MOTHER GOOSE NURSERY TALES

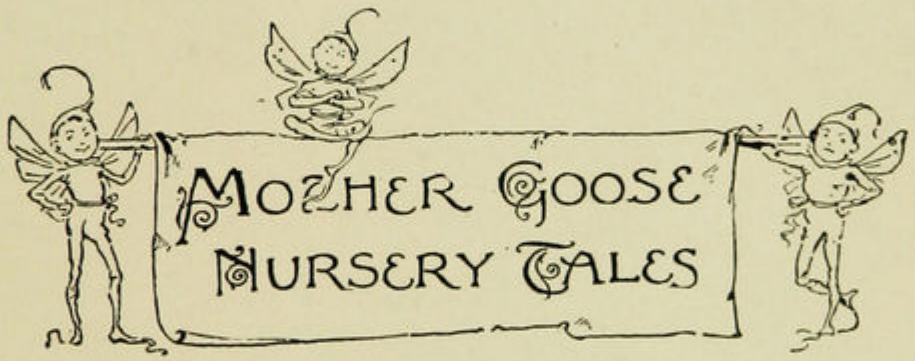
10

"A Merry Xmas"

— Dear Billy

From Grandmother —

Dec 24th 1907.


MOTHER GOOSE
NURSERY TALES

Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother.

Mother Goose Nursery Tales

BY
R. Marriott Watson,
Emily Bennett, A.M. Hoyer.
L.L. Weedon, E. Nesbit.
& others

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CINDERELLA

ONCE upon a time there lived a noble gentleman who had one dear little daughter. Poor child! her own kind mother was dead, and her father, who loved her very dearly, was afraid that his little girl was sometimes lonely. So he married a grand lady who had two daughters of her own, and who, he thought, would be kind and good to his little one. But no sooner did the stepmother enter her new home than she began to show her true character. Her stepdaughter was so much prettier and sweeter than her own children, that she was jealous of her, and gave her all the hard work of the house to do, whilst the two proud sisters spent their time at pleasant parties and entertainments.

The only pleasure the poor child had was to spend her evenings sitting in the chimney-corner, resting her weary limbs, and for this reason

her sisters mockingly nicknamed her "Cinderella." The sisters' fine clothes made Cinderella feel very shabby; but, in her little torn frock and ragged shoes, she was a thousand times more lovely than they.

Now, it chanced that the King's son gave a grand ball, to which he invited all the lords and ladies in the country, and, amongst the rest, Cinderella's two sisters were asked. How pleased and excited they were when the invitation arrived! For days they could talk of nothing but the clothes they should wear and the grand folk they hoped to meet.

When at last the great day arrived, Cinderella was kept running about from early till late, decking the sisters, and dressing their hair.

"Don't you wish you were going to the ball?" said one of them.

"Indeed I do," sighed the poor little maid. The sisters burst out laughing. "A pretty spectacle *you* would be," they said rudely. "Go back to your cinders—they are fit company for rags." Then, stepping carefully into their carriage so that they might not crush their fine clothes, they drove away to the ball.

Cinderella went back to her chimney-corner, and tried not to feel envious, but the tears *would* gather in the pretty eyes, and trickle down the sorrowful little face.

"What are you crying for, child?" cried a silvery voice.

Cinderella started, and raised her eyes. Who could it be? Then in a moment she knew—it was her fairy Godmother!

"I do so want——" began Cinderella; then her sobs stopped her.

"To go to the ball," finished the Godmother. Cinderella nodded. "Well, leave off crying—be a good girl, and you shall go. Run quickly into the garden, and bring the largest pumpkin you can find."

Cinderella could not imagine how a pumpkin could help her to go to the ball, but her only thought was to obey her Godmother. In a few moments she was back again, with a splendid pumpkin. Her Godmother scooped out the inside—one touch of the wand, and the pumpkin was a golden coach, lined with white satin.

"Now, godchild, quick—the mouse-trap from the pantry!"

"Here it is, Godmother," said Cinderella breathlessly.

One by one six fat sleek mice passed through the trap door. As each appeared, a touch of the wand transformed it into a cream-colored horse, fit for a queen.

"Now, Cinderella, can you find a coachman?"

"There is a large grey rat in the rat-trap—would he do, Godmother?"

"Run and fetch him, child, and then I can judge." So Cinderella ran to fetch the rat, and her Godmother said he was just made for a coachman; and I think you would have agreed with her had you seen him a moment later, with his powdered wig and silk stockings.

Six lizards from behind the pumpkin-frame became six footmen in splendid liveries—you would have thought they had been footmen all their lives. Cinderella was so excited that she could scarcely speak.

"Oh! Godmother," she cried, "it is all so lovely!" Then suddenly she thought of her shabby frock. "There is my white muslin," she said wistfully, "if—do you think——"

But before Cinderella could realize what was happening, her God-

mother's wand tapped her lightly on the shoulder, and in place of the shabby frock, there was a gleam of satin, silver and pearls.

Ah! who can describe a robe made by the fairies? It was white as snow, and as dazzling; round the hem hung a fringe of diamonds, sparkling like dew-drops in the sunshine. The lace about the throat and arms could only have been spun by fairy spiders. Surely it was a dream! Cinderella put her daintily-gloved hand to her throat, and softly touched the pearls that encircled her neck.

"Come, child," said the Godmother, "or you will be late."

As Cinderella moved, the firelight shown upon her dainty shoes.

"They are of diamonds," she said.

"No," answered her Godmother, smiling; "they are better than that—they are of glass, made by the fairies. And now, child, go, and enjoy yourself to your heart's content. Only remember, if you stay at the palace one instant after midnight, your coach and servants will vanish, and you will be the little grey Cinderella once more!"

A few moments later, the coach dashed into the royal courtyard, the door was flung open, and Cinderella alighted. As she walked slowly up the richly-carpeted staircase, there was a murmur of admiration, and the King's son hastened to meet her. "Never," said he to himself, "have I seen anyone so lovely!" He led her into the ball-room, where the King, who was much taken with her sweet face and pretty, modest manners, whispered to the Queen that she must surely be a foreign princess.

The evening passed away in a dream of delight, Cinderella dancing with no one but the handsome young Prince, and being waited on by his own hands at supper-time. The two sisters could not recognise their ragged little sister in the beautiful and graceful lady to whom the Prince paid so much attention, and felt quite pleased and flattered when she addressed a few words to them.

Presently a clock chimed the three quarters past eleven, and, remembering her Godmother's warning, Cinderella at once took leave of the Prince, and, jumping into her coach, was driven rapidly home. Here she found her Godmother waiting to hear all about the ball. "It was *lovely*," said Cinderella: "and oh! Godmother, there is to be another to-morrow night, and I *should* so much like to go to it!"

"Then you shall," replied the kind fairy, and, kissing her godchild tenderly, she vanished. When the sisters returned from the ball, they found a

sleepy little maiden sitting in the chimney-corner, waiting for them.

"How late you are!" cried Cinderella, yawning. "Are you not very tired?"

"Not in the least," they answered, and then they told her what a delightful ball it had been, and how the loveliest Princess in the world had been there, and had spoken to them, and admired their pretty dresses.

"Who was she?" asked Cinderella slyly.

"That we cannot say," answered the sisters. "She would not tell her name, though the Prince begged her to do so on bended knee."

"Dear sister," said Cinderella, "I, too, should like to see the beautiful Princess. Will you not lend me your old yellow gown, that I may go to the ball to-morrow with you?"

"What!" cried her sister angrily; "lend one of my dresses to a little cinder-maid? Don't talk nonsense, child!"

The next night, the sisters were more particular than ever about their

attire, but at last they were dressed, and as soon as their carriage had driven away, the Godmother appeared. Once more she touched her godchild with her wand, and in a moment she was arrayed in a beautiful dress that seemed as though it had been woven of moon-beams and sunshines, so radiantly did it gleam and shimmer. She put her arms around her Godmother's neck and kissed and thanked her. "Good-bye, childie; enjoy yourself, but whatever you do, remember to leave the ball before the clock strikes twelve," the Godmother said, and Cinderella promised.

But the hours flew by so happily and so swiftly that Cinderella forgot her promise, until she happened to look at a clock and saw that it was on the stroke of twelve. With a cry of alarm she fled from the room, dropping, in her haste, one of the little glass slippers; but, with the sound of the clock strokes in her ears, she dared not wait to pick it up. The Prince hurried after her in alarm, but when he reached the entrance hall, the beautiful Princess had vanished, and there was no one to be seen but a forlorn little beggar-maid creeping away into the darkness.

Poor little Cinderella!—she hurried home through the dark streets, weary, and overwhelmed with shame.

The fire was out when she reached her home, and there was no Godmother waiting to receive her; but she sat down in the chimney-corner to await her sisters' return. When they came in they could speak of nothing but the wonderful things that had happened at the ball.

The beautiful Princess had been there again, they said, but had disappeared just as the clock struck twelve, and though the Prince had searched everywhere for her, he had been unable to find her. "He was quite beside himself with grief," said the elder sister, "for there is no doubt he hoped to make her his bride."

Cinderella listened in silence to all they had to say, and, slipping her hand into her pocket, felt that the one remaining glass slipper was safe, for it was the only thing of all her grand apparel that remained to her.

On the following morning there was a great noise of trumpets and drums, and a procession passed through the town, at the head of which rode the King's son. Behind him came a herald, bearing a velvet cushion upon which rested a little glass slipper. The herald blew a blast upon the trumpet, and then read a proclamation saying that the King's son would wed any lady in the land who could fit the slipper upon her foot, if she could produce another to match it.

Cinderella and the Prince.

Of course, the sisters tried to squeeze their feet into the slipper, but it was of no use—they were much too large. Then Cinderella shyly begged that she might try. How the sisters laughed with scorn when the Prince knelt to fit the slipper on the cinder-maid's foot; but what was their surprise when it slipped on with the greatest ease, and the next moment Cinderella produced the other from her pocket! Once more she stood in the slippers, and once more the sisters saw before them the lovely Princess who was to be the Prince's bride. For at the touch of the magic shoes, the little grey frock disappeared for ever, and in place of it she wore the beautiful robe the fairy Godmother had given to her.

The sisters hung their heads with sorrow and vexation; but kind little Cinderella put her arms around their necks, kissed them, and forgave them for all their unkindness, so that they could not help but love her.

The Prince could not bear to part from his little love again, so he carried her back to the palace in his grand coach, and they were married that very day. Cinderella's step-sisters were present at the feast, but in the place of honour sat the fairy Godmother.

So the poor little cinder-maid married the Prince, and in time they came to be King and Queen, and lived happily ever after.

THE THREE SPINNERS

ONCE upon a time there was a lazy maiden who would not spin, and, let her mother say what she would, she could not make her do it. At last, the mother, in a fit of impatience, gave her a blow which made the girl cry out loudly.

At that very instant, the Queen drove by, and, hearing the screams, she stopped the carriage, came into the house, and asked the mother why she beat her daughter in such a way that people in passing could hear the cries.

Then the mother felt ashamed that her daughter's laziness should be known, so she said: "Oh, your Majesty, I cannot take her away from her spinning: she spins from morning till night, and I am so poor that I cannot afford to buy the flax."

"There is nothing I like better than to hear the sound of spinning," the Queen replied, "and nothing pleases me more than the whirl of spinning-wheels. Let me take your daughter home with me to the castle; I have flax enough, and she may spin there to her heart's content."

The mother rejoiced greatly in her heart, and the Queen took the maiden home with her. When they arrived in the castle, she led her up into three rooms, which were piled from top to bottom with the finest flax.

"Now spin me this flax," said the Queen, "and when thou hast spun it all, thou shalt have my eldest son for a husband. Although thou art poor, yet I do not despise thee on that account, for thy untiring industry is dowry enough."

The maiden was filled with inward terror, for she could not have spun the flax had she sat there day and night until she was three hundred years old! When she was left alone, she began to weep, and thus she sat for three days without stirring a finger

On the third day the Queen came, and when she saw that nothing was as yet spun, she wondered over it, but the maiden excused herself by saying that she could not begin in consequence of the great sorrow she felt in being separated from her mother.

This satisfied the Queen, who, on leaving her, said—

"Thou must begin to work for me to-morrow."

But when the maiden was once more alone, she did not know what to do, or how to help herself, and in her distress she went to the window and looked out. She saw three women passing by, the first of whom had a great broad foot, the second such a large under-lip that it hung down to her chin, and the third an enormous thumb.

They stopped under the window, and, looking up, asked the maiden what was the matter.

When she had told them of her trouble, they immediately offered her their help, and said—

"Wilt thou invite us to the wedding, and not be ashamed of us, but call us thy aunts, and let us sit at thy table? If thou wilt, we will spin all the flax, and do it in a very short time."

"With all my heart," answered the girl, "only come in, and begin at once."

Then she admitted the three strange women, and, making a clear space in the first room, they sat themselves down and began spinning.

One drew the thread and trod the wheel, the other moistened the thread, the third pressed it and beat it on the table, and every time she did so, a pile of thread fell on the ground spun in the finest way.

The maiden concealed the three spinners from the Queen, but showed her the heaps of spun yarn whenever she came, and received no end of praise for it.

When the first room was empty, the second was commenced, and when that was finished, the third was begun, and very soon cleared.

Then the three spinners took their leave, saying to the maiden—

"Forget not what thou hast promised us; it will make thy fortune."

When the girl showed the Queen the empty rooms and the great piles of thread, the wedding was announced. The bridegroom rejoiced that he had won so clever and industrious a wife, and he praised her exceedingly.

"I have three aunts," said the maiden, "and as they have done me many kindnesses, I could not forget them in my good fortune; permit me to invite them to our wedding and allow them to sit with me at table."

So the Queen and the bridegroom consented.

When the feast commenced, the three old women entered, clothed in the greatest splendour, and the bride said—

"Welcome, my dear aunts!"

"Alas!" exclaimed the bridegroom, "how is it you have such ugly relations?" and going up to one with a broad foot, he asked—

"Why have you such a broad foot?"

"From threading, from threading," she answered.

Then he went to the second, and asked—

"Why have you such an overhanging lip?"

"From moistening the thread," she replied, "from moistening the thread."

Then he asked the third—

"Why have you such a big thumb?"

"From pressing the thread," answered she.

Then the Prince became frightened, and said—

"Then shall my lovely bride never more turn a spinning-wheel, as long as she lives!"

Thus was the maiden freed from the hated flax-spinning.

HANSEL & GRETEL

MANY years ago, a woodcutter and his wife, with their two children, Hans and Gretel, lived upon the outskirts of a dense wood. They were very poor, so that when a famine fell upon the land, and bread became dear, they could no longer afford to buy sufficient food for the whole family. One night, as the poor man lay tossing on his hard bed, he cried aloud in his grief and anguish—

"Alas! what will become of us? How can I feed my hungry little ones when we have no food for ourselves?"

"Listen to me, good-man," answered his wife, who was stepmother to the children. "As it is no longer possible for us to keep our children, we will take them into the wood with us to morrow, light a fire for them, and give each a piece of bread and leave them. They will not easily find their way back, and so we shall be rid of the burden of them."

But the father said: "No, no! I could not find it in my heart to leave my darlings to perish. The wild beasts would tear them limb from limb.

"Then," answered the wife, "we must all four die of hunger." She gave her husband no peace until he promised to do as she wished, and at last, very unwillingly, he consented.

Now, the two children had been too hungry to go to sleep that night, and so it happened that they overheard all that their parents were saying. Gretel wept bitterly, but brave little Hansel did his best to comfort her. "Don't be afraid," he said; "I will take care of you."

As soon as his father and stepmother were asleep, he slipped on his smock, and, opening the door softly, went out into the garden. The moon was shining brightly, and by its light he could see the little white pebbles that lay scattered in front of the house, shining like little pieces

of silver. He stooped and filled his pockets as full as he could, and then went back to Gretel, and once more bidding her be comforted, for God would be sure to watch over them, he jumped into bed, and they both fell fast asleep.

Early in the morning, before the sun had risen, the stepmother came and wakened the children. "Rise, little lie-a-beds," she said, "and come with us into the wood to gather fuel."

She gave them each a piece of bread for their dinner, and told them to be sure not to eat it too soon, for they would get nothing more.

Gretel carried the bread in her pinafore, because Hansel had his pockets full, and then they all set out upon their way to the wood.

As they trudged along, the father noticed that his little son kept turning back to look at the house. "Take care, my boy," he said, "or you will slip. What are you looking at so earnestly?"

"I am watching my kitten, father; she is sitting on the roof to bid me good-bye."

"Silly little lad, that is not your cat," said the stepmother; it is only the morning sun shining on the chimney."

But Hansel had not been watching his cat at all; he had stayed behind to drop his pebbles upon the path.

When they reached the thickest part of the forest, the father bade the children gather wood, that he might kindle a fire for them, so that they might rest beside it and warm themselves whilst he and his wife were cutting the fuel. So they gathered a pile of brushwood and twigs, and as soon as it was well alight, the parents left them, promising to return as soon as they had finished their work.

Hansel and Gretel sat down by the fire, and when midday came they ate their bread and sat listening to the strokes of their father's axe, thinking all the time that he was near to them. But what they heard was only a dry branch which the man had bound to a tree, so that the wind swung it hither and thither, and the noise it made deceived the children. At last the poor, tired, little eyelids closed, and, side by side, brother and sister fell asleep.

When they awoke, the night was very dark, and Gretel was frightened, and began to cry. Hansel put his arms around her and whispered, "Wait, dearie, till the moon rises; we shall soon find our way home then."

As soon as the bright moon rose, Hansel took his little sister by the

hand, and all night long they followed the track of the little white pebbles, until at daybreak they came to their father's house.

They knocked at the door, and no sooner did the stepmother open it than she began to scold them for having stayed out so long in the wood; but the father greeted them kindly, for he had grieved sorely for his little ones.

In a short time they were as badly off as ever, and one night they again heard their mother trying to persuade her husband to take them out into the wood and lose them. "There is nothing left in the house but half a loaf of bread," she said; "for our own sakes it is better to get rid of the children; but this time we will lead them farther away, so that they will not be able to find their way home."

But the man would not agree. "Better to divide our last morsel with them," he said, "and then die together."

His wife would not listen to what he said, but scolded him for his want of thought for her; and at last the poor man gave way a second time, just as he had done at first.

But the children had overheard all that was said, and as soon as the mother and father were asleep, Hansel stole down to the door, meaning to go and collect pebbles as he had done before; but the door was locked and bolted, and he could not get out. "Never mind, Gretel," he said, consolingly, "the good God will surely help us."

Early in the morning the woman wakened the children, and, giving them a small piece of bread, bade them follow her and their father into the wood. As they went, Hansel crumbled his morsel of bread in his pocket and strewed the crumbs upon the path.

"Come, Hansel," said the father, "don't loiter so, sonny. What can you see to stare at so often?"

"My little dove, father. It is sitting on the housetop, bidding me good-bye."

"Nonsense," said the woman, "it is not your dove; it is only the rising sun shining upon the chimney."

Hansel did not answer, but he went on strewing his crumbs carefully until the morsel of bread was gone.

Deeper and deeper into the wood they went, where the children had never been before. There a great fire was kindled, and the mother said: "Stay here, children, whilst your father and I go to cut wood. If you

"Gretel shut
the iron door
and shot the bolt."

are tired you may sleep a while, and we will fetch you when it is time to go home."

