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Kathleen B Anderson
from
Granny

Xmas. 1903


GRIMMS
FAIRY
TALES

Little Snow-White and the Pedlar-Woman.

GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

TRANSLATED BY

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WITH TEN COLOUR PLATES

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AND

NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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AND OTHERS

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Little Snow White

ONG, long ago, in the winter-time, when the snowflakes were falling like little white feathers from the sky, a beautiful Queen sat beside her window, which was framed in black ebony, and stitched. As she worked, she looked sometimes at the falling snow, and so it happened that she pricked her finger with her needle, so that three drops of blood fell upon the snow. How pretty the red blood looked upon the dazzling white! The Queen said to herself as she saw it, "Ah me! if only I had a dear little child as white as the snow, as rosy as the blood, and with hair as black as the ebony window-frame."

Soon afterwards a little daughter came to her, who was white as snow, rosy as the blood, and whose hair was as black as ebony—so she was called "Little Snow-White."

But alas! when the little one came, the good Queen died.

A year passed away, and the King took another wife. She was very beautiful, but so proud and haughty that she could not bear to be

surpassed in beauty by anyone. She possessed a wonderful mirror which could answer her when she stood before it and said—

"Mirror, mirror upon the wall,
Who is the fairest fair of all?"

The mirror answered—

"Thou, O Queen, art the fairest of all,"

and the Queen was contented, because she knew the mirror could speak nothing but the truth.

But as time passed on, Little Snow-White grew more and more beautiful, until when she was seven years old, she was as lovely as the bright day, and still more lovely than the Queen herself, so that when the lady one day asked her mirror—

"Mirror, mirror upon the wall,
Who is the fairest fair of all?"

it answered—

"O Lady Queen, though fair ye be,
Snow-White is fairer far to see."

The Queen was horrified, and from that moment envy and pride grew in her heart like rank weeds, until one day she called a huntsman and said, "Take the child away into the woods and kill her, for I can no longer bear the sight of her. And when you return bring with you her heart, that I may know you have obeyed my will."

The huntsman dared not disobey, so he led Snow-White out into the woods and placed an arrow in his bow to pierce her innocent heart, but the little maid begged him to spare her life, and the child's beauty touched his heart with pity, so that he bade her run away.

Then as a young wild boar came rushing by, he killed it, took out its heart, and carried it home to the Queen.

Poor little Snow-White was now all alone in the wild wood, and so frightened was she that she trembled at every leaf that rustled. So she began to run, and ran on and on until she came to a little house, where she went in to rest.

In the little house everything she saw was tiny, but more dainty and clean than words can tell.

Upon a white-covered table stood seven little plates and upon each plate lay a little spoon, besides which there were seven knives and forks and seven little goblets. Against the wall, and side by side, stood seven little beds covered with snow-white sheets.

Snow-White was so hungry and thirsty that she took a little food from each of the seven plates, and drank a few drops of wine from each goblet, for she did not wish to take everything away from one. Then,

because she was so tired, she crept into one bed after the other, seeking for rest, but one was too long, another too short, and so on, until she came to the seventh, which suited her exactly; so she said her prayers and soon fell fast asleep.

When night fell the masters of the little house came home. They were seven dwarfs, who worked with a pick-axe and spade, searching for copper and gold in the heart of the mountains.

They lit their seven candles and then saw that someone had been to visit them. The first said, "Who has been sitting on *my* chair?"

The second said, "Who has been eating from *my* plate?"

The third, "Who has taken a piece of *my* bread?"

The fourth, "Who has taken some of *my* vegetables?"

The fifth, "Who has been using *my* fork?"

The sixth, "Who has been cutting with *my* knife?"

The seventh, "Who has been drinking out of *my* goblet?"

The first looked round and saw that his bed was rumpled, so he said, "Who has been getting into my bed?"

Then the others looked round and each one cried, "Someone has been on my bed too!"

But the seventh saw little Snow-White lying asleep in his bed, and called the others to come and look at her; and they cried aloud with surprise, and fetched their seven little candles, so that they might see her the better, and they were so pleased with her beauty that they let her sleep on all night.

When the sun rose Snow-White awoke, and, oh! how frightened she was when she saw the seven little dwarfs. But they were very friendly, and asked what her name was. "My name is Snow-White," she answered.

"And how did you come to get into our house?" questioned the dwarfs.

Then she told them how her cruel step-mother had intended her to be killed, but how the huntsman had spared her life and she had run on until she reached the little house. And the dwarfs said, "If you will take care of our house, cook for us, make the beds, wash, mend, and knit, and keep everything neat and clean, then you may stay with us altogether and you shall want for nothing."

"With all my heart," answered Snow-White; and so she stayed.

She kept the house neat and clean for the dwarfs, who went off early in the morning to search for copper and gold in the mountains, and who expected their meal to be standing ready for them when they returned at night.

All day long Snow-White was alone, and the good little dwarfs warned her to be careful to let no one into the house. "For," said they, "your step-mother will soon discover that you are living here."

The Queen, believing, of course, that Snow-White was dead, and that therefore she was again the most beautiful lady in the land, went to her mirror, and said—

"Mirror, mirror upon the wall,
Who is the fairest fair of all?"

Then the mirror answered—

"O Lady Queen, though fair ye be,
Snow-White is fairer far to see.
Over the hills and far away,
She dwells with seven dwarfs to-day."

How angry she was, for she knew that the mirror spoke the truth, and that the huntsman must have deceived her. She thought and thought how she might kill Snow-White, for she knew she would have neither rest nor peace until she really was the most beautiful lady in the land. At length she decided what to do. She painted her face and dressed herself like an old pedlar-woman, so that no one could recognise her, and in this disguise she climbed the seven mountains that lay between her and the dwarfs' house, and knocked at their door and cried, "Good wares to sell—very cheap to-day!"

Snow-White peeped from the window and said, "Good day, good-wife, and what are your wares?"

"All sorts of pretty things, my dear," answered the woman. "Silken laces of every colour," and she held up a bright-coloured one, made of plaited silks.

"Surely I might let this honest old woman come in?" thought Snow-White, and unbolted the door and bought the pretty lace.

"Dear, dear, what a figure you are, child," said the old woman; "come, let me lace you properly for once."

Snow-White had no suspicious thoughts, so she placed herself in front of the old woman that she might fasten her dress with the new silk lace. But in less than no time the wicked creature had laced her so tightly that she could not breathe, but fell down upon the ground as though she were dead. "Now," said the Queen, "I am once more the most beautiful lady in the land," and away she went.

When the dwarfs came home they were very grieved to find their dear little Snow-White lying upon the ground as though she were dead. They lifted her gently and, seeing that she was too tightly laced, they cut the silken cord, when she drew a long breath and then gradually came back to life.

When the dwarfs heard all that had happened they said, "The pedlar-woman was certainly the wicked Queen. Now, take care in future that you open the door to none when we are not with you."

The wicked Queen had no sooner reached home than she went to her mirror, and said—

"Mirror, mirror upon the wall,
Who is the fairest fair of all?"

"Snow-White put her head out of the window."

And the mirror answered as before—

"O Lady Queen, though fair ye be,
Snow-White is fairer far to see.
Over the hills and far away,
She dwells with seven dwarfs to-day."

The blood rushed to her face as she heard these words, for she knew that Snow-White must have come to life again.

"But I will manage to put an end to her yet," she said, and then, by means of her magic, she made a poisonous comb.

Again she disguised herself, climbed the seven mountains, and knocked at the door of the seven dwarfs' cottage, crying, "Good wares to sell—very cheap to-day!"

Snow-White looked out of the window and said, "Go away, good woman, for I dare not let you in."

"Surely you can *look* at my goods," answered the woman, and held up the poisonous comb, which pleased Snow-White so well that she opened the door and bought it.

"Come, let me comb your hair in the newest way," said the woman, and the poor unsuspicious child let her have her way, but no sooner did the comb touch her hair than the poison began to work, and she fell fainting to the ground.

"There, you model of beauty," said the wicked woman, as she went away, "you are done for at last!"

But fortunately it was almost time for the dwarfs to come home, and as soon as they came in and found Snow-White lying upon the ground they guessed that her step-mother had been there again, and set to work to find out what was wrong.

They soon saw the poisonous comb, and drew it out, and almost immediately Snow-White began to recover, and told them what had happened.

Once more they warned her to be on her guard, and to open the door to no one.

When the Queen reached home, she went straight to the mirror and said—

"Mirror, mirror upon the wall,
Who is the fairest fair of all?"

And the mirror answered—

"O Lady Queen, though fair ye be,
Snow-White is fairer far to see.
Over the hills and far away,
She dwells with seven dwarfs to-day."

When the Queen heard these words she shook with rage. "Snow-White shall die," she cried, "even if it costs me my own life to manage it."

She went into a secret chamber, where no one else ever entered, and there she made a poisonous apple, and then she painted her face and disguised herself as a peasant woman, and climbed the seven mountains and went to the dwarfs' house.

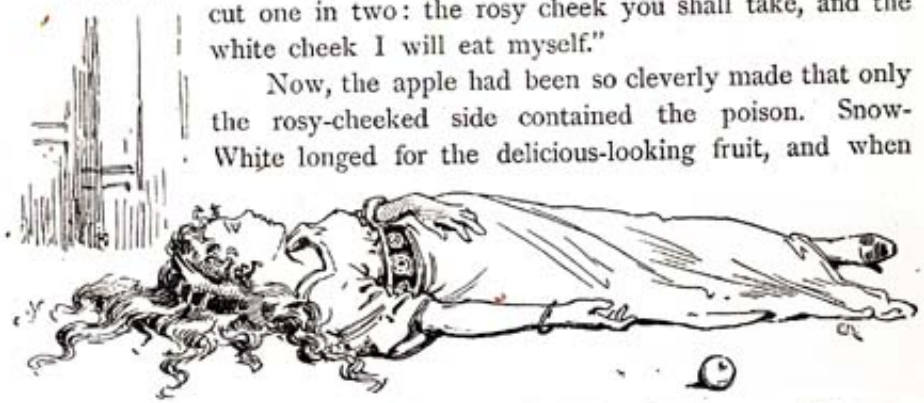
She knocked at the door. Snow-White put her head out of the window, and said, "I must not let anyone in; the seven dwarfs have forbidden me to do so."

"It's all the same to me," answered the peasant woman; "I shall soon get rid of these fine apples. But before I go I'll make you a present of one."

"Oh! no," said Snow-White, "for I must not take it."

"Surely you are not afraid of poison?" said the woman. "See, I will cut one in two: the rosy cheek you shall take, and the white cheek I will eat myself."

Now, the apple had been so cleverly made that only the rosy-cheeked side contained the poison. Snow-White longed for the delicious-looking fruit, and when



she saw that the woman ate half of it, she thought there could be no danger, and stretched out her hand and took the other part. But no sooner had she tasted it than she fell down dead.

The wicked Queen laughed aloud with joy as she gazed at her. "White as snow, red as blood, black as ebony," she said, "this time the dwarfs *cannot* awaken you."

And she went straight home and asked her mirror—

"Mirror, mirror upon the wall,
Who is the fairest fair of all?"

And at length it answered—

"Thou, O Queen, art fairest of all!"

So her envious heart had peace—at least, so much peace as an envious heart *can* have.

When the little dwarfs came home at night they found Snow-White lying upon the ground. No breath came from her parted lips, for she was dead. They lifted her tenderly and sought for some poisonous object which might have caused the mischief, unlaced her frock, combed her hair, and washed her with wine and water, but all in vain—dead she was and dead she remained. They laid her upon a bier, and all seven of them sat round about it, and wept as though their hearts would break, for three whole days.

When the time came that she should be laid in the ground they could not bear to part from her. Her pretty cheeks were still rosy red, and she looked just as though she were still living.

"We cannot hide her away in the dark earth," said the dwarfs, and so they made a transparent coffin of shining glass, and laid her in it, and wrote her name upon it in letters of gold; also they wrote that she was a King's daughter. Then they placed the coffin upon the mountain-top, and took it in turns to watch beside it. And all the animals came and wept for little Snow-White, first an owl, then a raven, and then a little dove.

For a long, long time little Snow-White lay in the coffin, but her form did not wither; she only looked as though she slept, for she was still as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as ebony.

It chanced that a King's son came into the wood, and went to the dwarfs' house, meaning to spend the night there. He saw the coffin upon the mountain-top, with little Snow-White lying within it, and he read the words that were written upon it in letters of gold.

And he said to the dwarfs, "If you will but let me have the coffin, you may ask of me what you will, and I will give it to you."

But the dwarfs answered, "We would not sell it for all the gold in the world."

Then said the Prince, "Let me have it as a gift, I pray you, for I cannot live without seeing little Snow-White, and I will prize your gift as the dearest of my possessions."

The good little dwarfs pitied him when they heard these words, and so gave him the coffin. The King's son then bade his servants place it upon their shoulders and carry it away, but as they went they stumbled over the stump of a tree, and the violent shaking shook the piece of poisonous apple which had lodged in Snow-White's throat out again, so that she opened her eyes, raised the lid of the coffin, and sat up, alive once more.

"Where am I?" she cried, and the happy Prince answered, "Thou art with me, dearest."

Then he told her all that had happened, and how he loved her better than the whole wide world, and begged her to go with him to his father's palace and be his wife. Snow-White consented, and went with him, and the wedding was celebrated with great splendour and magnificence.

Little Snow-White's wicked step-mother was bidden to the feast, and when she had arrayed herself in her most beautiful garments, she stood before her mirror, and said—

"Mirror, mirror upon the wall,
Who is the fairest fair of all?"

And the mirror answered—

"O Lady Queen, though fair ye be,
The *young* Queen is fairer far to see."

Oh! how angry the wicked woman was then, and so terrified, too, that she scarcely knew what to do. At first she thought she would not go to the wedding at all, but then she felt that she could not rest until she had seen the young Queen. No sooner did she enter the palace than she recognised little Snow-White, and could not move for terror.

Then a pair of red-hot iron shoes was brought into the room with tongs and set down before her, and these she was forced to put on and to dance in them until she could dance no longer, but fell down dead, and there was an end of her.

THE CHANGELING.

THERE was once a mother who had the dearest little baby in the world, but one day the brownies came and ran away with it, and in its stead they left a changeling, with a great big head and staring eyes, who did nothing but eat and drink the livelong day. The poor mother was much distressed, and told her neighbours of the terrible misfortune that had overtaken her, and asked their advice as to what she should do.

The neighbours told her to carry the changeling into the kitchen and set him before the hearth, then make up a good fire and set a couple of egg-shells full of water to boil upon it; this would make the changeling laugh, and if once he laughed there would be an end of him.

So the woman did all that her neighbours advised, and no sooner did the changeling see the egg-shells of water on the fire than he sat up in his cradle, and said—

"Though older than the hills am I
By fourscore years and more,
Never have I seen water boiled
In a thin egg-shell before."

Then he began to laugh, and immediately a whole crowd of little brownies came running in, and in their midst they carried the right little baby. They laid it down in the cradle before the fire, and then they picked up the changeling and carried him away.

THE little brother took his sister by the hand and said, "We have never had a happy moment since our dear mother died. Our step-mother beats us if we venture near her. Come, sister, let us go away into the wide world."

So they set out and wandered the whole day long, until they came to a great wood, and they were so weary with grief, hunger, and the long, long way, that they curled themselves up in a hollow tree and fell asleep.

The next morning when they awoke the sun was high in the heavens and shone warmly down upon the hollow tree. Then said the little brother—

"Sister dear, I am so thirsty. If only I knew of a little brook where I could quench my thirst. Listen, I think I can hear one gushing."

The little brother stood up, and took his sister's hand, and they went together to search for the brook.

Now, the wicked step-mother was a witch. She had seen the children go away, and, creeping silently after them, as witches creep, she had bewitched every stream in the wood.

When the children found a little brook that ran dashing over the stones, the brother stooped to drink, but the sister heard the words it murmured as it ran, "Whoever drinks of me will become a tiger. Whoever drinks of me will become a tiger."

So the little sister cried, "I pray you, dear brother, do not drink, or you will become a tiger and tear me in pieces."

And in spite of his great thirst the brother did not drink, but said, "I will wait until I come to the next stream."

But when they came to the second brook the sister heard it whisper, "Whoever drinks of me will become a wolf. Whoever drinks of me will become a wolf."

And the little sister cried, "Brother dear, I pray you do not drink, or you will become a wolf and eat me."

The little brother did not drink, but he said, "I will wait until I come to the next stream, and then, no matter *what* you say, I *must* drink, for my thirst is greater than I can bear."

When they came to the third brook the little sister heard it say as it rippled along, "Whoever drinks of me will become a fawn. Whoever drinks of me will become a fawn."

So she said, "Brother dear, I pray you do not drink, or you will become a fawn and run away from me."

But the brother knelt down as soon as ever he reached the brook, and, bending his head, began to drink, and as the first drops crossed his lips he was changed into a little fawn.

The sister wept bitterly over her poor little enchanted brother, and the fawn wept too, as he sat beside her.

"Never mind, dear little fawn," said the girl; "I will never forsake you." And she took her golden garter and fastened it round his neck, and then she gathered some rushes and plaited a soft cord, which she fastened to the garter and so led the little animal along, going farther and farther into the wood.

When they had gone a very long way they came to a little house. The sister peeped in, and, seeing that it was empty, thought to herself, "We may as well stay here always."

Then she searched for leaves and soft moss to make a comfortable bed for the fawn, and every morning she went out and gathered roots and berries and nuts for her own food, and for the fawn she brought tender grass, which he ate from her hand, and was happy and contented playing beside her.

For a long time they lived quite alone in the wilderness, but at length it happened that the King of that country ordered a great chase to be held in the wood.

Then the sound of horns, the barking of dogs, and the merry voices of the huntsmen were heard through the trees, and the fawn longed to be in the midst of it all.

"Oh, sister dear," he cried, "please let me go to the chase; I cannot bear to stay away any longer." And he begged so eagerly that at last the little sister consented.

"But," said she, "be sure you come back to me in the evening. I shall keep my door fast closed against the wild huntsmen, so you must knock and say, 'Let me in, little sister,' and then I shall know that it is you; but unless you say this I shall not open the door."

So the little fawn ran off into the wood, and the King and his huntsmen saw the beautiful creature, and pursued him, but they could not catch him, and when at length they thought they were close upon him, he sprang behind some bushes and disappeared.

When it grew dark the fawn ran to the little house, and knocked and said, "Little sister, open the door and let me in." Then the door was opened and he entered.

The next morning when the fawn again heard the sound of the horn, he said, "Please, little sister, let me go." And the sister opened the door and let him out.

When the King and his huntsmen saw the fawn they set to work to try and catch him, but he was too nimble for them. However, towards the end of the day they managed to surround him, and one of them wounded him in the foot, so that he could not run as quickly as before, and one of the huntsmen was able to keep up with him. This man saw

him go to the little house, knock at the door, and heard him say, "Little sister, let me in," and then saw that the house door was opened for him to enter and closed again immediately.

He went straightway to the King, and told him all that he had seen and heard.

The little sister was terribly frightened when she saw that her dear fawn was wounded. But the next morning the fawn was as well as ever again, for the wound had only been a slight one, and when he heard the sound of the horn nothing would satisfy him but that he must be off once more.

So there was nothing left for the sister to do but to open the door and let him go, but it was with a heavy heart that she did so.

When the King saw the fawn he told his huntsmen to chase him the whole day long, but on no account to harm him. And, as soon as the sun went down, the King went to the little house in the wood, and knocked and said, "Little sister, let me in." The door opened and the King entered, and there stood the most beautiful maiden he had ever seen. She was very frightened when she saw a man wearing a golden crown, instead of her fawn, but the King held out his hand to her and smiled.

"Will you come with me to my castle," he said, "and be my own dear wife?"

This the maiden consented to do, but only on condition that the fawn went too; so the King promised that he should go with them, and that he should have everything his heart could desire his whole life long.

At that moment the fawn came home, so the maiden fastened the cord of rushes to his collar and led him out of the house herself. The King lifted her upon his horse, and so they rode together to his castle, where the wedding was celebrated with great splendour.

So now the little sister was a great Queen, and she and her husband lived happily together, whilst the fawn was tended with the greatest care, and played about in the pleasant castle gardens.

When the news of their good fortune reached the ears of the wicked step-mother, she was beside herself with hatred and envy, and could think of nothing but how she could work them some mischief. Her own daughter, who was as ugly as night and had only one eye, reproached her, saying, "It should have been my luck to be a queen."

"Hush," said the old woman. "Take comfort, for be sure that when the right time comes I shall be ready."

Time passed on, and the Queen had a dear little son. Then one day when the King was out hunting and the Queen lay sick in bed, the wicked step-mother disguised herself as a servant, and went in to the Queen, and told her that she had prepared a healing bath which would soon make her well again. The ugly daughter was not far off, and she and her mother carried the Queen into a room, where there was no healing bath, but a great hot fire, which soon suffocated the poor invalid.

When this was done the old woman put a cap upon her daughter's head, and made her take the form of the Queen, and get into bed. But, as she could not give her an eye in place of the one which was missing, she told her to turn the blind side to the pillow, so that the King might not notice it.

When the King came home in the evening he went to his wife's bedside, but the old woman called to him that on no account must he draw back the curtains, for the light would be too strong for the Queen, and she must have rest. So he went away, little knowing that it was a false Queen who lay there in bed.

Midnight came, and everyone was fast asleep except the baby's nurse, who was watching beside his cradle.

Suddenly she saw the door open and the real Queen enter. She bent over the cradle and took her baby in her arms, fondled it, and then laid it cosily to rest again.

She did not forget the fawn, but went to the corner where he lay and stroked his back. Then softly and silently she left the room, and in the morning when the nurse asked the guard if they had seen anyone enter the castle during the night, they answered, "No, we have seen no one."

In this manner, without ever speaking, she came for many nights, and though the nurse saw her each time, she was afraid to tell anyone.

But after a time the Queen did speak, and this was what she said:

"How fares my baby? How fares my fawn? Twice more will I come, and then never more."

The nurse answered never a word, but when the Queen had vanished she went to the King and told him all.

"What can it mean?" said he. "To-morrow night I will watch beside the child myself."

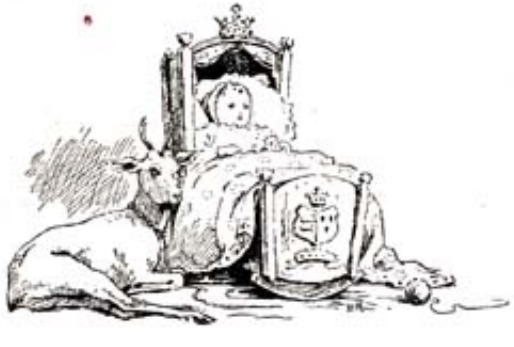
So in the evening he went to the nursery, and at midnight the Queen appeared, and said, "How fares my baby? How fares my fawn? Once more will I come, and then never more."

She took the child in her arms, fondled it as usual, and then disappeared. The King was afraid to speak to her, but the next night he watched again, and this time she said, "How fares my baby? How fares my fawn? I have come once more, but never again."

Then the King could restrain himself no longer, but held out his arms towards her, and said, "You must surely be my own dear wife?"

And she answered, "Yes, I am indeed your own true wife," and in a moment her life came back to her, and her cheeks grew rosy red with health and strength and happiness.

She told the King how wickedly the old witch and her daughter had behaved towards her, and he ordered them both to be brought before the judge, who condemned the daughter to be sent out into the wood, whilst the old witch was burnt to ashes. No sooner had this been done than the fawn received his human form again, and the brother and sister lived happily all the rest of their days.



A CERTAIN King had three sons, whom he loved equally well, so that he could not make up his mind which of them should succeed him as King when he was dead. When the time came for him to die, he called them to his bedside, and said, "My dear children, I have at length thought of a plan which I will carry out. It is this. Whichever of you can prove to me that he is the laziest of the three, shall be King after me."

Then said the eldest son, "Father, the kingdom is mine. I am so lazy that when I lie down to rest, even if something were to fall into my eyes, I would not shut them, though in so doing I might go to sleep."

The second said, "Father, the kingdom belongs to me, for I am so lazy that when I sit beside the fire to warm myself, I would rather my heels were burnt than take the trouble to draw back my legs."

But the third said, "Father, the kingdom is mine, for even if I were about to be hanged, and had the rope about my neck, and someone gave me a sharp knife and told me that I might cut it through, I would sooner be hanged than raise my hand to my neck."

When the father heard this, he said, "You have gone the farthest, my son, and therefore the kingdom belongs to you!"

THERE was once a fisherman who lived with his wife in a wretched hovel close to the seashore, and every day the man fished, and fished, and fished. One day, as he sat watching his line and gazing down into the deep water, he suddenly felt a bite, and, drawing the line cautiously out, he found he had caught a huge flounder.

At once the fish began to speak. "Hark you!" he said, "I am no fish, but an enchanted Prince. I should not be good to eat, so you may as well put me back into the sea."

"There is no need to make a favour of it," replied the fisherman. "I should not think of eating a flounder that could speak," and he unhooked the fish, let him go, and then went home to his wife.

"Husband," said she, "have you caught nothing to-day?"

"No," replied the man, "nothing but a flounder, who said he was an enchanted Prince; so I threw him back into the water."

"Did you not wish for anything first?" asked the wife.

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

"Well," said his wife, "it is not very pleasant to be obliged to live in this dirty hovel always. Why did you not wish for a cottage for us? Go back and ask for one—he is sure to give it to you."

"I don't like to," said the man.

"Nonsense," replied the wife; "did you not give him back his life? He will certainly not refuse you, so go back at once and ask."

The man did not wish to go, but as his wife was so anxious about it, he did not care to disappoint her, and went.

When he reached the sea, it was all green and yellow, and no longer smooth as it had been.

He stood beside it and called—

"Flounder, flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, back to me,
For Dame Isabel, my wife,
Begs a favour, for thy life."

At once the flounder came swimming towards him and said, "Well, then, what does she want?"

"Well," said the man, "she wishes for a cottage."

"Go home," replied the flounder, "and you will find she has it."

When the man went home, his wife was no longer in the hovel, but sat upon a bench before the door of a small cottage. She took his hand and said, "Come in and see if our present home is not better than the last one."

So they went in and found the prettiest little home imaginable.

"Is it not all nice?" said the wife.

"It is indeed," replied the husband, "and we ought to be content for the rest of our lives."

"I should think so too," said the wife, after which they ate some food, and went to bed.

Everything went well for a week or a fortnight, and then the woman said, "Husband, the cottage is too small for us. I should like to live in

a great stone castle. Go back to the flounder and tell him to give us one."

"Wife," replied the man, "the cottage is good enough for us. Why should you wish to live in a castle?"

"Because I do," answered the wife; "the flounder can give it to us if he likes. You go and ask him."

"But, wife," said the man, "he has only just given us the cottage. I don't like to ask for more. He might be offended."

"Just you go and ask him," the woman bade him. "He will give it willingly, I am sure."

The man's heart was heavy, and he said sadly to himself, "I know it is not right."

But all the same he went.

When he came to the sea, the water was purple, and blue, and grey, and no longer transparent and green and yellow. Still, it was not stormy. He stood beside it, and said—

"Flounder, flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, back to me,
For Dame Isabel, my wife,
Begs a favour, for thy life."

"What does she want?" asked the flounder.

"Alas!" replied the man, who was half afraid to speak, "she wants a great stone castle."

"Go home, and you will find her standing before the door of it," replied the flounder.

So the man went towards his home, but when he came to the place where it had been, he found a great, big stone palace, and his wife was standing upon the steps, ready to go in.

She took his hand and said, "Let us go in," and in they went. Inside the castle was a great hall, paved with marble. The walls were hung with beautiful tapestries, and the furniture was of gold, crystal candelabra hung from the ceilings, and the floors were covered with soft carpets, whilst the tables groaned beneath the weight of delicious foods and wines.

"Well," said the woman, "is not this fine, eh?"

"Yes," replied the man, "and we must be contented with it."

"We will think about that," said she, and then they went to bed.

The next morning the wife awoke first. From where she lay she could see a beautiful country, stretching out before her.

Her husband was scarcely awake when she nudged him, and said, "Get up, and look out of the window. Would it not be splendid to be King over all that land? Go to the flounder, and tell him we wish to be King."

"Wife, wife," cried the man, "why should we wish to be King? *I* don't want to be, I'm sure."

"But I do, and I *will* be King," said she. "Go to the flounder, and tell him I wish to be King."

"But why do you want to be King?" he asked. "I don't like to say it even."

"And why not, pray?" she said. "Just go straight away, and tell the flounder that I must be King."

The man went, but he was very unhappy about it. "I know it is not right," he thought to himself, but he went all the same.

When he came to the sea, it was almost black, and heaved up and

down, whilst a most disagreeable smell came from it. He stood beside it, and cried—

"Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, back to me,
For Dame Isabel, my wife,
Begs a favour, for thy life."

"Well, what does she want?" asked the flounder.

"Alas!" said the man, "she wishes to be King."

"Go home, and you will find that she is," said the flounder.

So the man went back, but when he came to where the castle had been, he found a much larger one, with a high tower, and sentinels and soldiers stood around to keep guard, and drums and trumpets were playing.

When the doors were opened he saw the court in all its splendour. His wife sat upon a throne of gold and diamonds, with a crown upon her head and a jewelled sceptre in her hand, whilst her maids-of-honour were ranged in rows on either side, each of them being just a head shorter than the one before her.

The man went up to her and said, "Well, wife, and so you are King, eh?"

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

He stood and looked at her for a time and then said, "Now that you are King, you must really be contented and wish for nothing more."

"But I am not contented," said the woman. "I don't know what to do to pass the time away. I am King, it is true, but I want to be Emperor as well."

"What!" cried the man, "you want to be Emperor?"

"Yes," said she, "I do, and you must go to the flounder and tell him so."

"But, wife, he cannot make you an Emperor, and I don't like to ask him even. There is but one Emperor in the land, so he cannot make you one."

"Don't speak to me like that!" cried the woman. "Am I not King, whilst you are only my husband? Go at once and do as I bid you. If the flounder could make me a King, he can make me an Emperor also, and I *will* be an Emperor, I tell you. Go away this minute."

"He found a great big stone palace, and his wife was standing upon the steps."

So he was forced to go, but he was very much troubled about it.

"It cannot be right to be going backwards and forwards to the flounder like this," he thought. "And an Emperor she will be. Oh, it is *too* shameless! Surely the flounder will have lost all patience."

When he came to the sea he found it was quite black and thick, and bubbled and boiled, and seemed to curdle with the raging wind which blew over it. And the man was afraid, but still he went and stood beside it, and cried—

"Flounder, flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, back to me,
For Dame Isabel, my wife,
Begs a favour, for thy life."

"Well, what does she want?" asked the flounder.

"Oh, flounder," said the man, "she wants to be Emperor."

"Go home and you will find she has her wish."

