answer.

"What's this? the distaff has not been touched."

Silence as before.

"Get me ready my supper at once. You will find water in that pail, and the groats in that cupboard. I must go and fetch my bedding, for to-night I will sleep at home."

The bear went out, and the old woman's daughter lit the fire in the stove, and began to prepare the porridge. Then the little mouse came out, stood on its hind-legs, and said:

"Mistress! help me, or I die!
A poor, weak little mouse am I!
I am hungry, give me food;
And to you will I be good."

But the unkind girl only caught up the spoon with which she was stirring the porridge, and flung it at the poor mouse, which ran away in a fright.

The bear soon came back with a huge load of stones and wood; instead of a mattress he arranged a layer of stones on the top of the stove, and covered this with the wood, in place of a sheet. He ate up the porridge, and said: "Here! take these keys; walk all night about the hut, and keep on jingling them. And if, when I get up tomorrow, I find you still alive, you shall be happy."

The bear was snoring at once, and the old woman's daughter walked up and down drowsily, jingling the keys.

But about midnight the bear woke up, and flung a stone towards the quarter whence he heard the jingling. It hit the old woman's daughter.

She gave one shriek, fell, and expired instantly.

Next morning the bear descended from the top of the oven, looked once at the dead girl, opened the cottage door, stood upon the threshold, and stamped upon it three times with all his force. It thundered and lightened; and in one moment the bear became a handsome young king, with a golden sceptre in his hand, and a diamond crown on his head.

And now there drew up before the cottage a carriage,

bright as sunshine, with six horses. The coachman cracked his whip, till the leaves fell from the trees, and the king got into the carriage, and drove away from the forest to his own capital city.

The old man having left his stepdaughter in the forest came home rejoicing in his daughter's joy. She was expecting the king every day. In the meantime he busied himself with looking after the four splendid horses, cleaning the golden carriage, and airing the costly horse-clothes.

On the third day after his return the old woman came down upon him and said: "Go and fetch my darling; she is no doubt all dressed in gold by this time, or married to a king; so I shall be a queen's mother."

The old man, obedient as ever, harnessed the waggon, and drove off.

When evening came the old woman gazed from the window; when the dog began to bark:

"Bow! wow! wow! the old man's come!
Your daughter's bones he's bringing home!"

"You lie!" exclaimed the old woman; "bark like this:

'Bow! wow! wow! the old man's here!
Driving home your daughter dear,
Decked in gold and diamonds' sheen,
Gifts to please a royal queen.'"

So saying she ran out of the house to meet the old man, coming back in the waggon; but she stood as if thunderstruck, sobbed, and wept, and was hardly able to articulate: "Where is my sweetest daughter?"

The old man scratched his head, and replied: "She has met with a great misfortune; this is all I have found of her a few bare bones, and her garments; in the wood, in the old hut…she has been devoured by wolves."

The old woman, wild with grief and despair, gathered up

her daughter's bones, went to some neighbouring cross-ways, and when a number of people had gathered together, she buried them there with weeping and lamentation; then she fell face downward on the grave and was turned to stone.

Meanwhile a royal carriage drew up in the courtyard of the old man's cottage, bright as the sun, with four splendid horses, and the coachman cracked his whip till the cottage fell to pieces with the sound.

The king took both the old man and his daughter into the carriage, and they drove away to his capital, where the marriage soon took place.

The old man lived happily in his declining years, as the father-in-law of a king, and with his sweet daughter, who had once been so miserable, a queen.

Appendix

Note I
THE FROG PRINCESS

This is certainly a "Nature story." The princess and her attendants are clearly personification of the elemental forces. The classical scholar cannot fail to be struck by the likeness of her metamorphoses to the story of Peleus and Thetis. Indeed the "Protean myth" so repeatedly occurs in these primitive Slavonic stories that it is impossible not to suspect a common origin.

Note II
PRINCESS MIRANDA AND PRINCE HERO

The old woman " Jandza" which word Polish dictionary-makers translate by "fury" appears very often both in Polish and Russian fairy tales, as a witch of witches. She is sometimes "Jaga"; and seems pretty malevolent, though capable of serving those who know how to manage her.

This story probably a symbolic one of the Spring and Winter, or the triumph of Light over Darkness, might be read at the present moment into an allegory of Poland, overrun, her people oppressed, starved, and all but extirpated by the malignant spirit of German militarism. Princess Miranda, herself unsleeping, awake, and watching, while all is desolation and despair around her, might be taken for the

Spirit of Poland herself, undying, but waiting for deliverance. But where is the Prince Hero, who shall deliver her?

Princess Miranda her name is cud-dziewica, i.e. "Wonder

Maiden" but is not "admired Miranda" the most obvious rendering?

Note III
THE WHIRLWIND

The name of the heroine "Ladna" signifies "pretty" or "beautiful" in Polish. It is not the word originally used; but being nearly equivalent, and of similar meaning, appears preferable.

The prince's name "Dobrotek," signifies "good," or "benefactor." Being easy of pronunciation, but not easily Englished into a proper name, it seemed best to retain it.

The whole story has a very Eastern cast. The mention of the "Seven seas," and the high mountains beyond them, suggest Persian or Indian influence. The ugly dwarf, with the long beard and diminutive stature, seems a malignant "Jinn," and to have his counterpart in a well-known legend of the Arabian Nights. But this is not the only Polish tale that gives this impression; more than one appears directly taken from these tales.

P. 50. "The Water of Loosening." Loosening is not perhaps an exact rendering, which is rather "unstiffening," or destroying the rigor mortis, as a preparative to healing a mortal wound, and breaking the sleep of death. These three waters always appear in stories, where this incident is used.

Note IV
THE PRINCESS OF THE BRAZEN MOUNTAIN

This story is rather freely translated, and much shortened from the original. There is much pious reflection, too long for insertion. The conversation between the prince and the sorcerer-miller is somewhat changed as much of it seemed rather irrelevant to the chief interest of the story, and lacking

in pithiness.

The story of a supernatural maiden, compelled by the theft of her wings to remain temporarily as a mortal with a mortal husband, has its counterpart in many lands. The oldest perhaps is a Persian story, related in Keightly's "Fairy Mythology," of a Peri, who being thus entrapped, lives several years as an ordinary woman; but accidently finding her wings again, puts them on, and deserts her mortal husband and children, remarking as she does so: "I loved you well enough, while we remained together; but I love my former husband better" and so vanishes away to Peristan.

The parallel legend of "Little Sealskin" will readily occur to memory.

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