When dinner-time came, Gretel divided her piece of bread with Hansel, because he had scattered all his share upon the road; and then they went to sleep. The evening shadows fell, but still no one came to fetch the poor children, and it was not until midnight that they awakened.

Hansel put his arms round his sister and told her not to fear, for when

the moon rose they would easily be able to see the crumbs, and so find their way home again.

So when the moon rose they set out upon their way; but alas! there were no crumbs to be seen, for the little birds that lived in the green wood were as hungry as the children, and had eaten them all up.

"We will find the way somehow," cried cheerful little Hansel; but though they traveled all night long, and the next day, too, they could not find it. Poor little mites, how tired and hungry they were, for they had nothing to eat but the berries that grew by the roadside!

When at length the weary little feet could go no farther, the children lay down beneath a tree and slept.

On the third day they were still as far away as ever, and it seemed to them that the longer they walked the deeper they got into the wood, and they began to be afraid that they would die of cold and hunger.

But presently, when the midday sun was shining brightly, they noticed a little snow-white bird singing so sweetly that they could not help but stay and listen. When the birdie's song was ended, he spread his wings and flew away.

The children followed him until they reached a little house, on the roof of which he perched. Then the children saw with surprise that the strange little house was built entirely of bread, roofed with cakes, and with windows of barley sugar.

"See, Gretel," cried Hansel joyfully, "there is food for us in plenty. I will take a piece of the roof, and you shall have one of the windows."

He stretched out his hand to help himself, and Gretel had already begun to nibble one of the window-panes, when suddenly they heard a voice call from within :—

"Nibbly, nibbly, mouse!
Who's nibbling at my house?"

The children answered quickly :—

"'Tis my Lady Wind that blows,
As round the house she goes."

And then they went on eating as though nothing had happened, for the cake of which the roof was made just suited Hansel's taste, whilst the barley-sugar window-panes were better than any sweetmeat Gretel had ever tasted before.

Hansel and Gretel

All at once the door of the cottage flew wide open, and out came an old, old woman, leaning upon a crutch. The children were so frightened that they dropped their food and clung to each other.

The old woman nodded her head to them, and said: "Who brought you here, my pets? Come inside, come inside; no one will hurt you."

She took their hands and led them into the house, and set before them all kinds of delicious foods, milk, sugared pancakes, apples, and nuts. When they had finished their meal she showed them two cosy little white beds, and as Hansel and Gretel lay snugly tucked up in them, they thought to themselves that surely they had now found the most delightful place in the whole wide world.

But the old woman had only pretended to be friendly and kind, for she was really a wicked old witch, who was always lying in wait to catch little children; indeed, she had built the little house of bread and cakes especially to entice them in. Whenever anyone came into her power, she cooked and ate him, and thought what a fine feast she had had.

Witches have red eyes and cannot see far, but they have keen scent, like animals, and can tell at once when a human being is near to them.

As soon as Hansel and Gretel came into her neighbourhood she laughed to herself and said mockingly: "Ha, ha! they are mine already; they will not easily escape me."

Early in the morning, before the children were awake, she stood beside them and admired their rosy cheeks and soft round limbs.

"What nice tit-bits for me," murmured she. Then seizing Hansel by the hand, she led him to a little stable, and, in spite of his cries and screams, shut him up and left him. Then she shook Gretel until she was awake, and bade her get up at once

and carry food and drink to her brother, and it must be of the best, too, for she wished to fatten him.

"When he is nice and plump, I shall eat him," said the cruel old witch. Gretel wept bitterly, but it was quite in vain, for she was obliged to do the witch's bidding; and every day she cooked the choicest food for her brother while she herself lived upon nothing but oyster-shells.

Day by day the old woman visited the stable and called to Hansel to put his finger through the window bars, that she might see if he were getting fat; but the little fellow held out a bone instead, and as her eyes were dim with age, she mistook the bone for the boy's finger, and thought how thin and lean he was. When a whole month had passed without Hansel becoming the least bit fatter, the old witch lost patience and declared she would wait no longer, "Hurry, Gretel," she said to the little girl, "fill the pot with water, for to-morrow, be he lean or fat, Hansel shall be cooked for my dinner.'

The tears chased each other down Gretel's cheeks as she carried in the water, and she sobbed aloud in her grief, "Dear God," she cried, "we have no one to help us but Thou. Alas! if only the wild beasts in the wood had devoured us, at least we should have died together."

"Cease your chattering," cried the old witch angrily. "It will not help you, so you may as well be still."

The next morning poor Gretel was forced to light the fire and hang the great pot of water over it, and then the witch said: "First we will bake. I have kneaded the dough, and heated the oven; you shall creep inside it to see if it is hot enough to bake the bread."

But Gretel guessed that the old witch meant to shut the door upon her and roast her, so she pretended that she did not know how to get in.

"Silly goose," said the witch. "The door is wide enough, to be sure. Why, even I could get in it." As she spoke, she popped her head into the oven. In a moment Gretel sprang towards her, pushed her inside, shut the iron door, and shot the bolt. Oh! how she squealed and shrieked, but Gretel ran off as fast as she could, and so there was an end of the cruel old witch.

Quick as thought, Gretel ran to her brother. "We are saved, Hansel" she cried, opening the door of the stable, "the wicked old witch is dead."

Hans flew from his prison as a bird from its cage, and the two happy little children kissed each other and jumped for joy. No longer afraid of the

old witch, they entered the house, hand in hand, and then they saw that in every corner of the room were boxes of pearls and diamonds, and all kinds of precious gems.

"Ah!" said Hanesl merrily, "these are better than pebbles, Gretel," and he stuffed his pockets with the jewels, whilst Gretel filled her pinafore. "Now," said Hansel, "we will leave the witch's wood behind us as fast as we can."

So off they ran, and never stopped until they came to a lake, upon which swam a large white duck.

"How can we cross," said Hansel, "for there is no bridge anywhere?"

"And ship either," Gretel answered; "but we will ask the pretty white duck to carry us over." So they cried aloud:—

"Little duck, little duck,
With wings so white,
Carry us over
The waters bright."

The duck came at once, and, taking Hansel upon her back, carried him over to the other side, and then did the same for Gretel. They went merrily on their way, and very soon they found themselves in a part of the wood they knew quite well.

When they saw the roof of their father's house in the distance they began to run, and, breathless with haste, half laughing and half crying, they rushed into the cottage and flung themselves into their father's arms.

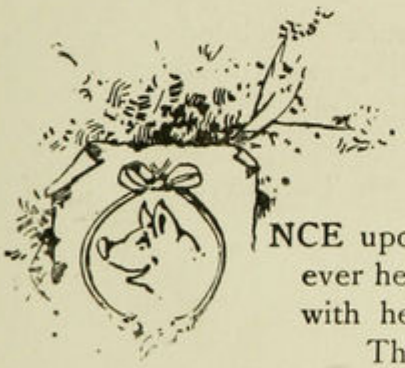
Oh! how pleased he was to see them once again, for he had not known a happy hour since he had left them alone in the wood. Gretel shook out

her pinafore, and Hansel emptied his pockets, and the floor of the little room was quite covered with glittering precious stones.

So now their troubles were at an end, for the cruel stepmother was dead, and Hansel and Gretel and their father lived together happily ever after.

My story is ended, and see, there runs a little mouse, and the first who catches him shall have a fur cap made from his skin.

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS.



ONCE upon a time, when pigs could talk and no one had ever heard of bacon, there lived an old piggy mother with her three little sons.

They had a very pleasant home in the middle of an oak forest, and were all just as happy as the day was long, until one sad year the acorn crop failed; then, indeed, poor Mrs. Piggy-wiggy often had hard work to make both ends meet.

One day she called her sons to her, and, with tears in her eyes, told them that she must send them out into the wide world to seek their fortune.

She kissed them all round, and the three little pigs set out upon

their travels, each taking a different road, and carrying a bundle slung on a stick across his shoulder.

The first little pig had not gone far before he met a man carrying a bundle of straw; so he said to him: "Please, man, give me that straw to build me a house?" The man was very good-natured, so he gave him the bundle of straw, and the little pig built a pretty little house with it.

No sooner was it finished, and the little pig thinking of going to bed, than a wolf came along, knocked at the door, and said: "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

But the little pig laughed softly, and answered: "No, no, by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin."

Then said the wolf sternly: "I will *make* you let me in; for I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in!"

So he huffed and he puffed, and he blew his house in, because, you see, it was only of straw and too light; and when he had blown the house in, he ate up the little pig, and did not leave so much as the tip of his tail.

The second little pig also met a man, and *he* was carrying a bundle of furze; so piggy said politely: "Please, kind man, will you give me that furze to build me a house?"

The man agreed, and piggy set to work to build himself a snug little house before the night came on. It was scarcely finished when the wolf came along, and said: "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin," answered the second little pig.

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in!" said the wolf. So he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed, and at last he blew the house in, and gobbled the little pig up in a trice.

Now the third little pig met a man with a load of bricks and mortar, and he said: "Please, man, will you give me those bricks to build a house with!"

So the man gave him the bricks and mortar, and a little trowel as well, and the little pig built himself a nice strong little house. As soon as it was finished the

"Little pig, are they nice apples?"

wolf came to call, just as he had done to the other little pigs, and said: "Little pig, little pig, let me in!"

But the little pig answered: "No, no, by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin."

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

Well, he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and he huffed, and he puffed; but he could *not* get the house down. At last he had no breath left to huff and puff with, so he sat down outside the little pig's house and thought for awhile.

Presently he called out: "Little pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips."

"Where?" said the little pig.

"Behind the farmer's house, three fields away, and if you will be ready to-morrow morning I will call for you, and we will go together and get some breakfast."

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

"At six o'clock," replied the wolf.

Well, the wise little pig got up at five, scampered away to the field, and brought home a fine load of turnips before the wolf came. At six o'clock the wolf came to the little pig's house and said: "Little pig, are you ready?"

"Ready!" cried the little pig. "Why, I have been to the field and come back again long ago, and now I am busy boiling a potful of turnips for breakfast."

The wolf was very angry indeed; but he made up his mind to catch the little pig somehow or other; so he told him that he knew where there was a nice apple-tree.

"Where" said the little pig.

"Round the hill in the squire's orchard," the wolf said. "So if you will promise to play me no tricks, I will come for you to-morrow morning at five o'clock, and we will go there together and get some rosy-cheeked apples."

The next morning piggy got up at four o'clock and was off and away long before the wolf came.

But the orchard was a long way off, and besides, he had the tree to climb, which is a difficult matter for a little pig, so that before the sack he had brought with him was quite filled he saw the wolf coming towards him.

He was dreadfully frightened, but he thought it better to put a good face on the matter, so when the wolf said: "Little pig, why are you here before me? Are they nice apples?" he replied at once: "Yes, very; I will throw down one for you to taste." So he picked an apple and threw it so far that whilst the wolf was running to fetch it he had time to jump down and scamper away home.

The next day the wolf came again, and told the little pig that there was going to be a fair in the town that afternoon, and asked him if he would go with him.

"Oh! yes," said the pig, "I will go with pleasure. What time will you be ready to start?"

"At half-past three," said the wolf.

Of course, the little pig started long before the time, went to the fair, and bought a fine large butter-churn, and was trotting away with it on his back when he saw the wolf coming.

He did not know what to do, so he crept into the churn to hide, and by so doing started it rolling.

Down the hill it went, rolling over and over, with the littile pig squeaking inside.

The wolf could not think what the strange thing rolling down the hill could be; so he turned tail and ran away home in a fright without ever going to the fair at all. He went to the little pig's house to tell him how frightened he had been by a large round thing which came rolling past him down the hill.

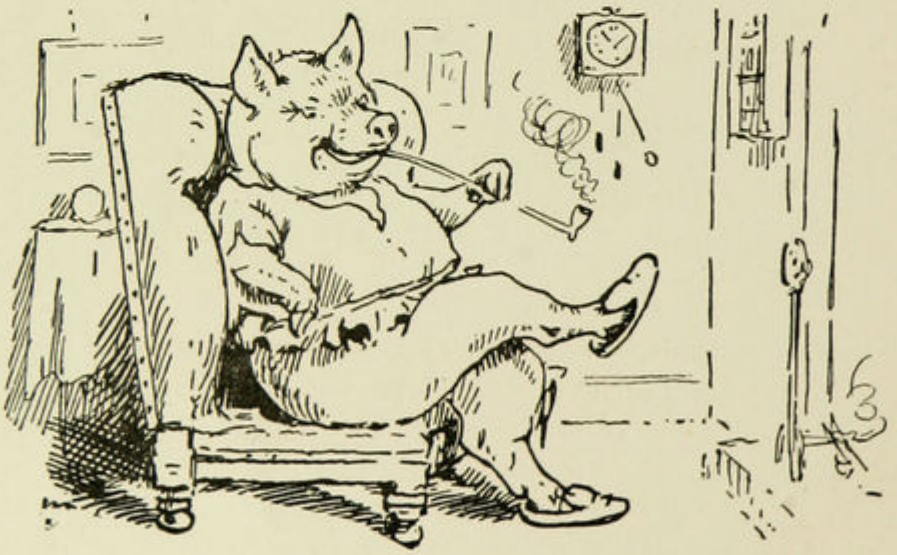
"Ha! ha!" laughed the little pig; "so I frightened you, eh?

I had been to the fair and bought a butter-churn; when I saw you I got inside it and rolled down the hill."

This made the wolf so angry that he declared that he *would* eat up the little pig, and that nothing should save him, for he would jump down the chimney.

But the clever little pig hung a pot full of water over the hearth and then made a blazing fire, and just as the wolf was coming down the chimney he took off the cover and in fell the wolf. In a second the little pig had popped the lid on again.

Then he boiled the wolf, and ate him for supper, and after that he lived quietly and comfortably all his days, and was never troubled by a wolf again.



YEARS ago there was a little girl who lived all alone with her mother, and they were so poor that they had nothing at all left in the house to eat.

The little girl went to the forest to see if she could find a few sticks with which to make a fire, and on her way she met an old woman who gave her a little pot which she said would prevent her from ever being hungry again :—"You have only to say : 'Cook, little pot, cook!' and at once you will have as much good, sweet porridge as you can wish for. When you have had sufficient you must say : 'Stop, little pot!' and it will cease to cook."

The little girl thanked the old woman, and carried the pot home to

her mother. From that time they had plenty to eat, for when they were hungry they only had to call upon the pot to cook.

One day the little girl went out and stayed away so long that the mother became hungry, so she cried: "Cook, little pot, cook!"

But when she had made a good meal, and wanted the pot to stop cooking, it still went on, for she did not know the magic words to stop it.

So the pot boiled over at last, and began to fill the kitchen. When the kitchen was full, the porridge streamed out all over the house, then into the next house, and the next, and the next, until at last the whole village was full of porridge. There is no knowing what would have happened if the little girl had not come back and cried to the pot to stop.

Then it left off cooking, but for many a long day the folk who wished to get into the village had to eat their way through a mountain of sweet porridge.

ONCE UPON A TIME long ago—so long, indeed, that even the very oldest people now alive could not remember it—there lived a King and Queen in a beautiful palace, a great white marble palace, with wide halls and high towers, and a golden roof that flashed in the sun.

And all round the palace, for miles and miles, there were lovely gardens and pleasure-grounds, with terraces and green lawns, and ancient trees where the birds would sit and sing all day and all night long, and more flowers than you could ever think of if you were to think a whole summer through. There were peacocks and birds of paradise on the broad lawns, and pretty slender brown deer in the shady glades, and gold and silver fishes in the ponds and fountains, and great red and yellow fruits ripened in the orchards.

There was everything there that heart could wish—except just one, and that was the one thing in all the world that this King and Queen wanted to make them perfectly happy. For there was no little child to

run and play about the sunny gardens and pick the flowers, and pet the birds and beasts that wandered there. And this would often make them very sad.

But at last, after many years, they had their wish and a little baby daughter was born to them—a tiny child with a face like a blush rose-bud, eyes like violets, and a little red mouth like the pimpernel flowers that grow in the cornfields and by the wayside in summer-time.

Now, you can easily think how glad this King and Queen were, and what great rejoicings were made over all the country.

Bonfires as big as haystacks were kept burning all night, fat oxen were roasted whole in the market-place of every town, the church-bells were rung and rung again until the ringers were out of breath and their arms were aching, and every little child in the kingdom was given a beautiful present for the baby Princess's sake.

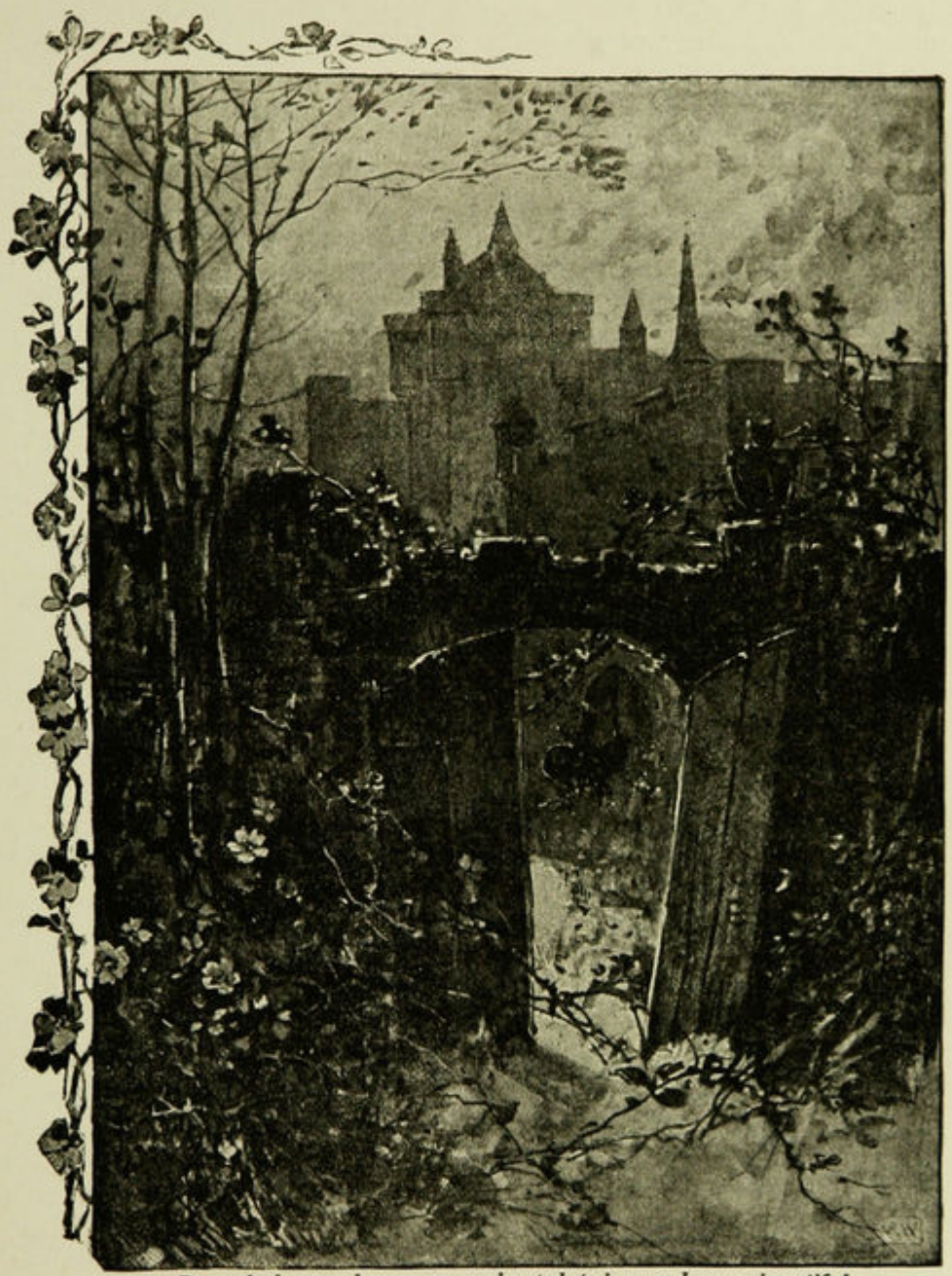
In the palace, of course, all was bustle and hurry to make ready for the christening-feast; the maids were busy putting flowers all about the halls and chambers, and sprinkling the shining floors with sweet-smelling leaves and petals.