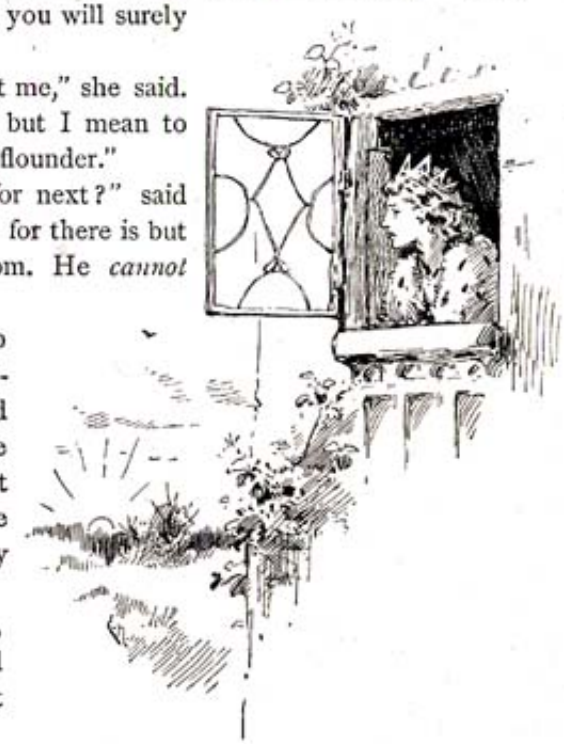
So the man went towards home, and when he reached it he saw that the palace was made of polished marble and gold. When he entered he saw his wife sitting upon a throne of gold which was two miles high; she wore a golden crown three ells high at the very least, and set with diamonds and carbuncles.

In one hand she held the sceptre and in the other the imperial orb, and on both sides of her stood her bodyguard, each man being shorter than the one before him, ranging from a giant two miles high to a dwarf as small as one's little finger, and before her dukes and princes bowed down.

The man went up to her, and said, "Wife, are you really the Emperor now?"

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

And he stood and looked at her for a time and then he said, "Well, wife, now that you are Emperor you will surely be contented."



"Don't stand there staring at me," she said. "It is true that I am Emperor, but I mean to be Pope also. Go and ask the flounder."

"Wife, what will you wish for next?" said the man. "You cannot be Pope, for there is but one in the whole of Christendom. He *cannot* make you Pope."

"Husband, be quick and do my errand," commanded the Emperor. "If the flounder could make me Emperor he can make me Pope. Away with you at once. Recollect that I am the Emperor, and you are only my husband."

Then he was afraid and went, but his knees and legs trembled beneath him, and he felt faint with fear.

A fierce wind blew across the land, the clouds gathered, and towards evening it grew very dark. The leaves fell from the trees with the fury of the storm, the waves roared and dashed themselves upon the shore. In the distance the fisherman could distinguish ships in sore distress, pitching and tossing at the mercy of the waters. And yet high up in the heavens there was left just one little bit of blue, though all around was the lurid glare of the storm.

Then in fear and desperation the fisherman went and stood beside the shore, and cried—

"Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, back to me,
For Dame Isabel, my wife,
Begs a favour, for thy life."

"Well, what does she want?" asked the flounder.

"Alas," cried the man, "she wishes to be Pope."

"Go home, and you will find she has her wish," cried the flounder.

So he went towards home, and when he reached it, he saw what seemed to be a large church surrounded by palaces. He entered, and then he saw his wife, robed in garments of pure gold, sitting upon a throne much higher than the Emperor's had been, and wearing three golden crowns upon her head.

"Wife," said the man, gazing hard at her, "are you *really* Pope?"

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

He stood looking at her for some time, and the splendour dazzled his eyes as though he were looking at the bright sun.

"Surely, surely, you will be contented now," he said, but she did not answer, only looked straight before her as though she were a wooden image. So he said again, "Wife, you will be contented now that you are Pope, will you not? There is nothing left for you to wish for?"

"I am not so sure about that," replied the woman.

They went to bed, but the woman could not rest, for she was still dissatisfied, and her greed would not let her sleep, because the whole time she was wondering what there was left for her to wish for.

The man slept soundly, for he had walked a long way that day, but the woman tossed from side to side, thinking and thinking what she could possibly wish for now, but she could not find anything.

At length the sun began to rise, and as she watched it through the window she thought, "I wish *I* could make the sun and moon rise," and she nudged her husband, and said, "Wake up; go and tell the flounder that I want to make the sun and moon rise."

The man was still half asleep, but he fell out of bed with sheer horror at these words. He thought he *must* have mistaken her, so he screamed, "*What* did you say?"

"Husband," said she, "if I am bound to see the sun and moon rise and know that *I* cannot order them to do it, I shall never know a happy hour again. Go at once, and tell the flounder that I wish to do this." She had such a horrible look upon her face that the man trembled, and fell upon his knees before her.

"Wife, I cannot ask this thing," he cried, "and the flounder cannot

grant it. Emperor and even Pope he made you, but it is only God Himself who can order the sun and moon to rise."

Then she fell into a great rage, so that her hair stood on end, and she pushed him with her foot and cried, "I will stand it no longer. Go at once—at once, do you hear?"

So he dressed himself and ran as though he were mad.

Outside a fearful storm was raging, so that he could scarcely keep his feet; houses and trees were falling, the mountains shook, and huge rocks rolled down into the sea, the sky was black as pitch, and it thundered and lightened. The black waves came dashing along the shore mountains high and crested with white foam.

Then the man screamed as loudly as he could, and even then did not hear his own words—

"Flounder, flounder in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, back to me,
For Dame Isabel, my wife,
Begs a favour, for thy life."

"Well, what does she want?" said the flounder.

"Alas," said the man, "she wants to make the sun and moon rise."

"Go home," said the flounder, "and you will find her sitting in the dirty hovel again."

And there the man found her, and there they live still to this very day.

THERE was once a King whose palace was near a great wood, in which all kinds of wild animals roamed. One day he sent a huntsman into this wood to shoot a fat buck, but the huntsman never returned.

"Perhaps he has met with an accident," said the King, and the next day he sent two more huntsmen to look for him; but these two did not come back either.

On the third day he sent for all his huntsmen, and bade them search the whole wood through until they found the three who were lost.

They went, but not one of them ever returned; neither did a single hound out of the whole pack they had taken with them ever find its way home again.

From that time forth no one would venture into the wood; solitude and deepest silence reigned there; only now and again an eagle or a hawk was seen to hover above it; but for that it seemed deserted by all.

This lasted for many years, and then it chanced that a strange huntsman came to the King, asked for a situation with him, and offered to enter the dangerous wood.

But the King would not give his permission to this. "It is not safe," he said, "and you would probably share the fate of those who went before, and never come out alive."

The huntsman answered, "Sire, I will go at my own risk, and I am afraid of nothing."

So the huntsman went into the wood, taking his dog with him, and before long the animal found some game and was in full chase of it, when suddenly it came to a standstill before a deep pool, out of which a naked arm appeared, seized the dog and dragged him beneath the water.

When the huntsman saw this he at once returned, and fetched three men with buckets to bale out the water. When they came at length to the bottom of the pool, there lay a wild man, whose body was brown like rusty iron, and whose hair hung down over his face in long locks that reached to his knees. They bound him with cords and led him away to the castle.

What excitement and surprise there was, to be sure, over the wild man of the wood! The King ordered him to be shut up in an iron cage, which was placed in the courtyard. It was forbidden on pain of death to open the door of the cage, and the Queen herself was obliged to take care of the key.

From this time it became quite safe for anyone to go into the wood.

The King had a little son who was eight years old, and once as he was playing in the courtyard he let his golden ball roll into the cage.

"Give me back my ball," cried the boy, but the man answered, "Not until you have opened the door of my cage."

"I cannot do that," said the child, "for the King has forbidden it," and then he ran away.

The Prince with the Golden Locks.

The next day he came again and asked for his ball, but the wild man only said, "First open the door;" but the boy would not.

On the third day, when the King was away hunting, the boy came to the cage and said, "Even if I would, I could not open the door, for I have not got the key."

And the wild man answered, "It is under your mother's pillow; you can fetch it."

The boy, who wanted his ball very badly indeed, thought no more about it, but just went and fetched the key. Even then it was difficult to open the door, and the boy pinched his fingers; but at length he managed it, and the wild man came out, gave him the ball, and hurried away.

Then the boy began to be afraid, and cried, "Please, please, don't go away, wild man, or I shall be beaten."

The wild man turned, lifted the boy in his arms, set him upon his shoulder, and hastened back into the wood.

When the King came home, he saw the empty cage, and asked the Queen what had happened. She knew nothing about the matter, but when she came to look for the key she could not find it. She called her son, but no one answered, and though the King sent messengers in every direction, they could not find him.

Then he guessed what had happened, and sorrow reigned in the royal palace.

When the wild man reached the dark wood he lifted the boy from his shoulder and said, "Father and mother are lost to you for ever, but because you set me free, I will take care of you, for I am sorry for you. If only you will obey me, you may be happy. Of gold and precious treasures I have enough and to spare."

He made a bed of soft moss for the boy, upon which he slept soundly, and the next morning the man led him to a fountain and said, "See, he Golden Fountain is clear as crystal. You must sit beside it the whole day long, and take care that nothing falls into it, else it will be dishonoured. Every evening I shall come and see if you have obeyed my commands."

The boy seated himself beside the fountain, and saw now a little golden fish, now a little golden snake, twist and turn in the clear water, and he was careful to see that nothing fell into it. As he sat there he

had a sudden pain in his finger, and, without thinking what he was doing. he put it into the water.

He took it out again at once, but saw that it was covered with gold, and though he took great pains to dry it and rub it off, he could not do so. In the evening the Man of Iron came back, looked at the boy, and said, "What has happened to the fountain?"

"Nothing at all," replied the boy, but he held his finger behind his back so that the man should not see it.

But the man said, "You have dipped your finger in the fountain. I will forgive you this time, but see that you do not let anything else fall into it."

By daybreak the boy was seated beside the fountain, and was as careful as he could be that nothing should fall into it, but again his finger hurt him, and this time he held it to his head, when alas, a single hair fell down into the water. He took it out as quickly as he could, but it was already covered with gold. When the Man of Iron came he knew beforehand what had happened. "You have allowed a hair to fall into the fountain," he said. "I will overlook it this time, but if it happens again the fountain will be dishonoured, and I shall be able to keep you with me no longer."

The third day the boy sat beside the fountain, and no matter how his finger hurt him he would not move it. But the time passed slowly away, and to amuse himself he glanced at his own face, reflected in the surface of the water. Lower and lower he bent to look right down into the eyes when his long hair fell down from off his shoulders into the water. He straightened himself at once, but his whole head of hair was covered with gold and shone like the sun itself.

You can think how frightened the poor boy was. He took his handkerchief and bound it about his head, so that the Man of Iron should not see it, but as soon as he came he knew what had happened, and said, "Untie the handkerchief."

Then the golden locks came rolling down, and, though the boy excused himself as best he could, it was all in vain.

"You have failed in your trial," said the man, "and you can stay with me no longer. Go out into the world and learn what poverty means. But because I know that your heart is good and true, I will do

the best I can for you. If ever you are in trouble, come to the wood and cry aloud, 'Man of Iron, Man of Iron!' and I will come and help you. My power is great, greater even than you can guess, and I have gold and silver in abundance."

So the King's son left the wood, and walked by beaten and unbeaten tracks ever onward, until at length he came to a great city.

There he sought for work, but he could find none, for he had never learnt to do anything useful.

At length he went to the castle, and asked if they would not take him in. The royal servants did not know what use they could possibly make of him, but as he pleased them they bade him stay, and in the end the cook engaged him to fetch water and wood, and sweep the ashes together.

It happened once, when there was no one else at hand, that the cook bade the boy carry the food to the royal table, and as he did not wish his golden hair to be seen he did not remove his cap.

Such a thing had never happened before, and the King said, "When you approach the royal table you should take off your cap."

"Alas, your majesty," he replied, "I cannot, for I have a bad sore place upon my head."

Then the King sent for the cook and scolded him soundly for taking such a boy into his service, and told him to send him away at once. But the cook, who was sorry for him, exchanged him for the gardener's boy.

So now the boy had to plant and water the flowers, and hoe and dig in the gardens, no matter what the weather might be. Once in the summer-time, when he was quite alone in the garden, he took off his cap so that the wind might cool his forehead, for he was very warm. As the sun shone down upon his hair it made it sparkle and shimmer, so that the rays darted right into the bed-chamber of the King's daughter, and she sprang up to see what it was. She saw the boy, and called to him to bring her a nosegay of flowers.

He hastened to replace his cap, and then gathered a bunch of wild-flowers and bound them together. As he climbed the staircase with them, he met the gardener, who said to him, "How can you take a bunch of common flowers like those to the Princess? Throw them away at once, and go and gather the rarest and most beautiful you can find."

But the boy said, "No; the wild ones smell the sweetest and will please her best."

When he entered the room the Princess said, "Take off your cap. It is not seemly that you should keep it on in my presence."

Then the boy answered, "I cannot, for I have a bad sore upon my head." But the Princess seized his cap, and pulled it off, and his golden locks rolled down about his shoulders, so that it was a sight to behold.

He would have run away there and then, but she grasped his arm and gave him a handful of golden ducats. But he cared nothing for the money, and only went straight to the gardener and gave it to him, saying, "I will make a present of it to your children. They can play with it."

The next day the Princess again asked for a bunch of wildflowers, and when he brought them for her, she at once tried to seize his cap,

but he held it with both hands so that she could not. Again she gave him a handful of ducats, and again he gave them to the gardener's children for playthings.

The third day it was just the same: the Princess could not take off his cap, and the boy would have none of her money.

Not long afterwards a war broke out, and the King was uncertain as to whether his army could overcome his enemies, for they were very strong indeed. Then the gardener's boy said, "I am no longer a child; I too will go to the war if only you will give me a steed."

And everyone laughed, and said, "When we are gone you can look for one. We will be sure and leave one in the stable for you."

When they had gone he went to the stable and took the horse they had left for him, but it was lame and could barely hobble along. However, he got upon its back and rode towards the wood. When he reached the outskirts he called to the Man of Iron three times, and so loudly that the woods re-echoed with the sound.

Immediately the wild man appeared, and asked what he wanted. "I want a fine battle steed that I may ride to the wars," he answered.

"Then you shall have your wish," said the wild man, "and even more than you ask."

He went back into the wood, and before long a groom appeared, leading a beautiful horse that snorted and pranced, and behind followed a troop of soldiers wearing iron armour, whose swords flashed in the sunshine.

The youth then gave his three-legged horse to the groom, mounted the other one, and rode away at the head of the troop. As they neared the battlefield

they saw that a great part of the King's army lay dead, and in a short time the rest would have been defeated; but the youth rode forward at the head of his iron troop, passed like a hurricane right through the enemy, striking down all who came in his way, so that there was no resisting him. They turned to fly, but the youth pursued them hotly, and did not stop until every man had been destroyed.

Instead of returning to the King he led his troop back to the wood, and called to the Man of Iron. "What do you want?" asked the wild man.

The youth answered, "Take back your steed and your troop, and give me my three-legged horse again."

Everything happened as he wished, and he rode home upon the lame horse.

When the King came back to his castle his daughter came to meet him, and wished him joy of his victory.

"It was not I who won the battle," said the King, "but a strange knight who came to my help with a troop of soldiers."

Of course, the Princess wanted to know who the strange knight might be, but the King could not tell her. "After he set out in pursuit of the enemy I never saw him again," he said.

The Princess went to the gardener to inquire what had become of his boy, but he laughed, and said, "He has just returned upon his three-legged steed, and everyone is making fun of him, and crying, 'Here comes our Hopperty Dick back again!' and then they ask him which hedge he slept beneath during the battle, but he only answers, 'It would have gone badly but for me,' and then, of course, they tease him more than ever."

The King now told his daughter that he intended to give a great feast, at which she was to throw a golden apple for the knights to catch. "Perhaps," said he, "the unknown knight will come."

As soon as the feast was announced the youth went to the Man of Iron, and begged that he might be allowed to catch the Princess's apple.

"You may count upon it as surely as though you held it in your hand," said the wild man, "and besides that you shall have a suit of red armour and a prancing chestnut horse to ride."

When the day arrived the youth went to the feast, and took up his stand amongst the knights, but no one recognised him.

"The Princess took off his cap, and his golden hair fell about his shoulders."

The King's daughter came forward and threw the golden apple, but the youth was the only one who could catch it, and as soon as he had it he rode quickly away.

On the second day the Man of Iron sent him to the feast as a white knight, and gave him a white horse to ride. Again he was the only one to catch the apple, but not a moment did he lose before he galloped off with it. This made the King exceedingly angry, and he said, "I cannot allow such behaviour. He must present himself before me and tell me his name." And he commanded that if the knight who had won the apple should appear again he was to be pursued and brought back, even if it were by force.

On the third day the Man of Iron gave the youth a suit of black armour and a black horse, and again he succeeded in catching the apple.

As he was racing away with it the King's servants pursued him and so nearly came up with him that one of them actually wounded him in the leg.

However, he managed to escape, though his horse reared so that his helmet was shaken off his head, and they could see that he had golden hair.

So the servants rode back to the King and told him this.

The next day the Princess went to the gardener, and asked what his boy was doing.

"He is working in the garden," replied the man. "The strange fellow went to the feast and only returned yesterday evening. He showed my children three golden apples which he had won."

The King commanded that the youth should appear before him, and when he came he again wore his cap upon his head. But the Princess went up to him and took it off, and his golden hair fell about his shoulders, so that everyone was surprised at the beauty of it.

"Are you the knight who came every day to our feast, each time wearing a different colour, and each time winning the golden apple?" asked the King.

"Yes," replied the young man; "see—here are the apples." And putting his hand in his pocket, he handed them to the King. "If you would have further proof, you may see the wound which your servants gave me when they pursued me. I am also the knight who helped you to win the victory over your enemies."

"If you can do such deeds as these you cannot be a common gardener's boy," said the King. "Tell me, who is your father?"

"My father is a mighty King, and I have riches in plenty—even more than I desire."

"It is plain," said the King, "that I am greatly indebted to you. Is there anything I can do to repay you?"

"Yes," answered the youth; "you can give me your daughter for my wife."

Then the maiden began to laugh. "You are certainly not shy," she said, "but I knew quite well, since first I saw your golden locks, that you could be no gardener's boy;" and she went up to him and kissed him.

The young Prince's father and mother came to the wedding, and very happy they were to find their dear son alive and well, for they had long since given up all hope of ever seeing him again.

As they sat at the marriage feast the music suddenly ceased, the doors sprang open, and a noble King entered, followed by a large company of knights and men-at-arms. He went up to the youth, and embraced him, saying, "I am the Man of Iron. I was enchanted and turned into a wild man, but you have delivered me, and therefore all the treasures and riches which I possess are yours."

The Story of the Death of the Little Hen

ONCE upon a time the little hen went nutting with the little cock, and before starting they agreed that whichever of them found a nut-kernel should share it with the other. But in spite of this the little hen found a great big nut, and said nothing about it, meaning to eat it all herself. But the kernel was so large that when she tried to swallow it it stuck in her throat, and she was afraid lest she should choke. So she screamed as loudly as she could—

"Run, Cocky-locky, as fast as you can, and get me some water, or I shall choke."

The little cock ran as fast as he could to the stream, and said—

"Stream, stream, give me some water. Henny-penny lies choking on the nut-hill, for she has swallowed a big nut-kernel."

The stream answered—

"Go first to the bride, and ask her for some red silk."

Cocky-locky ran to the bride and said—

"Bride, bride, give me some red silk, that I may give it to the stream; the stream will then give me water, and the water I will carry to Henny-penny, who lies choking on the nut-hill, for she has swallowed a big nut-kernel."

The bride answered—

"First run and fetch me my little wreath, which I left hanging on a willow-tree."

So Cocky-locky ran to the willow, and took the wreath from the branch, and brought it to the bride, and the bride gave him red silk for it, which he brought to the stream, and this stream gave him water. Then Cocky-locky carried the water to Henny-penny, but in the meantime she had choked, and lay dead upon the nut-hill, and never even moved.

Cocky-locky was so grieved that he cried aloud, and all the animals came and mourned for Henny-penny, and six mice built a little carriage to carry her to the grave, and when it was finished they harnessed themselves to it, and Cocky-locky drove.

On the way they met a fox, who said—

"Where are you going to, Cocky-locky?"

"I am going to bury my poor Henny-penny."

"May I come too?"

"Yes, but seat yourself behind;
Then my horses will not mind."

So the fox seated himself behind the carriage, and then came the wolf, the bear, the stag, the lion, and every other wild beast, and did the same. And so the procession went on, until they reached a brook.

"How are we to get across?" said Cocky-locky.

A straw, which was lying beside the stream, said—

"I will lay myself straight across, and then you can drive over me."

But when the six mice began to cross the bridge, the straw slipped and fell into the water, and the six mice fell in too, and were drowned.

THE DEATH OF THE LITTLE HEN. 53

Cocky-locky ran to the bride and said—

"Bride, bride, give me some red silk, that I may give it to the stream; the stream will then give me water, and the water I will carry to Henny-penny, who lies choking on the nut-hill, for she has swallowed a big nut-kernel."

The bride answered—

"First run and fetch me my little wreath, which I left hanging on a willow-tree."

So Cocky-locky ran to the willow, and took the wreath from the branch, and brought it to the bride, and the bride gave him red silk for it, which he brought to the stream, and this stream gave him water. Then Cocky-locky carried the water to Henny-penny, but in the meantime she had choked, and lay dead upon the nut-hill, and never even moved.

Cocky-locky was so grieved that he cried aloud, and all the animals came and mourned for Henny-penny, and six mice built a little carriage to carry her to the grave, and when it was finished they harnessed themselves to it, and Cocky-locky drove.

On the way they met a fox, who said—

"Where are you going to, Cocky-locky?"

"I am going to bury my poor Henny-penny."

"May I come too?"

"Yes, but seat yourself behind;
Then my horses will not mind."

So the fox seated himself behind the carriage, and then came the wolf, the bear, the stag, the lion, and every other wild beast, and did the same. And so the procession went on, until they reached a brook.

"How are we to get across?" said Cocky-locky.

A straw, which was lying beside the stream, said—

"I will lay myself straight across, and then you can drive over me."

But when the six mice began to cross the bridge, the straw slipped and fell into the water, and the six mice fell in too, and were drowned.

Then the trouble began again, but a coal came along, and said—

"I am large enough, so I will lay myself across, and you can drive over me."

The coal laid itself across the water, but unfortunately it just happened to touch it, when at once it gave a hiss, its light went out, and it died.

Next a stone, which had seen this, took compassion on them, and wished to help poor Cocky-locky; so it laid itself across the water, and Cocky-locky himself drew the carriage over. But when he reached the shore with poor dead Henny-penny, he tried to draw the rest of the carriage, upon the back of which all the others were sitting, over as well; but they were too heavy for him, and the carriage slipped backwards and they all fell into the water and were drowned.

So that Cocky-locky was left alone with the little dead hen. He dug a grave and laid her in it, and made a mound over the spot, and then he sat down beside it, and fretted so much and so long that at length he died too, and then everyone was dead.

RAPUNZEL

THERE WAS ONCE a man who lived all alone with his wife in a little house, the back windows of which looked upon a magnificent garden, which was full of beautiful flowers and fine vegetables. But around this garden was a high wall, and no one ever ventured into it, because it belonged to an old witch, who had great magic powers, so that everyone was afraid of her.

One day the wife was standing at her window, looking down at this garden, when it chanced that she saw a bed of radishes which looked so green and fresh that she immediately had a great longing to eat some of them.

Day by day the longing grew, but as, of course, she could not have the radishes, she became pale and worn with thinking of them.

Her husband was sorry to see her look like this, and asked—

"What ails you, dear wife?"

Then she told him how much she wished for some of the radishes growing in the next garden, and as he loved her very dearly and was afraid that she might die of the longing, he made up his mind that, no matter what it cost him, she should have her wish.

So in the evening when it was dusk, he slipped over the wall into the witch's garden, grasped a handful of radishes, and brought them to his wife.

She made a salad of them and ate them with relish, but they were so good that the next day she longed for more, and her husband felt that he would have no rest until she had her desire.

So he waited until the evening came, and then once more slipped down over the garden wall, but oh! how frightened he was when he found himself face to face with the old witch.

"How dare you come into my garden like a thief and steal my radishes?" she cried, with angry looks. "See if I do not make you suffer for your rashness."

"Forgive me," cried the poor man, "for I have only erred from necessity. My wife, who had seen the radishes from our window, would have died of longing if she had not had some."

The witch appeared to be softened, and told him that he might take as many radishes as he pleased—"But," said she, "in return you must promise me your first little child. I will be good and kind to it and it shall want for nothing."

The man was so frightened that he said, "Yes," and then the witch allowed him to go.

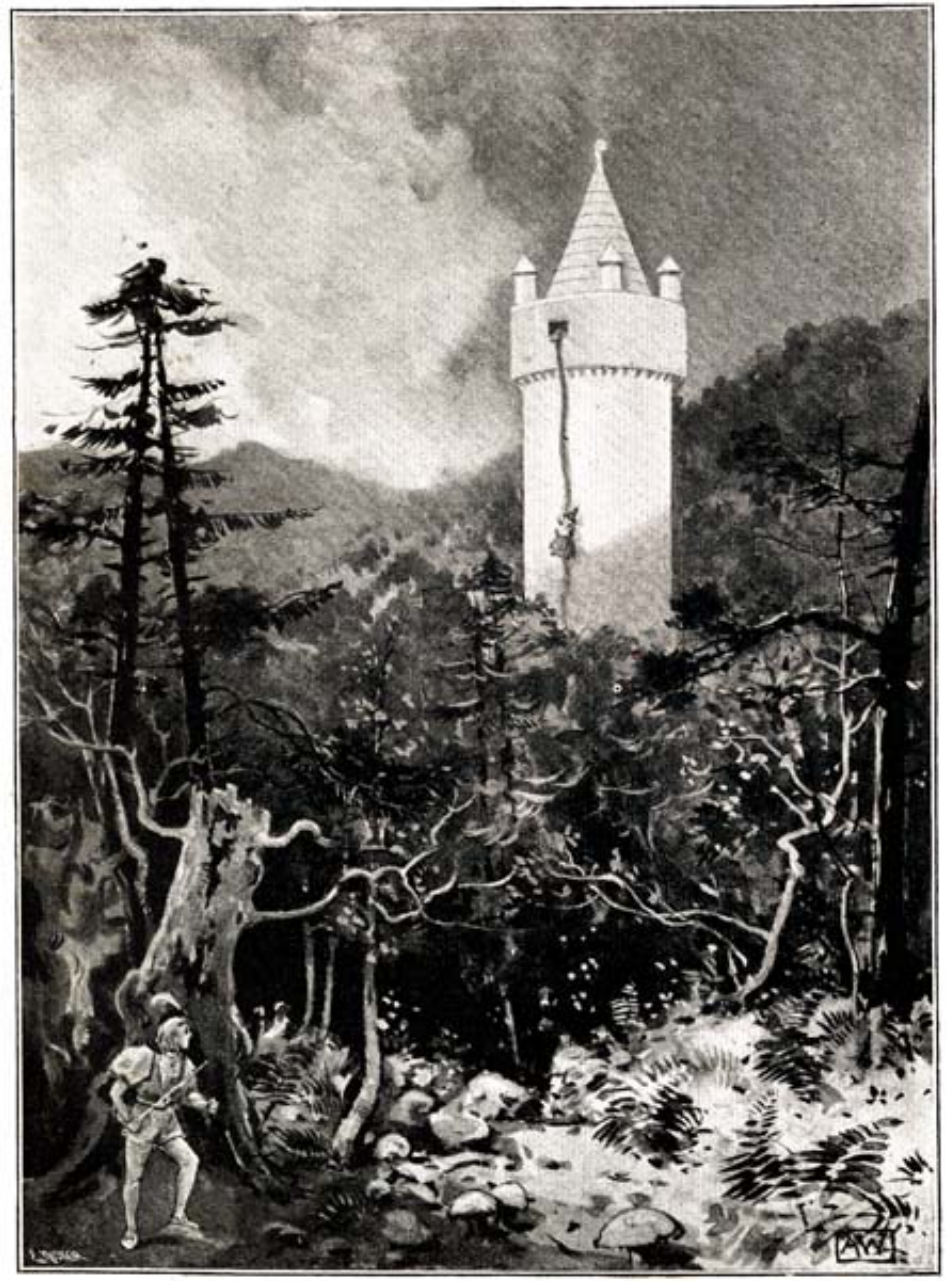
Now, it happened that the man and his wife had no children, although they had dearly wished for one, but very soon afterwards a little baby girl came to them, and at once the witch appeared, gave the child the name of Rapunzel (which means a sort of radish), and carried it away with her.

Rapunzel was the most beautiful child under the sun. When she was twelve years old the witch shut her up in a tower in the midst of a deep wood, and this tower had neither staircase nor door, only a small window, right at the very top of it. When the old witch wanted to come in, she stood below and cried—

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!"

Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, as fine as spun gold, and when she heard the witch's voice, she unbound her long plaits, wound them round the hasp of the window and then let fall twenty ells of hair at the very least, and up this hair the old witch climbed.

After a year or two it chanced that the King's son was riding through the wood, and came to the tower. There he heard such beautiful singing that he was forced to stand and listen.



"'Ah!' said the Prince, 'if that is the ladder one has to climb, I will try my luck.'"

It was Rapunzel, singing to while away the time. The King's son at once wished to go to her, and sought in vain for either a door or a staircase.

He rode slowly homewards, but the song had touched his heart so that he could not help but return, day by day, to listen to the music.

One day, as he stood behind a tree, he saw the witch arrive, and heard her call—

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!"

And Rapunzel let down her locks of hair, up which the old woman climbed.

"Ah!" said the Prince, "if that is the ladder one has to climb, I will try my luck."

The next day, when it began to get dark, he went to the tower, and cried—

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair."

At once the hair came tumbling down, and the King's son mounted.

Oh! how frightened Rapunzel was when she saw a man jump in through the window, for she had never seen one before. But the Prince was very kind and friendly, and told her how his heart had been so touched by her sweet singing that he had known no rest until he had seen the singer.

So Rapunzel ceased to be afraid, and when he asked her if she would like him for a husband, she laid her hand in his, and said, "Yes." For she thought—

"He is young and handsome, and he will love me better than old Dame Gothel."

But then she said—

"Although I would willingly go with you, I do not know how I am to get down. Whenever you come to see me, you must bring a skein of silk with you, and I will weave it into a ladder; then, when it is ready I can climb down it, and you can carry me away upon your horse."

Then they agreed that the Prince should only visit her in the evening, because the old witch always came in the day-time. All went well until one day Rapunzel said to the witch—

"I wonder how it is, Dame Gothel, that you are so much heavier for me to draw up than the King's son—he is with me in a moment."

"You wicked child!" cried the witch. "What is this I hear? I thought I had separated you from all the world, and yet you have deceived me."

In her anger, she clutched Rapunzel's beautiful hair, wound it twice round her left hand, and then, seizing a pair of scissors in her right hand, snip, snap! she cut it all off, and the thick plaits lay upon the ground.

And so merciless was she that she carried poor Rapunzel away to a desert place, where she was forced to live in great grief and misery.

On the very same day, she made Rapunzel's golden locks fast to the

window hasp, and when the King's son came in the evening, and cried, "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair," she let it down.