For the most important guests invited to this christening were seven very powerful fairies, and you know, I am sure, how particular fairies are about what they eat and drink. Not that they are greedy; but they are used to such delicate food that even the very best of ours seems strange to them. So the Queen was very anxious that they should be pleased; for they had been asked to be godmothers to the baby Princess, and she wanted them to be in good humour so that they should be kind to her little one.

It was a beautiful summer afternoon, and the roses on the palace terrace were nodding their heads sleepily in the warm breeze, when the fairies' chariots came into sight, sailing through the blue sky like a flight of bright-winged butterflies.

They were all good fairies, and had known the King and Queen all their lives long, and as they had not seen them for some time there was a great deal to talk about and much news to tell. And, dear me! how pleased they were with the baby! They all agreed that she was the prettiest little darling they had ever seen—almost as pretty as a real fairy baby—and *that* was a compliment, indeed, I can tell you.

And when they went in to the great banqueting-hall and sat down



"Beyond the wood was an enchanted palace, where a beautiful princess had been sleeping for a hundred years."

to table, they were even more delighted than at first. For each one of them there was a set of six golden dinner things—knife, spoon, fork, cup, dish, and plate—made on purpose as a present for each, and all different. One was set with pearls, another with diamonds, the third with rubies, the fourth with opals, the fifth with amethysts, the sixth with emeralds, the seventh with sapphires; and nobody could tell which was the most beautiful.

They were just going to begin, and everybody was as happy as happy could be, when, all of a sudden, there was a clashing of brazen claws and a rushing of wings, and something like a black cloud seemed to pass before the tall windows and darken all the room, so that the guests could hardly see their plates. Then the great doors burst open with a terrible bang, and an old fairy in a long trailing black gown, with her face almost hidden in a black hood, jumped out of a black chariot drawn by fierce griffins, and stalked up to the table.

The King turned pale, and the Queen nearly fainted away, for this was the spiteful fairy Tormentilla, who lived alone, an immense distance away from everywhere and everyone, in a dismal black stone castle in the middle of a desert. The poor Queen had been so happy and so busy that she had forgotten all about her, and never sent her an invitation.

However, they all tried to make the best of it, and another chair was brought, and another place laid for Tormentilla; and both the King and Queen told her over and over again how very, very sorry they were not to have asked her.

It was all in vain. Nothing could please her; she would eat and drink nothing, and she sat, scowling and looking angrily at the other fairies' jewelled cups and dishes, until the feast was over, and it was time to give the presents.

Then they all went into the great tapestry saloon where the tiny Princess lay sleeping in her mother-o-'pearl cradle, and the seven fairies began to say what they would each give her.

The first stepped forward and said: "She shall always be as good as gold"; the second: "She shall be the cleverest Princess in the world"; the third: "She shall be the most beautiful"; the fourth: "She shall be the happiest"; the fifth: "She shall have the sweetest voice that was ever heard"; the sixth: "Everyone shall love her." And then the wicked old

cross fairy strode over to the cradle with long quick steps, and said, shaking her black crooked stick at the King and Queen: *"And I say that she shall prick her hand with a spindle and die of the wound!"*

At this the Queen fell on her knees and begged and prayed Tormentilla to call back her cruel words; but suddenly the seventh fairy, the youngest of all, who knew Tormentilla well, and had hidden herself behind the curtains for fear that some such thing might happen, came out and said—

"Do not cry so, dear Queen; I cannot quite undo my cousin's wicked enchantment, but I can promise you that your daughter shall not die, but only fall asleep for a hundred years. And, when these are past and gone, a Prince shall come and awaken her with a kiss."

So the King and Queen dried their tears and thanked the kind fairy Heartease for her goodness; and all the fairies went back to their homes, and things went on much as usual in the palace. But you can imagine how careful the Queen was of her little girl; and the King made a law that every spindle in the country must be destroyed, and that no more should be made, and that anyone who had a spindle should be heavily punished, if not executed at once.

Well, the years went by happily enough until the Princess Miranda was almost eighteen years old, and all that the six fairies had promised came true, for she was the best and prettiest and the cleverest Princess in all the world, and everybody loved her. And, indeed, by this time Tormentilla's spiteful words were almost forgotten.

"Poor old thing," the Queen would sometimes say, "she was so angry at having been left out that she did not know what she was saying. Of course, she did not really mean it."

Now, the King and Queen had to go away for a few days to a great entertainment that one of their richest nobles was giving at his country house; and, as the Princess did not wish to go, they left her behind with her ladies-in-waiting in the beautiful old palace. For the first two days she amused herself very well, but on the third she missed her father and mother so much that, to pass the time till they came back, she began exploring all the old lumber-rooms and out-of-the way attics in the palace, and laughing at the dusty furniture and queer curiosities she found there.

At last she found herself at the top of a narrow winding stairway in a tall turret that seemed even older than all the rest of the palace. And when she lifted the latch of the door in front of her she saw a little low chamber

with curiously painted walls, and there sat a little old, old woman in a high white cap, spinning at a wheel.

For some time she stood at the door, watching the old woman curiously; she could not imagine what she was doing, for the Princess had never seen a spinning-wheel in her life before, because, as I told you, the King had ordered them all to be destroyed.

Now, it happened that the poor old woman who lived in this tower had never heard the King's command, for she was so deaf that if you shouted until you were hoarse she would never have been able to understand you.

"What pretty work you are doing there, Goody? And why does that wheel go whirr, whirr, whirr?" said the Princess. The old woman neither answered nor looked up, for, of course, she did not hear.

So the Princess stepped into the room and laid her hand upon the old woman's shoulder.

Goody started then, looked up, and rubbed her eyes.

"Deary, deary me!" cried she, in a high, cracked voice. "And who may you be, my pretty darling?"

"I'm the Princess Miranda," screamed the maiden in her ear, but the woman only shook her head—she could hear nothing.

Then the Princess pointed to the spindle, and made the old woman understand that she wanted to try if she could work it.

So Goody nodded, and laughed, and got up from her seat, and the Princess sat down and took the spindle in her hand. But no sooner did she touch it than she pricked the palm of her hand with the point, and sank down in a swoon.

Immediately a deep silence fell on all around. The little bird that only a moment before had been singing so sweetly upon the window-sill hushed his song. The distant hum of voices from the courtyard beneath ceased; even Goody stopped short in the directions she was giving the Princess, and neither moved hand nor foot towards the poor little maid, and all because she had fallen fast asleep as she stood.

Below in the castle it was just the same. The King and Queen, who had that moment returned from their journey and were enquiring for their daughter, fell asleep before the lady-in-waiting could answer them, and as to the lady herself she had begun to snore—in a ladylike manner, of course—before you could have winked your eye.

The soldiers and men-at-arms slumbered as they stood. The page-boy fell asleep with his mouth wide open, and a fly that had just been going to settle on his nose fell asleep too in mid-air.

Although the sun had been shining brightly when the Princess took the spindle in her hand, no sooner did she prick herself with the point than deep shadows darkened the sunny rooms and gardens.

It was just as though night had overtaken them, but there was no one in or near the palace to heed whether it was dark or light.

This sudden darkness had been caused by a magic wood which had sprung up all around the palace and its grounds. It was at least half a mile thick, and was composed of thorns and prickly plants, through which it seemed impossible for anyone to penetrate. It was so thick and high that it hid even the topmost towers of the enchanted castle, and no one outside could have dreamed that such a castle lay behind it.

Well, and so the years went on, and on, and on, until a hundred years had passed, and the palace and the story of it were all but forgotten. And it happened that a King's son from a neighbouring country came hunting that way with his men, and horses, and dogs. And in the excitement of the chase he rode on and on until he became separated from his servants and attendants, and found himself in a part of the country where he had never been before. In vain he tried to retrace his steps: he only seemed to wander farther away in the wrong direction.

Presently he came to a woodcutter's cottage, and dismounted to ask his way. An old, old man lived in this hut, and after he had directed the Prince as to the best way back, the young man pointed to a thick wood ahead, and asked what lay beyond it. Then the old man told him that there was a legend that beyond the wood was an enchanted palace where a beautiful Princess had lain sleeping for a hundred years, and whom a Prince was to awaken with a kiss.

Directly the Prince Florimond heard this, nothing would serve but he must go there and see for himself if the tale were true. So he rode and he rode until he came to the edge of the wood, and there he got off his horse and began to push his way through the thorny thicket. It was hard work indeed, for the briars were so strong and so sharp that you would never believe that anyone could get past them, and they closed up behind him as he went.

But he was strong and brave, and after a time the way became easier, until at last he came to the palace.

There everyone was sleeping—the sentinels and soldiers in the court-yard, the cooks in the kitchen, and pages and lords- and ladies-in-waiting in the corridors and chambers; and, in the great throne-room the King and Queen on their golden and ivory thrones.

Prince Florimond passed on, wondering more and more, till he came at length to the narrow staircase which led to the little tower in which the Princess had fallen asleep. He mounted this, and then came the greatest wonder of all—the beautiful sleeping lady, in her glistening white robes. She was so beautiful that to see her almost took away his breath; and, falling on his knees, he bent to kiss her cheek. And as he kissed her, she opened her lovely blue eyes and said, smiling: "Oh, Prince, have you come at last? I have had such pleasant dreams."

Then she sat up laughing and rubbing her eyes, and gave him her hand, and they went hand in hand together down the stairs and along the corridors, till they came to the throne-room. And there were the King and Queen rubbing their eyes too, and they kissed their daughter and welcomed the Prince most gladly.

And, all at the same time, the whole palace was awake. Cocks crowed, dogs barked, the cats began to mew, the spits to turn, the clocks to strike, the soldiers presented arms, the heralds blew their trumpets, the head cook boxed a little scullion's ears, the butler went on

The Prince finds the Sleeping Beauty.

drinking his half-finished tankard of wine, the first lady-in-waiting finished winding her skein of silk.

Everything, in short, went on exactly as though the spell had lasted a hundred seconds instead of years. To be sure, Princess Miranda's pretty white dress was just such a one as Prince Florimond's great-grandmother might have worn. But that gave them something to laugh at.

And now my story is done, for I need hardly tell you that the Prince and Princess were married amid great rejoicings, and lived happily ever after; and that the seven fairy godmothers danced at the wedding. So all ended well, and what more could anyone wish?

ALL alone, in a quiet little village, lived a poor old woman. One day she had a dish of beans which she wanted to cook for dinner, so she made a fire on the hearth, and in order that it should burn up quickly she lighted it with a handful of straw.

She hung the pot over the fire, and poured in the beans; but one fell on to the floor without her noticing it, and rolled away beside a piece of straw. Soon afterwards a live coal flew out of the fire and joined their company. Then the straw began to speak.

"Dear friends," said he, "whence come you?"

"I was fortunate enough to spring out of the fire," answered the coal. "Had I not exerted myself to get out when I did, I should most certainly have been burnt to ashes."

"I have also just managed to save my skin," said the bean. "Had the old woman succeeded in putting me into the pot, I should

have been stewed without mercy, just as my comrades are being served now."

"My fate might have been no better," the straw told them. "The old woman burnt sixty of my brothers at once, but fortunately I was able to slip through her fingers."

"What shall we do now?" said the coal.

"Well," answered the bean, "my opinion is that, as we have all been so fortunate as to escape death, we should leave this place before any new misfortune overtakes us. Let us all three become travelling companions and set out upon a journey to some unknown country."

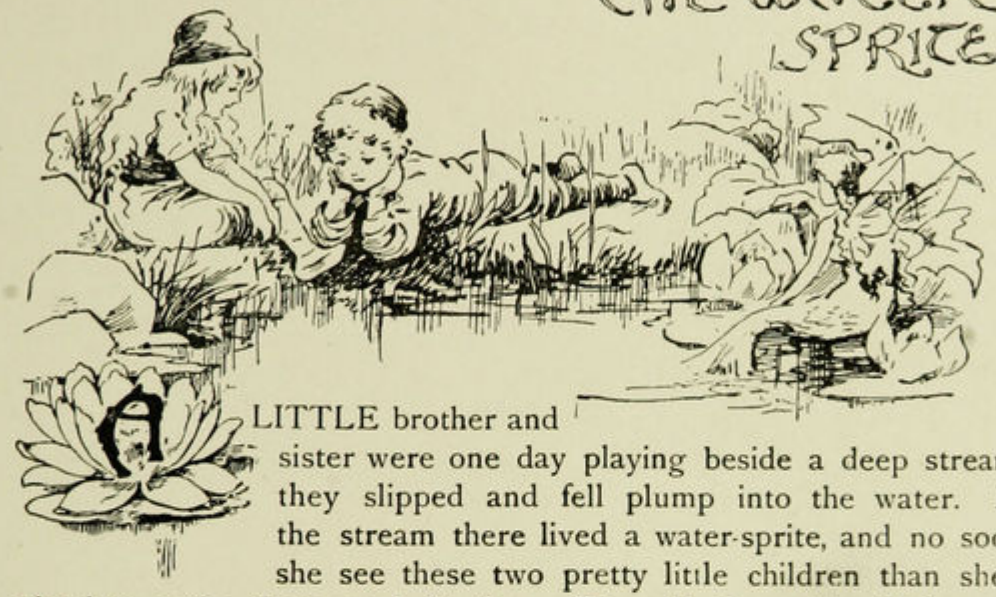
This suggestion pleased both the straw and the coal, so away they all went at once. Before long they came to a brook, and as there was no bridge across it they did not know how to get to the other side; but the straw had a good idea: "I will lay myself over the water, and you can walk across me as though I were a bridge," he said. So he stretched himself from one bank to the other, and the coal, who was of a hasty disposition, at once tripped gaily on to the newly-built bridge. Half way across she hesitated, and began to feel afraid of the rushing water beneath her. She dared go no farther, but neither would she return; but she stood there so long that the straw caught fire, broke in two, and fell into the stream. Of course, the coal was bound to follow. No sooner did she touch the water than—hiss, zish! out she went, and never glowed again.

The bean, who was a careful fellow, had stayed on the bank, to watch how the coal got across, before trusting himself to such a slender bridge. But when he saw what very queer figures his friends cut, he could not help laughing. He laughed and laughed till he could not stop, and at length he split his side.

It would have gone badly with him then, had not a tailor happened to pass by. He was a kind-hearted fellow, and at once took out his needle and thread and began to repair the mischief.

The bean thanked him politely, for he knew that the tailor had saved his life, but unfortunately he had used black thread, and from that time till to-day every bean has a little black stitch in its side.

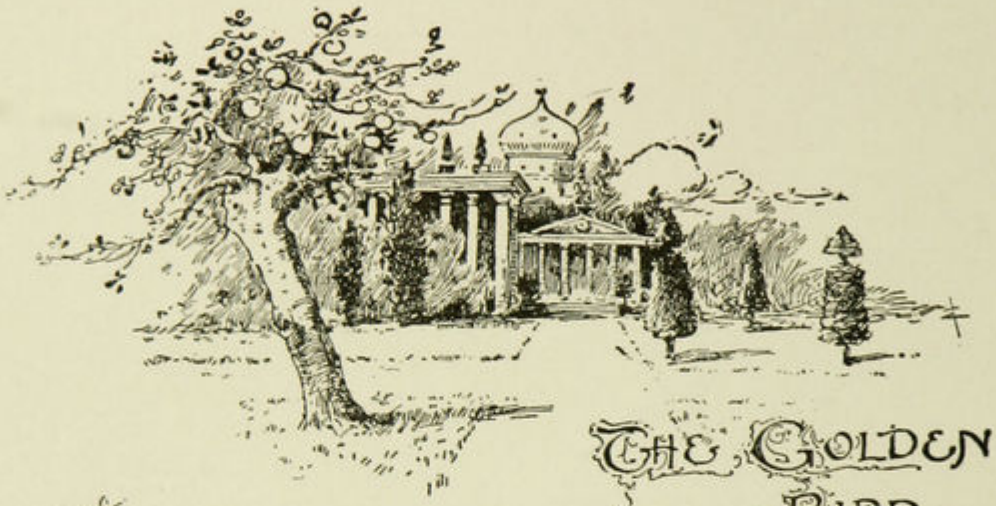
THE WATER SPRITE



A LITTLE brother and sister were one day playing beside a deep stream, when they slipped and fell plump into the water. Now, in the stream there lived a water-sprite, and no sooner did she see these two pretty little children than she determined to make them work for her. The girl she set to fetch water in a pail that had no bottom to it; the boy was made to cut down trees with a blunt axe, and all the food she gave them was doughy dumplings.

At last the children could bear this cruel treatment no longer, so one day, when the water-sprite was from home, they ran away. When the water-sprite returned, she ran as fast as ever she could to try and overtake them. The children saw her coming, and the little girl threw her brush behind her. In a second it had grown into a mountain of bristles, over which the sprite had the greatest difficulty in climbing. But she succeeded at last, and when the children saw how very near she was to them the boy threw his comb behind him. This grew into a mountain of sharp spikes, but the sprite was so anxious to catch the children that she clambered over the spikes and never seemed to feel the slightest prick.

Then the girl threw her mirror behind her, and immediately it grew into a mountain of glass, which was so slippery that the sprite could not climb over it, try as much as she would So home she went to fetch an axe; but by the time she came back and had chopped down the mountain of glass the children had reached their home and were safe in their mother's arms. Then there was nothing left for the water-sprite to do but to go back to her spring and work for herself.



THE GOLDEN BIRD.

THERE WAS ONCE A KING who had a beautiful pleasure-garden behind his palace, in which grew a tree that bore golden apples. As fast as the apples ripened they were counted, but the next day one was always missing. This was made known to the King, who commanded that a watch should be kept every night under the tree. Now, the King had three sons, and he sent the eldest into the garden when night was coming on; but at midnight he fell fast asleep, and in the morning another apple was missing. The following night the second son had to watch, but he did not succeed any better, and again another apple was missing in the morning. Now came the turn of the youngest son, who was eager to go; but the King did not rely much upon him, and thought he would watch even worse than his brothers; however, at last he consented.

The youth threw himself on the ground under the tree and watched steadily, without letting sleep master him. As twelve o'clock struck, something rustled in the air, and he saw a bird fly by in the moonlight, whose feathers were of shining gold. The bird alighted on the tree and was just picking off one of the apples when the young Prince shot a bolt at it. Away flew the bird, but the arrow had knocked off one of its feathers, which was of the finest gold. The youth picked it up and showed it to the King next morning, and told him all he had seen in the night.

Thereupon the King assembled his counsel, and each one declared that a single feather like this one was of greater value than the whole kingdom.

"However valuable this feather may be," said the King, "one will not be of much use to me—I must have the whole bird."

So the eldest son went forth on his travels, to look for the wonderful bird, and he had no doubt that he would be able to find it.

When he had gone a short distance, he saw a fox sitting close to the edge of the forest, so he drew his bow to shoot. But the fox cried out: "Do not shoot me, and I will give you a piece of good advice! You are now on the road to the golden bird, and this evening you will come to a village where two inns stand opposite to each other; one will be brilliantly lighted, and great merriment will be going on inside; do not, however, go in, but rather enter the other, even though it appears but a poor place to you."

"How can such a ridiculous animal give me rational advice?" thought the young Prince, and shot at the fox, but missed it, so it ran away with its tail in the air. The King's son then walked on, and in the evening he came to a village where the two inns stood: in one there was dancing and singing, but the other was quiet, and had a very mean and wretched appearance.

"I should be an idiot," thought he to himself, "if I were to go to this gloomy old inn while the other is so bright and cheerful." Therefore, he went into the merry one, lived there in rioting and revelry, and so forgot the golden bird, his father, and all good behaviour.

As time passed away, and the eldest son did not return home, the second son set out on his travels to seek the golden bird. Like the eldest brother, he met with the fox, and did not follow the good advice it gave him. He likewise came to the two inns, and at the window of the noisy one his brother stood entreating him to come in. This he could not resist, so he went in, and began to live a life of pleasure only.

Again a long time passed by without any news, so the youngest Prince wished to try his luck, but his father would not hear of it. At last, for the sake of peace, the King was obliged to consent, for he had no rest as long as he refused. The fox was again sitting at the edge of the forest, and once more it begged for its own life and gave its good advice. The youth was good-hearted, and said—

"Have no fear, little fox; I will not do thee any harm."

"Thou wilt never repent of thy good nature," replied the fox, "and in order that thou mayest travel more quickly, get up behind on my tail."

Scarcely had the youth seated himself, when away went the fox over hill and dale, so fast that the Prince's hair whistled in the wind. When they came to the village, the youth dismounted, and following the fox's advice, he turned at once into the shabby-looking inn, where he slept peacefully through the night. The next morning, when the Prince went into the fields, the fox was already there, and said—

"I will tell thee what further thou must do. Go straight on, and thou wilt come to a castle before which a whole troop of soldiers will be lying asleep. Go right through the midst of them into the castle, and thou wilt come to a chamber where is hanging a wooden cage containing a golden bird. Close by stands an empty golden cage, for show; but be careful that thou dost not take the bird out of its ugly cage and put it in the splendid one, or it will be very unlucky for thee."

With these words the fox once more stretched out its tail, and the King's son sat upon it again, and away they went over hill and dale, with their hair whistling in the wind.

When they arrived at the castle, the Prince found everything as the fox had said, and he soon discovered the room in which the golden bird was sitting in its wooden cage; by it stood a golden one; while three golden apples were lying about the room. But the Prince thought it would be silly to put such a lovely bird in so ugly and common a cage; so, opening the door, he placed it in the golden cage. In an instant the bird set up a piercing shriek, which awakened all the soldiers, who rushed in and made him prisoner.

The next morning he was brought before a judge, who at once condemned him to death. Still, the King said his life should be spared on one condition, and that was, that he brought him the golden horse, which ran faster than the wind; and if he succeeded he should also receive the golden bird as a reward.

The young Prince set out on his journey, but he sighed and felt very sorrowful, for where was he to find the golden horse? All at once, he saw his old friend, the fox, sitting by the wayside.

"Ah!" exclaimed the fox, "thou seest now what has happened through not listening to me. But be of good courage; I will look after thee, and tell thee how thou mayest discover the horse. Thou must travel

The Golden Bird.

straight along this road until thou comest to a castle; the horse is there in one of the stables. Thou wilt find a stable boy lying before the stall, but he will be fast asleep and snoring, so thou wilt be able to lead out the golden horse quite quietly. But there is one thing thou must be careful about, and that is to put on the shabby old saddle of wood and leather, and not the golden one which hangs beside it—otherwise everything will go wrong with thee." Then the fox stretched out his tail, the Prince took a seat upon it, and away they went over hill and dale, with their hair whistling in the wind.

Everything happened as the fox had said. The Prince came to the stable where the golden horse was standing, but, as he was about to put on the shabby old saddle, he thought to himself: "It does seem a shame that such a lovely animal should be disgraced with this. The fine saddle is his by right; it must go on."

Scarcely had the golden saddle rested on the horse's back when it began to neigh loudly. This awakened the stable boy, who awakened the grooms, who rushed in and seized the Prince and made him a prisoner. The following morning he was brought to trial and condemned to death, but the King promised him his life, as well as the golden horse, if the youth could find the beautiful daughter of the King of the golden castle. Once more, with a heavy heart, the Prince set

out on his journey, and by great good fortune he soon came across the faithful fox.

"I really should have left thee to the consequences of thy folly," said the fox; "but as I feel great compassion for thee, I will help thee out of thy new misfortune. The path to the castle lies straight before thee; thou wilt reach it about the evening. At night, when everything is quiet, the lovely Princess will go to the bath-house, to bathe there. As soon as she enters, thou must spring forward and give her a kiss; then she will follow thee wherever thou carest to lead her; only be careful that she does not take leave of her parents, or everything will go wrong."

Then the fox stretched out his tail, the Prince seated himself on it, and away they both went over hill and dale, their hair whistling in the wind.

When the King's son came to the golden palace, everything happened as the fox had predicted. He waited until midnight, and when everyone was soundly asleep the beautiful Princess went into the bath-house, so he sprang forward and kissed her. The Princess then said she would joyfully follow him, but she besought him with tears in her eyes to allow her to say farewell to her parents. At first he withstood her entreaties, but as she wept still more, and fell at his feet, he at last yielded.

Scarcely was the maiden at the bedside of her father, when he awoke, and so did everyone else in the palace; so the foolish youth was captured and put into prison.

On the following morning the King said to him: "Thy life is forfeited, and thou canst only find mercy if thou clearest away the mountain that lies before my windows, and over which I cannot see, but it must be removed within eight days. If thou dost succeed thou shalt have my daughter as a reward."

So the Prince commenced at once to dig and to shovel away the earth without cessation, but when after seven days he saw how little he had been able to accomplish, and that all his labour was as nothing, he fell into a great grief and gave up all hope.

On the evening of the seventh day, however, the fox appeared. "Thou dost not deserve that I should take thy part or befriend thee, but do thou go away and lie down to sleep, and I will do the work for thee."

And the next morning, when he awoke and looked out of the window, the mountain had disappeared! Then the Prince, quite over-

joyed, hastened to the King and told him that the conditions were fulfilled, so that the King, whether he would or not, was obliged to keep his word and give him his daughter.

Then these two went away together, and it was not long before the faithful fox came to them.

"Thou hast indeed gained the best of all," said he; "but to the maiden of the golden castle belongs also the golden horse."

"How can I get it?" enquired the youth.

"I will tell thee," answered the fox; "first of all, take the lovely Princess to the King who sent you to the golden palace. There will then be unheard-of joy; they will gladly lead the golden horse to thee and give it thee. Mount it instantly, and give your hand to everyone at parting, and last of all to the Princess Grasp her hand firmly; make her spring into the saddle behind thee, and then gallop away; no one will be able to overtake thee, for the golden horse runs faster than the wind."

This was all happily accomplished, and the King's son carried off the beautiful Princess on the golden horse. The fox did not remain behind, and spoke thus to the young Prince—

"Now I will help thee to find the golden bird. When thou comest near the castle where the bird is to be found, let the Princess dismount, and I will take her under my protection. Then ride on the golden horse to the courtyard of the palace, where thy coming will cause great joy, and they will fetch the golden bird for thee Directly the cage is in thy hands, gallop back to us and fetch the maiden again."

When this plot was successfully carried out, and the Prince was about to ride home with his treasure, the fox said: "Now must thou reward me for all my services."

"What is it that thou dost desire?" enquired the Prince.

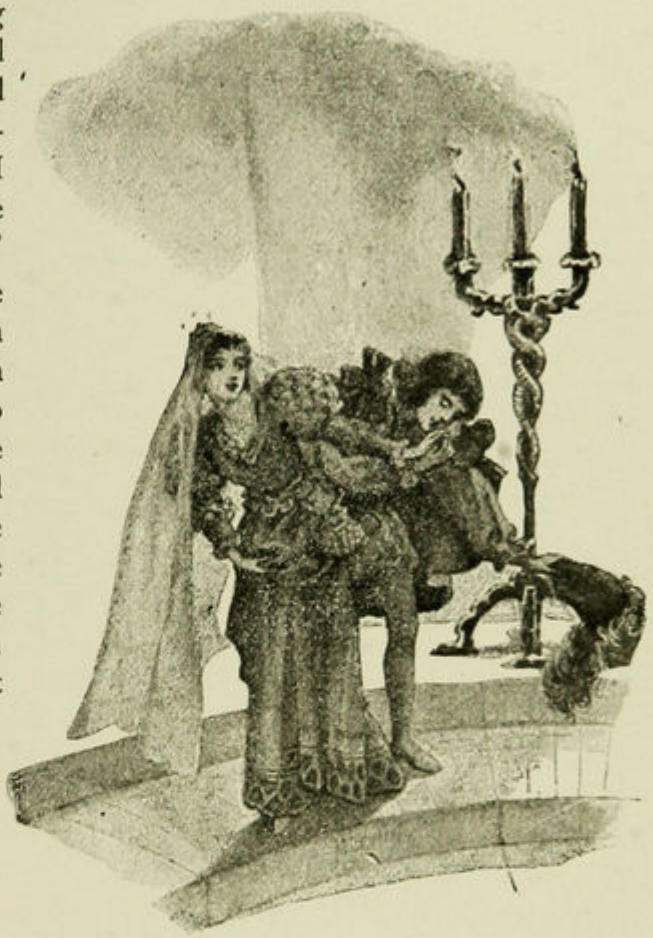
"When we come to yonder wood, thou must shoot me dead and cut off my head and paws."

"That would be a fine sort of gratitude," said the King's son; "that I cannot possibly promise thee."

"Then," replied the fox, "if thou wilt not, I must leave thee; but before I go I will give thee again some good advice. Beware of two things—buy no gallows'-flesh, and see that thou dost not sit on the brink of a well!"

With this the fox ran off into the forest.

"Ah!" thought the young Prince, "that is a wonderful animal with very whimsical ideas! Who would buy gallows'-flesh, and when have I ever had the slightest desire to sit on the brink of a well?"



So he rode on with the beautiful maiden, and his path led him once more through the village in which his two brothers had stopped. Here there was great tumult and lamentation, and when he asked what it all meant, he was told that two men were going to be hanged. When he came nearer, he saw that they were his two brothers, who had committed every kind of wicked folly and had squandered all their money. Then the young Prince asked if they could not be freed.

"Suppose you do pay for them," the people answered, "where is the good of wasting your money in order to free such villains?"

Nevertheless, he did not hesitate, but paid for them, and when the brothers were freed they all rode away together. They came to the forest where they first encountered the fox, and as it was cool and pleasant away from the burning sun, the two brothers said—

"Let us sit and rest a little by this well, and eat and drink something."

The young Prince consented, and while they were all talking together he quite forgot the fox's warning, and suspected no evil.

But suddenly the two brothers threw him backwards into the well,

and, seizing the maiden, the horse, and the golden bird, they went home to their father.

"We not only bring you the golden bird," said they, "but we have also found the golden palace."

There was great rejoicing, but the horse would not eat, neither would the bird sing, and the maiden only sat and wept.

But the youngest brother had not perished. By good fortune the well was dry, and he had fallen on soft moss without hurting himself, but he could not get out again.

Even in this misfortune the faithful fox did desert him, but came springing down to him and scolded him for not following his advice.

"Still I cannot forsake thee," said he, "and I will help to show thee daylight once more."

Then he told him to seize hold of his tail and hold on tightly; and so saying, he lifted him up in the air.

"Even now thou art not out of danger," said the fox, "for thy brothers were not certain of thy death, and have set spies to watch for thee in the forest, who will certainly kill thee if they see thee."

There was an old man sitting by the wayside with whom the young Prince changed clothes, and, thus disguised, he reached the court of the King.

No one recognised him, but the golden bird began to sing, and the golden horse commenced to eat, and the lovely maiden ceased to weep.

The King was astonished and asked: "What does this all mean?"

Then said the maiden: "I know not, but I was so sad, and now I feel light-hearted; it is as if my true husband had returned."

Then she told him all that had happened, although the other brothers had threatened to kill her if she betrayed them.

The King then summoned all the people in the castle before him: and there came with them the young Prince dressed as a beggar in his rags, but the maiden recognised him instantly and fell upon his neck.

So the wicked brothers were seized and executed, but the young Prince married the lovely Princess and was made his father's heir.

But what became of the poor fox?

Long afterwards the young Prince went again into the forest, and there he met once more with the fox, who said—

"Thou hast now everything in the world thou canst desire, but to my

misfortunes there can be no end, although it is in thy power to release me from them."

So he entreated the Prince to shoot him dead and cut off his head and feet.

At last the Prince consented to do so, and scarcely was the deed done than the fox was changed into a man, who was no other than the brother of the beautiful Princess, at last released from the spell that had bound him.

So now nothing was wanting to the happiness of the Prince and his bride as long as they lived.

ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP

IN a great city in China there once lived a boy named Aladdin, who was unfortunately, a very idle fellow. Even when his father died, he still refused to work, and passed all his time playing in the streets with other bad boys of his own age.

One day, as he was amusing himself thus, a stranger, who had paused to watch their games, called to him.

"O youth," he said, "are you not the son of Mustapha, the tailor?"

"Yes," replied Aladdin, somewhat astonished, unaware that the man had been enquiring about him, "yes, but my father is dead! How did you guess I was his son?"

"By your wonderful resemblance to my dearest brother," exclaimed the stranger, who wore the dress of an African merchant, and flinging his arms round Aladdin's neck, he kissed him, and giving him a handful of small coins, bade him take them to his mother. Aladdin ran home, but when his mother heard his story she was very much astonished.

"You have no uncle," she said. "Neither your father nor I ever had a brother. There must be some mistake."

However, the stranger came next day, and explained that he had been absent from his birthplace for forty years, travelling in distant lands, till a great desire to see home had seized him.

"It is very sad to return," he continued, wiping away his tears, "and find that Mustapha is dead. My only comfort is that he has left this son, who so closely resembles his dear father that wherever I met him I should have known him. And what is his occupation? Does he follow his father's profession?"

At this question Aladdin hung his head.

"Alas, brother," answered the mother, "I am sorry to say Aladdin is very idle. I have to toil to maintain him, and he grows so big and eats so heartily that I cannot support him much longer!"

"Dear, dear!" said the uncle. "This should not be. But perhaps I can help. Would you like to keep a shop, nephew, if I provided you with one?"

Aladdin, who hated hard work, thought this would be delightful, and rejoiced that he had met so charming an uncle.

Next day the merchant took Aladdin out and bought him new clothes and other presents, and then suggested that they should make a little trip into the country where Aladdin had never been. So one fine morning they set out and walked a long way, till they almost reached the mountains. There, in a narrow valley between high hills, the stranger paused.

"There is something very curious here which I should like to show you," he said. "But first I must make a fire, so gather me a heap of dry sticks."

This done, the merchant kindled a fire, on which he threw some incense, repeating at the same moment certain magical words. Instantly the earth opened before them, and discovered a huge stone in which was fastened a brass ring. Aladdin was so frightened that he would have run away, but his uncle caught him roughly by the arm.

"Stay still," he said, "as you value your life, and be obedient! And first take hold of that ring and lift the stone!"

"Then you must help me," gasped Aladdin, trembling with fear. "It is much too heavy for me to move alone."

"Do as I tell you," answered his uncle sternly, and Aladdin, too alarmed

to refuse, caught hold of the ring and the stone came up quite easily, disclosing a flight of steps descending to a door under ground.

"Now," said his uncle, "go down and open the door. Within you will find a palace divided into three great halls, in each of which stand four brass coffers full of gold and silver; but touch them not at your peril, nor let even your dress so much as brush the wall, or you will die. Pass quickly through to a garden planted with trees laden with fruit, of which you may pluck if you like. There, on a terrace, you will see in a niche a lighted lamp. Take it down, extinguish it, throw away the oil, and putting it in your waistband, bring it to me. But see, take this ring," and the stranger drew one from his finger and put it on Aladdin's hand; "it is a talisman against all evil. Go boldly, and we shall both be rich all our lives."

Aladdin obeyed. He found all as his uncle had described. He passed safely through the fatal halls, found the lamp, and put it into his waistband, but as he returned across the garden he stopped to pluck some of the fruit from the trees, and found it, as he thought, made of glass. Some of it was white, some red, and some green; but he was too ignorant to recognise that really these fruits were precious stones of enormous value — diamonds, pearls, rubies, sapphires, and amethysts! However, he filled his pockets, wrapped some in the skirt of his robe, and crammed his vest as full as he could. So laden he returned, and found his uncle waiting for him at the top of the steps.

"Have you got the lamp?" he cried.

"Yes," Aladdin answered. "But, uncle, just give me your hand to help me up these steep steps!"

"Give me the lamp first," said the stranger. "It will be in your way."

"I will as soon as I am up," replied Aladdin; "but I cannot get at it without dropping the fruit I have plucked."

Aladdin and the Magician.

"But you must give it me first," cried the merchant, who did not intend the boy to come up alive. He was only using him to obtain the magic lamp, which must be a voluntary gift from someone, or he would not have power over it; and Aladdin was just an idle vagabond whom no one would miss if he did not return. But still the boy refused to give him the lamp, and at last, irritated past bearing, the wicked magician threw some more incense on to the fire, muttered his charms, and lo! the stone suddenly moved back to its place, shutting Aladdin down in darkness in the bowels of the earth!

His horror can be imagined. In a moment he understood that this cruel wretch could be no uncle of his, but a wicked sorcerer who had deceived him for his own fell purposes. He tried to return to the palace, hoping to escape by the garden, but the door was fast shut. He screamed and shouted, but no one heard him, and then, resigning himself to his fate, he tried to remember some of the prayers which his father and mother had often striven to teach him. "There is no help for me but in Allah!" he said. Now, in joining his hands to pray, he rubbed the ring which the magician had placed on his finger, and to his extreme astonishment there stood before him a terrible genie, who said—

"What wouldest thou have? I am ready to obey thee, for both I and the other slaves of the ring are bound to serve him who possesses it!"

"Get me out of this?" promptly exclaimed Aladdin, and in a moment he was standing in the valley with no sign of the cave or the stone. He hurried off home as quickly as his legs would carry him, and there told his mother all that had befallen him, and how the pretended uncle was nothing but a wicked magician.