The Prince mounted, but alas! instead of his dear Rapunzel, he found the old witch, who gazed at him with angry, venomous eyes.

"Aha!" she cried mockingly. "So you came to fetch your dear little wife, eh? But the singing-bird is no longer in its nest; the cat has carried it away and will scratch out your eyes for you too. Rapunzel is lost to you for ever—you will never see her again."

The Prince was beside himself with grief, and in his despair he leapt

from the tower, and although he did not lose his life, the thorns into which he fell pierced his eyes and blinded him.

So he roamed blindly through the woods, living upon roots and berries, and doing nothing but grieve over the loss of his dear wife.

For many years he wandered about in misery, and came at length to the desert place in which Rapunzel was living.

He heard a sweet voice, which seemed so familiar to him that he went towards it, and as soon as Rapunzel saw him, she recognised him and fell upon his neck and wept. Then two of her tears ran down and moistened his eyes, and at once they were healed, and he could see as clearly as before.

The Prince led Rapunzel home to his kingdom, where they were received with great joy, and where they lived in happiness and content for many, many years.

KING THRUSH-BEARD

ONCE upon a time there was a King, who had a daughter beautiful beyond words, but so proud and haughty that she thought no lover who came to woo good enough for her. Not only did she send them all away, but made fun of them into the bargain.

The King at length gave a great feast, to which he invited all the bachelors from far and near. They were all made to stand in rows according to their rank. First came the kings, next the princes, then the dukes, earls, lords and gentry, and the King's daughter passed down between the rows to choose.

But she had some fault to find with each of them. One she said was as fat as a wine-cask, another too tall and lean. "Long and thin has little in," she laughed mockingly. The next was too short. "Short and thick is never quick," she quoted. Another was too pale, another too red, and another not straight enough.

So she went on making fun of all, but in particular of a good King

who stood right at the top of the row. He wore a short beard upon his chin, and the Princess pointed her finger at it, and cried, "He has a chin like the beak of a thrush," and from that time he was known by the name of "King Thrush-beard."

But the King was so angry with his daughter for making such sport of her suitors that he declared she should marry the first beggar-man who came to his door.

Two days later a fiddler came singing beneath the castle windows, hoping to earn a few pence.

When the King heard him he ordered his servants to bring him in. So the beggar-man came into the King's hall, clad in his dirty, ragged clothes, and sang to the King and his daughter, and when the song was ended he begged for charity, and the King said, "Your song has pleased me so well that I will give you my daughter for a wife." The Princess cried out in horror; but the King said, "I took an oath that I would give you to the first beggar-man who came by, and I will keep my word."

The Princess's pleadings were all in vain. A priest was sent for, and she and the beggar-man were married there and then. Afterwards the King said, "It is not fitting that a beggar-woman should remain in my castle any longer, so you may just go away with your husband at once."

So the beggar-man took her hand and led her away. She had no fine carriage to ride in, but was obliged to trudge on foot. Presently they came to a wood, and she asked, "To whom does this beautiful wood belong?"

"To King Thrush-beard," answered the beggar-man. "If you had taken him it would have been yours."

"Ah," sighed the Princess, "if only I had, unhappy maiden that I am!"

Soon afterwards they came to a meadow, and the Princess asked, "To whom does this lovely green meadow belong?"

And the beggar-man answered, "To King Thrush-beard. If you had taken him it would have been yours."

"Ah," sighed the Princess, "if only I had, unhappy maiden that I am!"

Next they came to a great town, and again she asked, "To whom does this fine town belong?"

"To King Thrush-beard," answered the beggar-man. "If you had taken him it would have been yours."

"Ah," sighed the Princess, "if only I had, unhappy maiden that I am!"

Then said the beggar-man, "It is not very pleasant to hear you wishing for another husband. Am I not good enough for you?"

At length they came to a little tiny house, and the Princess said, "To whom does this tiny house belong? What a wretched little place it is!"

The beggar-man answered, "That is mine and thine, the little home where you and I will live together."

The doorway was so low that the Princess had to bend her haughty head to enter.

"Where are my servants?" she asked.

"You will have no servant but yourself," answered her husband. "Come now, be quick and light a fire, and put the kettle on to boil. I want my supper, for I am very tired."

But the Princess knew nothing about lighting fires or cooking food, and the beggar-man had to lend a hand himself, or he would have had nothing to eat.

The next morning he made her get up very early, and do the work of the house, and so things went on for a day or two, and then when all the food had been eaten, he said, "Wife, we cannot go on like this, eating and drinking and earning nothing. You must learn to plait baskets."

So he brought some willows to her, and she tried to weave them

into baskets, but the tough willows hurt her delicate fingers. Then said the beggar-man, "This will never do; you had better try spinning—perhaps that will be easier for you."

So she sat down to spin, but the thread cut into her soft fingers so that the blood trickled down them.

"You are fit for no sort of work at all," said the man; "I have indeed made a bad bargain. But I will give you another chance. You shall take some pots and pans to market and see if you can manage to sell them."

"Alas," said she, "if my father's subjects should pass by and see me selling pots and pans at the street corners, they will mock me!" But all the same she was obliged to go, or die of hunger.

The first time everything went well. The people bought the pots and pans just because the seller was so beautiful, many of them even paying the price she asked, and giving her back her wares.

She and her husband lived for some time on the money she had earned, and then the husband bought a new lot of crockery, and she went to a corner of the market-place, set out her wares, and waited for folks to come and buy.

But suddenly a tipsy hussar came dashing down the market-place right into the midst of her pots and pans, and broke them into a thousand pieces. Then she began to cry, "Oh, dear, oh, dear! What shall I do? What *will* my husband say?"

She ran home and told him of the misfortune.

"Whoever heard of a person sitting at the corner of a market-place when they had breakable goods for sale?" said he. "Well, it is quite plain that you are good for no ordinary kind of work, so I have been to the King's castle and have begged them to find you a place as kitchen-maid. This they have promised to do, and you are to have your food instead of wages."

So the King's daughter was now compelled to go and serve as a kitchen-maid, be at the cook's beck and call, and do the hardest and the dirtiest work.

In each of her two pockets she carried a little pot, and in these pots she put the scraps that were given her, and carried them home, and upon this food she and her husband lived.

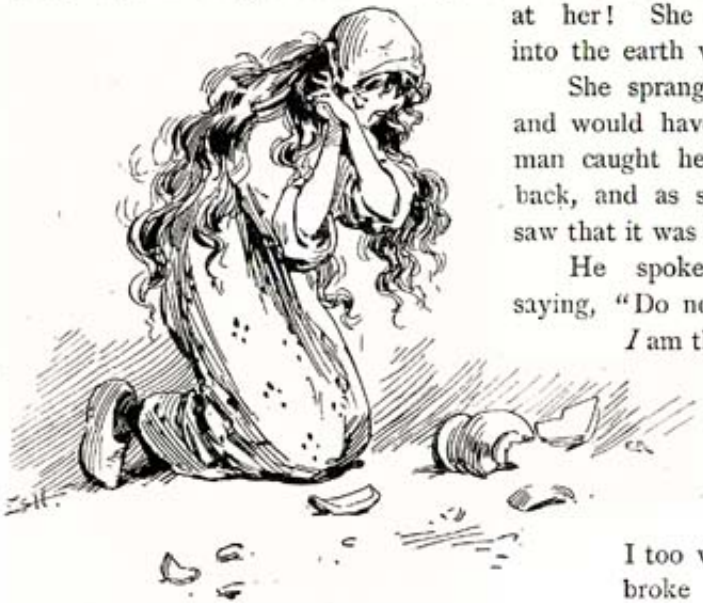
It happened that the King's eldest son was to be married, and the poor Princess crept to the door of the great hall that she might see some of the splendour of the wedding festivities. Then, as she saw the lights flashing and the noble people passing to and fro in their gorgeous clothing, she grieved from her heart that her pride and vanity had brought her to her present lowly lot.

The servants who passed by carrying costly food and drink, now and again threw her morsels and scraps, and these she put into her two pots ready to carry home.

All at once the King's son entered. He was dressed in velvet and silk and had a golden chain about his neck.

When he saw the beautiful woman standing in the doorway, he seized her hand and would have had her dance with him, but she drew back with fear, for she saw that it was King Thrush-beard, the suitor whom she had refused with scorn!

But her struggles were of no avail. He drew her into the great hall, when, alas! the string which held her pockets snapped, the pots and food fell to the ground, and the soup and scraps with which they were filled went in every direction. Oh, how the people laughed and mocked at her! She could have sunk into the earth with shame.



She sprang towards the door and would have run away, but a man caught her and brought her back, and as she looked up, she saw that it was King Thrush-beard.

He spoke kindly to her, saying, "Do not be afraid of me. *I* am the beggar-man with whom you lived in the little house. For love of you I disguised myself so. I too was the hussar who broke all your crockery,

and all this was done that I might humble your proud spirit and make you love me."

Then the Princess wept bitterly. "I am not worthy to be your wife," she cried.

But King Thrush-beard kissed her, and said, "Take comfort, dear wife, the evil days are past, and now we will keep our wedding-feast."

The maids-in-waiting came and dressed her in beautiful garments of gold and silver, and her father and his court all came too, and wished her good luck and happiness in her marriage with King Thrush-beard.

And then the festivities began in right good earnest, and all I can say is, that I wish you and I had been there to see them.

THE THREE BROTHERS

There was once a man who had three sons, but whose only possession was the house in which he lived. Now, each of the sons wished to have the house after his father's death, but the father loved them all equally, and did not know what to do so that he might not favour one more than the others. It is true he might have sold the house and divided the money amongst them, but this he did not want to do, because it had come down to him from his forefathers.

At length he had a good idea, and said to his sons, "Go out into the world and see what you can do. Each of you must learn a trade, and to the one who is the most perfect in it, I will give the house."

The sons were well contented, and the eldest decided to become a blacksmith, the second a barber, and the third a fencing-master. They fixed a time when they should all come home again, and then each one went his way.

It happened that each of them found a first-rate master, who taught them their trades as well as it was possible for them to learn.

The blacksmith had to shoe the King's horses, and thought to himself, "I cannot fail to get the house." The barber shaved only lords and gentry, and also thought the house would be his. The fencing-master

came in for many a cut, but he bit his lips, and took no heed, for he thought to himself, "If you are afraid of a blow you will never get the house."

When the appointed time arrived the three brothers came home to their father, but they were afraid they would have no opportunity of showing off their skill; so they sat down to consult as to what they should do.

As they were seated, they saw a hare running across the field.

"Ah!" said the barber, "he comes at the right time." He took his basin and soap and made a lather until the hare was near enough to him, when he soaped him as he ran, and then shaved off his whiskers without so much as giving him a scratch or shaving a single piece of fur.

"Very good indeed!" said the father; "your brothers will have hard work to beat that; and if they cannot, why, then the house is yours."

Before long a nobleman came dashing along in his coach. "Now, father, you shall see what I can do," said the blacksmith, and rushed after the carriage, tore the four shoes from the horse's feet as it galloped

along, and shod him with four new ones and all without stopping him for so much as a second.

"You are a fine fellow," said his father, "and can work as skilfully as your brother. I don't know to which of you I shall give the house."

Then said the third, "Father, give me my chance." At that moment it began to rain, and he drew his sword and brandished it above his head so that not a drop fell upon him. Harder and harder it poured, until at length it seemed as if someone were emptying bucketsful of water from the skies, but he only swung his sword faster and faster, and not a drop touched him, so that he was as dry as though he sat beneath a good roof. When the father saw this he was very much surprised, and said, "Yours is the master-piece of skill, and the house is yours also!"

The other brothers were quite content, and, as they had settled beforehand, for they were very fond of each other, they all three lived together in the house and worked at their trades, and because they were so clever they managed to earn a great deal of money.

Thus they lived until old age overtook them, and when one fell ill and died, the other two grieved for him so sorely that they also fell ill and died. And then, on account of their skill and of the great love they bore each other, they were all three laid to rest in the self-same grave.

THE TABLE · THE ASS AND THE STICK ·

Once upon a time there was a tailor, who had three sons, but only one goat. Day by day the sons took it in turns to lead her to pasture, and when it was the eldest son's turn he guided her to the churchyard, where the sweetest herbs grew. When night fell he took care to ask the goat if she had had plenty to eat, and at once she answered—

"Of the grass so sweet
No more can I eat—Baa-aa!"

"Then home we will go," said the youth, and, taking her by the chain, he led her back to her stall and fastened her up.

The old tailor questioned his son as to what food the goat had eaten, and though the young man told him what she herself had said, the father would not believe him. So he stroked his favourite gently and asked her, "Have you had plenty to eat?" and the goat answered—

"Not a blade of grass
Have I had, alas—Baa-aa!"

"What do I hear?" cried the angry tailor, and, seizing his yard-measure, he ran in search of his son, and beat the poor fellow out of house and home.

The next day it was the second son's turn to look after the goat, and he led her to the garden hedge, where there were plenty of young shoots which he knew she would like.

In the evening he asked her if she had eaten plenty, and the goat answered—

"Of the food so sweet
No more can I eat—Baa-aa!"

"Then home we will go," said the youth, and, taking her by the chain, he led her back to her stall and fastened her up.

When the old tailor asked him what food the goat had eaten he answered as his brother had done, but his father would not believe him, and went straight to his favourite and asked her, "Have you had plenty to eat?" and the goat answered—

"Not a blade of grass
Have I had, alas—Baa-aa!"

"What do I hear?" cried the tailor, and, taking his yard-measure, he chased his second son out of the house.

Next came the turn of the third son, but he fared no better, and, thanks to the malicious animal, was driven far away from his own dear home.

So the old tailor was left alone with his goat, and a fine fuss he made of her. He led her to the greenest pastures, and when evening came asked her, just as his sons had done, "Have you had plenty to eat, little goat?" and the goat answered—

"Of the grass so sweet
No more can I eat—Baa-aa!"

"Then home we will go," said the tailor, and he led her back to her stall and fastened her up. Before he left her he said caressingly, "You have had food in plenty to-day, little one," but the goat treated him no better than his sons, but bleated as loudly as she could—

"Not a blade of grass
Have I had, alas—Baa-aa!"

When the tailor heard this he saw in a moment how unjust he had been to his sons.

"Ungrateful creature!" he cried to the goat. "How can I punish you for what you have done, and teach you never to show your face again amongst honourable tailors?"

He fetched his razor and, having shaved the ill-tempered goat as clean as the palm of his hand, he next looked about him for something with which to drive her away.

She was not worthy of his yard-measure, he thought; so he seized a whip and gave her such a thrashing that she went bounding away like a young kid.

The poor old tailor felt very lonely now that he was left quite alone, and gladly would he have welcomed his three sons home again, but no one knew where they had gone to.

Now, the eldest had apprenticed himself to a joiner, and had proved such an industrious fellow that when his apprenticeship was over, his master made him a present of a little table, which, though plain enough to the sight, had one marvellous quality. You had only to set it down and say, "Table, be covered," and at once you had an excellent meal before you.

"He fetched his razor, and . . . shaved the ill-tempered goat."

The young man thought that now he was set up for life, and went wandering through the world with a merry heart and a smile for everyone. At length he grew homesick, and made up his mind to go back to his father, and see if he had forgiven him. On the way home he put up for the night at a little inn, which was already so full of guests that there seemed but little chance of his being well served; so one of the company invited him to sit down with them and share their repast.

"Nay," answered the joiner, "I would not take your scanty food—rather you shall be my guest."

How the folk laughed at him when he placed the little table in the centre of the room, and bade it be covered! But what was their astonishment to see that it obeyed him, and became immediately spread with a smoking meal, the odour of which tickled their noses very pleasantly.

"Fall to, good friends," said the merry joiner, and the guests needed no second bidding. Mine host, who had seen all that happened, glanced at the table longingly, and could not help thinking what riches it would bring him if only he could possess it. He waited until the joiner was sound asleep, and then, softly, softly, creeping slyly along on tip-toe, he stole the wonderful table, which stood by its master's bedside, and left one of his own in its place.

The following morning the joiner paid his reckoning, put the table on his back, and set out upon his way, little guessing the trick which had been played on him. By midday he reached his father's house, and was received with open arms. "What have you learnt, my son, since you left home?" asked the old man.

"I have learnt to be a joiner," the son told him.

"A very good handicraft too," was the answer. "But tell me, have you brought nothing home with you from your travels?" Then the son showed him his little table, but the father could see nothing in it but an old, ill-made piece of furniture.

"Wait awhile," said the young man, with a smile, "and you will see that it is worth more than you think. I have only to tell it to be covered, and immediately all sorts of nice things come flying down from no one knows where. So send out invitations to all our friends and relations, and I will furnish a feast fit for a king, and that without any expense to you."

The invitations were sent, and as soon as the company arrived the joiner placed his table in the midst of them, and commanded it to be covered. But it stood there as bare as a board that understands no language.

The joiner, poor fellow, felt very foolish, as you may guess, for his friends, who were obliged to return home as hungry as they came, made fine fun of him and his table.

So as the table had played him false, there was nothing left but for the father to return to his work, whilst the son found a situation with another master.

The second son had apprenticed himself to a miller, and when the time of his engagement was up his master praised him for his good

behaviour, and gave him a donkey as a parting present, but, to the young man's surprise, he told him that it would neither draw a cart nor carry a sack.

"But of what use is it then?" said the youth.

"Listen," answered the master, "you have only to spread a cloth before him and say, 'Golddust and money-bags,' and the good creature will let fall from his mouth a shower of golden guineas."

The young man thanked his master for his generous gift, and set out into the wide world.

He travelled like a prince, and lived upon the fat of the land, for he had money in plenty, and that for the mere trouble of picking it up.

For a time he wandered about from place to place, and then, growing tired of sight-seeing, he took the road towards home. So it happened that he came to the same inn as that in which his brother had lost his magic table. The host came forward and would have led the ass away to the stable, but its master waved him back.

"Do not trouble yourself," he said; "I will stable my steed myself; then I shall know where to find him."

It seemed a little strange to the host, and he thought that a man who stabled his own ass could have little money to spend, so that he was somewhat surprised when the young man brought out a couple of gold pieces, and told him to get him something good for supper.

After supper he called for the reckoning, and the greedy host, wishing to make all the profit he could, asked for two gold pieces in addition to those his guest had already given him.

The young fellow put his hand in his pocket, but it was empty; so he told the man to wait a moment, and, catching up the table-cloth, went straightway to the stable, and, spreading it before the ass, pronounced the magic words, "Gold-dust and money-bags."

The host stole softly after him, and, though the stable-door was bolted, he peeped through a crack, and was just in time to see the shower of golden guineas fall when the young man cried, "Gold-dust and money-bags."

The guest paid his reckoning and then went to bed. No sooner was he fast asleep than the sly old host crept into the stable, took away the young man's golden ass, and left an ordinary creature in its place.

The following morning the young man was up betimes, and on his way towards his father's house, with the ass trotting along beside him. At midday he arrived at his journey's end and received a warm welcome from his father, who asked him what he had been doing since he went away. "I have been learning to be a miller, dear father," answered he.

The father then asked him if he had brought nothing home from his travels, and the son pointed to his donkey. "We have more donkeys already than we want," said the father. "I had rather you had brought a goat."

The young man explained that he had only to mention the magic

words, "Gold-dust and money-bags," to bring forth a shower of gold from his donkey's mouth.

"So call our relations together, father," said he, "and we will send them home rich folk." The father was off in a moment, overjoyed to think that he would never have need to use a needle and thread again.

As soon as everyone had arrived the miller spread his cloth, and then brought his donkey into the room, and pronounced the words, "Gold-dust and money-bags." But nothing happened, and the poor fellow soon saw that he had been cheated. He begged his relations to pardon him for having brought them there only to disappoint them, and then every-

one went home as poor as he came. The old man took to his needle again, and the son found a situation with a miller.

The third son apprenticed himself to a turner, and, as this is a craft which requires a great deal of skill, it took the lad some time to learn it, so that his brothers were home again whilst he was still with his master. They wrote to him, however, and told him how they had been cheated by mine host. When at length he had learnt his trade, and was about to set out on his travels, his master gave him a sack, in which there lay a thick stick. The young man was quite willing to accept the sack, for he thought it would be sure to be useful at some time or another, but it seemed to him that the stick would only be a burden. Then the master explained that if ever he wished to defend himself he had only to say, "Stick, stick, out of your sack!" and at once it would hop out of the sack and commence to belabour his enemy. "When you think it has done its work well," said the master, "just say, 'Stick, stick, into your sack!' and at once it will hop back into its sack again."

The apprentice thanked his master, hung the sack round his shoulders, and set out. At length he reached the inn where his brothers had been so badly treated. Of course, he entered into conversation with the host, and began to boast of all the wonderful things he had met with on his travels. "Talk of magic tables and gold-coining donkeys," said he, "though they are well enough in their way, they are nothing to the treasure I have in my sack."

The host pricked up his ears, and thought to himself that the sack must surely be full of precious stones. When bed-time came the guest stretched himself upon a bench with his sack beneath his head for a pillow, and the dishonest old host waited until he thought the young man was fast asleep, and then went up to him and commenced pulling

the sack gently from beneath his head. But the turner had expected this, and was only pretending to be asleep, and as soon as he felt someone touch the sack, he whispered, "Stick, stick, out of your sack!" and out came his friend and commenced to belabour the old man.

The host screamed for mercy, but it was all in vain. Whack, whack, whack! the stick came down on his back, his legs, and his sides, and at length he fell to the ground quite exhausted.

Then the turner said to him, "Now, sirrah, if you have had enough, tell me instantly where you have hidden the table and the ass which you stole from my brothers."

"Oh! oh!" cried the miserable man; "only order your terrible hobgoblin back into his sack, and I will give you everything I have stolen."

The turner ordered the stick back into its sack, and the host at once gave up the stolen goods.

The next morning the turner went on his way, taking with him the magic table, the gold-coining ass, and his stick. When he reached home his father welcomed him kindly, and asked him what he had learnt whilst he had been away.

"Dear father," said the youth, "I have learnt to be a turner."

"A first-rate trade, my son," said the father, "and what have you brought home with you from your travels?"

"A costly treasure, father dear. I have a stick in a sack."

"What!" cried the father, "a stick? Why, that you can cut for yourself from any tree, without the trouble of carrying it so far."

"But not such a stick as mine, dear father. I have only to bid it come out of its sack, and it will lead anyone who attempts to harm me such a dance that he will soon sing for mercy. By the aid of my good friend I have recovered, not only the magic table, but the ass too, both of which were stolen from my brothers by the thieving host of the inn where we all lodged. So call my brothers and

all our relations together, and we will have a dinner fit for a king, and send everyone home with his pockets full of money."

The old tailor could scarcely believe his ears, but nevertheless he fetched all his relations, and as soon as they had arrived the turner led the donkey into the room where they were, and having spread a cloth, bade his brother speak the magic words.

"Gold-dust and money-bags," said the miller, and immediately there fell such a shower of golden guineas that the whole company filled their pockets and bags till they could hold no more.

Then the turner brought in the little table, and told his eldest brother to give it the word of command.

Scarcely had the joiner cried, "Table, be covered!" than a most delightful odour filled the nostrils of all present, and a delicious repast appeared upon the table before them. So the whole company sat down together and partook of a hearty meal, which they enjoyed so much that they remained sitting at the table until far into the night.

So the tailor took his needle and thread, his yard-measure, and goose, and shut them all up in a cupboard, and he and his three sons lived in great splendour and happiness ever after.

FIND-BIRDIE

There was once a forester who went into the wood one day to hunt, and there he heard a sound of weeping, like a little child in distress. He followed the sounds until he came to a tall tree, and upon the topmost branch he spied a little child. The little one's mother had fallen asleep beneath the tree with the baby in her arms, and a bird of prey had snatched it from her and carried it up into the branches.

The forester soon climbed up and brought the child down, and said to himself, "I will take him home with me, and bring him up with my little Lena." So he took him home, and the two children grew up together. The forester named the little foundling "Find-birdie," because he had found him upon the tall tree and because it was a bird that had placed him there. Find-birdie and Lena loved each other so dearly that they could not bear to be parted for a moment.

Now, the forester had an old cook, and one evening she went to and fro, filling her pails with water, till at length Lena asked what she wanted

it for. "First promise me that you will not tell anyone, and then you shall hear," answered the cook.

So Lena promised, and the cook said, "To-morrow morning when the forester has gone to hunt I shall set this water upon the fire in a great big pot, and as soon as it begins to boil I shall throw Find-birdie in and cook him."

The next morning when the forester had gone to hunt, Lena said to Find-birdie, "If you will never forsake me, then I will never forsake you."

And Find-birdie answered, "Never, never will I forsake you, Lena."

"Then I will tell you something," said Lena. "Last night old Sanna carried in ever so many buckets of water, and when I asked her why, she told me that she meant to boil a great pot of water and throw you into it and cook you. But we will get up quickly and dress ourselves, and run away together."

So the two children got up, dressed themselves as quickly as they could, and ran away.

As soon as the water in the pot began to boil the cook went into the bedroom to fetch Find-birdie. When she saw that both children were gone she was terribly afraid, for she said to herself, "What can I say when the forester comes home and finds the children gone? I must send after them, and try and bring them back."

So the cook sent three men-servants after them, but Lena and Find-birdie were sitting beside the opening to the wood, and saw the men coming, and Lena said, "If you will never forsake me, then I will never forsake you."

And Find-birdie answered, "Never, never will I forsake you, Lena."

Then said Lena, "Do you become a rose-tree, and I will be the rose upon it."

When the servants reached the wood there was nothing to be seen but a rose-tree with a little rose upon it, and the children had disappeared.

So they went home and told the cook that they had seen nothing but a rose-bush with a little rose upon it.

The old cook scolded them well.

"You simpletons!" she said; "you should have cut the rose-tree in two, plucked the rose, and brought it home with you. Off with you and do it!"

Find-Birdie in the Tree.

So the servants had to set out again, but the children saw them coming, and Lena said, "Find-birdie, if you will never forsake me, I will never forsake you."

And Find-birdie answered, "Never, never will I forsake you."

Then said Lena, "Be a church, and I will be a golden candlestick within it."

And when the servants came there was nothing to be seen but a church with a golden candlestick in it. So they went home again. But when they told the cook they had seen nothing but a church with a golden candlestick in it, she said, "You sillies! you should have broken down the church and brought home the candlestick."

So now the old cook set out herself with the three servants to find the children. The little ones soon saw the servants coming, with the old cook hobbling along behind, and Lena said, "Find-birdie, if you will never forsake me, I will never forsake you."

And Find-birdie answered, "Never, never will I forsake you."

"Then be a pond," said Lena, "and I will be a duck swimming upon it."

When the cook came up she laid herself down and set to work to try and drink up the pond, but the duck swam up to her, seized her head in its beak, and pulled her into the water, and so the old witch was drowned.

And then the two children went home together, and were as happy as the day is long, and if they are not dead, they are alive to this very hour.

THE WILLOW-WREN AND THE BEAR

ONE beautiful summer's day the bear and the wolf went out for a walk in the wood, and the bear heard a bird singing so sweetly that he said, "Brother wolf, what bird is that which sings so prettily?"

"That is the King of birds, before whom we must all bow down!" answered the wolf, but it was really only a willow-wren.

"If that is the case," said the bear, "I should like to see the royal palace, so come and show it to me."

"That is not so easily done," replied the wolf. "You must wait until the Queen comes home."

Soon afterwards the Queen came home with food in her beak, and with her was the King, for they were going to feed their young ones.

The bear would have liked to go at once to their home, but the wolf held him back by the sleeve, and said, "No; you must wait until the King and Queen have gone away again."

After a short time the King and Queen flew out, and the bear peeped into the nest and saw five or six young ones lying in it.

"Is this the royal palace?" he cried. "It is a wretched hole, and as for being King's children, why, you are not even respectable children."

When the young willow-wrens heard this they were very angry, and

cried and screamed. "Bear," said they, "you shall pay for this insult. Our parents are honest folk, and we are certainly respectable children."

Then the bear and the wolf began to be afraid, and turned round and went and hid themselves in their dens; but the young willow-wrens went on screaming and making a terrible noise, and when their parents again brought them food they said, "We will not touch so much as a fly's leg—no, not if we starve, until you have proved that we are respectable children. The bear has been here and insulted us."

Then the old father-bird said, "There, there, my dears, be quiet; he shall be punished." So he and his wife flew to the bear's den and cried, "Old Growler, why have you insulted our children? You shall suffer for it, for we will proclaim a fierce war."

Thus war was declared against the bear, and all four-footed beasts were summoned to take part in it—cattle, donkeys, stags—in fact, every creature that walks the earth. But the willow-wren summoned everything with wings—not only the birds, but gnats, hornets, bees and flies—all were bound to come.

The time came for the war to begin, and the willow-wren sent out spies to discover who was to be the general of the enemy's army. The gnat, who was the most cunning of all, flew to the wood and hid herself under a leaf of the tree beneath which the council of war was to be held.

The bear was there, and he called the fox, and said, "Fox, as you are the most crafty of all animals, you shall be our general and lead us on."

"Good," answered the fox; "but what is to be our signal?"

No one knew, so the fox said, "I have a fine long bushy tail, which looks almost like a plume of red feathers. When I raise it in the air, then all will be well, and you are to charge the enemy; but if I hang it down you must run for your lives." When the gnat heard this she flew back, and told the willow-wren every single word that had been said.

The battle morning dawned, and the four-footed animals came prancing along with such a noise that the very earth shook. The willow-wren came too with his army, whirring through the air, screaming and flapping, so that it made you tremble in your shoes, and so they advanced against each other.

But the willow-wren sent the hornet and made him settle beneath the fox's tail and sting him with all his might.

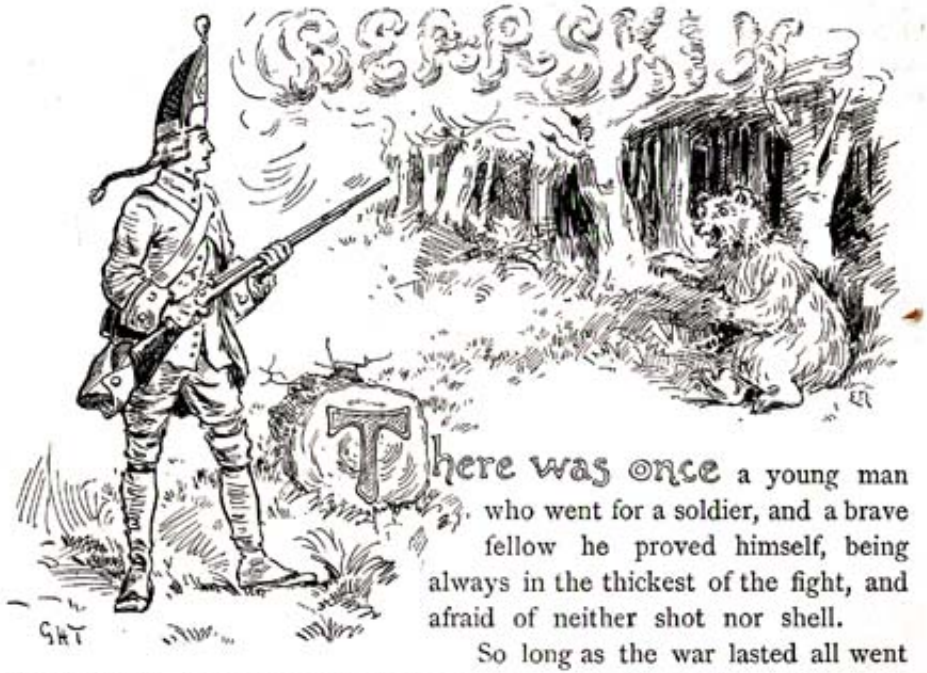
When the fox felt the first sting, he started and lifted one leg, but he bore the pain and still held his tail in the air; at the second sting he was bound to drop it for a moment; but at the third he could bear it no longer, but dropped his tail between his legs and screamed. When the animals saw this they thought that all was lost, and began to run to their dens, and so the birds had won the battle.