"And do give me something to eat, mother," he cried, "for I perish with hunger!"

"Alas, child," she replied, "I have not a morsel in the house, but I have spun a little cotton: I will go and sell that and buy a loaf."

"Why not sell this lamp," said Aladdin, taking it out of his waistband. "It will fetch more than the cotton."

"'Tis but a dirty old thing," she answered; "let me rub it up a bit, and then you may get a better price."

So saying, she began to clean the lamp, when in an instant a dreadful genie appeared before her, saying in a voice of thunder—

"What wouldst thou have? I am ready to obey thee—I and the other

slaves of the lamp." Whereupon the poor woman was so frightened that she fainted dead away.

But Aladdin snatched the lamp from his mother's hand, and cried boldly—

"I am hungry—bring me food!"

The genie disappeared, and instantly returned with a large silver tray, on which were six covered dishes of the same metal, containing delicious viands, two flagons of wine, and two silver cups. All these he placed on the carpet, and vanished.

Aladdin's mother soon recovered from her faint, and surveyed the refreshments with astonishment, asking if the Sultan had sent them. But Aladdin suggested they should have their meal first and he would tell her afterwards, which he did to her great astonishment and horror, she even beseeching her son to rid himself of both lamp and ring as being enchanted and connected with evil powers. But Aladdin could not quite make up his mind to do that.

After this, things went very well with them. When all the provisions were eaten up, Aladdin took the silver dishes one by one and sold them. And when all were gone, he summoned the genie to bring him more; so that he and his mother grew quite rich and prosperous.

But people are seldom long content, and so it happened to Aladdin. One day he heard a proclamation that all the inhabitants were to shut their shops and keep indoors while the Princess Buddir al Baddoor went to the bath. This Princess was said to be the most beautiful creature in the world, and a great desire to see her took possession of Aladdin. So he managed to hide behind the door of the bath, and was lucky enough to gain a full view of her face, for she removed her veil in passing the spot where he was concealed. Then he went home so sad and thoughtful that his mother asked him if anything was the matter.

"Mother," he said, "I have seen the Princess, and she is so beautiful that I am resolved to ask her in marriage from the Sultan!"

"Marry the Princess!" gasped his mother. "Child! you must be mad! Do you think the Sultan will give his daughter to such as you?"

"That is to be seen!" replied Aladdin. "But, mother, you must help me. Now I have a secret to tell you. Those fruits I brought home from the enchanted garden are not pieces of glass as I thought: they

Aladdin
and the Genie.

are jewels of enormous value—so the man to whom I sold the silver dishes tells me. Well, I want you to take them, arranged on your best china dish, to the divan where the Sultan sits to judge cases, and present them to him."

The poor woman was much distressed, believing that her son had lost his wits, but she agreed to do what he asked. Together they arranged the jewels, and indeed they were dazzling enough to astonish anyone. Then she wrapped the dish in a clean napkin, and carried it to the divan where she was careful to place herself so that the Sultan might see her. But that day there were so many cases, that she had no chance to speak, and so it happened day after day.

But still she always went, and at last the Sultan, seeing her waiting, became curious to know her business, and commanded that she should be brought before him.

"Good woman," he said, "what business is it which brings you here day after day?"

"O King, live for ever!" she exclaimed. "I come to make a petition, but it is of so strange a nature that ere I speak I implore your forgiveness!"

"It is granted," replied the Sultan, more curious than ever. "Speak boldly, and no harm shall come to you."

"My son," went on the widow, "loves your daughter, the Princess, and has sent me to ask her hand in marriage. He also sends these jewels which he entreats your Majesty to accept."

At first the Sultan was inclined to laugh at the idea of giving his daughter to the poor widow's son, but when he saw the beautiful jewels she had brought he hesitated, and

then said that he would probably give his consent at the end of three months.

However, before the three months had passed Aladdin found out that preparations were being made for the marriage of the Princess to the son of the Grand Visier.

In surprise and sorrow Aladdin lost no time in rubbing the lamp and calling up the genie, whom he commanded to frighten the Vizier's son so that he would no longer wish to marry the Princess. This the genie did by carrying him off and imprisoning him in a dark and dismal place until he was willing to give up his bride. Then, by the aid of the genie of the lamp, Aladdin carried to the Sultan such magnificent presents that at last he consented to accept him as his son-in-law, and sent word that the sooner he came to receive the Princess the greater favour he would be doing him.

Aladdin did not delay long, but first he commanded the genie to convey him to a bath and provide suitable raiment. In a moment he found himself in a splendid marble edifice where he was bathed in scented waters of various degrees of heat, and then clad in magnificent robes.

After this the genie supplied him with a beautiful horse, which he mounted, and, accompanied by forty slaves, who cast handfuls of gold among the crowd in the streets, he proceeded to the palace, where the Sultan received him with every mark of respect and honour.

First there was a great entertainment, at which the Sultan and Aladdin sat at a table by themselves, and later the Chief Cadi was directed to draw the marriage-contract, the Sultan asking Aladdin if he would remain and complete it the same day.

"Sire," he replied, "though I am most impatient to behold the Princess, still I wish very much to have a suitable residence prepared to receive her. Grant me, I beg you, sufficient ground near your palace, and I will have it finished with the utmost speed!"

Of course, the Sultan consented, and as soon as Aladdin got home again he summoned his genie.

"Genie," he said, "build me a palace, the most magnificent ever seen, of porphyry and marble, and whatever bricks you use must be of gold and silver. Let the chief hall have twenty-four windows enriched

with precious stones. And there must be gardens full of flowers and fountains, and stables with fine horses, and servants and slaves, and especially a treasure-house filled with gold and silver.

Next morning, when the Sultan's porter opened the palace gates, he saw something shining so brightly that he rubbed his eyes in astonishment. He looked again and again ere he realised that on a spot which the night before had only been a garden there had arisen a marvellous building. He ran to a servant of the Grand Vizier, who waked his master, who rushed off and told the Sultan.

"Why, that must be Aladdin's palace!" exclaimed the Sultan, jumping out of bed and running to the window; "built in one night! Well, he is a wonderful fellow, certainly!"

That day was the wedding-day. First of all Aladdin and his mother (who was now suitably dressed in splendid attire) took possession of the palace, and at night the bride was brought home in a splendid litter accompanied by a grand procession. So much magnificence had never before been seen in the city, where Aladdin was now a great favourite by reason of the gold his slaves had flung to the people. As for the Princess, she and Aladdin adored one another, and they lived together very happily.

But alas! a great misfortune was in store for poor Aladdin. For it happened some years later that the African magician remembered Aladdin, and by his magic arts sought to learn if the lad had perished in the enchanted hall.

To his great annoyance he discovered that Aladdin was not dead, but living in much splendour by the aid of the wonderful lamp; whereupon he started off to see if he could not do him some mischief.

As soon as he saw Aladdin's palace he at once recognised that it had never been built by mortal hands. Then he again consulted his magic powers, and learnt that the lamp was still in the palace, which caused him to rub his hands with glee.

Now, just then Aladdin was away on a hunting expedition which would last eight days, and the Princess found herself rather dull. As she sat in her room one morning, yawning a little, she heard a great shouting and noise outside, and sent one of her slaves to see what it was.

"Fancy, madam," she said, "there is a queer old man outside with a

basket full of beautiful lamps, and he is crying out: 'Old lamps for new! old lamps for new!' All the people are laughing at him!"

"Why, he must be mad!" exclaimed another slave. "Madam, there is a shabby old lamp in Prince Aladdin's room; shall we try if he will really change it for a new one?"

"Yes, do!" said the Princess, who had no idea of the value of the lamp. Then one of the slaves fetched it and offered it to the old man, who of course was the magician using this artifice to obtain the precious lamp. He was overjoyed, and bade the girl choose what she liked from his basket, and hurried away, having obtained all he wanted. As soon as it was night, he retired to a quiet spot, and, summoning the genie, he bade him remove Aladdin's palace straightway to Africa.

What was the dismay of the Sultan the next morning when he found that not only was his son-in-law's fine palace gone as quickly as it came, but that his daughter had vanished with it! In a transport of rage he sent for Aladdin from his hunting, and as soon as he arrived condemned him to be put to death!

"But why?" exclaimed poor Aladdin, who did not know what had occurred. "Why, sire, do you treat me thus? What crime have I committed?"

"Crime, wretch!" shouted the Sultan; "look out of window and tell me what has become of my daughter?"

Aladdin looked and looked again, but his splendid home was no longer visible! Then he guessed what had happened.

"O King!" he cried, "give me forty days, and if in that time I have

not brought back both your daughter and my palace, you can cut off my head and welcome!"

The Sultan granted his request, and Aladdin went forth depressed and miserable. He wandered about for three days, not knowing what to do or where to go. But accidently when near the river he slipped and, clutching at a rock to save himself, he rubbed the ring which the magician had given him and which he always wore, though he had forgotten its power —and there stood the genie before him.

"What wouldst thou have?" said the terrible being. "I am ready to obey thee, both I and the other slaves of the ring!"

"Show me where my palace is!" cried Aladdin, "or bring it back here if thou canst!"

"That is beyond my power," replied the genie, "but I can transport you to it!" and whisking Aladdin up, he transported him to Africa and put him down just outside the Princess's window, from which she, at that moment, was gazing in a forlorn mood.

With a cry of joy she recognised him, and in another minute they were weeping in one another's arms. But when they had somewhat recovered their calmness, Aladdin began to ask questions.

"Dearest Princess," he said, "there was an old lamp——"

"Ah!" interrupted the Princess, "I knew that that lamp had something to do with it, for the very morning after I had changed it for a new one I found myself in this strange place, and in the power of a horrid old man who keeps the lamp carefully in his bosom. He pulled it out one day in triumph to show me—odious old creature that he is!"

"Ah," cried Aladdin, "now I know what to do. Wait for me here, dearest; I will be back directly."

Off flew Aladdin to the nearest town, where he purchased a certain powder which he bade the Princess put in a cup of wine, and offer it to the magician at an entertainment to which she must invite him. "When he has drunk it, he will become insensible," he said; "then call me!"

The Princess obeyed him faithfully. She invited the magician, and made her slaves sing to him, and then offered him the drugged cup. The moment he had drunk the wine he fell back lifeless on the sofa.

"Aladdin," cried the Princess, "come quickly!"

"Now we are saved!" he exclaimed; "leave me alone a minute, dearest, and I will see if we cannot get home again."

The Princess felt two little shocks: one when the building was lifted up, and one when it was set down, and there was her father's palace standing over the way as usual. Need I say how overjoyed the Sultan was to see his daughter again, and how he quite forgave Aladdin and received him into favour.

So they lived in great felicity, and when the Sultan died, the Princess succeeded him on the throne, and she and Aladdin reigned many years and left a numerous and illustrious posterity.

TEENY TINY

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

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

she was awakened by a teeny-tiny voice from the teeny-tiny cupboard, which said—

"GIVE ME MY BONE!"

And this teeny-tiny woman was a teeny-tiny frightened, so she hid her teeny-tiny head under the teeny-tiny clothes, and went to sleep again. And when she had been asleep again a teeny-tiny time, the teeny-tiny voice again cried out from the teeny-tiny cupboard a teeny-tiny louder—

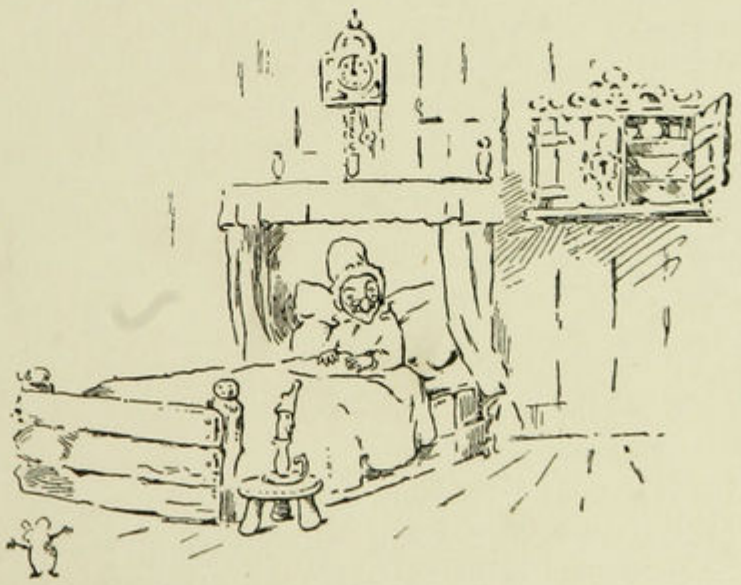
"GIVE ME MY BONE!"

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

"GIVE ME MY BONE!"

At this the teeny-tiny woman was a teeny-tiny bit more frightened; but she put her teeny-tiny head out of the teeny-tiny clothes, and said in her loudest teeny-tiny voice—

"TAKE IT!!"



The Goose Girl.

ONCE UPON A TIME there lived a Queen whose husband had long been dead. She had an only daughter, whom she loved most tenderly; but she had promised to give her in marriage to the son of a King who lived far away, and the time had come when the maiden must journey to the country of her bridegroom. The Queen packed up all kinds of costly stuffs, and jewels, and gold and silver goblets—everything in fact, which a royal bride must needs have. She also chose for her a waiting-maid, whom she believed she could trust, and who was to accompany the Princess and deliver her safely into the hands of her bridegroom. They had to make the journey on horseback, so each was provided with a good steed. The Princess's horse was named Falada and he had the power of speech. When at last the sorrowful hour of parting came, the Queen took a sharp little knife, and making a cut on her own finger, she let three drops of blood fall on to a white handkerchief, and this she gave to her daughter, saying: "Dearest child, take good care of it. It may be of the greatest use to you on the

journey." So the Princess put the handkerchief into her bosom that she might guard it most heedfully, and set out upon her journey.

Now, the waiting-woman had a bad heart, and she was full of schemes as to how she could take advantage of her young mistress. It was a very hot day, and the sun shone down brightly on the white road as it wound away over the hills, and after riding for some time the Princess became very thirsty. Presently they had to cross a clear little stream, and there she drew rein, and called to her waiting-maid.

"Please get down," she said, "and fill my cup from the brook, and bring it to me to drink, for I am so thirsty!"

But the waiting-maid tossed her head, and answered rudely—

"Get down yourself, and stoop and drink, for I will serve you no longer!" The Princess was greatly astonished at this rude reply, but she was young and timid, and being really very thirsty, she did dismount and, as she was afraid to ask for her cup, stooped to drink from the clear water in the brook as it came rippling down over the stones. And as she did so, she sighed, "Ah, me!" and the Three Drops of Blood answered:—

"If thy mother dear of thy grief but knew,
Her loving heart would break in two!"

But the Princess was gentle and timid, and she said nothing, but when she had quenched her thirst she mounted Falada and rode on. Yet as they went on and she grew tired, and the heat increased, she once more became very thirsty, and coming to another stream, she again spoke to her waiting-maid, and asked her to dismount and fill her cup with water. But the waiting-maid replied more haughtily than before—

"Get down yourself and drink; for I will be your waiting-maid no longer."

So the poor Princess had to dismount and stoop down to the stream, her thirst was so great. But as she bent down she wept a little and sighed, "Ah, me!" and again the Three Drops of Blood answered:—

"If thy mother dear of thy grief but knew,
Her loving heart would break in two!"

And as she bent down the handkerchief fell out of her bosom, and the flowing water carried it away, but the Princess did not see it, for her

eyes were full of tears. But the waiting-maid noticed the loss and rejoiced, for now she knew she would have full power over her young mistress, and as the poor Princess was about to remount she told her rudely to get on *her* nag, for she herself meant to ride Falada. Moreover, she forced the poor little Princess to take off her rich dress and put on her waiting-maid's attire, while she dressed herself in the Princess's clothes; and beyond all this she insisted on her taking a solemn oath that she would tell no man what had been done, threatening her with instant death if she broke her vow!

Then the waiting-maid mounted Falada, and on they rode.

In this way they reached the castle of the King, and there everyone ran out to give them a joyful welcome, and the Prince lifted the waiting-maid from Falada, and led her up the great staircase to the guest-chamber, while the Princess was left waiting in the courtyard. But as the Prince was talking to his bride, the old King happened to look out of the window and saw the poor girl standing forlorn and lonely, not knowing where to go or what to do, and he noticed that she was very beautiful.

"Who is that you have brought with you?" he enquired of the false bride.

"That girl!" she answered indifferently. "Oh! just someone for company. Please give her some work to do that she may not stand idling about."

"Then she must mind the geese!" replied the old King. "There is nothing else for her to do. Kurdchen, the gooseherd, is but a lad, and he will be glad of help!" Thus the Princess became a goose girl!

Now, all this pleased the wicked waiting-maid very well, and there remained one thing only to disquiet her, and that was the fear lest Falada should speak and betray her secret. So after a little while she said to the Prince—

"Dearest husband, will you do me one little favour?"

"Of course, I will," he answered; "only tell me what it is!"

"Well, then, will you send for the man who slays the cattle, and bid him cut off the head of the horse on which I rode, for he carried me so ill that he vexed me exceedingly!"

The Prince was sorry when he heard this, for he had noticed what a beautiful intelligent-looking creature Falada was when he had lifted the

The Goose Girl.

waiting-maid from the saddle. He thought, too, that his future wife must have rather a cruel disposition; but still it was her first request, and he could not very well refuse it.

So poor Falada was condemned to die! When the news came to the ears of the Princess she was very, very sorry, but she could not hinder the cruel deed; only she sought out the man who was to slay Falada, and offered him a piece of gold if he would bring her the poor horse's head so that she might see it again, and, moreover, would fasten it up in a dark gateway under which she and Kurdchen drove the geese morning and evening. And the man promised to do so.

Early the next morning the Princess drove out the geese, with Kurdchen, and as she passed under the dark gateway, there was poor Falada's head nailed to the wall. The Princess looked up and said:—

"Alas! poor Falada, hanging so high!"

and the head answered:—

"Alas! Princess! that thou passest by!
If thy mother dear of thy grief but knew,
Her loving heart would break in two!"

Then they went on farther from the town, till they drove their geese out into the meadows, where the Princess sat down and unfastened her hair, so that it fell all around her like a shower of gold.

Kurdchen, who had never seen anything so beautiful in his life, shouted with joy, and tried to seize it in his grubby little hands. But she cried out:—

"Blow, wind, blow, I pray!
Carry Kurdchen's hat away.
Over meadow, over hill,
Whisk it, frisk it, at thy will.
Make him chase it here and there:
Give me time to braid my hair."

And the wind heard what she said, and whirled Kurdchen's hat away, and he had to run after it so far and so long that when he came back her hair was all bound up under her little white cap, and Kurdchen could not touch it. He was very cross for a time, but presently he grew better and they herded the geese all day in the pleasant meadows and brought them home safely in the evening. The next morning the same thing

happened. As they went through the dark gateway the Princess looked up and said:—

"Alas! poor Falada, hanging so high!"

and the head answered:—

"Alas! Princess! that thou passest by!
If thy mother dear of thy grief but knew,
Her loving heart would break in two!"

And when they reached the meadow, she let down her hair, and when Kurdchen tried to seize it, she cried to the wind:—

"Blow, wind, blow, I pray!
Carry Kurdchen's hat away.
Over meadow, over hill,
Whisk it, frisk it, at thy will.
Make him chase it here and there:
Give me time to braid my hair."