Then the parent birds flew home to their children, and cried, "Children, be happy, eat and drink to your heart's content, for we have won the battle."

But the young willow-wrens answered, "We will not touch a thing until the bear has been to the nest and begged our pardon, and has said that we are respectable children."

So the willow-wren flew to the bear's den and cried, "Growler, I bid you come to my nest and beg pardon of my little ones, and tell them they are respectable children. If not, you shall have every bone in your body broken."

Then the bear came crawling along in the greatest terror, and begged their pardon. And so at last the young willow-wrens were contented, and sat down together, ate and drank, and made merry until late into the night.



There was once a young man who went for a soldier, and a brave fellow he proved himself, being always in the thickest of the fight, and afraid of neither shot nor shell.

So long as the war lasted all went well with him, but when peace was made, the captain told him they had no further use for him, and he might go where he pleased.

His parents were dead, so he had no home, but he went to his brothers, and asked them to take him in until the war began again. But the brothers were hard-hearted, and said—

"What can we do with you? You are of no use to us. Go and earn a living for yourself."

The soldier possessed nothing but his gun, so he placed it upon his shoulder, and went out into the world. He came at length to a wide moor, upon which there was nothing to be seen but a ring of trees. He seated himself beneath their shade, and began to think sadly of his hard fate.

All at once he heard a rushing sound beside him, and, looking round, saw a strange man, dressed in a green coat. He was very tall and stately, but had an ugly cloven foot.

"I know your need," said the stranger, "and I will give you more

money and possessions than you can possibly want; but first I must be certain that you are absolutely without fear, for I do not wish to spend money for nothing."

"A soldier and fear are strangers to each other," the young man answered; "prove me if you will—I am ready."

"Very well," said the stranger; "look behind you!"

The soldier turned, and saw a bear coming towards him, growling fiercely.

"Oh, oh!" said he; "I'll tickle your nose for you so that you won't be quite so fond of growling in future." And he aimed at the bear, and shot it right through the muzzle, so that it fell down and never stirred again.

"I can see," said the stranger, "that you are no coward, but you have still one condition to fulfil."

"I will undertake it also," replied the soldier, "if you can promise me that it has nothing to do with my soul," for he guessed that it was an evil spirit he had to deal with; "otherwise I will have nothing to say to it."

"You can judge for yourself," answered the man in green. "For the next seven years you must neither wash yourself, nor comb your hair and beard, you must not cut your nails or whisper so much as one prayer. I will give you a coat and a cloak which you must wear during this time. If you die before the seven years are up, you belong to me, but if not you are free and rich for the rest of your life."

The soldier thought of the great need he was in, and as he had faced death so often, he decided to risk it now, and agreed to the terms.

The stranger took off his green coat and gave it to the soldier, saying—

"When you are wearing that coat you have but to put your hand into the pocket and you will find it full of money."

Then he took the skin off the bear, and said—

"That shall be both your cloak and your bed, and on that alone must you sleep, and never on any other bed. And on account of this you shall be called 'Bearskin.'"

Having said this, the stranger immediately disappeared. The soldier put on the coat, felt in the pocket, and found that it was all true. Then

he swung the bearskin across his shoulders, and went out into the world to enjoy himself, spending money right and left as he pleased.

For the first year things were not so bad, but by the second year he looked like a monster. Nearly the whole of his face was covered with hair, his beard was like a piece of coarse felt, his nails were like claws, and his face was so thickly covered with dirt that if cress had been sown upon it it would have taken root in no time. People fled before him, but as he gave money to the poor that they might pray he should not die

within the seven years, and as he paid handsomely for all he had, he could always find a shelter somewhere.

In the fourth year he went to an inn, where the landlord refused to receive him; he would not even give him a corner in the stable, because he was afraid the horses would shy at him: but when Bearskin put his hand in his pocket and drew out some golden ducats, the host began to relent, and gave him a room in a little outhouse, but he made him promise not to show himself, so that his house might not get a bad name.

As Bearskin sat all alone in the evening, wishing from the bottom of his heart that the seven years were at an end, he heard loud cries coming

from the next room. He had a kind heart, so he opened the door and saw an old man weeping bitterly, with his hands clasped above his head. Bearskin went nearer, but the man jumped up and tried to escape from him. However, when he heard a human voice, he was not so much afraid, and very soon, by speaking kindly to him, Bearskin persuaded the old man to tell him the cause of his trouble.

His fortune had been gradually lost, and there was nothing left but starvation both for himself and his daughters, and besides this, as he had no money with which to pay the innkeeper, he was to be sent to prison.

"If that is all your trouble," said Bearskin, "I have money in plenty.'

He sent for the landlord, and paid him, and then thrust a purse of gold into the poor man's pocket.

When the old man found himself set free from his troubles he did not know what to do to prove his gratitude. "Come with me," he said; "my daughters are great beauties, and you shall choose one of them for a wife. When they hear what you have done for me they will not refuse. It is true your appearance is a little strange, but a good wife will soon improve you."

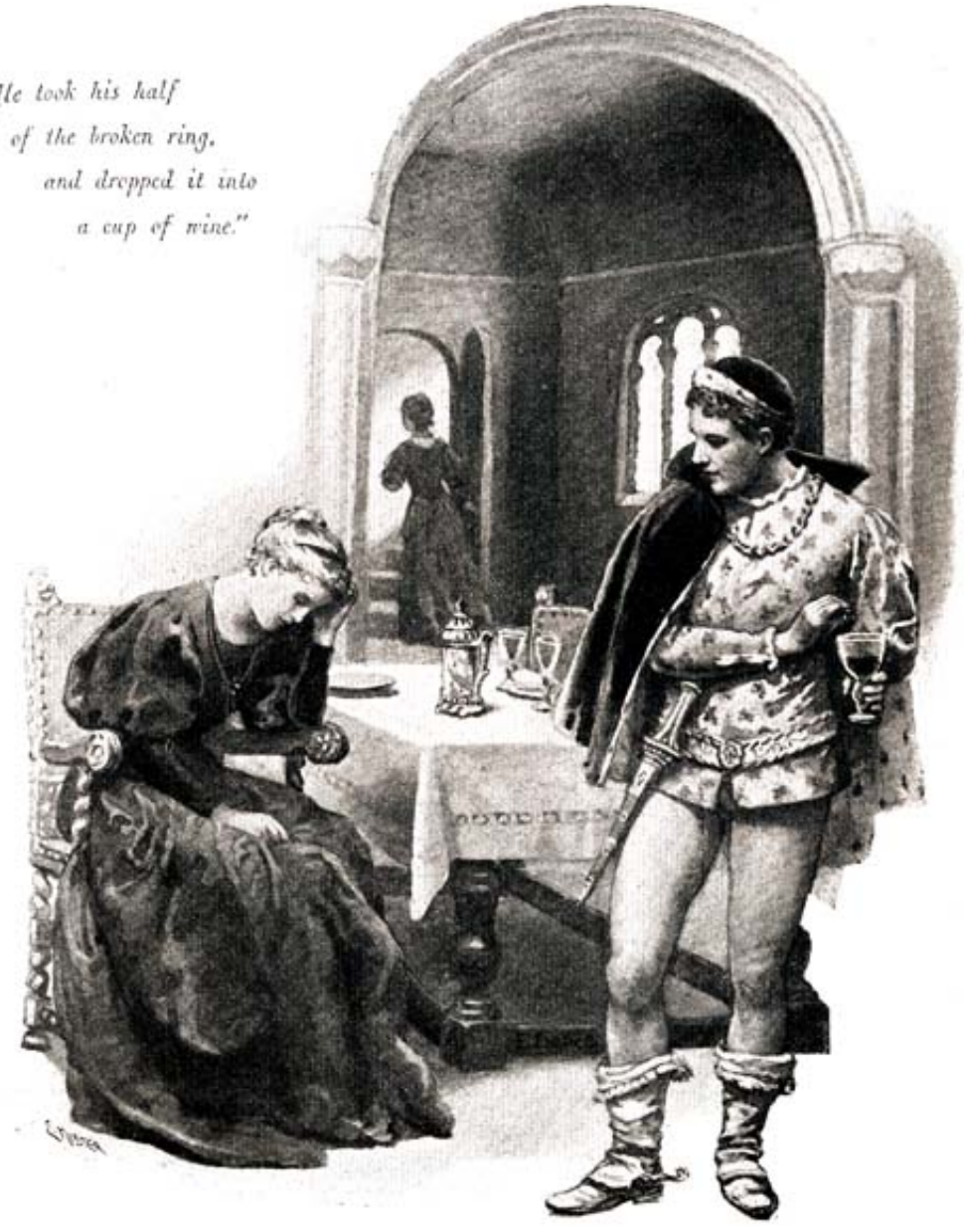
Bearskin was well pleased, so he went. When the eldest daughter saw him she was so horrified with his looks that she screamed and ran away. The second stood and looked at him from head to foot, and then said—

"How can I marry a man who has lost his human form? I would sooner marry the shaven bear which came here once and pretended to be a man, for at any rate it wore the fur cloak of a hussar and white gloves. If he were merely ugly I should get used to him."

The youngest said—

"Dear father, he must have a kind heart or he would not have helped you in your need. You promised him a bride, and your word must not be broken."

It was a pity Bearskin's face was so covered up with dirt and hair that they could not see how glad he was to hear these words. He took a ring from his finger and broke it in two, gave one half to the girl and kept the other himself. On the girl's half he wrote his name and on his own half he wrote the girl's name, and told her to take great care of her piece. Then he bade her farewell, and said—



"He took his half of the broken ring, and dropped it into a cup of wine."

"For three years longer I must be a wanderer. If I do not come back then, you are free, for I shall be dead, but pray God to grant me my life."

The poor bride clothed herself in black, and wept whenever she thought of her bridegroom. Her sisters mocked and teased her the whole day long.

"Take care," said the eldest; "when you give him your hand, he will drive his claws into it."

"Beware," said the second; "bears are fond of sweet things, and if you please him he will eat you up."

"You must always do as he wishes," the eldest went on, "else he will begin to growl."

And the second sister added—

"Still, the wedding will be a merry one—bears dance so well."

The bride never said a word, and would not take any notice of them.

Bearskin wandered about from one place to another, doing all the good that came in his way, and giving money to the poor that they might pray for him. At length the last day of the seven years dawned, and he went once more to the moor, and seated himself beneath the ring of trees. Before long the wind whistled, and there stood the evil spirit, glaring at him viciously. He threw the soldier's old coat to him, and asked for the green one back.

"We haven't come to that yet," answered Bearskin; "first you must make me clean again."

Whether he would or no, the evil spirit was forced to fetch water, give Bearskin a good scrubbing, comb his hair, and cut his nails; after which he looked like a fine young soldier again, only that he was far handsomer than he had been before.

When the evil spirit had gone Bearskin felt quite light-hearted. He went into the town, and bought a magnificent velvet coat, jumped into a carriage drawn by four white horses, and drove to his bride's home. No one recognised him, and the father, supposing him to be some distinguished general, led him into the room where his daughters were seated. He was pressed to take his place between the two eldest, who helped him to wine, and gave him the best of everything, thinking the while that they had never seen a handsomer man. But his bride sat silent, clothed all in

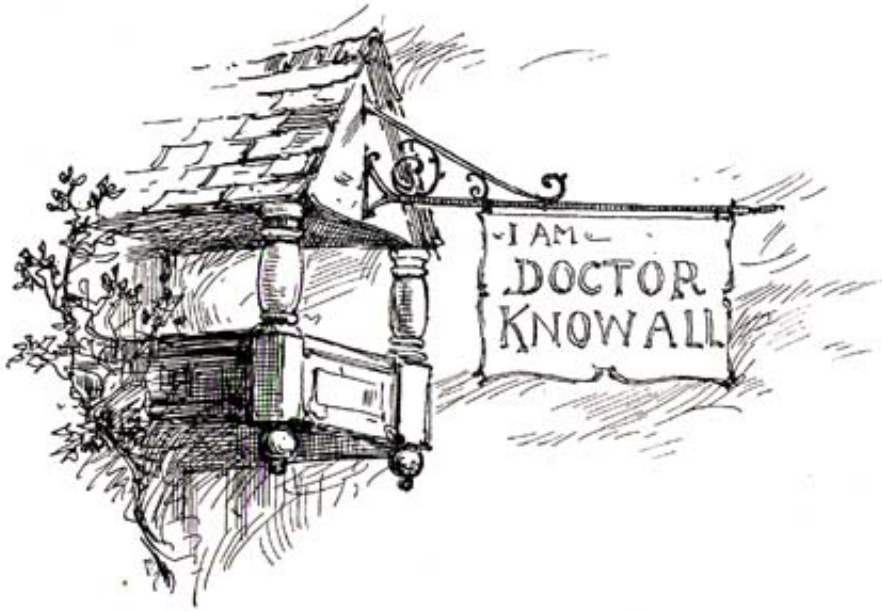
black, and never even raised her eyes. Presently he asked the father if he would give him one of his daughters for a wife, whereupon the two eldest jumped up, and, running into their room, began to deck themselves out in their best clothes, for each one thought she would be the one chosen. As soon as the stranger was alone with his bride, he took out his half of the broken ring, and dropped it into a cup of wine which he handed to her. When she had emptied the cup, and saw the half-ring lying at the bottom of it, her heart beat fast.

She felt for her own half, which she wore on a ribbon round her neck, put the two pieces together, and saw that they fitted exactly.

Then said he—

"I am your promised bridegroom, whom you saw before as Bearskin, but who now stands before you in his human form, clean and whole." He went to her, and, taking her in his arms, kissed her tenderly.

At that moment the two sisters entered, decked in their best, and when they saw that the handsome stranger had chosen their youngest sister, and heard how he had once been Bearskin, they ran out of the house, and, in their rage and envy, one drowned herself in the well, whilst the other hanged herself upon a tree.



THERE WAS ONCE a poor peasant, named Crab, who drove a couple of oxen to the town with a load of wood, which he sold to a doctor for two half-crowns. It happened that the doctor had just sat down to dinner when the money was being counted out, and when the peasant saw how well he fared he longed from the bottom of his heart to be a doctor also. He stood there for a minute or two, and then asked if it were possible for him to become a doctor. "Oh, yes," answered the doctor. "It is very easy."

"What must I do?" asked the peasant.

"First buy an ABC book, the kind which has a crowing cock upon the front page; secondly sell your oxen and cart, and with the money buy good clothes and whatever else a doctor requires; thirdly, have a sign painted with the words, 'I am Doctor Knowall,' and hang it up above your doors."

The peasant did all that he was told, and after he had doctored

people for a time, not a very long time either, a great and rich lord chanced to have his money stolen.

Someone told him about Doctor Knowall, who lived at "such-and-such a place," and who would, without doubt, know what had become of the money.

So the lord ordered his carriage to be made ready, drove to the village, and asked the peasant if he were Doctor Knowall. "Yes," he answered, and so nothing would do but that he should go back in the carriage and find the stolen money.

He was willing, he said, but Gretel, his wife, must come too. This the nobleman agreed to; so they both got into the carriage, and they all drove away together.

When they reached the nobleman's castle, the table was spread for a meal, and the peasant was told to sit down to it. "Yes," he said, "but my wife Gretel must sit down too." So they seated themselves at table, and when a servant came in with delicious food, the peasant nudged his wife, and said, "Gretel, that is the first," meaning, "That is the first course."

But the servant thought he meant, "That is the first *thief*," and because he really was, he was afraid, and said to his comrades outside the door, "The doctor knows everything—it will go badly with us. He said just now, 'That is the first!'"

The second servant was not at all anxious to go in, but he was obliged to, and as he offered his dish of food, the peasant nudged his wife, and said, "Gretel, that is the second." This servant was as frightened as the other one had been, and went out of the room as quickly as he could. The third did not come off any better, for the peasant again said, "Gretel, that is the third."

The fourth servant brought in a covered dish, and the nobleman told the doctor he should show his skill, and guess what was beneath the cover. Now, it happened to be a crab, but this, of course, the doctor did not know, so he stared at the dish, and then said, in great distress of mind, "Poor Crab, poor Crab!" meaning himself, but when the nobleman heard him, he cried, "There, he knows what it is; so he will be sure to know who has the money."

come out of the room, and then they confessed that they had stolen the money. They said they would give it all back, and besides that, pay the doctor a heavy sum into the bargain, if only he would not betray them, for if he did they knew that it was a hanging matter. Then they took him to the place where they had hidden the money.

With this the doctor was satisfied, and returning to the room, sat down again to the table, and said, "My lord, I will now consult my book, and see where the money is hidden."

The fifth servant had crept behind the stove, so that he might hear how much more the doctor knew. The peasant opened his ABC book and began to turn over the pages in search of the crowing cock; but as he could not find it just at first, he said, "I know you are here; so you had better come out."

The man behind the stove thought he was meant, and, full of terror, he jumped out, crying, "That man knows everything."

Doctor Knowall now showed the nobleman where the money was hidden, but he did not tell him who had stolen it, and so he received a handsome reward from both sides, and became a celebrated man.

A CERTAIN King was once out hunting in his woods, when, in the excitement of the chase, he went so far and so fast that none of his attendants could keep pace with him. When the evening came he at length drew rein, and gazed around him, and then he found that he had lost his way. He searched for a path, but could not find one, and presently noticed an old woman coming towards him.

Now, this old woman was a witch!

"My good woman," said the King, "can you show me the way out of the wood?"

"Oh, yes, my lord King," she replied, "that I can easily do; but on one condition, and if you will not agree to my terms, you shall stay in the wood and perish of hunger."

"What is your condition?" asked the King.

"I have a daughter," said the old woman, "who is so beautiful that you could not find anyone in the world to compare with her, and who is

worthy to be your bride. If you will promise to make her your Queen I will show you the way out of the wood."

The King was afraid to refuse, and so the old woman led him to her cottage, where her daughter sat beside the fire. She received the King as though she had been expecting him, and he saw that she was indeed very beautiful, but for all that she did not please him, and he could not look at her without a secret shudder.

When he had lifted the maiden upon his horse, the old woman showed him the way out of the wood, and they soon reached the royal palace, where the wedding was celebrated.

The King had been married before, and had seven little children, six boys and one girl, whom he loved better than anything else in the world. He did not feel sure that their step-mother would treat them kindly, and was even afraid that she might harm them, so he took them away to a lonely castle, which stood in the midst of a wood. It was so carefully hidden that he himself could not have found the way to it, had not a wise woman given him a magic ball of yarn; this ball he threw before him, and it unrolled itself and showed him the way.

The King went to see his children so often that the Queen noticed his absence, and was curious to know what he could possibly be doing all alone in the wood.

So she bribed the servants, and they told her the King's secret, and also how he possessed a magic ball which could show the way by itself.

She had now no peace until she had found out where the King kept the ball, and then she made some little white silk shirts, into each of which she sewed a charm, for she had learned witchcraft from her mother.

The next time the King went hunting, she took the little shirts, and went into the wood, and the ball of yarn showed her the way.

The children, who had seen someone coming from the distance, thought it must be their dear father, and ran joyfully to meet him.

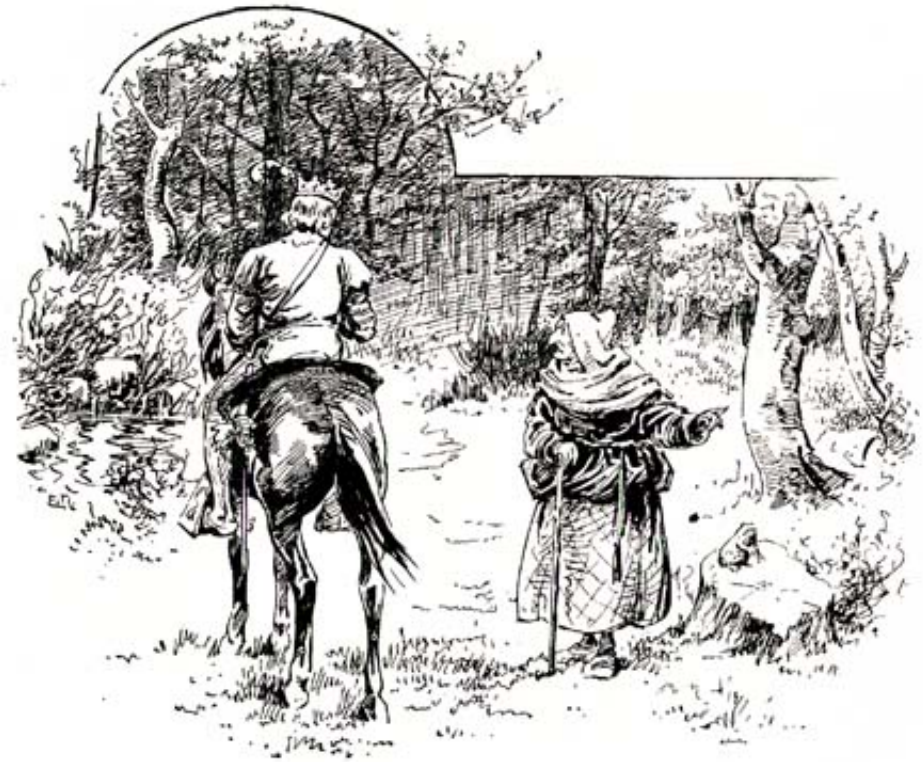
Then she threw a little shirt over each of the children, and no sooner did the shirts touch their bodies than they were changed into swans, and flew away over the wood.

She went home well pleased, thinking that she had got rid of her step-children; but the little girl had not run to meet her, and so the Queen knew nothing about her.

The next day when the King came to visit his children, he only found the girl. "Where are your brothers?" he asked.

"Oh! father dear," answered the child, "they have gone away, and left me here alone."

And she told him how she had seen from her window that her brothers had been changed into swans, and had flown away over the wood.



The King was terribly grieved, but he did not think that the Queen had done the evil deed, and he was anxious to take his little daughter away with him, thinking that she might be stolen too, but the child was afraid of her step-mother, and begged her father to let her stay just one more night in the castle in the wood.

The poor girl thought, "I shall not stay here much longer; I will go and seek for my brothers."

And when night came she ran away, far, far into the depths of the wood. All that night she wandered on, and all the next day too, but at length she was so tired that she could go no farther.

She saw a little hut, and, going inside, found a room with six little beds in it. She did not venture to get into one, but crept beneath one of them, and lay down upon the hard floor, meaning to pass the night there.

But just before sunset she heard a rustling of wings, and saw six swans come flying through the open window. They alighted on the ground and began blowing each other as hard as they could, until they had blown all their feathers off; then they drew off their swan-skins as though they had been shirts, and the little girl recognised them at once as her brothers, and very gladly came out from beneath the bed. The brothers were not less pleased than she to see their little sister again, but their joy did not last long.

"You cannot stay here," they said: "this is a robbers' den. If they were to come home and find you, they would murder you."

"But can you not protect me?" asked the little girl.

"No," they answered, "for we are only able to take off our swan-skins for a quarter of an hour every evening, and during that time we have our human forms, but afterwards we are changed into swans again."

The poor little sister wept bitterly and said, "Is there *no* way to release you?"

"Ah! no," they answered; "the conditions are too hard. For six years you would be obliged to neither speak nor laugh, and during that time you would have to sew six little shirts of star-flowers for us. But if you should speak one single word, your work will have been in vain."

By the time the brothers had said this the quarter of an hour had passed, and they flew away in their swan-skins.

But the maiden was determined to save her brothers, even though it should cost her own life. She left the little hut and went out into the wood and clambered up into a tree, and so passed the night.

The next morning she slipped down and began to gather the star-flowers and to sew them together. She could not talk to anyone, and she had no wish to laugh, so she just sat and gazed at her work.

Time passed away, and it chanced one day that the King of that

"This ball he threw before him, and it unrolled itself and showed him the way."

country came into the wood to hunt, and his huntsmen stopped beneath the tree in which the maiden was sitting, and called to her, and said, "Who are you?"

But she did not answer.

"Come down to us," they cried; "we will not hurt you."

But she only shook her head.

Then, when they continued to question her, she threw down her golden necklace to them, hoping that they would be content with it and go away. But they did not cease to question her, so she threw them her girdle, then her golden garters, and even her pretty frock; but it was all in vain, for the huntsmen would not leave her in peace, but climbed up into the tree, lifted her down, and led her before the King.

"Who are you, and what are you doing in the tree?" he asked her, but she did not speak. He spoke to her in every language he knew, but she answered never a word.

But in spite of this her beauty touched the King's heart, so that he fell deeply in love with her. He wrapped his golden mantle around her and placed her before him on his horse, and took her home to his castle. He ordered her to be dressed in rich robes, but though she shone in her beauty like the bright day, she could not be made to speak.

The King made her sit beside him at meals, and he was so pleased with her modest behaviour and gentle ways that he said, "She is the only lady in the land whom I will wed," and shortly afterwards he married her.

Now, the King had a wicked mother, and she was very angry about the marriage.

"Who knows," said she, "from whence this dumb creature comes? She is not worthy of a King."

A year passed away and the Queen had a dear little baby, when what did the wicked old woman do, but take it away and hide it, and then pretend to the King that his wife had killed her own little child.

But the King would not believe it, and would not allow anyone to hurt her. And the Queen sat and sewed at the shirts and heeded nothing else.

Again the King and Queen had a little son, and again the deceitful old woman hid him away, and pretended that he had been murdered by

his mother. But the King would not listen to her. "She is too good and pious to do anything so wicked," he said. "If she were not dumb and could defend herself, she would soon prove her innocence."

But when the old woman stole away the third son, and declared that the Queen had murdered it, the King was forced to believe her, for the poor wife could say no word in her own defence, and so she was handed over to the judge, who condemned her to be burnt.

The day came upon which the sentence was to be carried out, and it happened to be the last day of the six years, and she knew that she had released her brothers from the cruel enchantment.

The six shirts were finished, except for the left sleeve of the last one, and she carried them in her arms as she went to the stake. When she was fastened to it and the fire was about to be lighted, she looked up and saw six swans flying towards her. Then she knew that her release was at hand, and her heart beat fast with joy.

The swans fluttered around her, and sank down so that she could throw the shirts over them, and no sooner did they touch them than the swan-skins fell off, and her brothers stood before her in their human forms—six fine, handsome men—only the youngest had no left arm, but instead a swan's wing upon his back.

They kissed each other affectionately, and then the Queen went to the King, and began to speak to him. "Dearest husband," she said, "at last I may speak, and tell you that I have been falsely accused."

And she told him how the cruel old woman had taken their children away, and hidden them, and, to the King's great joy, his sons were soon found and brought to him, and then the wicked old woman was bound to the stake and burnt to ashes.

But the King and Queen, with the six brothers, lived happily ever afterwards.

THE GOOD BARGAIN

ONCE upon a time there lived an honest peasant who owned a fine cow. He was very fond of the gentle creature, but as times were hard and he had no money, he was obliged to make up his mind to part with her.

So he drove the cow to the market, and sold her for seven half-crowns. On the way home he had to pass a pond, and long before he reached it he could hear the frogs croaking, "Aike, aike, aike."

"Nonsense," said he, "it wasn't eight I sold her for, but seven."

When he came to the pond he stood beside it, and cried to the frogs—

"Stupid creatures that you are, don't you know better than that? How can you make seven half-crowns into eight?"

But the frogs wouldn't give in, and went on calling, "Aike, aike, aike!"

"Well," said the peasant, "if you won't believe me I will count it out to you," and he took out the money and counted it out, piece by piece.

Still the frogs paid no attention to his reckoning, but went on crying, "Aike, aike, aike."

"What!" cried the peasant angrily, "since you think you know better than I do, you had better count it yourselves."

And he threw the money into the water.

He stood waiting for them to count it and give it back to him again, but the frogs kept to their first opinion, and went on calling, "Aike, aike, aike," and never even gave him back the money. He waited for a long time until night began to fall, and he was obliged to go home. Then he set to work to scold the frogs. "You water-splashers, you thick-heads, you goggle-eyes!" he cried. "You with your great mouths can scream one deaf, but you can't count seven half-crowns. Do you think I'm going to wait here for ever?"

With that he went away, but the frogs cried, "Aike, aike, aike," after him, until he was out of hearing, so that he went home in a very bad temper.

After a time he bought another cow, which he killed, for he reckoned that if he sold the meat well, he would gain enough to make up for the loss of the other cow, and have the skin into the bargain.

When he came to the town with his load of meat a whole pack of dogs, with a large greyhound at their head, came running out to meet him. The greyhound sniffed around the meat and barked, "Bow, wow, wow." As it would not be quiet the peasant said—

"I know quite well what you mean with your 'bow, wow, wow.' You want some of the meat, but I can't afford to give it to you."

The dog only answered, "Bow, wow, wow."

"Will you promise not to devour it all," asked the peasant, "and to be responsible for your companions' share?"

"Bow, wow, wow," said the dog.

"Well, if you insist, I suppose you must have it," said the peasant, "but remember, not only do I know who you are, but I know your master

also. In three days' time I must have my money; you can bring it out to my house."

Then he unloaded the meat and went home, but the dogs fell upon it, barking loudly all the time, "Bow, wow, wow!" The peasant heard them from a distance, and said to himself—

"Hark, now they all want some, but the big greyhound is responsible for the money."

The three days passed, and the peasant thought to himself: "This evening I shall have my money in my pocket," and was as pleased as could be. But nobody came to pay.

"There is no trusting anyone," said he, and at last he lost all patience, and went to the town to ask the butcher for his money. The butcher thought he was joking, but the peasant said—

"Joking apart, did not the big dog bring you the meat three days ago?"

The butcher grew angry, then seized a broomstick, and beat him out of the shop.

"Wait," said the peasant; "there is still justice to be had in the world!"

And he went straight to the King's castle and begged for a hearing.

He was led before the King, who was sitting with his daughter, and who asked him what misfortune had befallen him.

"Alas!" said the peasant, "the frogs and the dogs have taken everything belonging to me, and the butcher has paid me with the stick." And he explained fully all that had happened.

The King's daughter broke out into a hearty laugh, and the King said—

"I cannot help you in this matter, but I will give you my daughter for your wife instead. Never in all her life has she laughed until you made her do so just now, and I promised her to whoever should make her laugh. You can thank the stars for your good fortune."

"But," said the peasant, "I don't want her. At home I have a wife already, and she is one too many for me. When I go home I feel as though I had a wife in every corner."

Then the King was very angry, and cried—

"You are a rude fellow!"