And again the wind listened and whirled Kurdchen's hat away, and he had to run after it so fast and so far that before he returned her hair was all braided up under her little white cap. But that night when they had driven the geese home, Kurdchen went to the old King and said: "I cannot herd the geese any more with that maiden!"

"Why not?" asked the King.

"Oh!" said the lad, "she vexes me so! For under the dark gateway there is nailed up a horse's head, and as we pass it in the morning she says:—

"'Alas! poor Falada, hanging so high!'

and the head answers:—

"'Alas! Princess! that thou passest by!
If thy mother dear of thy grief but knew,
Her loving heart would break in two!'"

And then he told the King all that followed.

The King listened thoughtfully to all he said, and then he bade the lad go once again with the goose girl as if nothing had happened. But he himself the next morning rose very early, and went out and hid himself in the dark gateway where they drove out the geese, and he heard what the Princess said to the horse's head. Then he followed them to the

meadow, and standing behind an old thorn tree, he watched the goose girl let down her hair, which quite dazzled him with its splendour and beauty as it shone in the morning sunshine. And as Kurdchen again tried to grasp it, the maiden cried:—

"Blow, wind, blow, I pray!
Carry Kurdchen's hat away.
Over meadow, over hill,
Whisk it, frisk it, at thy will.
Make him chase it here and there:
Give me time to braid my hair."

Then came a gust of wind and blew away Kurdchen's hat, and whilst he ran after it the maiden combed and plaited her hair and bound it up under her little white cap.

When they brought the geese back to the castle that night, the King called the goose girl to him.

"Why do you do thus?" he asked, and told her what he had seen.

"That I must not tell you," she answered sadly, "for I have sworn an oath not to tell any man, and if I break my vow I must die."

This troubled the King, and he sat silent and thoughtful for a time, but presently he said to her—

"This must you do! Go, creep into the great oven in the bake-house and there lament your grief aloud; so will you tell no man nor break your oath."

So the maiden crept into the great oven and there began to bemoan her hard fate.

"Alas, alas!" she wept, "how sad am I! Here I sit alone in the world, I who am a Queen's daughter, and my false waiting-maid has gained power over me by wicked arts, and has forced me to lay aside my rich garments, which she wears, while she sits by my bridegroom's side. Alas, alas! if my dearest mother only knew, her heart would break!"

Now, the old King stood by the oven-door and heard all she said. Then he called to her to come forth, and he bade his servants clothe her in costly clothes, and when she was so clad everyone was astonished at her beauty.

Meanwhile, he hastened to his son and told him how he had been deceived. He brought him to see the true bride, and when the Prince

looked at her, he was overjoyed at her beauty and grace, for the more he had seen of the false bride the less he had liked her.

But what was to be done? How was the wrong to be set right? The King and the Prince thought and thought, and at last they decided on a plan.

They sent out invitations for a feast, to which they invited all the nobles and great people. When the day came, the Prince sat in the most honourable seat, and on one side of him was the false bride and on the other the Princess, but the wicked waiting-woman was so

dazzled with the grandeur of the scene that she never recognised her young mistress.

There were all kinds of dainties set forth on gold and silver dishes, and costly wines, and everyone was dressed in their best, and sparkling with jewels.

And when they had eaten and drunk and were all in a joyful mood, the old King began asking them riddles, and the company had to guess them.

But presently he told them a story, which indeed was the story

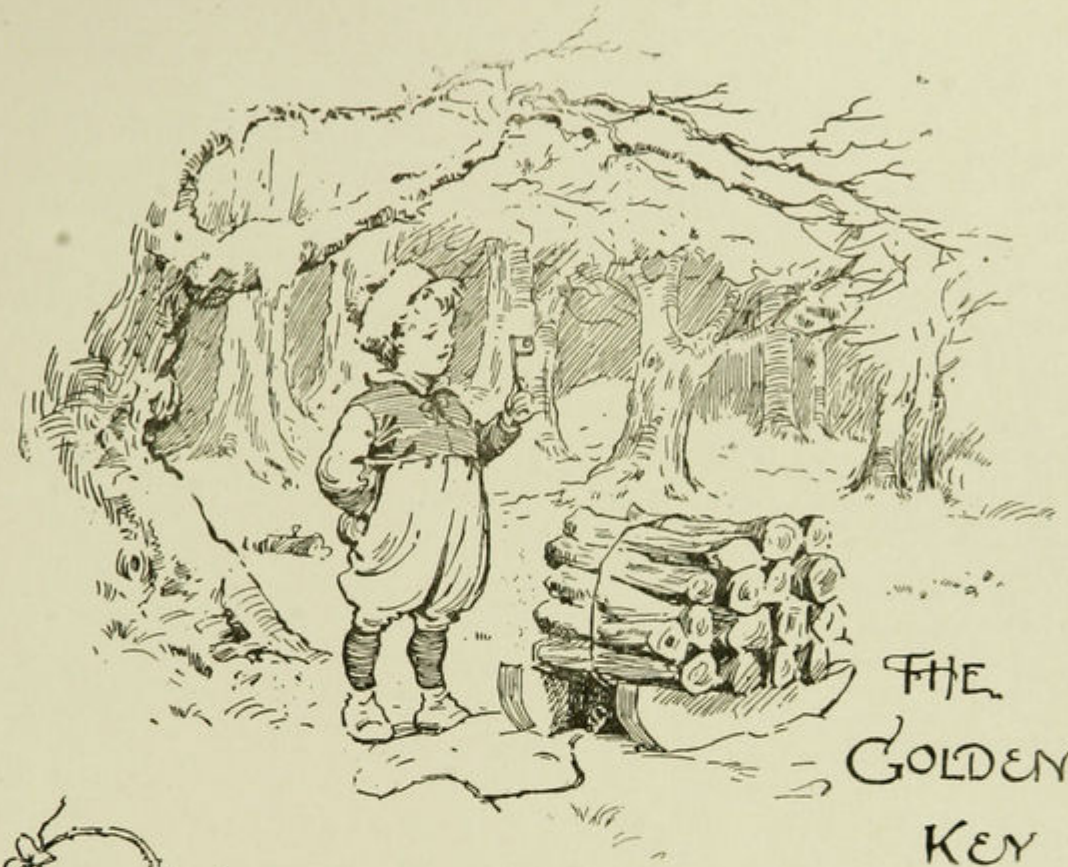
of the Princess and her false waiting-maid, and asked them what punishment they thought so unfaithful a servant deserved.

And the false bride was still so dazzled with her greatness, and puffed up with pride and vanity, that she even yet did not understand what was meant, and she cried—

"Such a wicked person deserves to be put into a cask full of sharp nails, to which two white horses shall be harnessed, and so dragged about the streets till she dies!"

"So shall it be!" said the old King sternly. "You have pronounced your own sentence and chosen your own punishment!"

So they took her away to be punished as she deserved, and then the Prince married the true Princess, and they lived in peace and happiness all the rest of their days!



THE GOLDEN KEY

ONE cold winter's day, when the snow was thick upon the ground, a poor little lad was sent into the forest to gather wood, which he was to stack upon a little sledge and bring home for fuel. By the time he had collected enough, he was so cold that he thought he would make a fire and warm himself before he went home. So he scraped away the snow, and in so doing found a little golden key.

"Ah!" said he to himself, "where the key is, there, to be sure, will the lock be found," and went on scraping away the snow until he found an iron chest. "Now," he said, "if only the key fits the lock, I shall no doubt find all sorts of precious things in the chest."

He searched for a long time, and at last he discovered a lock—so small, however, that one could scarcely see it.

He tried the key, and it fitted exactly; he turned it slowly, slowly, and—if only we wait patiently until he has turned it right round and opened the lid, why then we shall know what was inside the chest.

THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN LITTLE GOATS.

THERE was once an old goat who had seven little ones, whom she loved just as dearly as your mother loves you. One day, finding that there was no food in the larder, she called her children together and said—

"My dears, I am obliged to go to the wood to fetch some food for you; so promise me that on no account whatever will you allow the wolf to enter. If you do, he will gobble you all up, and what will your poor mother do then? You must be very careful, for he is a sly fellow and might easily deceive you. Still you cannot fail to recognise him by his rough voice and black feet."

Mother Goat and her Little Ones.

The little goats promised their mother that they would be very careful; so she kissed them all, bade them good-bye, and set out upon her way. Before long, there came a tap, tap, tapping at the cottage-door, and a rough voice cried: "Open the door, my pets, it is only mother, and I have brought you each a fine, fresh young cabbage from the market."

But the little goats answered: "No, no, that is not our mother's voice; her tones are low and sweet. We will not let you in; go away, wicked wolf!"

Then the wolf went to a shop and bought a lump of chalk, which he swallowed, so that his voice might sound less harsh and grating; after that he returned to the cottage and knocked at the door once more.

"Open the door, children," he cried; "mother has brought you each a present." His words were soft and low, but, as he spoke, he laid his black paw upon the window-sill, and the little goats saw it, and cried: "You are not our mother; she has pretty white feet. We will not open the door, Mr. Wolf."

Then the wolf ran to the baker. "I have wounded my foot," said he; "pray bind it up for me with a piece of dough."

When the baker had done this, the wolf ran to the miller. "Powder my paw with flour," he said; but the miller hesitated, for he was afraid that the wolf meant mischief to someone. However, the wicked fellow threatened to eat him up if he still refused, so the miller powdered his foot quite white, and the rascal made his way back to the cottage-door.

A third time he called to the little ones: "Open the door: it is I, your mother, and I have brought you something nice from the wood."

"First show your paw," answered the little goats, "so that we may know if you are really our own dear mother."

He laid his paw upon the window-sill, and when they saw that it was white, they thought it must be the old goat, so they opened the door, and in came the wolf. Oh! how frightened they were!

One jumped under the table, another into the bed, a third into the oven, a fourth hid in the kitchen, a fifth in the cupboard, a sixth in the washing-tub, and the youngest in the case of the old grandfather's clock.

But the wolf found them all except the youngest, and made short work of them. One after another he swallowed them, and then, having

had a hearty meal, he went out into the green meadow, laid himself down beneath a tree, and fell fast asleep.

Soon afterwards the old goat came home from the wood.

What a terrible sight she saw! The house-door stood wide open, the chairs and tables lay upside down, the wash-tub was in pieces, and the pillows and sheets were torn from the bed and scattered about the floor. In vain she sought for her dear little ones. Alas! they were nowhere to be found.

One after another she called them by name, but no one answered her, until she came to the youngest. Then a little voice cried—

"Dear mother, I am hidden in the clock case."

The mother opened the door and out jumped the little goat. With sobs and cries she told the sad story of how the wolf had eaten her brothers and sisters, and the poor old goat shed bitter tears for the loss of her pretty darlings.

Sorrowfully she wandered from the house, weeping and wringing her paws as she went, and the little goat ran beside her.

When they came to the meadow they saw the wolf lying beneath the tree, snoring so that the branches shook. They gazed at him from every side, and saw with amazement that something was bobbing up and down inside him. "Ah, me!" said the mother, "can it be possible that my children are still alive after having furnished a supper for that monster?"

She sent the little goat home to fetch scissors, needle, and thread, and then began to cut open the wolf's stomach. No sooner had she made a tiny little slit than a little goat poked out his head, and presently the whole six were hopping about on the soft green grass, and not a bit the worse for their adventure.

How the mother kissed and hugged her darlings! She was quite beside herself with joy.

"Now, my pets," she cried, "make haste and fetch me some stones from the riverside. Whilst the wolf sleeps I will fill his stomach with them, so that he may not miss you when he awakes."

The little goats dragged the heaviest stones they could lift, and placed them inside the wolf, and the mother goat stitched him up as fast as she could, and he never winked an eye until she had finished.

When at length he roused himself, and stood up on his legs, the stones lay heavy on his chest and made him thirsty, so he went to the brook to drink. As he moved the stones began to jingle, and the wolf cried out:—

"This rumbling and grumbling shakes my very bones;
I do believe instead of goats I've swallowed only stones."

He stooped to drink, but the stones were so heavy that he lost his balance and fell headlong into the stream and was drowned.

Then the goat and her seven litttle ones came out of their hiding-places, and danced upon the banks of the stream, singing for joy because the wicked wolf was no more.

THERE WAS ONCE a man who had served bravely in the wars, and when they were ended he received his discharge and three florins, which was all he had to face the world with.

"This is mean treatment!" said he. "But wait a bit; if only I can get hold of the right people, the King shall be made to give me the treasures of the whole kingdom."

So, full of wrath, he went into the forest, where he came across a man who had just uprooted six trees as if they had been cornstalks.

"Wilt thou be my servant and travel with me?" said our hero.

"Yes," replied the man; "but first I must take home these few faggots to my mother," and picking up one of the trees, he twisted it round the other five, and, lifting the bundle on his shoulders, he carried it away.

Then he returned to his master, who said: "We two shall be a match for all the world."

Now, when they had journeyed for a little space they met a huntsman, who was on his knees taking aim with his gun.

Then the master said: "Tell me, huntsman, what it is you are going to shoot."

And the man answered: "Two miles off there is a fly sitting on the branch of an oak-tree, whose left eye I intend to shoot out."

"Come with me!" said the master; "we three shall be a match for all the world."

The huntsman was quite willing, and came with him, and they soon arrived at seven windmills whose sails were whirling round at tremendous speed, although there was not a breath of wind even to stir a leaf on the trees.

Then said the master: "I cannot think what it is that drives the windmills, for there is not the slightest breeze." But going on farther with his servants for about two miles, they saw a man sitting on a tree, puffing out his cheeks and blowing.

"My good fellow, what are you doing up there?"

"Oh!" replied the man, "there are seven windmills two miles from here; just look how I am sending them around."

"Come with me!" cried the master; "we four shall be a match for all the world."

So the blower climbed down and accompanied him, and presently they came upon a man who was standing on one leg, for he had unbuckled the other and it was lying on the ground by his side. Then the master said—

"I suppose you want to make yourself more comfortable while resting?"

"No," said the man; "I am a runner, and in order not to race over the ground too quickly, I have unbuckled my leg, for, if I were to run with both, I should go faster than any bird flies."

"Come with me!" said the master; "we five shall be a match for all the world."

The five comrades all started off together, and soon they met a man who had on a hat, which he wore tilted over one ear.

Then said the master: "Manners, my friend, manners! Don't wear your hat like that, but put it on properly; you look like a simpleton."

"I dare not do it," returned the man, "for, if I did, there would come such a fearful frost that the very birds in the sky would freeze and fall dead upon the ground."

"Come with me!" said the master; "we six shall be a match for all the world."

Then the six companions came to a city where the King had proclaimed that whoever should run in a race with his daughter and be victorious might become her husband, but if he lost the race he would also lose his head.

This was told to our hero, who said: "I will make my servant run for me."

Then the King answered: "Then must thou also forfeit thine own life as well as thy servant's, for both heads must be sacrificed if the race be lost."

When these conditions were agreed upon, and everything was arranged, the master buckled on the runner's other leg, saying: "Now, be as nimble as you can, and don't fail to win!"

Now, the wager was that whoever was the first to bring water from a distant spring should be the winner.

The runner received a pitcher, as did also the King's daughter, and they both began to run at the same moment; but when the Princess had run a little way the runner was quite out of sight, and it seemed as if there had only been a rustling of the wind. In a very short time he had reached the well, so he drew up the water to fill his pitcher and turned back.

But when he was half way home, he was over-

come with fatigue, so he put the pitcher down, stretched himself on the ground, and fell asleep. He made a pillow of a horse's skull, which was lying close by, thinking that, as it was so hard, he would very soon wake up again.

In the meantime, the King's daughter, who was a splendid runner and ran better than many a man, reached the spring and hurried back with her pitcher of water. Suddenly, she saw the runner lying asleep on the wayside; she was overjoyed at this, and exclaimed: "The enemy is given into my hands!" Then, emptying his pitcher, she ran on as fast as she could.

Now, all would have been lost if by great good fortune the huntsman had not been standing on one of the castle towers and seen everything with his sharp eyes.

Said he: "The King's daughter shall be no match for us if I can help it." So, loading his gun, he aimed so true that he shot away the horse's skull from under the runner's head without harming him in the least.

This awakened the runner, who, springing up, saw in a flash that his pitcher had been emptied, and that the King's daughter was already far ahead of him.

However, he did not lose courage, but ran back swiftly to the well, drew up fresh water, filled his pitcher, and was back again full ten minutes sooner than the King's daughter.

"See what I can do," cried he, "when I really use my legs; what I did before could scarcely be called running."

The King was displeased, and so was his daughter, that a common discharged soldier should have won the race; so they consulted with each other how they could rid themselves of him, together with his five comrades.

Then the King said to his daughter: "Do not be afraid, my child, for I have found a way to prevent them coming back."

So he said to the six companions: "You must now eat, drink, and be merry." Saying which, he led them to a room that had an iron floor and iron doors, and even the windows were secured with iron bars.

In this apartment there was a table covered with the most delicious appetising dishes; and the King said: "Now come in and sit down and enjoy yourselves."

Directly they were all inside he had the doors locked and bolted. This done, the King sent for the cook, and commanded him to light a fire underneath the room, until the iron should be red-hot.

The heat soon became so great that the six comrades guessed that the King wished to suffocate them.

But the man with the hat set it straight on his head, and immediately a frost fell on everything, and all the heat vanished, while the very meats on the dishes began to freeze.

When the King believed they had all perished in the fearful heat, he ordered the doors to be opened, and there stood all the six men safe and sound.

They said they would like very much to come out and warm themselves, for the cold had been so intense that the meat had frozen on their plates.

Then the King demanded why the cook had not obeyed his commands.

"He blew the two regiments up into the air."

But the cook pointed to the tremendous fire that was still burning, and the King saw that he could not harm the six comrades in this way.

In despair the King began to cast about in his mind for some other way to rid himself of his unwelcome guests; so he commanded the master to be sent before him.

"If you will give up all claim to my daughter," said he, "you shall have as much gold as you can wish for."

"Indeed, your Majesty," replied the master, "if you will only give me as much as my servant can carry, I will no longer demand your daughter."

This pleased the King very much, and the master said that he would return in fourteen days to take away the gold.

Thereupon the master ordered all the tailors in the kingdom to sew him a sack of such a size that it would take fourteen days to make. When it was finished he sent the strong man who had uprooted trees with the sack on his shoulder to the King.

So the King ordered a ton of gold to be fetched, which it required sixteen men to carry; but the strong man took it up with one hand, and threw it into the sack, saying: "Why don't you bring more at a time? This scarcely covers the bottom of the sack."

So the King sent again and again for all his treasure to be brought, and the strong man threw it all into the sack, which was yet not half full.

"Bring me more!" cried he; "these few crumbs won't fill it."

Therefore they were obliged to bring seven thousand wagons laden with gold to the palace; these the strong man pushed into his sack, together with the oxen which were yoked to the wagons.

At last, when everything that could possibly be found had been put in, he said: "Well, I must finish this; at any rate, if the sack isn't quite full, it's all the easier to tie it up."

Saying which, he lifted it on to his back and went off with his companions.

When the King saw how this one man was carrying off all the wealth of his kingdom, he flew into a great passion and ordered all his cavalry out to pursue the six comrades, commanding them to take away the sack from the strong man.

The two regiments soon overtook the six men and shouted to them—

"Halt! You are our prisoners. Put down that sack of gold, or we will cut you all to pieces."

"What is it you are saying?" asked the blower coolly. "We are your prisoners? Aha! First you must have a little dance together up in the air!"

Then he puffed out his cheeks and blew the two regiments up into the sky. Some were blown away on one side of the mountains, and some disappeared in the blue distance on the other.

A sergeant cried for mercy: he had nine wounds, and was a brave fellow and did not deserve such a disgrace. So the blower blew gently after him, which brought him back to the ground without hurting him.

"Now go home," said the blower, "and tell the King that he may send any number of horsemen after us, but I will blow them all into the air."

When the King received this message, he said: "Let the fellows go! they will meet with their deserts."

So the six comrades brought home the wealth of the kingdom, which they divided, and lived happily to the end of their days.

JACK and the BEANSTALK

ONCE upon a time there lived a poor widow who had an only son named Jack. She was very poor, for times had been hard, and Jack was too young to work. Almost all the furniture of the little cottage had been sold to buy bread, until at last there was nothing left worth selling. Only the good cow Milky White, remained, and she gave milk every morning, which they took to market and sold. But one sad day Milky White gave no milk, and then things looked bad indeed.

"Never mind, mother," said Jack. "We must sell Milky White. Trust me to make a good bargain," and away he went to the market.

For some time he went along very sadly, but after a little he quite recovered his spirits. "I may as well ride as walk," said he; so instead of leading the cow by the halter, he jumped on her back, and so he went whistling along until he met a butcher.

"Good morning," said the butcher.

"Good morning, sir," answered Jack.

"Where are you going?" said the butcher.

"I am going to market to sell the cow."

"It's lucky I met you," said the butcher. "You may save yourself the trouble of going so far."

With this, he put his hand in his pocket, and pulled out five curious-looking beans. "What do you call these?" he said.

"Beans," said Jack.

"Yes," said he, "beans, but they're the most wonderful beans that ever were known. If you plant them overnight, by the next morning they'll grow up and reach the sky. But to save you the trouble of going all the way to market, I don't mind exchanging them for that cow of yours."

"Done?" cried Jack, who was so delighted with the bargain that he ran all the way home to tell his mother how lucky he had been.

But oh! how disappointed the poor widow was.

"Off to bed with you!" she cried; and she was so angry that she threw the beans out of the window into the garden. So poor Jack went to bed without any supper, and cried himself to sleep.

When he woke up the next morning, the room was almost dark; and Jack jumped out of bed and ran to the window to see what was the matter. The sun was shining brightly outside, but from the ground right up beside his window there was growing a great beanstalk, which stretched up and up as far as he could see, into the sky.

"I'll just see where it leads to," thought Jack, and with that he stepped out of the window on to the beanstalk, and began to climb upwards. He climbed up and up, till after a time his mother's cottage looked like a mere speck below, but at last the stalk ended, and he found himself in a new and beautiful country. A little way off there was a great castle, with a broad road leading straight up to the front gate. But what

most surprised Jack was to find a beautiful maiden suddenly standing beside him.

"Good morning, ma'am," said he, very politely.

"Good morning, Jack," said she; and Jack was more surprised than ever, for he could not imagine how she had learned his name. But he soon found that she knew a great deal more about him than his name; for she told him how, when he was quite a little baby, his father, a gallant knight, had been slain by the giant who lived in yonder castle, and how his mother, in order to save Jack, had been obliged to promise never to tell the secret.

"All that the giant has is yours," she said, and then disappeared quite as suddenly as she came.

"She must be a fairy," thought Jack.

As he drew near to the castle, he saw the giant's wife standing at the door.

"If you please, ma'am," said he, "would you kindly give me some breakfast? I have had nothing to eat since yesterday."

Now, the giant's wife, although very big and very ugly, had a kind heart, so she said: "Very well, little man, come in; but you must be quick about it, for if my husband, the giant, finds you here, he will eat you up, bones and all."

So in Jack went, and the giant's wife gave him a good breakfast, but before he had half finished it there came a terrible knock at the front door, which seemed to shake even the thick walls of the castle.

"Dearie me, that is my husband!" said the giantess, in a terrible fright; "we must hide you somehow," and she lifted Jack up and popped him into the empty copper.

No sooner had the giant's wife opened the door than her husband roared out:—

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

It's a boy, I'm sure it is," he continued. "Where is he? I'll have him for my breakfast."

"Nonsense!" said his wife; "you must be mistaken. It's the ox's hide you smell." So he sat down, and ate up the greater part of the ox.

Jack and the Beanstalk.

When he had finished he said: "Wife, bring me my money-bags." So his wife brought him two bags full of gold, and the giant began to count his money. But he was so sleepy that his head soon began to nod, and then he began to snore, like the rumbling of thunder. Then Jack crept out, snatched up the two bags, and though the giant's dog barked loudly, he made his way down the beanstalk back to the cottage before the giant awoke.

Jack and his mother were now quite rich; but it occurred to him one day that he would like to see how matters were going on at the giant's castle. So while his mother was away at market, he climbed up, and up, and up, and up, until he got to the top of the beanstalk again.

The giantess was standing at the door, just as before, but she did not know Jack, who, of course, was more finely dressed than on his first visit. "If you please, ma'am," said he, "will you give me some breakfast?"

"Run away," said she, "or my husband the giant will eat you up, bones and all. The last boy who came here stole two bags of gold—off with you!" But the giantess had a kind heart, and after a time she allowed Jack to come into the kitchen, where she set before him enough breakfast to last him a week. Scarcely had he begun to eat than there was a great rumbling like an earthquake, and the giantess had only time to bundle Jack into the oven when in came the giant. No sooner was he inside the room than he roared:—

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

But his wife told him he was mistaken, and after breakfasting off a roasted bullock, just as it if were a lark, he called out: "Wife, bring the little brown hen!" The giantess went out and brought in a little brown hen, which she placed on the table.

"Lay!" said the giant; and the hen at once laid a golden egg. "Lay!" said the giant a second time; and she laid another golden egg. "Lay!" said the giant a third time; and she laid a third golden egg.

"That will do for to-day," said he, and stretched himself out to go to sleep. As soon as he began to snore, Jack crept out of the oven, went on tiptoe to the table, and, snatching up the little brown hen, made a dash for the door. Then the hen began to cackle, and the giant began to wake up;

but before he was quite awake, Jack had escaped from the castle, and climbing as fast as he could down the beanstalk, got safe home to his mother's cottage.

The little brown hen laid so many golden eggs that Jack and his mother had now more money than they could spend. But Jack was always thinking about the beanstalk; and one day he crept out of the window again, and climbed up, and up, and up, and up, until he reached the top.

This time, you may be sure, he was careful not to be seen; so he crept round to the back of the castle, and when the giant's wife went out he slipped into the kitchen and hid himself in the oven. In came the giant, roaring louder than ever:—

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

But the giantess was quite sure that she had seen no little boys that morning; and after grumbling a great deal, the giant sat down to breakfast. Even then he was not quite satisfied, for every now and again he would say:—

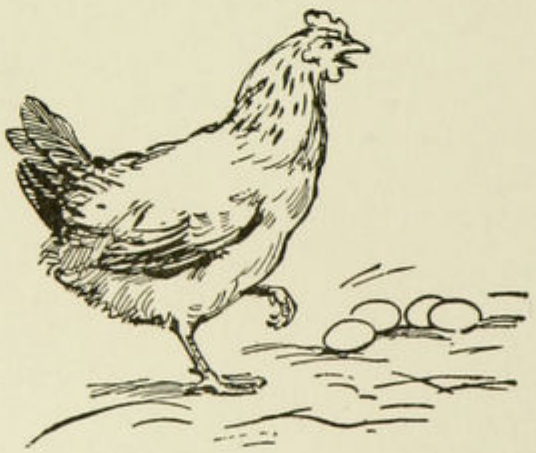
"Fee, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman;"

and once he got up and looked in the copper. But, of course, Jack was in the oven all the time!

When the giant had finished, he called out: "Wife, bring me the golden harp!" So she brought in the golden harp, and placed it on the table. "Sing!" said the giant; and the harp at once began to sing the most beautiful songs that ever were heard. It sang so sweetly that the giant soon fell fast asleep; and then Jack crept quietly out of the oven,

and going on tiptoe to the table, seized hold of the golden harp. But the harp at once called out: "Master! Master!" and the giant woke up just in time to catch sight of Jack running out of the kitchen-door.

With a fearful roar, he seized his oak-tree club, and dashed after Jack, who held the harp tight, and ran faster than he had ever run before. The giant, brandishing his club, taking terribly long strides, gained on Jack at every instant, and he would have been caught if the giant hadn't slipped over a boulder. Before he could pick himself up, Jack began to climb down the beanstalk, and when the giant arrived at the edge he was nearly half-way to the cottage. The giant began to climb down too; but as soon as Jack saw him coming, he called out: "Mother, bring me an axe!" and the widow hurried out with a chopper. Jack had no sooner reached the ground than he cut the beanstalk right in two. Down came the giant with a terrible crash, and that, you may be sure, was the end of him. What became of the giantess and the castle nobody knows. But Jack and his mother grew very rich, and lived happy ever after.



JACK had served his master seven long years; so he said to him: "Master, my time is out, and my wish is to return home to my mother: give me, if you please, my reward."

The master answered: "Thou hast truly and faithfully served me; as the service was, so shall the reward be." And he gave Jack a piece of gold as big as his head.

Jack pulled out his handkerchief, wrapped up the lump of gold in it, and, throwing it over his shoulder, made his way home. As he went on his way, always putting one foot before the other, he met a man galloping briskly along on a fine horse.

"Ah!" said Jack, quite aloud, "what a capital thing it is to ride! There you sit as comfortably as in a chair, kicking against no stones,

saving your shoe-leather, and getting to your journey's end almost without knowing it!"

The horseman, who heard this, pulled up and cried, "Hullo, Jack, why do you trudge on foot?"

"Because I must," answered he; "for I have this big lump to carry home. It is real gold, you know; but all the same, I can scarcely hold up my head, it weighs so terribly on my shoulders."

"I'll tell you what," said the horseman: "We'll just exchange. I'll give you my horse and you give me your lump of gold."

"With all my heart!" said Jack. "But I'll warn you, you'll have a job to carry it."

The horseman dismounted, took the gold, and helped Jack up; and, giving the bridle into his hand, said: "If you want him to go at full speed, you must cluck with your tongue and cry 'C'ck! c'ck!'"

Jack was heartily delighted, as he sat on his horse and rode gaily along.

After a while he fancied he would like to go faster, so he began to cluck with his tongue and cry "C'ck! c'ck!" The horse broke into a smart trot, and before Jack was aware he was thrown off—splash!—into a ditch which divided the highway from the fields, and there he lay. The horse, too, would have run away had it not been stopped by a peasant, as he came along the road, driving his cow before him.

Jack pulled himself together and got upon his legs again. He felt very downcast, and said to the peasant: "It's a poor joke, that riding, especially when one lights upon such a brute as this, which kicks and throws one off so that one comes near to breaking one's neck. You don't catch me on his back again. Now, there's more sense in a cow like yours, behind which you can walk in peace and quietness, besides having your butter, milk, and cheese every morning for certain. What would I not give for such a cow!"

"Well," said the peasant, "if it would give you so much pleasure, I will exchange my cow for your horse."

Jack gladly consented, and the peasant

flung himself on the horse and rode quickly off.

Jack drove the cow peacefully along, thinking: "What a lucky fellow I am! I have just to get a bit of bread (and that isn't a difficult matter) and then, as often as I like, I can eat my butter and cheese with it. If I am thirsty, I just milk my cow and drink. What more could I desire?"

When he came to an inn, he made a stop, and in his great joy ate all the food he had with him right up, both dinner and supper. With his two last farthings, he bought himself half a glass of beer. Then he drove his cow towards his mother's village.

As the morning went on, the more oppressive the heat became, and Jack found himself upon a heath some three miles long.

Then he felt so hot that his tongue was parched with thirst. "This is soon cured," thought Jack. "I have only to milk my cow, drink, and refresh myself."

He tied the cow to a withered tree, and as he had no pitcher he placed his leathern cup underneath her; but in spite of all his trouble not a drop of milk could be got.

And he went to work so clumsily that the impatient brute gave him such a kick with her hind leg that he was knocked over and quite dazed, and for a long time did not know where he was.

Luckily a butcher came just then, wheeling a young pig in a barrow.

"What kind of joke is this?" cried he, helping our friend Jack to rise.

Jack told him what had happened. The butcher passed him his bottle and said—

"There, drink and revive yourself. That cow will never give any milk; she is an old animal and, at the best, is only fit for the plough or the butcher."

"Oho!" said Jack, running his fingers through his hair. "Who would have thought it? It is all right indeed when you can slaughter such a beast in your own house. But I don't think much of cow's flesh; it is not tender enough. Now, if one had a young pig! That would taste far different, to say nothing of the sausages!"

"Listen, Jack," said the butcher. "For your sake, I will exchange, and let you have my pig for your cow."

"May Heaven reward your friendship!" said Jack, and at once gave him the cow.

The man untied the pig from the wheelbarrow, and gave the rope with which it was bound into Jack's hand.

Jack marched on, thinking: "What a lucky fellow I am. As soon as anything goes wrong, something turns up and all's right again."

Just then, up came a youth, carrying a fine white goose under his arm. They were friends, and Jack began to talk about his luck and how he always came off best in his exchanges. The youth told him he was taking the goose to a christening feast.

"Just hold it," he continued, seizing it by the wings, "and feel how heavy it is: yet it was only fattened for eight weeks. It will be a rich morsel when roasted."

"Yes," said Jack, weighing it with his hand, "it is certainly heavy, but my pig is by no means to be despised."

Meanwhile the lad was looking thoughtfully around, shaking his head. "Listen," he said, "I don't think it's all right about your pig. In the village I have just come through, one has lately been stolen from the magistrate's own sty. I fear it is the one you have. They have sent people out, and it would be a bad business if they found you with the pig. The least they would do would be to throw you into gaol."

Our friend Jack was downcast. "Alas," he cried, "help me in my need! You know your way here better than I. Take my pig then, and give me your goose."

"I shall be running great risks," said the youth, "but at least I will prevent you getting into trouble."

He took the rope in his hand and drove the pig quickly away down a by-path, and Jack went on relieved of his sorrow, towards home, with the goose under his arm.

"Jack went on,
with the goose
under his arm."

"What a lucky fellow I am!" he said to himself. "First, I shall have a good roast; then there is the quantity of dripping that will fall out, which will keep me in bread-and-dripping for a quarter of a year; and lastly, the splendid white feathers, with which I will have my pillow stuffed; then I shall fall asleep without rocking. How glad my mother will be!"

When he was at length come to the village, there stood in the street a scissors-grinder with his truck. His wheel hummed, and he sang the while :—

"My wheel I turn, and the scissors I grind,
And my cloak hangs flowing free in the wind."

Jack remained standing, and watched him; at length he spoke to him, and said—

"You must be doing well since you are so merry over your grinding."

"Yes," said the scissors-grinder; "the work has gold at the bottom of it. A proper scissors-grinder is the sort of man who, whenever he puts his hand in his pocket, finds money there. But where have you bought that fine goose?"

"I did not buy it, but exchanged it for my pig."

"And the pig?"

"I obtained him for a cow."

"And the cow?"

"I had her for a horse."

"And the horse?"

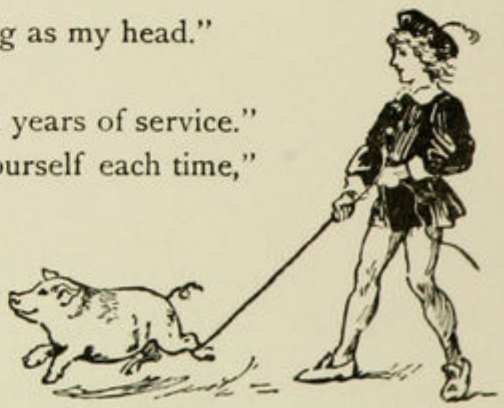
"For him I gave a lump of gold as big as my head."

"And the gold?"

"Why, that was my reward for seven years of service."

"You have certainly done well for yourself each time," said the scissors-grinder. "If you could only hear money rattling in your pocket every time you got up, your fortune would be made."

"How shall I set about it?" said Jack.



"You must become a grinder, like me. All you want is a grindstone: the rest comes of itself. I have one which is a little damaged indeed, but for which I would ask nothing more than your goose; would that suit you?"

"How can you ask me?" answered Jack. "I shall be the luckiest fellow on earth. If I have money as often as I feel in my pocket, what else shall I have to care about?" And he handed over the goose, and took the grindstone in receipt.

"Now, said the grinder, lifting up an ordinary heavy field-stone, which lay beside him. "There you have a capital stone, which will be just the thing to hammer your old nails straight upon. Take it and lift it up carefully."

Jack raised the stone and marched on with a joyful heart, his eyes shining with pleasure.

"I must have been born lucky," he cried out. "All that I desire comes to me, as to a Sunday-child."

Meanwhile, having been on his legs since daybreak, he began to feel tired; besides which he was tormented by hunger, for he had eaten up all his provision in his joy over the exchange of the cow.

At length he could only proceed with great trouble and must needs stop every minute; the stones, too, crushed him terribly. Then he could not conceal the thought: "How nice it would be now to have nothing to carry!"

Like a snail he crept up to a well, wishing to rest himself and enjoy a refreshing drink.

In order not to spoil the stones in setting them down, he laid them carefully on the ground one beside the other, and bent himself down to drink, but by an accident he gave them a little push, and both stones went splashing down.

Jack, when he saw them sinking in the depths of the well, jumped

up with joy, kneeled down and thanked God, with tears in his eyes, that He had shown him this grace and, without troubling him to think what to do with them, had relieved him of the heavy stones which would have been such a hindrance to him.

"There is no man under the sun," he cried out, "so lucky as I."

With a bright heart and free from all care, he sprang upon his way, until he was home at his mother's.

Little Red Riding Hood

IN a great wide forest, full of beautiful trees, and green glades, and thorny thickets, there lived a long time ago a wood-cutter and his wife, who had only one child, a little girl. She was so pretty, and so good, that the sun seemed to shine more brightly when its light fell upon her rosy little face, and the birds would seem to sing more sweetly when she was passing by.

Her real name was Maisie; but the neighbours round about all called her "Little Red Riding-Hood," because of a scarlet riding-hood and cloak that her kind old grandmother had made for her, and which she nearly always wore.

She was a happy, merry little child, with a smile and a gentle word for everybody, and so you may easily believe that everybody loved her, and was glad to catch a glimpse of her golden curls and her scarlet cloak as she tripped along, singing, under the green boughs.

Now, this, let me tell you before I forget, was at the time when all the

birds and beasts, or very nearly all, could speak just as well as you or I; and nobody was surprised to hear them talk, as I suppose one would be nowadays.

Well, as I was saying, Little Red Riding-Hood lived with her parents in a little white cottage with a green door and a thatched roof, and red and white roses climbing all over the walls, and even putting their pretty heads in at the latticed windows, to peep at the child who was so like them.