"Alas, your majesty," answered the peasant, "what can you expect from an ox but beef?"

"Wait, my friend," said the King; "you shall receive a different reward. You can go now, but come back in three days' time, and you shall have five hundred paid out to you."

As the peasant was leaving the castle, one of the guards said to him—

"You have made the King's daughter laugh, so I expect you have had a good reward given you?"

"Yes, I should think so indeed," answered the peasant; "I am to have five hundred counted out to me."

"Come," said the soldier, "give me some of it. What can you want with so much money?"

"Well," replied the peasant, "as it is you, I will let you have two hundred. Go to the King in three days' time and demand it."

A Jew, who was standing near, overheard what they were saying, and came running after the peasant, and caught him by the coat.

"My goodness," said he, "you are in luck. I will change the money into small coin for you—large pieces of silver would be no good to you."

"Jew," answered the peasant, "you can have three hundred if you like, but give me the small coin now, and in three days' time go to the King for payment."

The Jew was delighted with the bargain, and brought the money in bad halfpence, three of which were only worth two good ones.

In three days' time the peasant presented himself before the King as he had been commanded.

"Take off his coat," said his majesty; "he shall have his five hundred."

"But they are mine no longer," said the peasant; "two hundred I gave to one of the guard, and three hundred I have exchanged with the Jew, so that by right nothing belongs to me."

At that moment the soldier and the Jew came in, and claimed what they had gained from the peasant, and received five hundred blows strictly counted out.

The soldier bore the punishment patiently, because he was well used to it, but the Jew cried sorrowfully—

"Alas! alas! is this the payment?"

The King could not help laughing at the peasant, and so forgot his anger.

"As you made away with your reward before ever you received it," he said, "I will give you something in place of it. Go into my treasure-chamber and take as much money as you please."

The peasant did not need to be told twice, but filled his deep pockets as full as they would hold, after which he went into the inn to count his money.

The Jew had crept after him, and heard how he muttered to himself—

"That rogue of a King has got the better of me after all. Why couldn't he have given me the money himself? I should then have known how much I had, whereas, having stuffed the money into my pockets by chance, as it were, I can't be sure at all."

"I never heard anything like that," said the Jew. "Why, the man is speaking disrespectfully of the King. I will go and tell him at once. I shall be certain to get a reward, while he will be punished after all!"

When the King heard what the peasant had said he was very angry indeed, and told the Jew to go and bring the offender before him at once.

So the Jew ran to the peasant and said—

"You are to come to the King at once, just as you are."

"I know what is fitting better than that," replied the peasant. "First I must order a new coat to be made. Do you suppose that a man with

as much money as I have could appear before the King in an old ragged coat?"

When the Jew saw that he should never get the peasant away unless he had another coat, he said—

"Out of pure friendship I will lend you mine, just for the short time; but it isn't everyone who would do as much for love." But he really only did it because he was afraid he would lose his reward and the peasant

his punishment. However, the peasant agreed, put on the Jew's coat, and went with him.

The King reproached the man for having spoken disrespectfully of him, but he answered—

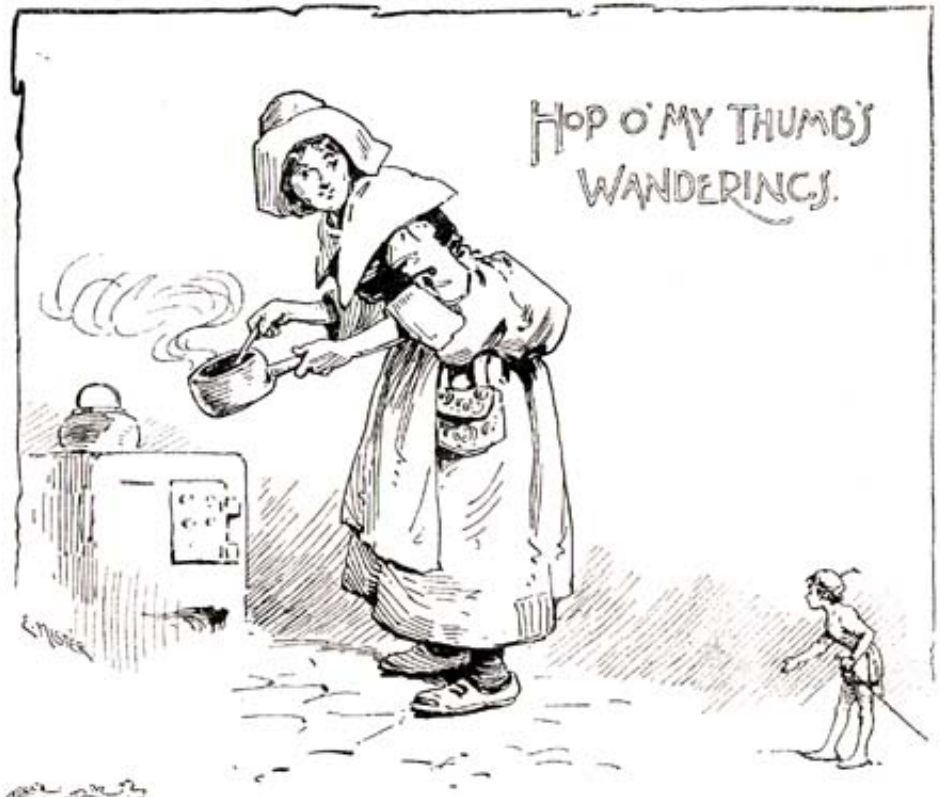
"A Jew's word is never to be trusted, for no true word ever passes his lips. Why, the fellow is even capable of saying I am wearing his coat!"

"What do I hear?" shrieked the Jew, "and is the coat not mine? Did I not lend it to you out of pure friendship, so that you might be able to appear before his majesty?"

When the King heard this he said, "The Jew has certainly deceived one or the other of us," and he ordered him to receive some extra strokes as a punishment.

But the peasant went home in the good coat, and with good hard money in his pockets, and as he went he laughed to himself—

"This time I have made a good bargain!"



ONCE UPON A TIME there was a poor tailor who had an only son, and he was so tiny that his father nicknamed him "Hop-o'-my-Thumb." But although he was so small, he had a large heart and a brave spirit, and very early in life he made up his mind to seek his fortune in the busy world. So his father gave him for a dagger, one of his own needles, with a lump of sealing-wax at the end. "You will now be able to take care of yourself on the road, my son," said he, and then he bade him good-bye. But as the little fellow was hungry, he did not set out at once, but first popped into the kitchen to see what there might be for him to eat.

"Mother dear," said he, "what have we got for dinner to-day?"

"Look and see, sonny," answered his mother, pointing to the pot which stood smoking on the hearth.

So he ran to the hearth and was just peeping over the edge of the pot, when the steam from the food caught him and carried him upwards until he floated out at the top of the kitchen chimney. For some time he was carried about to and fro in the air, but gradually the steam disappeared and then he sank lower and lower, down and down, until he rested upon firm ground once more. Then for the first time he felt that he really was out in the wide world, seeking his fortune.

At first he was not very successful, for, though he found a situation, it did not please him; the food his mistress gave him was scanty and not of the best. "If you can't give me something better to eat I shall leave you," said the little man, "but before I go I will write this legend upon your door—

"Travellers all, pray take this hint:
Don't lodge with Mistress Skin-a-flint."

"Silence, little grasshopper," said the mistress angrily, and, seizing a duster, she set to work to beat him. But Hop-o'-my-Thumb crept under a thimble, popped out his head and made a face at her. She lifted the thimble, but before she could catch him he had hopped into the duster. Next he slipped into the crack of the table, and at last into the table drawer, crying all the time as loud as he could, "Hey, hey! mistress mine, catch me if you can!"

At length, however, he was caught, and driven out of the house. Then, breathless and laughing, he took to the road again, and wandered on and on until he came to a thick wood. Here he met with a band of robbers who were going to try and steal the King's treasure. No sooner did they see him than they thought how useful he would be to creep through key-holes for them and serve as a pick-lock.

So they invited him to come with them, and after Hop-o'-my-Thumb had considered awhile, he said, "Yes," and went.

When they reached the treasure-chamber he examined the door care-

Hop-o'-My-Thumb and the Serving-Maid.

fully, and at length found a little crack, through which he was about to creep when one of the guard saw him.

"Look at that horrid spider crawling up the door," said the man; "shall I tread on it and kill it?"

"Let the poor thing go," answered his comrade; "it has done you no harm."

So the little fellow crept through the crack in safety, opened the window of the treasure-chamber, beneath which the robbers stood, and began to throw the pieces of silver down to them, one after another.

He was hard at work when presently he heard the King coming, and had only just time to hide himself when his majesty entered. Of course, he at once noticed that many of his silver pieces were missing, but could not think what had become of them, as neither locks nor bolts had been tampered with. As he went out he bade the two men on guard be careful, for that he was sure someone lay hidden behind the money. Left alone, Hop-o'-my-Thumb set to work again, but the noise the money made soon betrayed him to the guard, who were listening outside, and they came hurrying in to seize the thief. The little fellow was too quick for them, however. Springing into a corner, he covered himself with a crown-piece, and though they never caught sight of him, he teased them sadly, crying, "Here I am —catch me!"

Then when the men ran towards the sound, he was off in another direction in a moment, crying mockingly the whole time, "Catch me if you can." So they chased him again and again, until at length he tired them out, and they gave

up the search and went away. Then he threw the rest of the money out of the window as fast as he could, and, jumping upon the last piece as it fell, flew with it out of the window.

The robbers were loud in praise of what he had done, and called him a gallant little man and a hero, and even begged him to be their captain. But Hop-o'-my-Thumb thanked them, and answered that first he wished to see a little more of the world. So they gave the little hero his share of the spoil, which was only a farthing, for the reason that he was not big enough to carry more; then buckling his dagger upon his thigh, he bade the robbers good day, and set out on his way. At first he tried to get work as a tailor, but after two or three trials he gave up the idea, and engaged himself as an indoor servant at an inn. Here the maids one and all disliked him heartily, for he was so small that, without their seeing him, he overheard all they said, and told their mistress when they helped themselves to the good things from the store-room.

"Wait awhile," cried one of them; "we will pay you out one of these fine days," and they set to work to think what trick they could play him.

Soon afterwards it happened that one of them was mowing a plot of ground on which Hop-o'-my-Thumb was amusing himself. She watched him creeping up a blade of grass, quickly mowed it down, caught up the little fellow and the grass together, and threw them to the cows. A big black creature stretched out her glossy neck and swallowed him down, without so much as grazing him with her teeth.

It was terribly dark in the cow's inside, and there were no candles for him to light, so that Hop-o'-my-Thumb was not quite as comfortable as he could have wished. The next day, when the cow was milked, he cried in his shrill little voice—

"Pull, maid, pull,
The pail will soon be full."

But the noise of the falling milk drowned his voice. Presently the master came into the stall, looked at the black cow, and ordered it to be killed the following day. Oh! how frightened the little man was then. "Let me out! let me out!" he cried, but though the master heard him well enough, he could not tell where the voice came from.

"Where are you?" he asked.

"Inside the black cow," answered the little one. But his master did not understand him, and went away.

The next day the cow was killed and cut up into joints, but Hop-o'-my-Thumb managed to escape unhurt, and was put into a dish with the sausage-meat, to be minced quite fine. When the butcher came and began his work, the poor fellow screamed with might and main, "Don't cut too deep! don't cut too deep! Poor little Hop-o'-my-Thumb lies hidden beneath the meat."

But the butcher only heard the sound of the chopper, and the little man had to jump for his life at each stroke. But out of the dish he could not jump, so the end of it was that he was stuffed into a black pudding, with the meat and pieces of bacon. His quarters were a little close, and

to add to his trouble, he was hung up in the chimney to be smoked, where time passed very slowly indeed with him.

When winter-time came the hostess lifted him from his peg, and began to cut the sausage into slices to set before a guest. This was Hop-o'-my-Thumb's chance, and when her back was turned for a moment he gave a great leap, and sprang out upon the floor.

Poor little man! he had had trouble enough in that house, so he thought it was time he left it, and once more he set out upon his travels.

But his freedom did not last long, for, coming to an open field, he met a fox, who snapped him up in a twinkling.

"Hi! Mr. Fox," cried Hop-o'-my-Thumb, "please let me go again—there's a good fellow!"

"Well," said the fox, "it is true you wouldn't make a mouthful for me, so suppose I do. But first you must promise to give me the fattest hens in your father's poultry-yard."

"With the greatest of pleasure," was the answer; "the hens you shall have without fail."

So the fox let him out of his mouth again, and was even kind enough to carry him home.

When the father saw his dear little son again, he was so pleased that he opened the gate of the poultry-yard, and let Mr. Reynard take his choice.

Then Hop-o'-my-Thumb proudly brought out his piece of money and presented it to his father, so that he might see that he had not returned from his travels empty-handed.

Only the poor hens were sad, because the fox was to eat them, but then, you see, a father loves his own dear little son better than all the hens that ever cackled.

ODDS AND ENDS.

THERE was once a maiden who was very pretty, but also very idle and careless. When she sat at her spinning-wheel she would not trouble to unravel a knot in the flax, but tore it out and threw it upon the floor beside her. Now, she had a maid-servant who was very industrious, and collected these odds and ends of flax, washed them, and spun them, and made herself a pretty dress out of the material.

The idle maiden was soon to be married, and on the eve of the wedding the busy little maid-servant put on her pretty dress and danced right merrily. The bride, who was watching her, said to the young man—

"See, how that girl there bows and bends,
Dressed in my cast-off odds and ends."

The bridegroom asked his bride what she meant; so she told him how the girl had made herself a dress out of the pieces of flax which she had thrown away. When the bridegroom heard the story, and found how idle she must be, and how industrious the poor girl was, he gave up his bride, and went and chose the other girl for a wife instead.

THERE WAS ONCE a man who had lost his wife and a woman who had lost her husband. The man had a daughter and the woman had a daughter, and one day the woman said to the man's daughter—

"Tell your father I want to marry him. If I do you shall wash in milk and drink the best wine, but *my* daughter shall wash in water and drink water too."

The girl went home and told her father what the woman had said, and as he could not make up his mind as to what he should do, he took off his boot and gave it to his daughter, saying—

"Take it and hang it up on the big nail in the loft, and then pour water into it. There is a hole in the sole of it, and if the water runs through the hole I will not take another wife; but if the boot holds the water, why, then I will."

The girl did as her father told her, but the water drew the hole together, so that not a drop ran through. She told him what had happened, and he came up himself to look, and when he saw that she had spoken the truth, he went straight to the widow and married her.

But the step-mother did not keep her promise, and treated her step-daughter with great cruelty. Once in the winter-time, when the ground was frozen hard, and hills and valleys lay deep in the snow, the woman made a dress of paper and, calling her step-daughter to her, said—

"Put on this dress, and go out into the woods and pick me a basket of strawberries. I have a fancy for some."

"But there are no strawberries in winter," said the girl. "And why must I wear a paper dress? Outside it is so cold that one's very breath freezes."

"Be off at once!" said the step-mother, "and do not show your face again until you have filled your basket with strawberries." Then she gave her a piece of bread, and thought to herself, "She is sure to die of cold and hunger."

So the poor girl set out in the bitter cold, and wandered on until she came to a wood, and in the midst of the wood she saw a tiny house, out of which three little men were peeping. She wished them good day,

and knocked modestly at the door. They told her to come in, so she went into the room and sat down upon a bench beside the fire to warm herself; and began to eat her breakfast.

"Will you not give us some?" asked the little men.

"Willingly," she replied, and divided her bread in halves and gave them one.

Then they asked her how she came to be wandering in the wood in the middle of winter in such a thin dress.

"Alas!" said she, "I have been told to gather a basket of strawberries, and I am afraid to go home until I have done so."

When the girl had eaten her bread the three little men gave her a broom, and told her to sweep away the snow from the back door; then whilst she was out of the room, they said—

"What shall we give her for being so polite and kind and for sharing her bread with us?"

The first said—

"My gift is that she shall become more beautiful every day."

The second said—

"Whenever she speaks, golden guineas shall drop from her lips."

The third said—

"A King shall come and marry her."

Now, the maiden was sweeping away the snow, as the little men had asked her to do, when what do you think she found? Why, ripe strawberries, which looked like bright red rubies against the white snow.

With joy she hastened to fill her basket, thanked the little men, shook them each by the hand, and then ran home to give her step-mother the fruit she had so much longed for.

No sooner had she entered the house and bidden them all good evening, than a golden guinea fell from her mouth. She told them all that had happened in the wood, and at each word a golden guinea came tumbling down, so that soon the whole room was full of them.

Then the step-sister wished to go and search for strawberries too; so her mother made her a splendid coat of fur, and gave her bread-and-butter and cakes to eat by the way. So the girl set out for the wood, and presently came to the little house. The three little men were looking out of the window, but she gave them no greeting, and, without

"The Queen bent over her child's cradle."

waiting for permission, bounced into the room, sat down upon the bench, and began to eat her bread-and-butter and cakes.

"Give us some," cried the little men, but she answered—

"I have scarcely enough for myself, so how can I give you any?"

When she had finished her breakfast they said—

"Here is a broom; go and sweep away the snow from our back door."

But she answered rudely—

"Do it yourselves—I am not your maid-servant!"

Then when she saw that the little men did not mean to give her anything she got up and went out.

The three little men said to each other—

"What shall we give to her, who is bad-tempered, wicked, and greedy, and will not give anything to others?"

The first said—

"My gift is that she shall become uglier day by day."

The second said—

"Whenever she speaks a toad shall jump out of her mouth."

The third said—

"Her end shall be a miserable one."

The girl looked about for strawberries, but could not find a single one; so she went home in a rage.

She opened her mouth to tell her mother what had happened, but at each word a toad jumped out, so that she became a horror to everyone.

The step-mother took a greater dislike than ever to the man's daughter, who grew more and more beautiful every day, and one day she sent her to the frozen river to wash the yarn for spinning. So she went to the river, and began to chop a hole in the ice, when suddenly the King's carriage came dashing along. The carriage stopped, and the King asked—

"My child, who are you, and what are you doing here?"

"I am a poor maiden, and I am washing yarn," she answered.

Then the King felt a great pity for her, and, seeing how beautiful she was, he said—

"Will you come with me?"

"Gladly will I come," she answered, for she was thankful to go away from her mother and sister.

So she drove away with the King, and when they came to his castle the marriage was celebrated with great splendour.

A year passed by, and the Queen had a little son. Then, when the step-mother heard of the great good fortune which had befallen her, she and her daughter went to the castle, pretending that they had just come to pay a visit. But when the King had gone away, the wicked woman and her cruel daughter seized the Queen, and threw her out of the window, into the stream which flowed beneath. Then the ugly daughter got into the bed, and the old woman covered up her head.

The following morning the King came and stood by his wife's bedside, and began to talk to her, but when she answered him a toad sprang out of her mouth at each word, instead of golden guineas. He could not understand it at all, but the old woman said that it was all on account of her illness, and that she would soon be better.

During the night a little scullery-boy saw a duck come swimming up the gutter, and heard it say—

"What is my little one doing?"

"He is fast asleep in his cradle," replied the boy. Then the duck took the form of the Queen, and went upstairs and bent over her child's

cradle, smoothed the coverlet, and then swam away down the gutter again in the shape of a duck. This happened for two nights, but on the third the duck said to the scullery-boy—

"Go to the King and tell him to take his sword and wave it over me three times, upon the threshold of our home."

The scullery-boy told the King, and he came at once and waved his sword over the duck, and the third time his wife stood before him.

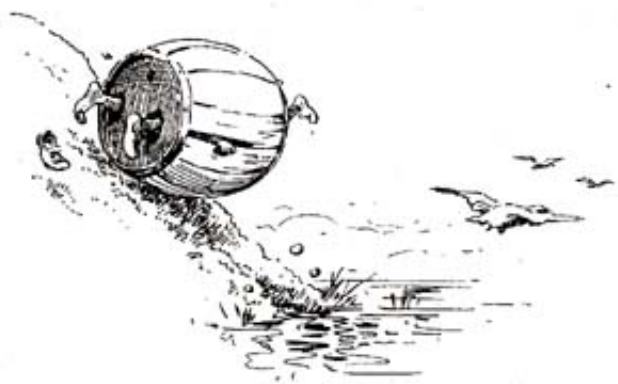
The King was very happy indeed, but he kept the Queen shut up in a little room until the Sunday when the baby was to be christened. When the christening was over he said—

"What should be done to a person who takes another out of bed and throws her into the water?"

The old woman answered—

"The wretch deserves nothing better than to be put into a barrel with sharp nails all over it, and rolled down the side of a hill into the water."

"You have pronounced your own sentence," said the King, and immediately sent for such a barrel, packed her and her daughter into it, and when the lid had been hammered on, ordered it to be rolled down the hill into the river.



The Queen Bee.

THERE were once two Princes, who set out in search of adventures, but who wasted their time and their money in all sorts of foolish ways, so that they were never able to come home again.

Then the youngest, who had always been thought the simpleton of the family, set out to look for his brothers, but when he found them they only mocked him for his pains.

"For," said they, "if we with all our brains have not been able to make our way in the world, how can you expect to do so?"

But nevertheless they all started on their way together, and journeyed on until they reached a large ant-hill. The two eldest would have destroyed it, but the simpleton said—

"Leave the poor little ants alone. I will not let you disturb them."

So they went on their way until they came to a pond, upon which

a great many ducks were swimming, and the two eldest wanted to catch a couple and roast them, but the simpleton said—

"Leave them alone. I will not let you kill them."

So on they went again, until they came to a tree, in the trunk of which was a wild-bees' nest. The two eldest wanted to make a fire under the tree and suffocate the bees, so that they might take the honey; but the simpleton again refused to allow them, and said—

"Leave the poor creatures alone. I will not let you burn them."

At last the three brothers came to a castle, where the stables were full of stone horses, and where not a single human being was to be seen. They walked through one room after another, and at length came to a door in which there were three locks, and in the middle of the door was a little grating through which they could look into the room beyond.

They saw a little man, dressed in grey, seated at a table.

Twice they called to him, but he did not answer, so they called a third time, and then he rose, opened the three locks, and came out.

He said not a word, but led them to a table which was richly spread, and when they had eaten and drunk as much as they wished, he took each of them to his own bedroom.

The next morning the little grey man came to the eldest brother, beckoned to him to follow, and led him to a stone table, upon which were engraven three tasks, by means of which the castle could be disenchanted.

This was the first:—In the forest, hidden beneath the thick moss, lay the princesses' pearls, a thousand in number. These must be collected, but if one single pearl was missing when the sun set, then he who had sought for them would be turned into stone.

The eldest Prince searched the whole day long, but by sunset he had only found a hundred of the pearls, and so he was turned to stone, just as the stone table had said.

The following day the second Prince tried his luck, but he fared no better than his brother, for by sunset he had found but two hundred pearls, and he too was changed into stone.

At length it came to the simpleton's turn. He searched all day amidst the moss, but the pearls were so difficult to find that at length he sat down upon a stone and burst into tears.

And as he sat there, the king of the ants, whose life he had once

saved, came with five thousand ants, and before long the little creatures had found every one of the pearls and piled them up in a heap.

The second task engraven upon the stone table was this:—To fetch out of the lake the key of the princesses' sleeping-chamber.

When the simpleton came to the lake, the ducks which he had saved were swimming upon the surface. At once they dived down into the depths below and brought up the key.

But the third task was the most difficult of all, for it was to tell which of the sleeping princesses was the youngest and dearest. They were all exactly alike, the only difference being that before they went to sleep each of them had eaten a different sweetmeat—the eldest a piece of sugar, the second a little syrup, and the youngest a spoonful of honey.

Then came the queen of the bees, and tasted the lips of all three, and when she came to the lips which had sipped the honey she remained seated upon them, so that the King's son was able to recognise the right princess.

Thus the enchantment was at an end, the sleepers awoke, and those who had been turned into stone received their human forms again. And the simpleton married the youngest and dearest princess, and became King after her father's death, whilst his two brothers married the other two princesses, and lived happily ever after.

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN MOUNTAIN

THERE was once a merchant who had two little baby children, a boy and a girl. Now, this merchant spent the whole of his fortune on two richly laden vessels, which he sent to sea in the hope of doubling his wealth, but instead of that the ships sank, and everything on board was lost, so that he had nothing left in the world but a little field outside the town.

He went to this field, and began walking up and down, trying in vain to forget his troubles, when suddenly a little black mannikin stood beside him, and asked him why he was so sad.

"I would tell you," said the merchant, "if I thought you could help me."

"Who knows but what I can?" replied the little black man. So the merchant told him about his misfortune.

"Come," said the mannikin, "don't trouble about that. I will give you as much money as you like, if you will promise to give me the

first thing that rubs itself against your leg when you go home. In twelve years' time you must bring it to me, here, in this very place."

The merchant thought for certain it would be his dog, and never once gave a thought to his little boy; so he consented, gave the black mannikin a written and sealed agreement, and went home.

When he reached his house his little boy came toddling towards him and clutched his legs. The poor father was horrified, for he remembered his promise, but as he could find no money in any of his chests or coffers, he thought the little black man had been having a joke with him.

A month later he went up to the garret, meaning to collect some pieces of old tin and sell them, but he found a great heap of gold there. Then things began to go well with him; he bought and sold, and was soon a wealthier merchant than he had ever been before.

As time passed on his boy grew to be a fine, clever little fellow, but as his twelfth year approached, his father grew more and more anxious.

One day the boy asked his father what ailed him, but the poor man would not tell him at first, but when the child pressed him to do so, he said that, without knowing what he was promising, he had given his own son to a little black man in exchange for endless wealth. He had signed and sealed his promise, and so when the boy reached his twelfth year he would have to take him to the man.

"Do not be uneasy about me, father dear," said the boy. "The black man has no power over me."

When the time came the father and son went to the field, and the son made a circle and he and his father stood in the centre of it. Then the black mannikin appeared and said to the man, "Have you brought me what you promised?"

The man was silent, but the son spoke for him.

"You cheated and misled my father," said he. "Give back the agreement."

"No," replied the little black man, "I will not give up my right."

For a long time they argued together, but at length they decided that, as the son belonged neither to the mannikin nor his father, he should get into a boat, which was floating upon a flowing stream, and be left to the mercy of the waters.

So he took leave of his father and stepped into the boat, and the father had to push it off from the land with his own foot. The boat upset, so that it floated away, keel upwards, and the father, thinking that his son was drowned, went home and mourned bitterly for him.

But the boat did not sink, but floated calmly away, with the boy sitting safely inside it. On and on it sailed, until at last it became stranded upon an unknown shore. There he landed, and, seeing a beautiful castle before him, went straight towards it.

But when he entered it, he found that it was enchanted. He went through room after room, finding them all empty, until he came to the last, and there a snake lay coiled.

The snake was an enchanted maiden, and she was very glad indeed to see the youth.

"At last you have come, my deliverer," she said. "For twelve long years I have waited for you. This kingdom is enchanted, and it is you who must release it."

"How can I do that?" he asked.

"To-night," said she, "twelve black men, laden with heavy chains, will appear. They will ask you what you are doing here. You must not answer them, no matter what they do, they will torment you and beat you, but you must bear it in silence, and at twelve o'clock they will be obliged to go away again. On the second night twelve others will come, and on the third night there will be four-and-twenty, and they will chop off your head, but at twelve o'clock their power is at an end, and if you have borne it all in silence you will have released me. I will come to you with a flask, in which is the water of life, and with this I will anoint you, and then you will come to life again, and be as well and strong as before."

Then said he, "I am willing to release you."

Everything happened as the snake had said. The black men could not make him speak a single word, and on the third night the snake became a beautiful Princess again, and came with the water of life to restore him.

Then she put her arms around his neck and kissed him, and there was great rejoicing throughout the whole castle, and shortly afterwards their marriage-feast was celebrated, and the boy became the King of the Golden Mountain.

They lived happily together for some time, and the fairies brought them a dear little baby son. Eight years passed by, and one day the King thought of his father, and felt a great longing to go and see him again. The Queen begged him not to go, saying, "I know some misfortune will happen to me if you do."

But he gave her no peace until she consented to his going. As she bade him farewell, she gave him a magic ring, and told him to place it

upon his finger, and whenever he wished to be transported to any place, he had only to turn the ring and wish to be there, and there he would be. "But," said she, "you must promise me that you will on no account wish for me to be transported from here to your father's house."

He promised, placed the ring upon his finger, and wished himself away, outside the town where his father lived. He found himself there in a moment, and would have entered the town, but the sentries would not allow him to do so, because, although the clothes he wore were very costly, they were of a very peculiar fashion.

So he went to a hill where a shepherd was watching his flock, and changed clothes with the man, after which no one prevented his entering the town.

When he came to his father he told him that he was his son, but the old man would not believe him, and said that he had certainly had a son, but that he had been dead for many years. However, as the shepherd looked hungry and thirsty, he would give him some food.

Then said the shepherd, "I am indeed your son. Is there no mark upon my body by which you might recognise me?"

"Yes," answered his mother, "our son had a strawberry-mark under his right arm."

The shepherd rolled up his sleeve and they saw the strawberry-mark, and knew that he must be their son. Then he told them that he was King of the Golden Mountain, that his wife was a king's daughter, and that they had a little son, who was seven years old.

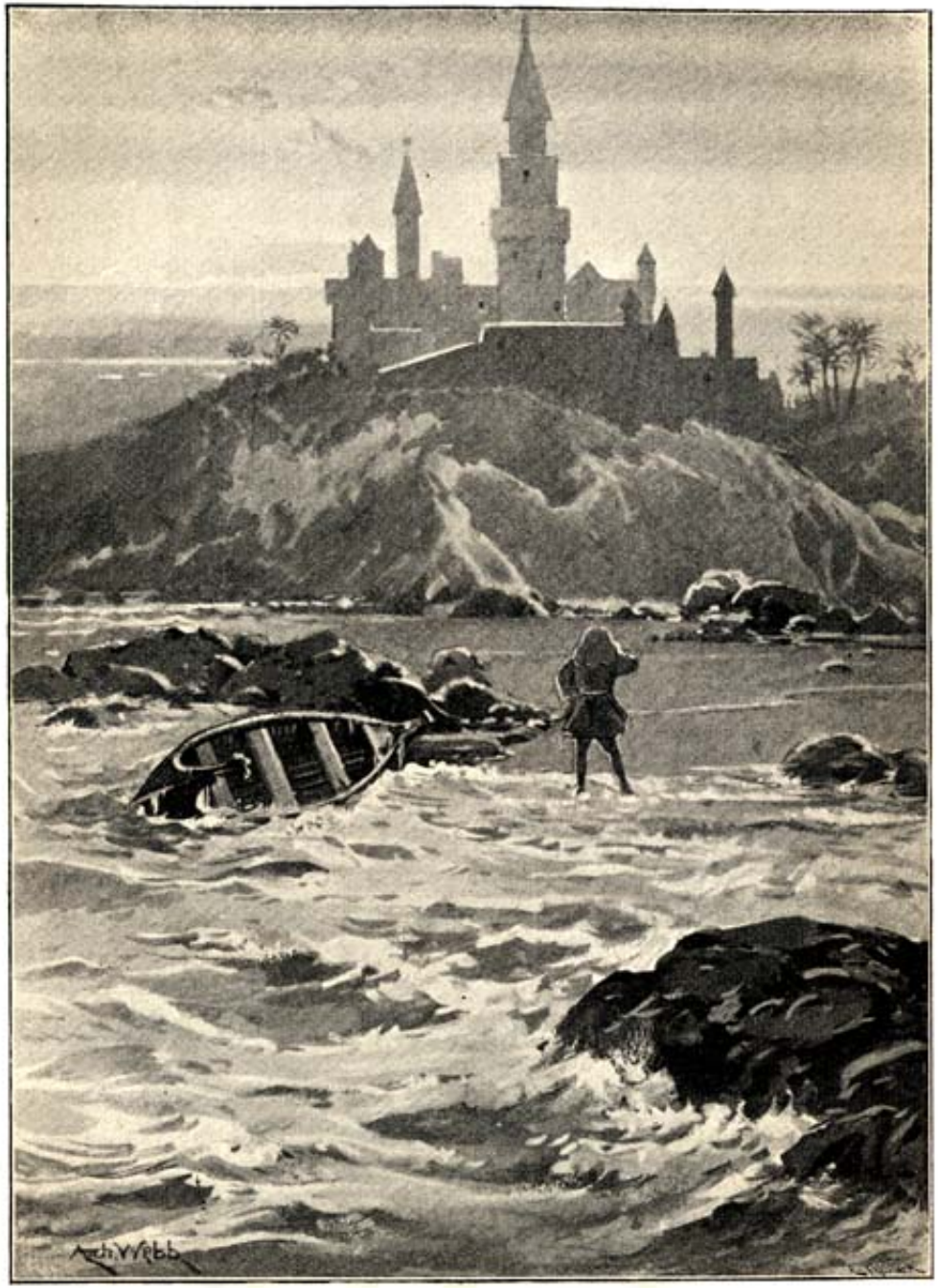
"Nonsense!" said the father. "A fine King you are, with your ragged shepherd's smock."

The son was very angry, and, quite forgetting his promise, he turned the ring on his finger and wished for his wife and child. In a moment they were both there, but the Queen wept and wailed, and declared that he had broken his word and brought misfortune upon her.

"I am very sorry," he said, "but I did it without thinking, and not to vex you."

He calmed her as best he could, and the Queen pretended to be satisfied, but all the time she was planning evil against him.

He took her out of the town to the little field, and showed her the water on which he had been set afloat in the boat. Then he said,



"When he landed he saw a beautiful castle."

"I am tired; sit down and let me rest my head upon your knees, and sleep for a while."

So he laid his head on her lap, and fell asleep. Then she took the ring from his finger, and slipped from beneath him, leaving only her slipper behind, and, taking her child in her arms, she wished herself back in her kingdom.

When the King awoke he was all alone. Wife and child had disappeared, and also the ring from his finger, and there was nothing left but the slipper to show that they had ever been there.

"I cannot go home to my parents," thought the King; "they would take me for a magician. I had better get up at once and walk back to my kingdom." So he walked on and on, until at length he came to a mountain, in front of which three giants were standing, and quarrelling as to how they should divide their father's property.

When they saw him they cried out that little people had quick wits, and he should come and divide their inheritance for them.

The inheritance consisted of a sword, which, when you grasped it and said, "All heads off but mine!" immediately laid every head low; secondly, of a cloak which made the wearer invisible; and thirdly, a pair of boots which could carry the wearer to any place he wished in a moment.

"You must let me examine the goods," said he, "so that I may see if they are in good condition."

They gave him the cloak, and when he had put it on he at once became invisible, and then changed into a fly.

He soon took his own form again, and said, "I see that the cloak is a good one; now give me the sword."

"No, no," said they. "If you were to say, 'All heads off but mine!' we should all lose our heads, and you would be the only person left with one."

But they gave it to him at length, on condition that he should try it on a tree. He consented, and the sword cut the tree in two as though it had been a straw.

Now he wanted the boots, but they said, "No, no. If you had them on, you might wish yourself at the top of the mountain and here we should be left with nothing."

"No," said he, "I will not do that." So they gave him the boots as well, and now that he had the three things he could think of nothing but his wife and child, and said to himself, "Oh! if only I were back on the Golden Mountain."

Instantly he disappeared from the giants' sight, and that was how their inheritance was divided.

When he came to his castle he heard music and sounds of rejoicing, and the people told him that his wife was about to be married

to someone else. This made him very angry indeed, and he said, "False creature! she deceived and deserted me whilst I slept."

He put on his cloak, and entered the castle unseen by anyone. When he came into the dining-hall, the great table was spread with costly food, and the guests ate and drank, and laughed and joked.

The Queen sat upon a royal seat in the midst of them, with a crown upon her head, and the King placed himself behind her. Whenever food was set before her, he took it and ate it, or if her glass was filled with wine he drank it instantly, so that although she was

served constantly, she still had nothing, for her plate and glass disappeared as soon as they were filled.

Then, in shame and fear, she rose and went into her own room and wept, but he followed her there.

Then she said, "Can it be that the magician has power over me still, and that my deliverer never came at all?"

Then he struck her in the face, and said, "Did your deliverer never come, indeed? Traitress, you are in his power now! Have I deserved that you should treat me so?" and he threw off the cloak and made himself visible, and went into the hall, and cried, "There will be no marriage, for the rightful King has come."

The kings and princes and councillors who were assembled there mocked and laughed at him, but he wasted few words upon them.

"Will you go or not?" he asked. They pressed around him, and would have taken him prisoner, but he drew his sword, and said, "Heads off, all round, except my own!"

And everyone's head rolled off his shoulders, and he alone was master, and once more King of the Golden Mountain.

THE RAVEN

THERE was once a Queen who had a little baby daughter, and one day the child was naughty and would not be quiet. Now, there were some ravens flying round and round the castle, and when the Queen saw them she opened the window, and said impatiently—

"I wish you were a raven—I might have a little peace then."

She had scarcely spoken the words when the child changed into a raven, and flew from her arms, out through the window. It flew away to a dark wood, where it remained for a long, long time, and the parents heard nothing of their lost child. But one day a man was going through the wood and heard the raven cry, and followed its voice until he came near to the bird, when it said—

"I am a King's daughter by birth, and have been bewitched into this form, but you are able to release me."

"What can I do?" he asked.

"Go farther into the wood," answered the raven, "and you will find a little house, inside which an old woman will be sitting. She will offer you food and drink, but you must not take them, for if you eat or drink

anything at all you will fall into a deep sleep and will not be able to release me. In the garden behind the house there is a big tan-heap; you are to stand upon it and await my coming. For three days running I shall come to you at two o'clock in the afternoon, and I shall drive in a carriage which on the first day will be drawn by four white horses, on the second by four chestnut ones, and on the third day by four black ones, but if you are not awake you cannot release me."

The man promised to do all she asked, but the raven said—

"Alas! I know beforehand that you will not release me; you will be sure to take something from the woman."

Again the man promised earnestly that he would touch neither food nor drink. But when he reached the house the old woman came to meet him, and said—

"Poor man! how faint and ill you look. Come and take some refreshment; eat and drink."

"No," replied the man, "I will neither eat nor drink."

But she gave him no peace, and at length said—

"Well, even if you will not eat, you can at all events take a draught of something."

Then he allowed himself to be persuaded, and drank.

In the afternoon, when it was nearly two o'clock, he went out into the garden to the tan-heap to wait for the raven. As he stood there he suddenly became so tired that he could not resist lying down for a few minutes, but he did not mean to go to sleep. However, he had scarcely stretched himself out before his eyes closed themselves of their own accord, and he fell so fast asleep that nothing in the world could have awakened him. At two o'clock the raven came driving up with the four white horses; but she was very sad, for she said—

"I know he is asleep."

When she came into the garden, there, sure enough, he lay, fast asleep upon the tan-heap. She got out of the carriage, and shook him and called to him, but he slept on.

The next day at midday the old woman came again and brought him food and drink, but he would not take it. But she worried him so that at last he consented to take just one draught from the glass. Towards two o'clock he went out into the garden to the tan-heap to wait for the

raven; but again he was so overcome with fatigue that he fell asleep. When the raven came she went up to him, but he slept so heavily that she could not awaken him.

The next day the old woman placed a dish of food and a glass of wine before him, and as the smell reached his nose, he could resist no longer, but took a good draught.

When the time came he went out into the garden to the tan-heap, to await the King's daughter, but again he fell asleep.

At two o'clock the raven came driving along with her black horses. The coachman's livery and all the trappings were of black too, and the raven was plunged in the deepest sorrow, "For," said she, "I *know* he will be asleep, and will not be able to release me."

When she stood by his side he lay there fast asleep, and though she shook him and called to him, she could not awaken him. Then she laid a loaf of bread beside him, next a piece of meat, and thirdly, a bottle of wine, and of these things he might take as much as he pleased without their ever growing less.

After that she took a golden ring from her finger, upon which her name was engraven, and put it upon his. Lastly, she laid a letter beside him, in which she told him that, if he still wished to release her, he was to go to the Golden Castle of Stromberg. After that she drove away.

When the man awoke he was very much grieved to find he had missed the raven again; but when he saw the things lying beside him, and read the letter in which was written all that had happened, he got up at once and set out for the Golden Castle of Stromberg, though he had no idea in which direction it lay.

For a long time he travelled about all over the world, and came at length to a thick wood, in which he wandered for fourteen days without being able to find the way out again. One evening he felt so tired that he lay down beside a bush and went to sleep. The next day he went on again, and at night, just as he was about to lie down beside a bush again, he heard such a howling and screaming that he could not get to sleep.

When the hour came at which people light their candles, he saw one glimmering in the distance. He got up and went towards it, and came at length to a house, which appeared to be very small indeed, because a tall giant was standing in front of it.

When the giant saw him he said—

"I am very glad to see you, for it is a long time since I had anything to eat, and I will swallow you down for my supper."

"I think you had better not," said the man, "for I don't care to be eaten, and if you are hungry I can give you plenty to satisfy you."

"If that is true," the giant replied, "you need have no further fear. I was only going to eat you because I had nothing else."

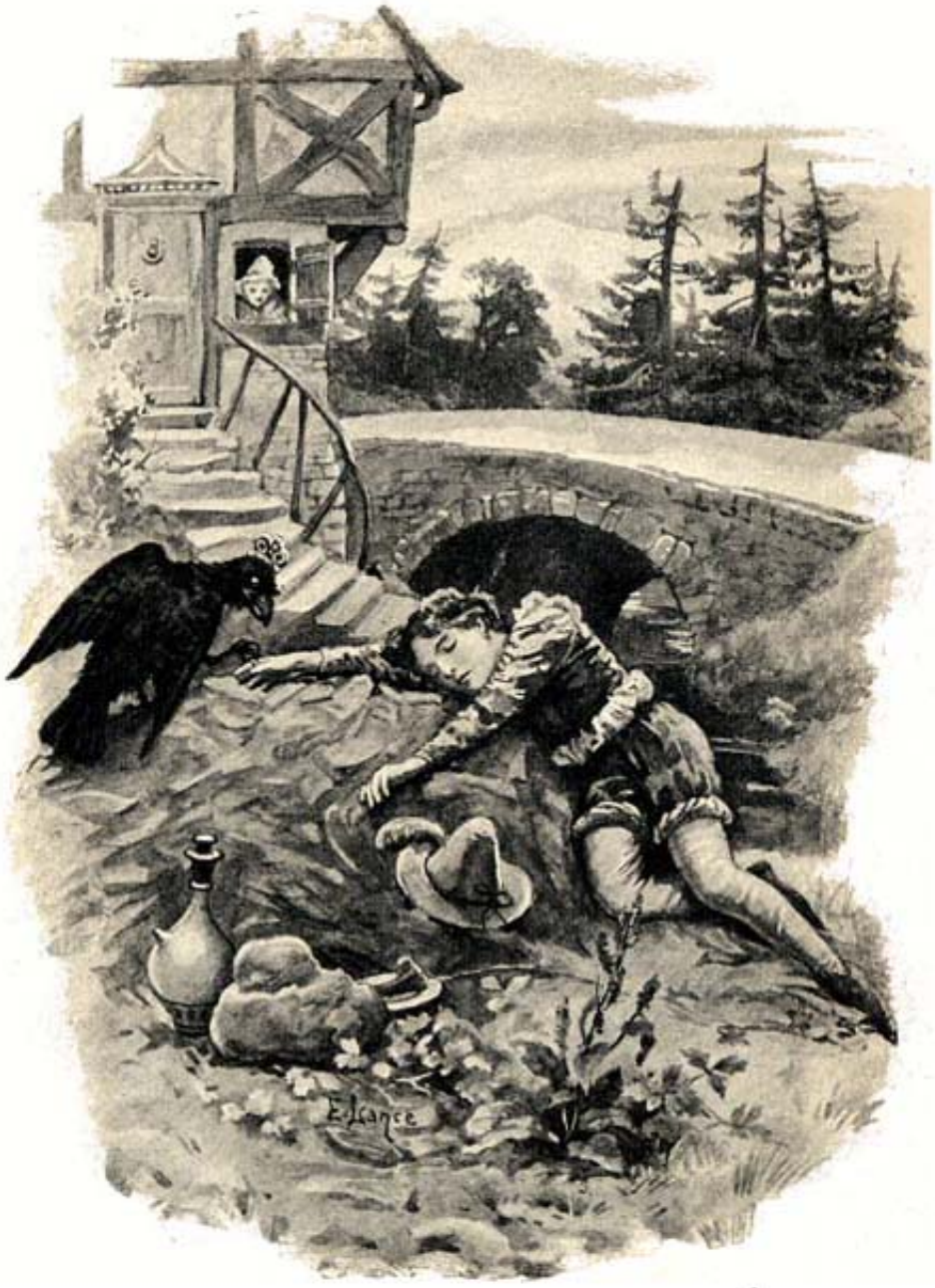
So they sat down together and the man brought out the bread, meat, and wine which never came to an end.

"Ah!" said the giant, "this is very good indeed," and he ate as much as he required.

When they had finished the man asked him if he knew where the Golden Castle of Stromberg was.

"I will look for it on my map," answered the giant; "every town, village, and house is marked upon it."

He fetched the map, but the castle was not marked upon it.



"The raven put a golden ring upon his finger."

"Never mind," said the giant; "upstairs I have still larger maps."

But they looked in vain. The man would then have gone on his way, but the giant begged him to wait a couple of days until his brother came home.

When he came, they asked him if he knew the Golden Castle of Stromberg, and he answered—

"When I have had a good meal I will look for it upon my map."

The second giant searched for a long time. At length he found the Golden Castle of Stromberg; but it was many thousands of miles away.

"How shall I ever get there?" asked the man, and the giant answered—

"I have a couple of hours to spare, and will carry you to within a hundred miles of the castle; the rest of the way you can easily go by yourself."

So at length, after much travelling, the man came to the Golden Castle of Stromberg. It stood upon the top of a mountain of glass, and the enchanted maiden drove round the castle in her carriage, and then went into it.

Although he was delighted to see her, he could not reach her, for each time he took a step upon the glass, he slipped backwards.

So he built himself a little hut, and sat in it a whole year, watching the King's daughter drive round the castle every day, without being able to get up to her.

One day, when he was in his hut he saw three robbers fighting, and called to them, "Good luck to you!" They stopped at the sound of his voice, but when they did not see anyone they began to fight again, and this time most fiercely.

Again he cried, "Good luck to you!" and again they ceased and looked round, but, seeing no one, began once more to fight. A third time he cried, "Good luck to you!" and said to himself, "I will go and see what these three mean to do." Then he went up to them, and asked why they were fighting.

One of them told him he had found a stick, a tap from which would open any door; another said he had found a cloak which rendered him invisible whenever he wrapped himself in it; but the third said he had

found a horse with which one could ride over anything, even a glass mountain. Now, they could not agree as to whether the things belonged to them in common, or whether they should be divided.

The man said—

"I will give you something in exchange for your three things. It is true I have no money, but I have other things of greater value, but first I must prove them, to see if you have spoken the truth."

So they allowed him to get upon the horse, put the cloak round him,

and gave the stick into his hand; and when he had them all, of course they could no longer see him.

He gave them some mighty strokes with the stick, crying—

"There, you villains, you have got what you deserve, so be contented."

Then he rode up the glass mountain; but when he came to the castle the door was closed, but he struck it with his stick, and immediately it flew open.

He entered and mounted the staircase until he came to the hall where the maiden was seated, with a golden cup full of wine before her. But

she could not see him, on account of his cloak. When he stood before her, he drew the ring which she had given him from his finger, and threw it into the cup, so that it clinked.

And she cried—

"It is my ring, and the man who is to release me must be here also!"

They searched the whole castle for him, but could not find him, for he had gone out, seated himself upon his horse, and cast off his cloak. So when they came to the castle gate they saw him, and cried aloud with joy.

He dismounted and took the King's daughter in his arms, and she kissed him, and said—

"You have set me free, dear, and to-morrow we will be married."

Snow-White and Rose-Red.

THERE was once a poor widow who lived in a lonely little cottage, in front of which was a garden, where two rose-trees bloomed, one of which bore a white rose and the other a red. Now, the widow had two children, who were like the rose-trees, for one was called Snow-white and the other Rose-red.

The two children loved each other so dearly that whenever they went out together they walked hand-in-hand. Very often they went out into the wood by themselves to pick berries, but the wild beasts would not harm them. If they happened to stay too long in the wood and the night came on, they just lay down side by side upon the moss, and slept until the morning dawned, and as the mother knew this she was never anxious about them.

Once when they had spent the night in the wood, and the sunrise awoke them, they saw a beautiful child in a shining white robe sitting beside their resting-place. He rose and smiled, but said not a word, and went away into the wood.

And when they looked round they found they had been lying close to a precipice, over which they must have fallen in the darkness if they had taken another step. So their mother told them that the child they had seen must have been the sweet angel who watches over little children.

The children lived a very happy life with their dear mother in their pretty cottage home. In the evenings the mother would say, "Now, Snow-white, bolt the door," and then they seated themselves round the hearth, and the mother put on her spectacles and read to them out of a great big book, whilst the girls sat at their spinning-wheels and listened.

Beside them on the floor lay a little lamb, and on a perch behind them a white dove sat, with its head tucked snugly under its wing.

One winter's evening, as they all sat comfortably together, someone knocked at the door as though he wished to be let in.

"Quick, Rose-red," said the mother, "open the door. Very likely some poor wanderer has come to seek shelter."

Rose-red ran to push back the bolt and open the door, thinking to see a poor man, but instead, a great black bear pushed his big head in and looked at them.

Rose-red screamed with fright, the lamb began to bleat, the dove shook its wings, and Snow-white ran to hide herself behind her mother's bed.

But the bear told them not to be afraid, for that he would not hurt them. "I am half frozen with the cold," he said, "and only wish to warm myself a little."

"Poor fellow," answered the mother; "lie down by the fire, but see that you do not burn your thick fur coat."

Then she called the children, and told them to have no fear, for the bear would not harm them, but was an honest and respectable fellow.

So Snow-white and Rose-red crept out from their hiding-places, and by-and-by the lamb and the dove came too, and were not the least afraid of the bear, who asked the children to brush the snow from his fur for him. They fetched a broom and brushed the thick black coat, till not a single flake remained, and then the bear stretched himself comfortably in front of the fire, and growled gently with content.

Before long the children were quite at home with their clumsy guest, playing all sorts of tricks upon him. The bear seemed well

Snow-White, Rose-Red, and the Angel.

pleased with this treatment, though, when they became a little too rough, he would cry comically, "Please, children, don't kill me quite."

When bed-time came the mother told the bear that he might spend the night beside the hearth, and so be sheltered from the cold and storm.

As soon as morning dawned the two children opened the door, and he trotted away across the snow and was lost to sight in the wood. But from that day the bear came to them every night at the same time, laid himself down beside the hearth, and let the children play pranks with him as they liked, and they soon grew so accustomed to him that they never thought of bolting the door until their black friend had arrived.

When spring came, and the whole world was fresh and green, the bear told Snow-white one morning that he would not be able to visit them again all through the summer months.

"Where are you going to, dear bear?" asked Snow-white.

"I must stay in the wood and guard my treasures from the wicked dwarfs. In the winter, when the ground is frozen hard, they cannot work their way through it, and are obliged to stay below in their caves; but now that the warm sun has thawed the earth, they will soon break through it, and come out to steal what they can find, and that which once goes into their caves seldom comes out again."

Snow-white grieved sadly over the parting. As she unbolted the door and the bear hurried through, a piece of his coat caught on the latch and was torn off, and it seemed to the child that she

saw a glimmer of gold beneath it, but she was not sure. The bear ran quickly away, and soon disappeared behind the trees.

Some time afterwards the mother sent the children into the wood to gather sticks. They came to a great tree which lay felled on the ground, and beside which something kept jumping up and down in the grass.

At first they could not make out what it was, but as they came nearer they saw that it was a dwarf, with an old withered face, and a snow-white beard an ell long at least. The end of his beard had been fast caught in a split in the tree, and the little creature jumped about like a little dog at the end of a string, and knew not how to help himself.

He glared at the little girls with his fiery red eyes, and screamed, "Why do you stand staring there instead of coming to help me?"

"What have you been doing, little man?" asked Rose-red.

"You silly, prying goose," answered the dwarf; "if you *must* know, I was splitting the tree to get some small pieces of wood for the kitchen. The large logs which you use would burn up our food in no time: we don't need to cook such a quantity as you great greedy folk. I had just driven the wedge firmly in and everything seemed right enough, when it slipped on the smooth wood, and popped out, so that the tree closed up in a second, catching my beautiful white beard as it did so; and now I cannot get it out again, and you foolish, milk-faced creatures stand and laugh at me. Oh, how horrid you are!"

The children tried with all their might to help the old man, but they could not loosen his beard, and so Rose-red said she would run and fetch someone to help them.

"You stupid thing!" snarled the dwarf. "Why go and fetch others when you are two too many already? Can't you think of something better than that?"

"Have patience," said Snow-white. "I know what to do." And drawing her scissors from her pocket she cut off the end of the old man's beard.

As soon as the dwarf was free he grabbed at a bag of gold which was hidden amongst the roots of the tree, threw it across his shoulders, and grumbled out, "What clumsy folk, to be sure—to cut off a piece

of my beautiful beard! Bad luck to you!" and then, without so much as a word of thanks to the children, away he went.

Some time afterwards Snow-white and Rose-red went to catch a dish of fish, and as they neared the brook they saw something that looked like a grasshopper, hopping along towards the water. They ran towards it, and soon recognised the dwarf.

"What *are* you doing?" said Rose-red; "surely you don't want to jump into the water?"

"I'm not quite such an idiot as that," shrieked the dwarf. "Can't you see that the horrid fish is pulling me in?"

The little man had been sitting fishing, when unfortunately the wind entangled his beard with the fishing-line. Just at that moment a large fish took the bait, and the little weak creature was not strong enough to pull it out.

So the fish had the upper hand and was drawing the dwarf towards it. It is true the dwarf clutched at the grass and rushes as he went along, but it was all in vain, and he was forced to follow every movement of the fish, so that he was in great danger of being dragged into the water.

The children came just at the right moment. They held the little man fast and tried to disentangle the line, but they could not do so, and at last there was nothing for it but to bring out the scissors and snip a little piece off the beard.

The dwarf was very angry when he saw what they had done.

"Is it good manners," he yelled, "to spoil a person's face like that, you toads? Not content with having shortened my beard, you must now cut the best part out of it. May you go barefoot all your days for your pains!"

Then he seized a bag of pearls which lay hidden in the reeds, marched off without another word, and disappeared behind a stone.

It happened that soon afterwards the mother sent her two little girls into the town to buy needles and thread, laces and ribbons. Their way led them across a piece of land where great rocks lay scattered about.

There they saw a huge bird hovering in the air above them. Lower and lower it sank, until at last it settled upon a rock close by, and immediately they heard a piercing shriek. They hurried towards the sound, and saw, to their horror, that the eagle had seized upon their old acquaintance the dwarf, and was carrying him off.

The kind-hearted children at once took hold of the little man, and held him with might and main, so that the eagle was obliged to give up its prey. As soon as the dwarf had recovered from his fright he cried, in his rasping voice, "Could you not have been a little more careful? See, you have torn my delicate coat, so that it is all in rags. Stupid clumsy creatures that you are!"

Then he took up a bag full of precious stones, and slipped down into his den beneath the rock.

The children were used to his ingratitude, so they just went on their way and did their marketings in the town.

On their way home they again met the dwarf. He had emptied his sack of precious stones upon a smooth place, little thinking to be surprised by anyone at such a late hour. The evening sun shone upon the glistening heap of gems, and made them sparkle and flash so prettily that the children stood still to look at them.

"Why do you stand gaping there?" screamed the dwarf, his ashen

grey face crimson with wrath. He would have continued to scold but at that moment loud growls were heard, and a big black bear came shambling out of the wood.

In terror the dwarf sprang towards his cave, but the bear was too near, and he could not reach it. Then he cried, in his despair, "Dear Mr. Bear, spare me, I pray you, and I will give you all my treasures. Look at these precious stones: they shall all be yours if only you will spare my life. I am such a little fellow you would scarcely feel me between your teeth, but here are these two wicked girls—take them and eat them; you will find them tender morsels, and as fat as young quails."

The bear took no heed of his words, but gave the wicked little creature one stroke with his paw, and he never moved again.

The two girls had begun to run away, but the bear now called to them, "Snow-white, Rose-red, do not be afraid. If you will wait for me I will come with you."

They recognised his voice at once, and stood still, and as the bear came up to them his fur coat suddenly fell off, and he stood there, a fine handsome man, dressed all in shining gold.

"I am a King's son," he said, "and I was condemned by the wicked dwarf, who had stolen all my treasures, to become a bear and run wild in the woods, until I should be released by his death. He has now received his well-earned reward."

Shortly afterwards the disenchanted Prince married little Snow-white, whilst Rose-red was betrothed to his brother, and they divided between them all the beautiful treasures which the dwarf had collected in his cave.

The poor old mother went to live with her dear children, and took with her the two rose-trees from her little garden. These she planted close to her window, and every year they were covered with the most beautiful red and white roses that ever were seen.

THREE women were once changed into three flowers, which grew in the fields; but one of them was allowed to spend the night in her own home.

Once, when the daylight was very near and she knew that she must return to her companions in the field, she said to her husband—

"If you were to come this morning and gather me, I should be released from the enchantment and could stay with you always."

This happened, and now comes the riddle:—

How did the man know which flower was his wife, for all three were exactly alike?

You cannot guess? Then I will tell you.

Because she spent the night at home, instead of in the field as the others did, the dew which fell upon them did not touch her, and this was how her husband recognised her.

The Knapsack
The Hat and the Horn.

THERE were once three brothers, who gradually lost all their money, until at length they were so poor that they had nothing to eat or drink. "Things cannot go on like this," they said; "we had better go out into the world and seek our fortune."

So they set out and walked for many a weary mile, and still they did not meet their fortune. But one day they reached a wood, and in the midst of the wood was a mountain, and when they came close up to it they saw that it was of silver.

"At length I have found my long-wished-for fortune," said the eldest, "and I want nothing better." So he took as much silver as he could carry, and went back home with it.

The other two said, "We shall expect something more from fortune than mere silver," and did not even touch it, but went farther on. After a couple of days they came to a mountain of pure gold. The second brother stood and looked at it, but could not make up his mind how to act.

"What shall I do?" he said: "shall I take as much gold as I can carry, so that I have sufficient to last me all my life, or shall I go farther?"

At length he decided, filled his pockets as full as they would hold, bade his brother farewell, and went home. But the third brother said, "Silver and gold have no charms for me. I will not spoil my chance of a good fortune, for very likely there is something better in store for me." So he went on his way, and when he had travelled for three days he came to a wood which was thicker even than the last, and seemed without end. As he could find nothing in it to eat or drink, he was very nearly starving. He climbed a tall tree, so that he might see if the wood was nearly at an end, but as far as the eye could reach there was nothing but the tops of trees to be seen. He slipped down the tree again, but he was so tormented by hunger that he thought to himself, "I should not mind anything if only I had something to eat."

When he reached the ground, to his great astonishment he saw, beneath the tree, a table richly spread with delicious foods, the steam of which rose up towards him.

"This time," said he, "I have my wish, and at the right time." Without waiting to ask who had brought the food or who had cooked it, he went up to the table and ate with the greatest enjoyment, until his hunger was satisfied. When he had finished, he thought, "It would be a pity if the nice little tablecloth were to be spoilt in the wood." So he folded it neatly together and put it in his pocket. Then he went on once more, but by the evening he was hungry again, and thought he would make a trial of his cloth; so he spread it out, saying, "I wish you would be covered with good food again." Hardly had he spoken the words than it was covered with as many dishes of delicious food as there was room for.

"Now I know," said he, "in whose kitchen my food is cooked. You are more precious to me than the gold and silver mountains." For he saw at once that his tablecloth was a magic one. Still, he did not think the cloth sufficient to return home with and settle down in ease. He felt he would sooner see more of the world and find out if fortune had not even better things in store.

One night he met a dusky, black-faced charcoal-burner in the lonely

wood; he was burning charcoal, and had set his supper of potatoes to cook upon the fire.

"Good evening, my blackbird," said the youth; "how do you pass the time all alone here?"

"One day is like another," replied the charcoal-burner, "and every evening there are potatoes for supper. Will you be my guest and share them?"

"Many thanks," the traveller answered, "but I would not take your supper from you, and you did not reckon upon having a guest to share it. However, if you will be content with what I have, you shall be *my* guest."

"Who will prepare the meal for you?" asked the charcoal-burner. "There is no one within a couple of miles who could give you anything."

"All the same there shall be plenty to eat," said the young man, "and it will be better than anything *you* have ever tasted."

He took the cloth out of his knapsack, spread it, and said, "Cloth, be covered!" and at once all sorts of roast and boiled meats stood before them, smoking hot, as though they had just come from the kitchen.

The charcoal-burner stared, but he did not need much pressing, and began to eat as fast as ever he could.

When they had finished, the charcoal-burner smiled contentedly and said, "Listen! that cloth of yours pleases me remarkably well; it would be a first-rate thing for me to have here in the wood, where there is no one to cook anything nice for me. Let me see if I can make an exchange with you. There in the corner hangs a soldier's knapsack; true, it is old and shabby, but it has a wonderful power hidden in it. It is no use to me, so I will exchange it for your cloth."

"First I must hear what this wonderful power is," replied the traveller.

"I will tell you," the charcoal-burner answered. "You have only to tap it three times with your hand, and out come a corporal and six men, all armed from head to foot and ready to obey your commands."

"As far as I am concerned, I am willing to change," said the traveller, and gave his cloth to the charcoal-burner, lifted the knapsack from its peg, hung it upon his shoulders, and said good-bye.

Before he had gone far he thought he would like to try the magical powers of the knapsack, so he tapped it.

Immediately seven stalwart soldiers stepped out, and the corporal asked, "What does my lord and commander wish for?"

"March at once to the charcoal-burner and demand my wishing-cloth!"

They faced to the left, and before long they brought what he had

wished for; they had taken it from the charcoal-burner without troubling to ask for it.

He ordered them to retire, and then went farther on, hoping that fortune would smile still more brightly upon him. By sunset he came upon another charcoal-burner, who was just preparing his evening meal.

"Will you share my food?" said the grimy fellow. "I have only potatoes and salt, without so much as a taste of dripping, but you are welcome, so sit down."

"No," replied the traveller, "you shall be my guest," and he spread his cloth, which was immediately covered with delicious food.

They ate and drank together and were the best of friends. After supper the charcoal-burner said, "Up on the shelf there lies a little worn-out hat, which has, however, strange powers. When anyone puts it on and turns it round and round on his head, cannons begin to go off, as though there were a dozen side by side, and they shoot everything down so that no one can withstand them. I have no use for the little hat, so I will give it to you in exchange for your cloth."

"Yes, I have no objection," replied the traveller, so he took the hat, put it upon his head, and left the cloth in place of it. But he had scarcely gone a few steps before he tapped his knapsack and ordered the soldiers to go and get it back again.

"One thing comes on the top of the other," he thought, "and I feel as though my luck had not come to an end yet."

His thoughts had not played him false, for after another day's journey he met a third charcoal-burner, who invited him to share his supper of potatoes without dripping. The traveller allowed him to sup from his wishing-cloth, and the charcoal-burner liked the food so well that he offered to give him a horn in exchange for the cloth. This horn had quite a different power to the hat. When anyone blew it, walls and fortifications, and even towns and villages, fell down in ruins. It is true the traveller gave the charcoal-burner his cloth for it, but he soon sent his soldiers to fetch it back, so that now he had the knapsack, the hat, and the horn.

"Now," said he, "I am a made man, and it is time I went home to see how my brothers are getting on."

When he reached home he found that his brothers had built themselves a fine house with their gold and silver, and were living on the best of everything. He went in to see them, but because he was wearing a torn coat and a shabby hat, and had an old worn-out knapsack on his back, they would not own him as their brother.

They mocked him and said, "So you pretend to be our brother, who despised silver and gold and craved for something better still? No doubt he will come back as a mighty king, and not as a beggar-man," and they drove him out of the house.

"She put her arms around his neck and unfastened the knapsack."

He was so angry that he tapped and tapped at his knapsack until a hundred and fifty men stood before him. He commanded them to surround his brothers' house, whilst two of them took a couple of hazel-rods and beat the two insolent fellows until they *did* know who he was. Then a fearful noise arose, and people came hurrying along to see what was the matter, and would have helped the two brothers had they been able, but the soldiers prevented them.

At length the news of what was happening reached the King's ears. He was very angry, and sent a captain and troop to chase this disturber of the peace from the town; but the man with the knapsack soon had a larger troop, and beat the captain and his men so that they ran home with their noses bleeding.

Then said the King, "This vagabond *shall* be brought to order." And the next day he sent a still bigger troop against him, but they could do even less than the first. The young man had more men ready to meet them, and in order to finish the matter quickly, he turned his hat and set the heavy guns to work, so that the King's people were beaten and put to flight.

"Now," said he, "I will not make peace until the King has promised to give me his daughter for my wife, and will let me govern the kingdom in his name."

He sent this message to the King, who said to his daughter, "Must is a hard nut to crack, but there is nothing else for me to do. If I wish for peace and to keep the crown upon my head, I must give you to him."

The marriage was celebrated, but the King's daughter was dreadfully vexed to think that her husband was just a common man, who wore a shabby old hat upon his head and carried a worn-out knapsack on his back. She was anxious to get rid of him, and thought day and night of means to do so.

Then she thought to herself, "Could it be possible for his strange power to be hidden in the knapsack?"

So she pretended to be very loving, and made much of him, and when his heart was softened towards her, she said, "I wish you would not wear that ugly old knapsack. It makes you look so strange that I am quite ashamed of you."

"Dear child," he answered, "this knapsack is my greatest treasure; so long as I possess it I need fear no power in the world," and he told her of the magic power it possessed.

Then she put her arms around his neck, as though she were going to kiss him, but instead she managed to unfasten the knapsack from his shoulders, and ran off with it. As soon as she was alone she tapped upon the knapsack, and bade the soldiers seize their former master and lead him out of the royal palace.

They obeyed, and then the false wife sent others to chase him out of the land. He would have been ruined had it not been for his hat.

Scarcely were his hands free than he turned it round twice, and at once the cannons began to thunder and everything fell before them, and the King's daughter was obliged to come herself and beg for pardon.

And because she begged so earnestly, and promised to behave better in future, he allowed himself to be persuaded, and forgave her.

Then she pretended to grow very fond of him, and after a time she deceived him so well that he told her that, even if he lost the knapsack, he would still be able to hold his own so long as he had his hat.

When she had found out the secret, she waited until he was asleep, and then took his hat away, and ordered him to be turned out into the streets.

But he still had the horn, and, in great anger, he blew into it with all his might.

In a moment everything began to fall down—walls, fortresses, towns and villages, and the King and his daughter were crushed to death. Then he put down the horn; but if he had not left off blowing when he did, there would have been nothing left standing at all.

After this no one attempted to resist him, so he made himself King over the whole country.

THERE was once an old King who was very ill, and, thinking that he was about to die, he ordered his favourite servant to be sent to him. This servant's name was John, and because he had served his master so faithfully all his life long, he was always known by the name of "John the Faithful." When he came to the bedside of his master, the old King said to him—

"John, my faithful old servant, I feel that my end is not far off, but I cannot die happily unless you will promise me to be a second father to my dear and only son, who is still but a youth and unable to judge wisely for himself."

Now, John the Faithful answered—

"Sire, I will serve him faithfully and well, even though I should give my own life for his welfare."

Then the King gave John instructions as to what he should do after his death. "You may show him the whole of the castle, with the exception of the little room at the end of the long gallery," said he. "In that room hangs the picture of the Princess of the Golden Palace. If he were to see the picture he would fall in love with her at once, would swoon

at your feet, and afterwards encounter all sorts of dangers for her sake, and from these troubles you must save him."

John the Faithful, having promised that he would guard the young man as much as lay in his power, the old King laid his head contentedly upon the pillow and died.

As soon as the days of mourning were over, John showed the Prince all the riches of his father's castle. Into every room and hall he led him, except, of course, the little one at the end of the long gallery, where the fatal picture hung.

This picture was so placed that it met the glance as the door of the chamber was opened, and it was so exquisitely painted that it looked as though the figure lived and moved. Never was anything in the world so lovely.

The young King noticed that John passed by this room, and asked why he did not open the door.

"There is something there which would horrify you," he replied.

"Nonsense," said the young King; "I insist upon knowing what is hidden here," and he would have burst open the door by force but John the Faithful held him back.

"Before your father's death," said he, "I promised him that you should not see this room. Hidden within it is something which would lead both you and me into great danger."

"Well," answered the young King, "I shall never rest until I know what is within, and I will not move from the place until you have shown me."

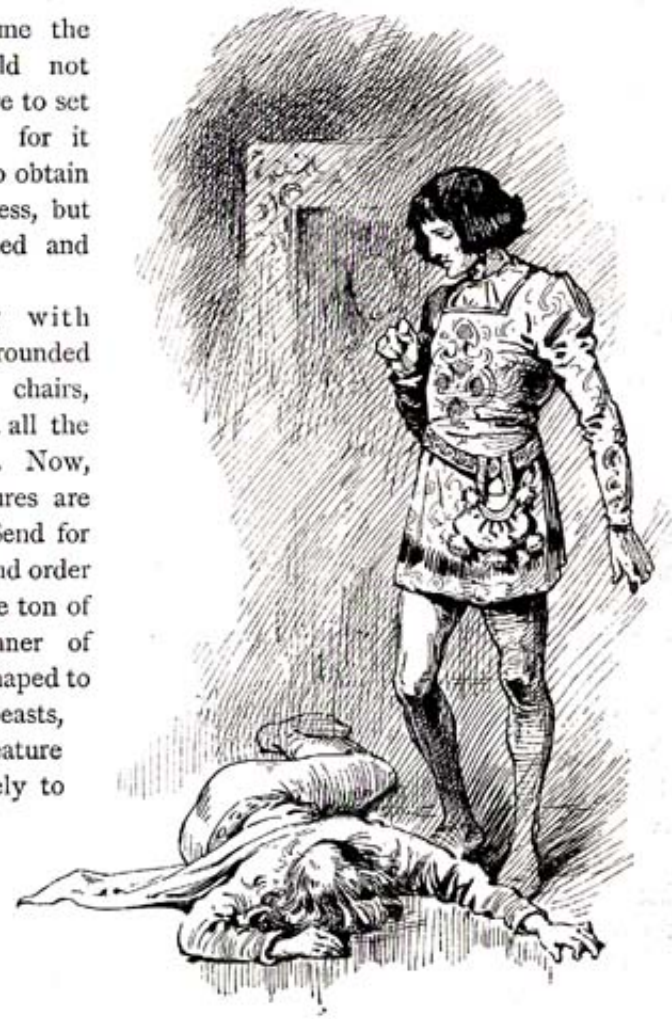
Then John the Faithful saw there was no help for it, but it was with a heavy heart that he searched for the key, upon the great bunch that he held.

When he had opened the door, he entered first, hoping to hide the picture from the young man's gaze, but it was of no use, for the King stood on tip-toe and peeped over his shoulder. And when he saw the lovely portrait of the Princess, which shone and sparkled with gold and precious stones, he fell fainting to the ground.

His faithful servant lifted him in his arms and carried him to his bed, thinking with sorrow that the misfortune had come upon them, in spite of all his care.

He held wine to the lips of the fainting youth and presently he recovered, and inquired whom the beautiful picture he had seen represented. "That is the picture of the Princess of the Golden Palace," answered John the Faithful, and the King's son said—

"My love for her is so great that even though all the leaves upon the green trees had tongues, they could not say how dear she is to me. I will give my life to win her, and you, my faithful John, must lend me your help."



For a long time the good servant could not think how they were to set about the matter, for it was difficult even to obtain a sight of the Princess, but at length he decided and said—

"Everything with which she is surrounded is of gold—tables, chairs, dishes, goblets, and all the household furniture. Now, among your treasures are five tons of gold. Send for a clever goldsmith and order him to make up one ton of gold into all manner of vessels and goods, shaped to represent birds and beasts, or any kind of creature which might be likely to attract her notice, and then we will set sail and try our luck."

So the King sent for every

goldsmith in the kingdom, and ordered them to work day and night until at length they had fashioned such beautiful things as had never before been seen. Then when everything had been stored away on board a great ship, John the Faithful clothed himself in merchant's garments, and, making the King do the same, so that neither of them might be recognised, they hoisted the sail and journeyed across the sea until they came to the town where the Princess of the Golden Palace dwelt.

John the Faithful bade the King remain behind on the ship whilst he went ashore.

"Perhaps," said he, "I may be able to persuade the Princess to come on board, so be careful that everything is in order, the golden vessels set out to the best advantage, and the whole ship decorated."

Then he filled his apron with all sorts of beautiful things, went on shore, and marched straight to the royal palace.

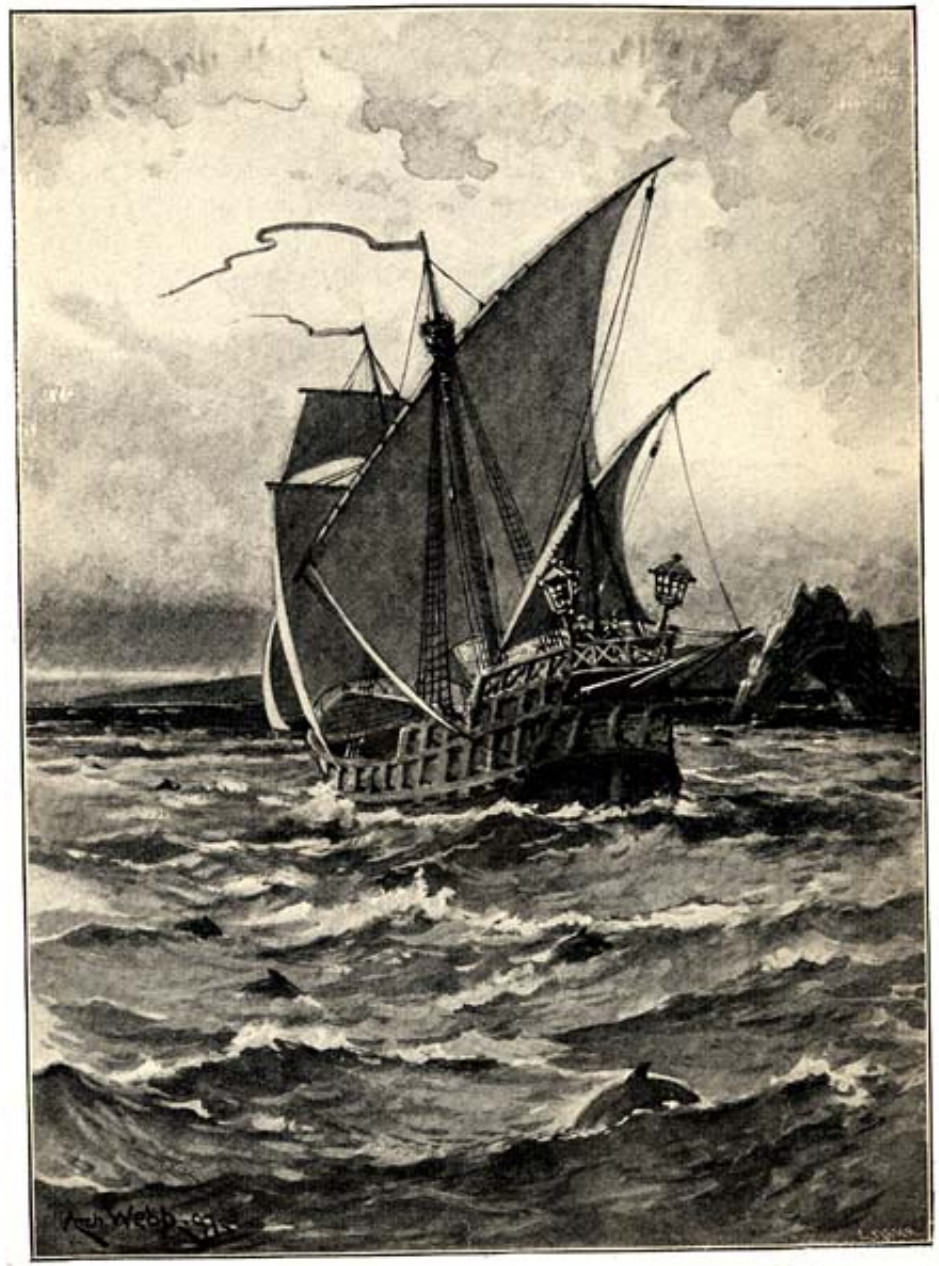
As he entered the courtyard, he saw a pretty maiden drawing water from the well in two golden buckets. Just as she was about to carry the sparkling water away she caught sight of the stranger, and asked him what he was doing there. He held out his apron and showed her the golden dishes and goblets which he carried, telling her at the same time that he was a merchant.

"How lovely!" cried the girl, and she set down her pails, that she might examine them the better. "You must certainly show your wares to the Princess," she said, "for she is so fond of golden things that she will most likely buy all you have."

She took his hand, and led him to the Princess, for she was one of her maids-in-waiting, and when her mistress had seen the goods, she was delighted with them, and wished to buy them all, but John told her—

"I am but the servant of a rich merchant, and the things I have shown you are not to be compared to what my master has on board his ship. There you could see the most exquisite golden vessels that have ever been made."

The Princess wished to have the things brought to her, but he told her that there were so many that it would take days and days to bring them ashore, and that even then the palace would not be large enough to hold them all. So, her curiosity being aroused, she said that she would go on board herself and inspect the treasures which John told her of.



"They hoisted sail and journeyed across the sea."

The faithful servant was well pleased, you may be sure, and made haste to lead her to his master, and when the young King saw her he thought his heart would burst with joy, for she was even more beautiful than her picture.

As she stepped on board the ship he gave her his hand, and led her below, but John the Faithful remained behind, and bade the pilot hoist every sail, that they might speed across the sea like a bird on the wing.

Meanwhile the King was showing the Princess his golden goods, and in her pleasure at the sight of the strange and beautiful vessels and cunningly wrought creatures, many hours passed away without her noticing that the ship was in motion. At length when she had seen everything, she thanked the merchant and would have returned home, but when she reached the deck she saw that the ship was far from land, upon the high seas, and bounding forward with every sail set.

"Alas! alas!" she cried. "I am betrayed, and have fallen into the hands of this merchant. Sooner would I have died."

Then the King took her by the hand, and said—

"I am no merchant, dearest, but a mighty King, and equal to yourself in birth. It is true I have carried you away by stealth, but it was only because of my great love for you. The first time I saw your picture I fell fainting to the ground."

When the Princess of the Golden Palace heard this she was comforted, and could not help but forgive him, and very soon she promised to be his wife.

Now, it happened that as they were still sailing upon the high seas John the Faithful sat by himself in the fore-part of the ship and played sweet music, and as he sat there he saw three ravens flying towards him. So he ceased playing that he might hear what they were talking about, for he understood bird-language very well.

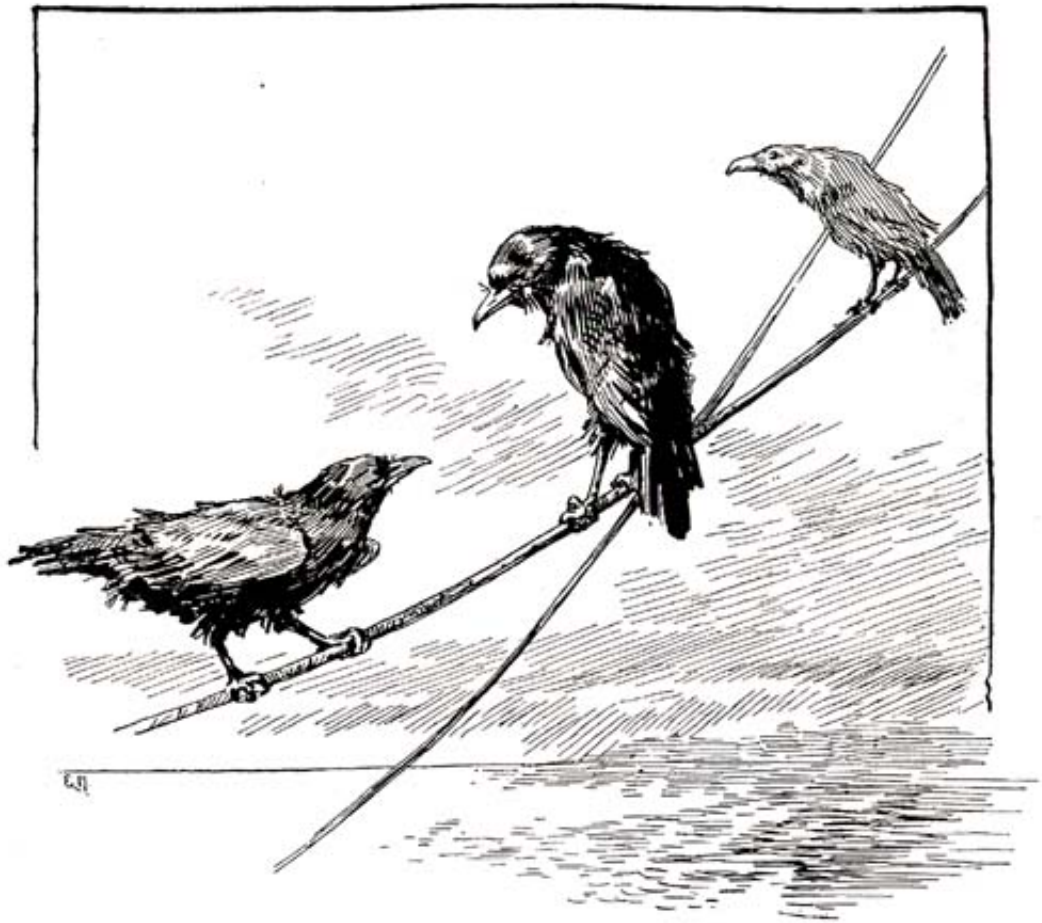
"Ha!" cried one of the ravens. "He is carrying the Princess of the Golden Palace home!"

"Yes," answered a second, "but she is not yet his!"

Said the third—

"Why, she must be his, for even now she sits beside him in the cabin."

Then the first raven spoke again—



"That will help him but little by-and-by, for when they reach the land a bay horse will rush forward to meet him; he will try to spring upon its back, but if he does, it will leap into the air with him, and carry him away, so that he will never see his true love any more."

The second said—

"And is there no escape?"

"Yes, there is one way. Someone must spring up before him, seize the pistol which is in the holster, and shoot the horse dead, and the young King will be saved. But who knows this? And even if anyone did know it and told it, he would be turned into stone from his toes to his knees."

Then said the second—

"I know still more. Even if the horse is killed, the young King will not keep his bride, for when they enter the castle together, they will see a bridal robe lying upon a dish. It will look as though it were woven of gold and silver; but instead of that it is only brimstone and pitch, and when he puts it on it will burn him to the very bone."

The third raven asked—

"Is there *no* means of escape?"

"Oh, yes," answered the second; "if anyone were to seize the robe in his gloved hands and throw it into the fire, so that it was burnt, the young King would be saved. But of what use is this, for who knows it? And even if anyone did and told it, the half of his body would be turned into stone from his knees to his heart."

Then said the third—

"I know yet more, for even if the marriage robe is burnt, the King will still lose his bride. After the wedding there will be a dance, and in the midst of the dancing the Queen will suddenly turn pale and fall down as though she were dead. Then unless someone takes three drops of blood from her breast she will surely die. But if anyone were to speak of this he would be turned into stone from the crown of his head to the tips of his toes."

When the ravens had finished speaking they flew away, but John the Faithful had understood every word they said, and from that time he became very sorrowful, for he knew that unless he warned his master of what was going to happen he could not escape from misfortune, and yet if he told him he knew that he would lose his own life, but at length he said to himself—

"I will save my master, even though I die in the attempt."

When they reached the land everything happened just as the ravens had said. A splendid bay charger came springing towards them.

"Good," said the King, "he shall carry me home to my palace," and was just about to jump into the saddle when John the Faithful ran before him, sprang upon its back, took the pistol from the holster, and shot the charger dead.

Then the rest of the King's servants, who were jealous of John, cried out that it was shameful to shoot the beautiful creature that should have

John the Faithful at the Golden Palace.

carried the King to his palace. But the King bade them hold their peace, "For," said he, "he is the most faithful of all my subjects. Who knows to what good end he has done this?"

Then they went on their way, and as they entered the castle hall they saw a marriage robe lying in a great dish, and it looked just as though it were woven of gold and silver.

The young King went to take it up, but John the Faithful ran quickly, and, seizing it in his gloved hands, threw it into the fire so that it was burnt.

The other servants again began to complain, and said—

"See, now he has even burnt the King's marriage robe!"

But the King said—

"Leave him alone: we know not to what good end he has done this. He is my most faithful servant."

The marriage was now celebrated, and when the dance began, and the bride came in to join the dancers, John the Faithful watched her anxiously. Suddenly she turned deadly pale and fell to the ground as though she were dead. He darted forward, raised her in his arms, and, carrying her hastily into an inner room, took three drops of blood from her breast. Immediately she drew a deep breath and began to recover, but the young King, who could not understand why John had behaved in this strange fashion, was angry with him and ordered him to be carried away to prison.

The next morning John the Faithful was condemned, and led away to the gallows. Then, when he stood ready to be executed, he said:

"Every man who is condemned to die is allowed to make one last speech: have I the right to do so too?"

"Yes," answered the King, "the right shall be granted you."

Then said John the Faithful: "I have been wrongfully condemned, for I have ever been faithful to you," and he told the King what the ravens had said, and how all that he had done had been to save his master.

And the King cried out—

"My faithful servant, you are pardoned, pardoned! Bring him down at once."

But John the Faithful had fallen down as he spoke the last word, and had become a stone.

The King and the Queen were overwhelmed with grief, and the King said, "How evilly have I rewarded such fidelity!" and he ordered the stone figure to be carried into his bed-chamber and placed beside his bed, and as often as he looked at it he wept and said—

"Ah! if only I could give you back your life, my faithful John!"

Time passed on, and the Queen had two little sons, who grew into fine boys, and were her joy and pride.

Once when she had gone to church and the children were playing beside their father, the King looked sorrowfully at the stone figure and sighed—

"Ah! if only I could bring you back to life, my faithful servant!"

Then the stone began to speak, and said—

"If you will give up your dearest and best, you can do even that!"

And the King cried—

"I will give up everything I possess in the world for your sake!"

Then the stone went on—

"If you will cut off your children's heads with your own hands and anoint me with their blood, then I shall receive my life again."

The King was horrified to hear that he was to kill his dear little children with his own hands, but he thought of how his faithful servant had given his life for his master, and so drew his sword and cut off the heads of his sons.

And when he had anointed the stone with their blood, the life returned to it, and John the Faithful stood once more before him, ruddy

with life and health. He smiled at the King, and said, "Your faithfulness shall not go unrewarded," and, taking the children's heads, he placed them upon their bodies, and the next moment the two little boys were whole again, and playing about as though nothing had happened.

The King was beside himself with joy, but when he saw the Queen

coming he hid John the Faithful and the two children in a cupboard, and when she came into the room he asked—

"Have you been praying in church to-day?"

"Yes," she answered, "but my thoughts would stray to our faithful John and the misfortune which befell him for our sakes."

Then said the King—

"My own dear wife, we have it in our power to restore him to life, but in order to do this we must sacrifice our dear little sons."

The Queen turned pale, and her heart stood still with grief, but she said—

"All that we have we owe to his great faithfulness."

How glad the King was then to find that the Queen's thoughts were even as his own.

He went at once and opened the cupboard, and brought out the children, and John the Faithful with them.

"Let us rejoice," said he, "for our faithful John is restored to us once more, and besides that, our dear little ones are spared to us also." And then he told her all that had happened.

And so it came to pass that they all lived happily together all the days of their lives.

The Queen Bee.

Clever Grethel

THERE was once a cook named Grethel, who had a pair of shoes with scarlet heels. She was so proud of them that when she went out walking she gave herself great airs, and thought—

"Ah, Grethel! You do look pretty."

When she came home she drank a glass of wine out of pure light-heartedness, and as wine gives one a longing for food she tasted the rest of whatever she was cooking until she could eat no more, and then she said—

"Every cook is bound to try the food to see if it is good."

It happened one day that her master said to her—

"Grethel, I have a guest coming to visit me this evening, so you must prepare a couple of fowls as daintily as you can."

"Yes, sir," said Grethel, and she went and caught the fowls, killed and plucked them, put them on the spit, and towards evening placed them in front of the fire, so that they should be well roasted.

The fowls began to brown nicely, but the guest did not arrive, so Grethel called to her master—

"If the guest does not come soon I must take the fowls away from the fire, but it is a sin and a shame not to eat them whilst the gravy is in them."

And the master said—

"I will run and fetch him myself."

As soon as the master's back was turned, Grethel took the spit with the fowls on it from the fire and put it on one side.

"How hot and thirsty standing over the fire makes one!" she said to herself. "Who knows how long they may be? I will just run down to the cellar and get a drink."

She ran down, drew a jug of wine, and took a good draught, saying, "Your health, Grethel!" Then she added, "It is a pity to divide the wine," and finished what was in the jug.

She went upstairs again and put the fowls down to the fire, and basted them with butter. How good they smelt, to be sure!

"Perhaps there is something wrong with them," said Grethel; "I must taste them." She tried them with her finger. "Oh, dear, how good they are," she said. "It is a sin and a shame that they should not be eaten at once."

She ran to the window to see if her master and his guest were not coming, but as she saw no one she went and looked at the fowls again.

"One of the wings is burning," she said; "I had better eat it."

She cut it off and eat it up with great enjoyment. "Now the other must come off," she said, "or else master will notice that something is missing."

When she had eaten the two wings she went and looked for her master, and he was still not in sight.

"Who knows," thought she, "but what they are not coming at all, and have gone somewhere else." Then she said, "Now, Grethel, enjoy yourself; you have cut into one fowl, so go and have another drink and then finish it up. When it is gone you will have a little peace, for it is such a pity to waste good food." So she went down to the cellar again, took a good drink, and then finished the fowl in great glee.

When the one fowl had disappeared and her master still did not come, Grethel looked at the other, and said—

"Where the one is the other should be, for they belong to each other. What is good for the one is good for the other. I believe if I had another drink of wine it would do me no harm." So she took a hearty drink, and sent the second fowl to find the first.

Before she had finished eating, her master came home and called to her—

"Be quick, Grethel; the guest will follow me directly."

"Yes, master, I will dish up," answered Grethel.

In the meantime the master went to see that the table was properly laid, took the big knife with which he meant to carve the fowls, and sharpened it upon the door.

Presently the guest arrived, and knocked politely at the front door.

Grethel ran to see who was there, and when she saw the guest, placed her finger on her lips, and whispered—

"Hush, hush! Run away as fast as you can. It will be the worse for you if my master catches you. It is true he has invited you to supper, but he only means to cut off both your ears. Hark! you can hear him sharpening the knife."

The guest heard the sharpening, and hurried down the steps as fast as he could. Grethel was not idle, but ran screaming to her master.

"A fine guest you have invited," she cried.

"Eh, Grethel?" said he; "what do you mean?"

"Why," she answered quickly, "I was just going to bring in the fowls, when he seized them both from the dish and ran off with them."

"That's a fine trick to play!" said her master, thinking sadly of the beautiful fowls. "He might at least have left me one, so that I had something to eat."

He called after him, but the guest pretended not to hear. Then he ran after him, with the knife still in his hand, crying, "Only one, only one!" meaning that the guest should leave him one of the fowls and not take both.

But the guest, of course, thought he meant that he was to give up one of his ears, and ran as fast as though he were on hot bricks, so that he might take them both home with him.

The Three Feathers

THERE was once a King, who had three sons. The two elder ones were clever, witty fellows, but the youngest had little to say for himself, and was so simple that he was called "The Simpleton."

When the King grew old and infirm he was troubled in his mind as to which of his sons should succeed him. At length he said to them, "Go forth, my sons, upon your travels, and whichever of you brings home the most beautiful carpet shall be King after my death."

And in order that there might be no dispute amongst them, he took them out of the castle, blew three feathers up into the air, and said, "As the feathers fly, so you shall go."

The first feather flew towards the east, the second towards the west, but the third just settled down upon the ground at once. So the eldest brother went to the right, the second to the left, but the Simpleton was bound to stay behind, where his feather had fallen.

The poor fellow sat down, full of grief, when suddenly he noticed a trap-door close beside the feather. He raised it and found some steps, down which he went, until he came to another door, at which he knocked, and then heard a voice from within cry, "Little green maiden, hop to the door and see who knocks."

The door opened, and he saw a huge toad surrounded by a crowd of small ones. The big toad asked what he wanted, and he answered, "I should like to have the prettiest and finest carpet in the world." Then the big toad told the little one to bring her a big box, and out of this box she took a beautiful carpet, which she gave to the Simpleton.

The elder brothers had thought their brother too stupid ever to find a carpet at all, and so they did not trouble themselves to look far, but just bought the cloaks of the two first shepherd's wives they met, and carried them home to the King. The Simpleton arrived back at the same time, and when the King saw his lovely carpet, he said, "By right, the kingdom belongs to you."

But the other two said it was ridiculous to suppose that a Simpleton could be the King, and they begged their father to set them some other task. So the father said, "The kingdom shall belong to the one who brings me the most beautiful ring," and he led the brothers out, and blew the three feathers into the air to decide in which direction they should go.

The two elder brothers again went towards the east and west, but the Simpleton's feather settled down close beside the trap-door. He went down to the big toad at once, and told her that he wanted a beautiful ring, and again she sent for the big box, and gave him a ring out of it, which sparkled with precious stones.

The other two laughed at the idea of the Simpleton being able to find a beautiful gold ring, and so they gave themselves no trouble about the matter, but just took two old harness rings and brought them home to their father. When the Simpleton produced his gold ring, the old man said at once, "The kingdom belongs to him!"

But the elder sons worried the King until he had promised them a third trial, and this time he declared that whoever should bring home the most beautiful wife should have the kingdom. Then he blew the three feathers into the air, and they fell as they had done before.

At once the Simpleton went down to the big toad, and said, "I am to take home a beautiful wife!"

The toad gave him a carrot, which had been hollowed out, and to which six mice had been harnessed, and when the Simpleton asked what

he was to do with it, she answered, "Take one of my little toads and place her inside it."

So he seized one at random and put her into the carrot coach, and scarcely was she seated before she had changed into a lovely maiden, the carrot became a coach, and the six mice were prancing horses. So he kissed her, and drove away quickly to the King. The elder brothers soon followed him. They had given themselves no trouble whatever, but had just chosen the two first peasant girls they met. As soon as the

King saw them he said, "The kingdom belongs to my youngest son, after my death."

But again the two eldest deafened the King's ears with their cries—"We *will* not allow the Simpleton to be King," and begged that he should choose the one whose wife could jump through a ring which hung in the great hall, for they thought, "The peasant girls can easily do that, because they are so strong, but the tender little lady will kill herself, no doubt."

So at last the old King consented. The two peasant girls managed to jump through the hoop, it is true; but they were so clumsy that they fell and broke their arms and legs. Then the Simpleton's little maiden jumped, and came through as lightly and gracefully as a fawn; and now there was nothing left to be said, and the Simpleton was made King, and ruled wisely and well from that time to this.

THERE was once a woman who had three daughters. The eldest was called "One-Eye," because she had only one eye, which was right in the middle of her forehead, the second was called "Two-Eyes," because she had two eyes like other folk, and the youngest was called "Three-eyes," because she had three eyes, and the third, like her eldest sister's one eye, was fixed right in the middle of her forehead. Neither the mother nor the sisters loved poor Two-eyes, and only because she was like other people.

It happened once that she was sent out to tend the goat, and, being very hungry, for her sisters had given her very little to eat, she sat down upon a bank and began to cry. In the midst of her grief she looked up, and saw a woman standing beside her, who asked, "What are you crying for, Two-eyes?"

Two-eyes answered, "Have I not cause to weep?—for my mother and sisters hate me; they push me about, make me wear their old clothes,

and only give me the scraps of food they leave. To-day they have given me so little to eat that I am still as hungry as I can be."

Then the wise woman said, "Dry your eyes, Two-eyes, and I will tell you how you shall never be hungry again. Say to your goat—

"'Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, bring me something to eat!'

and at once a little table will appear, covered with the most delicious food you could wish for. Eat what you will, and when you have finished say—

"'Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, carry away the meat!'

and it will vanish before your eyes."

The wise woman then went away, and Two-eyes thought to herself, "I will see at once if she has spoken the truth, for I am dreadfully hungry." So she said—

"Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, bring me something to eat!"

And scarcely had she spoken the words than a table appeared, covered with a white cloth, upon which were laid a plate with a knife and fork and a silver spoon, and besides these, the most delicious foods, all smoking hot as though they had come straight from the kitchen. Two-eyes said the shortest grace she knew, and helped herself. When she had eaten as much as she wanted, she said, as the wise woman had told her—

"Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, carry away the meat!"

and in a moment the table and everything upon it had disappeared.

"What a delightful way of keeping house!" thought Two-eyes, and she was as pleased as she could be.

In the evening when she took the goat home, she found an earthenware dish of food, which the sisters had put out for her, but she did not touch it. The next day she went out with the goat again, and never so much as glanced at the breakfast of broken bits which was given her. And so it went on. At first the sisters did not take any notice, but when it happened once or twice they said, "There is something wrong with

Two-Eyes, the Goat, and the Magic Table.

Two-eyes. She never touches her food, and once she was glad enough to finish every scrap." And so in order to discover the truth, they made up their minds that One-eye should go with her when she drove the goat to pasture, and find out whether anyone gave her food and drink.

The next time Two-eyes set out, One-eye said to her, "I am coming with you to see if you take proper care of the goat." But Two-eyes guessed what One-eye was thinking of, and drove the goat to where the tall grass grew, and then said, "Come, One-eye, let us sit down, and I

will sing to you." One-eye sat down, for she was tired with the unaccustomed walk and the heat, and Two-eyes sang over and over again—

"One-eye, wakest thou?
One-eye, sleepest thou?"

And One-eye shut her one eye and went to sleep. As soon as Two-eyes saw that One-eye was asleep and could not discover anything, she said—

"Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, bring me something to eat!"

and sat down to the table and ate and drank until she was satisfied, and then said—

"Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, carry away the meat!"

and in a moment everything had vanished.

Two-eyes now awakened her sister and said, "One-eye, you talk of watching the goat, and yet you go to sleep; it might have got into all sorts of mischief. But now we had better go home again."

So they went home, and again Two-eyes left her dish of food untouched, and One-eye could not tell her mother the reason of it, and to excuse herself she said, "I fell asleep out there in the open air."

The next day the mother told Three-eyes to go and see if Two-eyes had anything to eat given her, "For," said she, "it is quite certain she must eat and drink when no one is looking." So Three-eyes went to Two-eyes, and said, "I am coming with you to-day, to see that you take proper care of the goat and lead it to rich pastures."

But Two-eyes knew what Three-eyes had in her mind; so she drove the goat to where the tall grass grew, and said, "Come, Three-eyes, let us sit down, and I will sing to you."

Three-eyes sat down, for she was tired with the long walk and the heat of the sun, and Two-eyes began the song she had sung before: "Three-eyes, wakest thou?" But instead of singing, as she should have done: "Three-eyes, sleepest thou?" she thoughtlessly sang: "*Two-eyes*, sleepest thou?" and over and over again she sang—

"Three-eyes, wakest thou?
Two-eyes, sleepest thou?"

so two of Three-eyes' eyes shut themselves up and went to sleep, but the third kept awake, because it had not been mentioned in the little song. It is true that Three-eyes shut it as though it were asleep, but that was her cunning, for she was peeping out beneath the eye-lid and could see all that was happening. Thinking that Three-eyes was asleep, Two-eyes said the little verse—

"Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, bring me something to eat!"

and ate and drank as much as she pleased, and then bade the table disappear—

"Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, carry away the meat!"

And Three-eyes had seen everything! Two-eyes went to her and awakened her, and said, "Ah, Three-eyes, so you went to sleep, did you? What good care you take of the goat, to be sure! But, come, we will go home now."

When they went home as usual, Two-eyes ate nothing, and Three-eyes said to her mother, "I know now why it is that the fine-mouthed creature will not eat; when she is out with the goat she says—

"'Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, bring me something to eat!'

and a table appears, covered with much better food than we ever have, and when she has eaten as much as she wants, she says—

"'Bleat, my little goatakin, bleat!
Table, carry away the meat!'

and everything vanishes. I have seen exactly how it all happens. First she

sent my two eyes to sleep by singing a little lullaby, but fortunately the one in my forehead kept awake."

Then the envious mother cried, "Wilt thou have better food than we, eh? Thou shalt soon lose the wish for it!" And she fetched a knife and stabbed the goat to the heart, so that it fell down dead. When Two-eyes saw this she wandered sorrowfully away, and, seating herself upon a grassy bank, began to weep bitter tears. Suddenly the wise woman stood before her. "What are you crying for, Two-eyes?" she said.

"Have I not good cause to weep?" she answered, "for my mother has killed the goat which covered the table with such nice food for me whenever I said the verse you taught me, and now I shall have to go hungry and thirsty once more."

The wise woman said, "Two-eyes, I will give you a piece of good advice. Ask your sisters to give you the goat's inside, and bury it in the earth before the house-door, and your fortune will be made."

Then she vanished, and Two-eyes went home and said to her sisters, "Dear sisters, will you not give me *some* part of my goat? I don't ask for anything good, but will be quite content if you will only give me the inside."

And they laughed and said, "Oh, you may have that and welcome, if that is all you wish for."

So Two-eyes took the inside, and buried it at night, when all was quiet, in front of the house-door, just as the wise woman had told her.

The next morning when they were all awake they went to the house-door, and there stood a strange and beautiful tree, which had leaves of silver, between which shone bright golden fruits; never was anything seen which could compare with the beauty and splendour of this wonderful tree. They could not think how it had come there in a single night, but Two-eyes noticed that it had grown from the inside of the goat, for it was standing upon the very spot where she had buried it.

Then said the mother to One-eye, "Climb up, my child, and pluck some of the fruit for us." One-eye climbed up, but each time she tried to pluck one of the golden apples the branch escaped from her hands, so that, try as she might, she could not pick a single apple.

So the mother said, "Come, Three-eyes, you shall climb up; you will be able to look about you better with your three eyes than your

"Two-eyes broke off a branch, and gave it to the knight."

sister can with only one." One-eye slipped down, and Three-eyes climbed up instead. But Three-eyes was no handier than One-eye, and though she kept her three eyes fixed upon them, the golden apples escaped her too!

At length the mother grew impatient, and climbed the tree herself, but she had no better luck than One-eye and Three-eyes, and grasped nothing but the empty air. Two-eyes then said, "I will climb up and see if I can manage any better."

The sisters both screamed at her, "You! what can you do with your two eyes?" But Two-eyes climbed up, and instead of drawing themselves away, the golden apples fell into her hand of their own accord, so that she gathered one after another, and came down at length with a whole apronful. The mother took them from her, but, instead of being kinder to Two-eyes, she and One-eye and Three-eyes were even more cruel than before, for they were jealous that she was the only one of them who could pluck the fruit.

Now, it happened once that they were all standing together beside the tree, when a young knight came by.

"Quick, Two-eyes," cried the two sisters, "creep under this, so that we need not be ashamed on your account." And they pushed poor Two-eyes under a big empty barrel which was standing near, and with her they put the golden apples which she had just plucked.

As the knight approached they saw that he was a handsome young nobleman. He stopped beside the gold and silver tree, and began to admire its beauty. "To whom does this lovely tree belong?" he asked the sisters. "I would give anything I possess to the person who would make me a present of one of its branches."

One-eye and Three-eyes told him that the tree belonged to them, and that they would break off a branch for him.

They tried with all their might to do so, but it was all in vain, for the branches and the fruit turned away from them. Then said the knight, "It is indeed surprising that the tree should belong to you and yet you have no power to break off so much as a small twig."

But still they insisted that the tree belonged to them.

Just then Two-eyes, who was under the barrel all this time, rolled a couple of golden apples from beneath it, so that they fell at the young knight's feet, for she was angry with her sisters for not speaking the

truth. The knight was very much astonished to see the apples, and asked where they came from. One-eye and Three-eyes then told him that they had another sister, but she was not allowed to show herself, because she had only two eyes just like the common folks. But the knight wished to see her, so he cried, "Two-eyes, come here!" Two-eyes crept out, well pleased, and the knight was surprised at her great beauty. "Perhaps *you* will be able to break off a branch of the tree for me?" he said.

"Yes," answered Two-eyes, "that I can easily do, for the tree belongs to me." Then she climbed the tree, and broke off a branch with its silver leaves and golden fruit, and gave it to the knight.

And the knight said, "Two-eyes, choose what I shall give you."

The maiden answered, "Ah, sir, from early till late I am hungry and thirsty, sorry and sad; if only you would take me with you and deliver me from these evils, then

I should be happy indeed." So the knight lifted Two-eyes upon his horse, and carried her home to his father's castle, and gave her pretty dresses and fine food to eat, and so dearly did he love her that he asked her to marry him, and the wedding was celebrated with great rejoicings.

Now that Two-eyes had been carried away by the handsome knight, the two sisters were as jealous as they could be.

"Still we have the wonderful tree," they thought, "and even if we cannot pluck the fruit, everyone who sees it will come to us and admire it. Who knows what good fortune may yet be in store for us?"

But the next morning the tree had disappeared, and all their hopes with it. And when Two-eyes looked out of the window of her little room, to her great joy she saw her dear tree, growing before her, for it had followed her to her new home.

Two-eyes lived happily for a long, long time. One day two poor beggar-women came to her castle and asked for charity, and as she looked at them she recognised her two sisters, One-eye and Three-eyes, who had fallen into such poverty that they had to beg their bread from door to door. But dear little Two-eyes took them in, and made them welcome, and was so good and kind to them that they repented from their hearts for all the unkindness they had shown her when they were young. Then Two-eyes forgave them, and so they all lived happily ever after.

The Old Woman in the Wood.

A POOR maid-servant was once travelling with her master's family through a great wood. When they were in the very middle of it a band of robbers sprang out of a thicket, and murdered all whom they could find. So everyone of them perished except the poor maid-servant, for in her fright she had jumped out of the carriage and hidden herself behind a tree.

When the robbers had made off with their booty she came out, and wept as she saw what had happened.

"Alas!" she cried, "what can a poor girl like me do? I can never find my way out of the wood, and not a human creature lives in it, so that I shall certainly die of hunger."

She wandered about for some time looking for a pathway, but could not find one, and when the evening came she sat down beneath a tree, gave herself into God's keeping, and made up her mind to stay there, come what might. She had not been there long before a little white dove came flying to her, with a small golden key in its beak. It laid the key in the girl's hand and said—

"Do you see the big tree yonder? In the bark of it there is a little

lock, which this key will open. You will then find food and drink in plenty, so that you will never be hungry again."

She went to the tree and opened it, and inside she found a basin of milk, and some white bread to eat with it, so that she had as much as she could wish for.

When she had eaten the food she said—

"At home the hens will be going to roost now, and oh! if only I could go to bed too."

Then the little dove once more came flying to her, with another little golden key in its beak, and said—

"Open the tree yonder, and inside you will find a little bed."

She opened the tree, and found a beautiful soft white bed inside; so, having said her prayers, she jumped into it and went to sleep. In the morning the dove came a third time, and brought her a key, and this time it told her that if she opened a certain tree she would find clothes to wear.

When she had done this she found beautiful clothing, all embroidered with gold and precious stones, and as splendid as though they were for a king's daughter.

For a long time she lived like this, the dove coming every day and caring for her wants. It was indeed a peaceful, happy life. One day the dove came to her and asked—

"Will you do something for my sake?"

"With all my heart," replied the maiden.

Then the dove said—

"I will take you to a little house, which you must enter. By the hearth you will see an old woman sitting. She will bid you good day, but you must on no account answer her, no matter what she does, but just pass on by her right-hand side, and you will then find a door. Open it and go into a room where a whole heap of rings of every description will be lying upon the table. There will be many beautiful ones glittering with precious stones, but leave them where they are, and search for a small plain one which is somewhere there, and bring it to me as quickly as you can."

The maiden went to the little house, opened the door, and saw the old woman, who stared and said, "Good day, my child." But the girl

made no answer, but just went on towards the other door. "Where are you going to?" cried the old woman, seizing her by the skirt. "This is my house, and no one can go in there unless I please."

But the girl said never a word, loosened her skirt from the woman's hands, and went into the room.

Upon the table lay a glittering heap of jewelled rings, which she turned over in her search for the plain one, but she could not find it.

As she searched she noticed the old woman creeping slyly away with a birdcage in her hand.

She went up to her and took the cage out of her hand, and then she saw that there was a bird inside it, which held the plain ring in its beak.

She took the ring and ran merrily out of the house, thinking that the dove would surely come and fetch the ring, but it did not.

She leant against a tree, waiting for the dove, and as she stood there it seemed as though the tree became soft and supple and bent its branches downwards.

Then all at once the branches twined themselves about her and became two strong arms, and when she looked up, there, instead of the tree, stood a fine handsome man, with his arms around her. He kissed her lovingly and said—

"You have released me from the power of the old woman, who is a wicked witch. She bewitched me and changed me into a tree, though for two hours every day I became a white dove. So long as she possessed the ring I could not regain my human form."

His servants and horses, who had also been changed into trees, were released from the spell at the same time, and stood beside him. And now they all rode away into his kingdom together, for he was a king's son, and he married the maiden, and they lived happily ever after.

The Giant's three Golden Hairs

THERE was once a poor woman whose little baby son was born lucky, for it had been said of him that when he grew to be fourteen years of age, he would marry the King's daughter.

It happened that the King came to the village where the luck-child was, but no one knew that it was the King, so that when he asked for news they told him of the lucky little baby which had been born that very day, and of whom it was said that he would marry the King's daughter when he was fourteen years of age.

Now, the King, who had a bad heart, was very angry when he heard

this. He went to the parents and offered them a large amount of money for their boy. "Well," thought they, "he is born lucky, so nothing can go amiss with him," and so they gave him to the King, who placed him in a box and rode on until he came to a deep river, into which he threw the box, thinking, "There, I have freed my daughter from an unlooked-for suitor."

The box, however, did not sink, but floated like a little boat, until it came within two miles of the King's capital, when it was caught and held fast in a mill-wheel.

The miller's boy saw it, and drew it ashore with a hook, thinking that he had found a great treasure. But when he opened the box, there lay a pretty, smiling, healthy little baby boy. He carried him to the miller and his wife, and, as they had no children of their own, they were only too glad to take the little foundling in and care for him, and they trained him so well that he grew up a kind-hearted, honest lad.

One day the King was out, when a terrible thunderstorm came on, so he went to the mill for shelter. Whilst there he saw a tall, handsome lad, and asked the miller and his wife if he were their son.

"No," they answered, "he was a foundling. Fourteen years before, he had come sailing down the mill-stream in a box, and the mill-boy had pulled him out of the water."

Then the King knew that he was the luck-child whom he had thrown into the water, and he said, "Will you let the boy take a letter to the Queen for me, good people, and I will give him two golden guineas as a reward?"

"The King has only to command," they answered, and, calling the boy, they bade him get ready to go.

Then the King wrote a letter to the Queen, in which he said:—"As soon as the boy who brings this arrives, he is to be killed and buried. See that this is done before my return."

The boy set out with the letter, but he lost his way, and when night came on he found himself in the middle of a thick wood. He saw a light glimmering through the darkness, and went towards it until he came to a cottage. He entered, and found an old woman sitting alone beside the fire. She started when she saw the boy, and asked him where he came from and whither he was going.

"I come from the mill," he answered, "and I am carrying a letter to the Queen, but I lost my way in the wood, and I should be glad to stay the night with you if you will let me?"

"This is a robbers' house, my poor boy," said the old woman, "and when they come home they will kill you."

"Let them come," answered the boy; "I am not afraid, but I am too tired to go farther." And with that he stretched himself upon a bench

and went to sleep. Soon afterwards the robbers came home and asked angrily who the strange boy was. When the old woman told them, they opened the letter and read it, and then even their hard hearts were touched. So the captain of the band tore up the letter and wrote another in its stead, in which he said that when the boy arrived he was to be married immediately to the King's daughter. They allowed him to sleep peacefully until the morning, and when he awoke gave him the letter and showed him the right way. When the Queen had received the letter,

she read it, and then ordered a magnificent marriage feast to be prepared, and the King's daughter was married to the luck-child, and as he was both handsome and well-mannered, the Princess was very well content.

After a little time the King came home, and saw that the prophecy was fulfilled, and the luck-child married to his daughter. "How did it happen?" he asked his wife, "for I gave you very different orders in my letter."

The Queen gave him the letter, saying that he might see for himself what was written in it. When the King had read it, of course he knew that it had been changed, and he asked the boy where he had been with the letter, and why he had brought another instead of it.

"I know nothing about it," the boy replied; "it must have been changed in the night when I was asleep in the cottage in the wood."

"You shall not find things quite so easy as you suppose," the King said angrily. "Whoever marries my daughter must fetch me three golden hairs from the head of the fiery giant. If you can do this you shall have the Princess."

The King hoped that he would now be rid of the young man, but the luck-child answered, "You shall have the golden hairs; *I* am not afraid of the fiery giant."

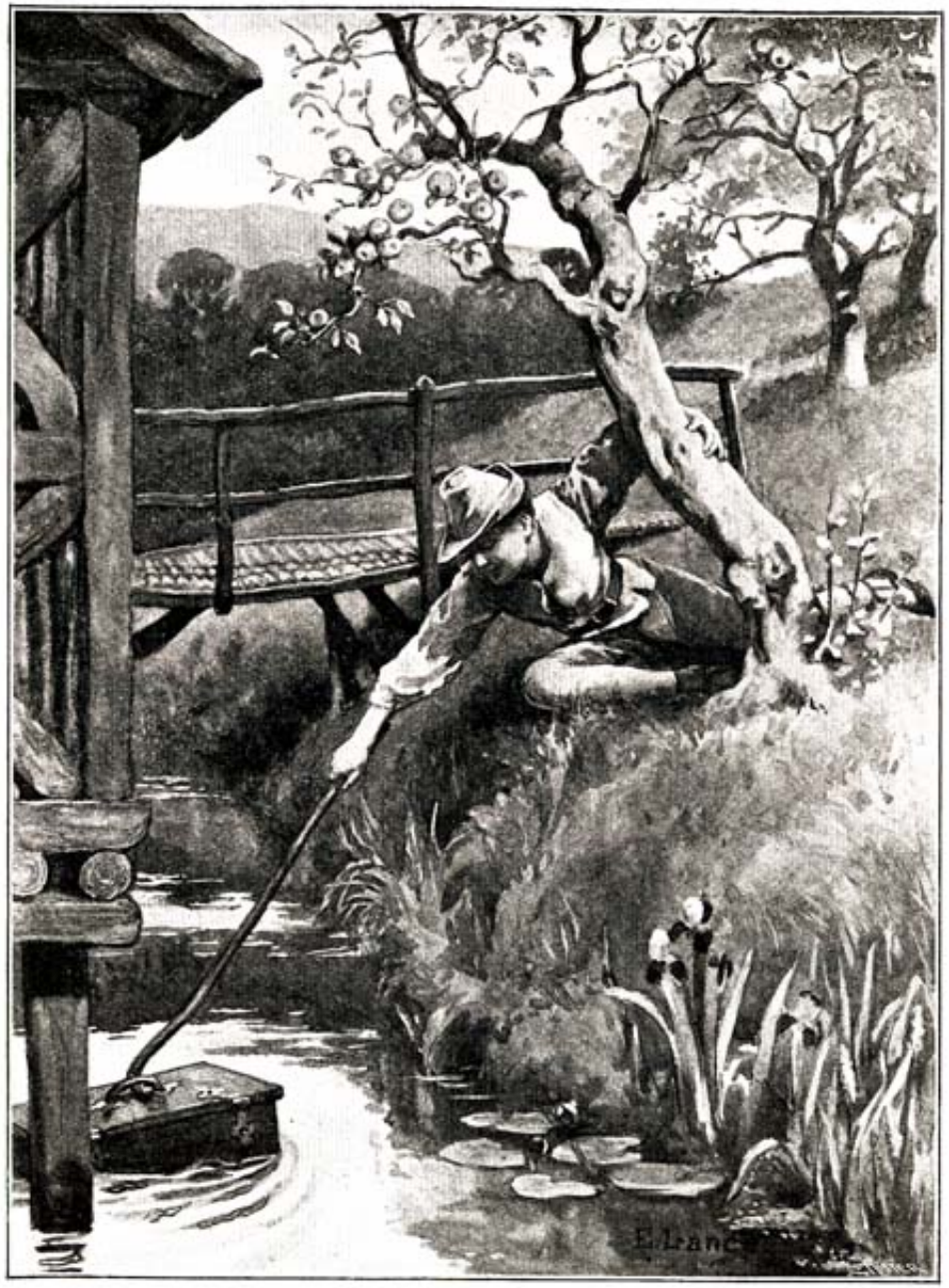
Then he took leave of them and set out upon his travels. His way led him through a large town, at the gates of which he was stopped by a watchman, who asked him what trade he had learnt and how much he knew. "I know everything," replied the luck-child.

"Then you will do us a great favour," said the watchman, "if you will tell us how it is that the fountain in the market-place, which once flowed with wine, has suddenly run dry, and does not even supply us with water."

"You shall certainly know," replied the luck-child, "if you will wait for an answer until I come back."

Then he went on his way, until he came to another large town, where the watchman again asked him what his trade was and how much he knew. "I know everything," he replied.

"Then you can do us a favour," said the watchman. "Will you tell us why a certain tree in our town, which has always borne golden apples, does not bring forth so much as a leaf nowadays?"



"The miller's boy drew it ashore with a hook."

"You shall certainly know," replied the luck-child, "if you will wait for an answer until I come back."

Then he went on again, until he came to a wide river which he had to cross. The ferryman asked him what his trade was and how much he knew. "I know everything," he answered.

"Then you can do me a favour," said the ferryman, "and tell me why I am bound to remain here for ever, ferrying people backwards and forwards across the stream, and can never free myself."

"You shall certainly know," said the luck-child, "if you will wait for an answer until I come back."

When he had crossed the river the young man found himself close to the fiery giant's home; inside it looked all black and sooty, but the fiery giant was not at home, though his grandmother was sitting there in a big arm-chair.

"What do you want?" she asked, and she did not look half as wicked as one would have expected the grandmother of a fiery giant to look.

"I should like three golden hairs from the giant's head," he answered. "Unless I can get them I shall lose my wife."

"That is a good deal to expect," said she, "for if he comes home and finds you, he will certainly kill you. However, I am sorry for you, so I will see what I can do to help you."

Then she changed him into an ant, and told him to creep into the folds of her dress, where he would be safe.

"So far, so good," said he, "but there are three things I should dearly like to know, namely:—Why a certain fountain which once flowed with wine has now become dry, and does not even spout forth water? Why a certain tree, which once bore golden apples, now does not so much as put forth a single leaf? And why the ferryman at the river must ferry people backwards and forwards for ever and ever, without being able to free himself?"

"Those are difficult questions," said she, "but keep still and listen attentively to what the giant says when I pull out the three golden hairs."

In the evening the fiery giant came home. No sooner had he entered than he noticed a difference in the air. "I can smell human flesh," said he. "There is something wrong here."

He searched in every hole and corner, and yet could find nothing. His grandmother scolded him roundly all the time. "I have only just swept up and put everything tidy," said she, "and now you go and upset the place again. You are always fancying you smell human flesh. Sit down and eat your supper, do!"

When he had eaten his supper he felt tired, so he laid his head in his grandmother's lap, and was soon fast asleep and snoring. Then the old woman seized a golden hair, plucked it out and laid it beside her.

"Oh! oh!" screamed the giant. "What are you doing?"

"I had a bad dream," answered the grandmother, "and in my fright I pulled your hair."

"What did you dream?" asked the giant.

"I dreamt of a fountain in a market-place which had once flowed with wine, but which was sealed up so that not even a drop of water came from it. What could have caused such a thing?"

"Why, if only the folk knew it," laughed the giant, "there is a toad sitting beneath a stone in the fountain, and if that were killed the wine would flow as before."

The grandmother stroked his head gently until he fell asleep again, and snored so that the windows shook. Then she pulled out the second hair. "Oh! oh! what are you doing?" cried the giant angrily.

"Don't be cross," said she, "I was dreaming when I did it!"

"What did you dream this time?" he asked.

"I dreamt," said she, "that in a certain kingdom there was a tree which had once borne golden apples, but which now did not bring forth so much as a single leaf. Now, what could be the reason of such a thing?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the giant. "If the people only knew, there is a mouse gnawing at the root of the tree. If it were killed the tree would soon bear golden apples again, but if the mouse gnaws on much longer it will wither and die. But there, let me hear no more of your dreams, and if you disturb my sleep again I will give you a good sound box on the ear."

The grandmother soothed him with gentle words, and stroked his head softly until he fell asleep again. Then she seized the third golden hair and pulled it out. The giant sprang up with a yell, and would have treated her badly had she not managed to calm him.

"Who can help bad dreams?" said she.

"Whatever did you dream?" he asked curiously.

"I dreamt of a ferryman," she answered, "who was bemoaning his hard fate, for he was forced to ferry people backwards and forwards across a stream, and no one came to release him."

"Ah!" said the giant, "he is a silly, and no mistake. If anyone comes to be ferried across, he has but to place the oar in his hand and he will be free, whilst the new-comer will be compelled to take his place."

Now that the grandmother had pulled out the three golden hairs and the giant had answered the three questions, she let him sleep on undisturbed until the morning. As soon as the giant had gone out the old woman took the ant from the fold of her dress, and changed it back into the form of the luck-child again.

"There are the three golden hairs," said she; "the answers to your three questions you will have heard for yourself."

The young man thanked the old woman, and went his way. When he came to the ferryman he was asked for the promised answer.

"First ferry me across," said the luck-child, and when he had reached the opposite bank he gave him the giant's advice: "The next time anyone comes to be ferried across the stream, place the oar in his hand."

Then he went on to the down where the unfruitful tree stood, and where the watchman was waiting for an answer, and he said, just as he had heard the giant say: "Kill the mouse which is gnawing at the root, and the tree will once more bear golden apples."

The watchman thanked him, and gave him two asses laden with

gold, which were driven after him. At last he came to the town in which was the sealed fountain, and said to the watchman: "Beneath a stone in the fountain sits a toad—find it and kill it, and at once the fountain will yield wine in abundance, as in days gone by."

The watchman thanked him, and also gave him two asses laden with gold.

At length the luck-child reached home safely, and was welcomed lovingly by his wife, who was delighted to hear how fortunate he had been. He gave the King what he had asked for—namely, the giant's three golden hairs, and when the greedy man saw the four asses laden with

gold he was very well pleased, and told the young man that, as he had fulfilled the conditions, he might have his daughter.

"But, my dear son-in-law," said he, "wherever did you get so much gold? Why, there is untold wealth there!"

"I crossed a river," answered the young man, "where gold strews the shores instead of sand, so I brought some away with me."

"Could I get some too?" asked the King eagerly.

"As much as you please," answered the luck-child. "There is a ferryman by the river who will row you across, and then you can fill every sack you have."

The grasping King set out upon the way with all speed, and when he came to the river he beckoned to the ferryman to come and take him over. The ferryman came and bade him step into the boat, but when he had ferried the King across to the other side he put the oar into his hand, and ran away. And from that time the King was condemned, on account of his great wickedness, to ferry the boat to and fro.

"And is he there still?" you ask.

Perhaps, but who knows? If he is, you may be sure it is because no one will take the oar from him.

The End.