It was on a bright spring morning early in May, when little Red Riding-Hood had just finished putting away the breakfast-cups, that her mother came bustling in from the dairy.

"Here's a to-do," she said. "Farmer Hodge has this very minute told me that he hears your Grannie isn't quite well, and I can't leave the cheese making this morning for love or money! Do you go, my dear, and find out how she is—and—stay—take her this little pot of sweet fresh butter, and these two new-laid eggs, and these nice tasty little pasties. Maybe they'll tempt her to eat a bit. Here's your basket, and don't be too long away, honey."

So little Red Riding-Hood pulled her hood over her curls, and set off down the sunny green slope, with her basket in her hand, at a brisk pace. But as she got deeper into the forest, she walked more slowly. Everything was so beautiful; the trees waved their huge arms over her, the birds were calling to one another from the thorns all white with blossom, and the child began singing as she went, she could not have told why, but I think it was because the beautiful world made her feel glad.

The path wound along through the trees, and, as it grew wider after turning a corner, Red Riding-Hood saw that she was likely to have company on her walk; for, where two cross-paths divided, there sat a big grey Wolf licking his long paws, and looking sharply about him. And "Good morning, Red Riding-Hood," said he.

"Good morning, Mr. Wolf," she answered.

"And where may you be going, sweet lass?" said the Wolf, as he walked beside her.

"Oh, Grannie isn't very well, and mother cannot leave the cheese-making this morning, and so I'm taking her some little dainties in my basket, and I am to see how she is, and tell mother when I get back," said the child, with a smile.

Red Riding-Hood and the Wolf.

"And," said the Wolf, "where does your good Grannie live, little lady?"

"Through the copse, and down the hollow, and over the bridge, and three meadows after the mill."

"Does she indeed?" cried he. "Why, then, I do believe she is a very dear old friend of mine, whom I have not seen for years and years. Now, I'll tell you what we'll do, you and I: I will go by this way, and you shall take that, and whoever gets there first shall be the winner of the game."

So the Wolf trotted off one way, and Red Riding-Hood went the other; and I am sorry to say that she lingered and loitered more than she ought to have done on the road.

Well, what with one thing and another, the sun was right up in the very mid-most middle of the sky when she crossed the last meadow from the mill and came in sight of her grandmother's cottage, and the big lilac-bushes that grew by the garden gate.

"Oh! dear, how I must have lingered!" said the child, when she saw how high the sun had climbed since she set out on her journey; and, pattering up the garden path, she tapped at the cottage door.

"Who's there?" said a very gruff kind of voice from inside.

"It's only I, Grannie dear, your little Red Riding-Hood, with some goodies for you in my basket," answered the child.

"Then pull the bobbin," cried the voice, "and the latch will go up."

"What a dreadful cold poor Grannie must have, to be sure, to make her so hoarse," thought the child. Then she pulled the bobbin, and the latch went up, and Red Riding-Hood pushed open the door, and stepped inside the cottage.

It seemed very dark in there after the bright sunlight outside, and all Red Riding-Hood could see was that the window-curtains and the bed-curtains were still drawn, and her grandmother seemed to be lying in bed with the bed-clothes pulled almost over her head, and her great white-frilled nightcap nearly hiding her face.

Now, you and I have guessed by this time, although poor Red Riding-Hood never even thought of such a thing, that it was not her Grannie at all, but the wicked Wolf, who had hurried to the cottage and put on Grannie's nightcap and popped into her bed, to pretend that he was Grannie herself.

And where was Grannie all this time, you will say? Well, we shall see presently.

"Come and sit down beside my bed, dearie," wheezed the Wolf, "and let us have a little chat." Then the Wolf stretched out his large hairy paws and began to unfasten the basket.

"Oh!" said Red Riding-Hood, "what great arms you have, Grannie!"

"All the better to hug you with," said the Wolf.

"And what great rough ears you have, Grannie!"

"All the better to hear you with, my little dear."

"And your eyes, Grannie; what great yellow eyes you have!"

"All the better to see you with, my pet," grinned the Wolf.

"And oh! oh! Grannie," cried the child, in a sad fright, "what great sharp teeth you have!"

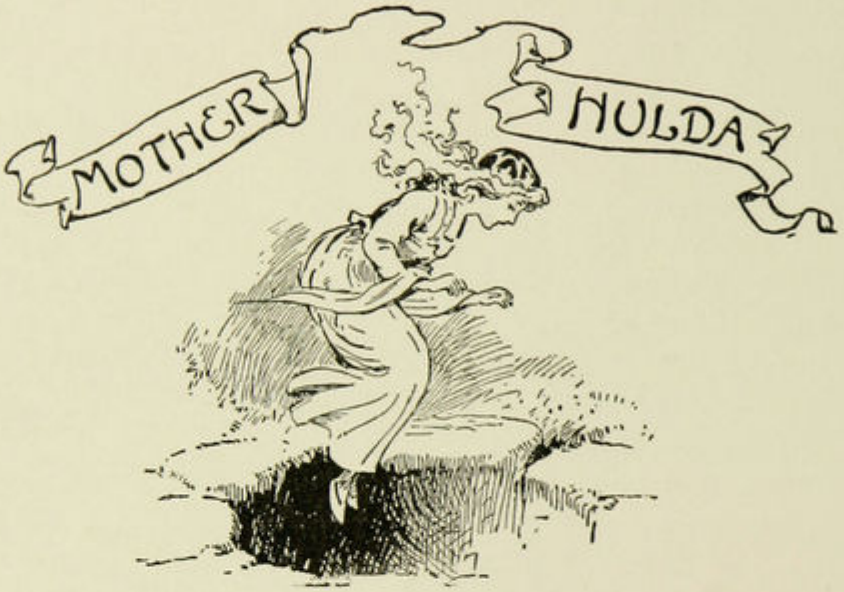
"All the better to eat you with!" growled the Wolf, springing up suddenly at Red Riding-Hood. But just at that very moment the door flew open, and two tall wood-cutters rushed in with their heavy axes, and

killed the wicked Wolf in far less time than it takes me to tell you about it.

"But where is Grannie?" asked Little Red Riding-Hood, when she had thanked the brave wood-cutters. "Oh! where can poor Grannie be? Can the cruel Wolf have eaten her up?"

And she began to cry and sob bitterly—when, who should walk in but Grannie herself, as large as life, and as hearty as ever, with her marketing-basket on her arm! For it was another old dame in the village who was not very well, and Grannie had been down to visit her and give her some of her own famous herb-tea.

So everything turned out right in the end, and all lived happy ever after; but I promise you that little Red Riding-Hood never made friends with a Wolf again!



THERE WAS ONCE a widow who had two daughters; one was as pretty as could be, and worked hard for her living; but the other was both ugly and idle.

Now, it chanced that the widow loved the ugly daughter better than the pretty one, because she was her very own, whilst the pretty maiden was only her step-daughter. So, besides doing all the work of the house, the poor girl was sent every day to sit beside the village well and spin a bundle of flax into yarn. Sometimes she had to work so hard that her poor little fingers were covered with blood; and one day, when this happened, and a few drops of blood had fallen upon the spindle, she bent over the well to wash it clean again, and dropped it in.

She ran weeping to her step-mother, to tell her what had happened, and the angry woman scolded her without mercy. "As you have let the spindle fall in," said she, "you must just go and fetch it out again."

So the poor little maid went back to the well, and in her sorrow and despair, she jumped straight into it, to see if she could find her spindle. At once she lost all consciousness, and when she came to herself again

she found that she had fallen into a beautiful meadow, decked with every sweet and lovely flower, and where the sun was shining brightly.

As she strolled along the meadow path, she came to an oven full of bread. "Take us out! take us out! or we shall burn," cried the loaves; "we are just baked enough."

So the girl opened the oven door and took out the bread, and then went on her way again. Presently she came to an apple-tree, weighed down with fruit, and it called to her as she passed: "Shake me! shake me! My apples are all ripe." So she shook the apple-tree till the apples fell like rain around her. When there were no more left upon the tree, she stacked them in heaps, and went her way.

At length she reached a little house, where an old woman was looking out of the window. The girl was afraid of her great big teeth, and would have run away, but she called to her: "Do not be afraid of me, dear child; I am Mother Hulda. Stay with me, and help me with the house work. If you are a good girl, all shall go well with you. But you must take great pains to shake up my bed and make the feathers fly, or else there will be no snow to cover up the earth."

The old woman spoke so kindly that the girl took courage and agreed to stay with her.

She worked as hard as she was able, and pleased the old woman in everything she did. She shook the bed with such a will that the feathers flew like snow-flakes. So she led a happy life, with never an unkind word to grieve her, and had boiled and baked meats to eat every day. Time passed on, and the little maid grew pale and sad, though she herself could not tell at first what ailed her. At length

she thought it must be home-sickness, for, although she was treated a thousand times better than ever she had been at home, she had a great longing to go back again. So she went to the old woman and told her how she felt. "I have been very happy here," she said; "but I have such a longing to see my own people once again that I can stay here no longer."

"It is right you should wish to go home, my child," answered Mother Hulda. "You have served me faithfully all this long time, so I will see that you have a safe journey back."

She took the girl by the hand and led her to a great gate, which stood wide open. As soon as she passed through, a shower of golden rain fell and covered her with glittering gold from head to foot, so that she looked as though she were clad in a golden mantle. "That is my gift to you, because you have been a good, hard-working girl," said Mother Hulda, and then gave her as well the spindle which she had let fall into the well so long ago.

Immediately afterwards the gate shut with a clang, and the girl found herself back in the world once more, and quite near to her mother's house. As she entered the courtyard, the cock began to crow!—

"Cock-a-doodle-doo-doo-doo!
The golden girl's come back to you!"

Then the little maid went in to her mother and sister, who made a great fuss of her, now that she had come home covered with gold.

She told them all that had happened, and when the mother heard how her pretty daughter had come by her fortune, she was anxious that her ugly daughter should have the same good luck. So she sent her to sit by the side of the well, and put a spindle into her hand. The lazy girl had never pricked her fingers with spinning, but she thrust her hand into a thorn-bush, so that it might look as though she had.

Then she threw the spindle into the well, and jumped in after it.

She fell, just as her sister had done, into a beautiful flowery meadow, and followed the same path.

When she came to the oven, the bread cried out as before: "Take us out, or we shall burn. We are just baked enough."

The lazy girl answered: "I am not going to soil my hands for you."

Soon she came to the apple-tree. "Shake me! shake me! my apples are all ripe," it cried.

But the girl tossed her head and went on her way. "If I were to shake you," she said scornfully, "I might get a bump on my head from one of you for my pains."

When she reached Mother Hulda's house, she saw her looking out of the window, but was not in the least afraid of her, because she had heard beforehand of her large teeth. She engaged herself to the old woman, and at first things went very well. She remembered the gold she would receive at the end of her service, and did her work as well as she was able.

But very soon she grew lazy, and would not get up in the mornings. Then, too, she neglected Mother Hulda's bed shamefully, and scarcely shook it at all, so that there was not a feather to be seen. So her mistress soon tired of her, and told her to go home.

Miss Lazybones was delighted, for she thought the time had now come for the shower of gold, but when Mother Hulda led her beneath the great gateway, instead of gold there fell a shower of pitch. "This is the reward for your services," said the old woman, and banged the door behind the idle girl.

And so, when she reached home, covered with pitch, and as black as a sweep, the cock perched on the wall beside the well, began to crow:—

"Cock-a-doodle-doo-doo-doo!
Your dirty girl's come back to you."

And dirty the girl remained all the days of her life, for, try as much as she would, she could never wash the pitch off again.

The Ragamuffins

THE cock said to the little hen: "The nuts are getting ripe, wifie, so let us make a little picnic to the hill where they grow, and have a nice feast before the squirrels have eaten them all."

The little hen was delighted. "We will have fine fun together," she said, and away they went, arm in arm, to the place where the nuts grew. The day was fine, and they enjoyed themselves so much that they stayed there until night began to fall, and then they were so tired that they felt they really could not walk home. So the cock began to build a carriage of nutshells.

When it was finished, the little hen seated herself in it and told the cock to harness himself to the carriage and take her home.

"Indeed, no!" answered the cock, "I am as tired as you, and I have no mind to draw you, madam. Your coachman I will willingly be, and sit upon the box, but more I will not do."

So they squabbled with each other, until a duck came waddling by.

"Hullo! you thieves!" cried she, "what are you doing on my nut-hill? Wait a minute, and I'll teach you to keep away in future."

She flew at the cock with wings outspread, but the plucky little fellow met her with equal fury, and after a time the duck found she was getting the worst of it, and had to beg for mercy. So, as a punishment, she was made to harness herself to the carriage. The cock seated himself upon the box, cracked his whip, and away they went like the wind.

Before they had gone far, they met a couple of foot passengers—a pin and a needle. They called to the cock to stop, and asked if he and his wife would give them a lift, as they were too tired to go another step, and the roads were too muddy to make a comfortable resting-place. They said that they had stayed at the Tailor's Inn for refreshment, and had not noticed how quickly the time was passing, and how late they were.

When the cock saw what thin little folks they were, he bade them get inside the carriage, but made them promise on no account to crush his wife or tread on her toes.

Late that night they came to an inn, at which they alighted, for they felt sure that they would get no farther before morning. The duck was an unsteady steed, and besides shaking the carriage violently from side to side, complained terribly of pains in her feet, for she was not a good walker.

But the host did not much like the appearance of the travellers, and made all sorts of excuses to get rid of them.

However, the cock spoke so persuasively, promising him the egg which his wife had laid coming along, as well as that of the duck, which, he said, laid an egg every day, that at least he consented to let the company of ragamuffins stay one night.

So they set to work to enjoy themselves, ordered the best of food and drink, and passed the night in comfortable beds.

As soon as morning began to dawn, the cock awakened the hen, pecked a hole in the egg, and together they ate it up and threw the shell upon the hearth.

Then they went to the needle, which was still asleep, picked it up by the eye, and stuck it in the seat of the host's chair; the pin they hid in the poor man's towel; and after that they flew away, over hedge, ditch, and field, as fast as ever they could.

The duck, who had slept in the courtyard all night, heard the cock and the hen fluttering overhead, and waddled away well pleased to the stream, splashed in and swam away, far more quickly than she had drawn the carriage.

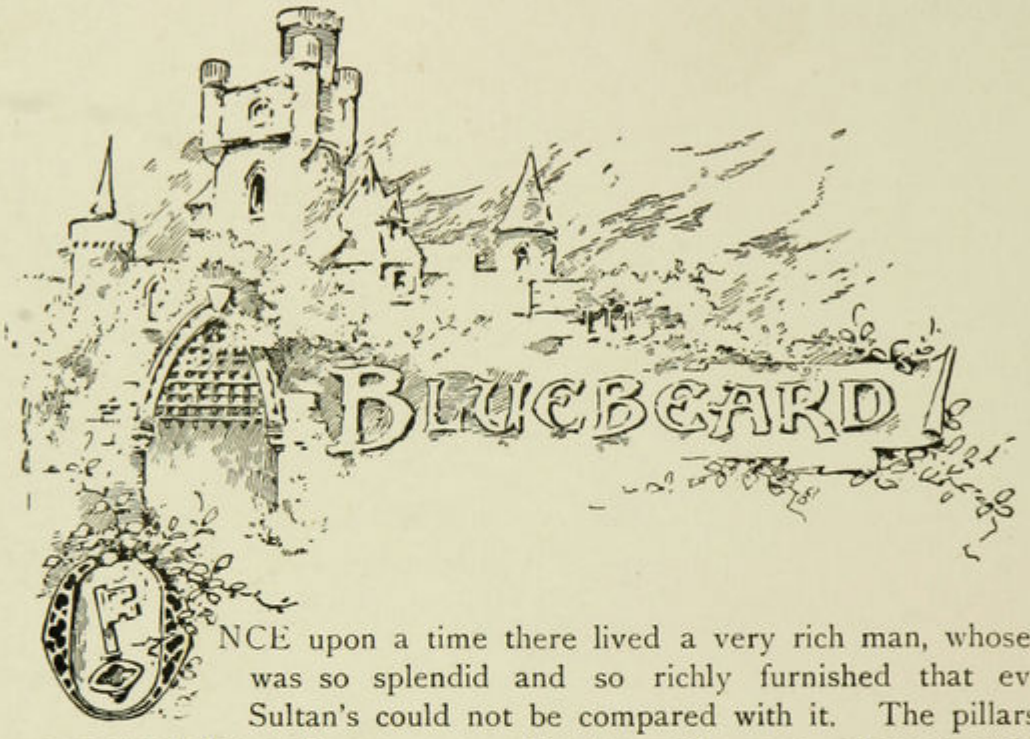
Two hours later, the host got up, washed himself, and took the towel to dry himself with, when the pin scratched him in the face and made a red scar from ear to ear.

He went down to the kitchen, and stooped over the hearth to light his pipe. At once the egg-shells flew up into his face.

"Everything seems to fly at my head this morning," he said, quite crossly, and sat down in the old grandfather's chair. With a cry of pain he sprang up as though he had been shot.

He was now thoroughly angry, but happening to remember the guests who had arrived the night before, he went to see how they had slept. But they had disappeared!

So the host made a vow that never again would he harbour a troop of ragamuffins, who ate folk out of house and home, paid nothing, and played one such shabby tricks into the bargain.



ONCE upon a time there lived a very rich man, whose palace was so splendid and so richly furnished that even the Sultan's could not be compared with it. The pillars which supported the roof were pure gold, the walls were adorned with every kind of curious and antique weapon, the hilts and scabbards of which shone and sparkled with a thousand gems, and the curtains and hangings were of the richest and softest silk.

Near to this beautiful palace lived a widow lady and her two daughters. The mother often looked with longing eyes towards her neighbour's house, and sighed as she thought of her children's obstinacy in refusing to become the mistress of such a magnificent mansion. For the rich man had made offers of marriage to both the pretty maidens in turn, but neither Fatima nor Anne would consent to become his wife.

The fact of the matter was that the rich man unfortunately had a bright blue beard, and this made him so extremely ugly that they could not bear to look at him. Added to this, Bluebeard had been married several times already, and no one quite knew what had become of his wives, though he made all sorts of excuses to account for their disappearance.

One day Bluebeard decided to give a series of entertainments

at one of his country mansions. Fatima and her mother and sister were invited to spend a week there, in company with many other ladies and young people; and so no sooner did they set foot in the house than they were loaded with gifts of the most costly description. At meals they were served with the most delicious foods, and dancing and music were provided for their amusement.

Before many days had passed, Fatima began to think that the beard she had imagined to be so ugly was not so *very* blue after all; and when the end of the week came, she decided that, as her host was so kind and polite, it would be a pity to refuse to become his wife on account of such a mere trifle as a blue beard.

Shortly after their return home, Fatima and Bluebeard were married, and at first everything went well. A month passed away, and one morning Bluebeard told his wife that he had received some news which would oblige him to leave her for a few weeks.

He kissed her affectionately, and, giving her the keys of the whole castle, bade her amuse herself during his absence in any way she pleased. He showed her the keys which opened the treasure-chests and wardrobes; then, pointing to a small key of polished steel, he said—

"I forbid you to use that key; it opens the door of the little closet at the end of the long gallery. Go where you will, do what you please, but remember that I have forbidden you to go near that room!"

Fatima promised faithfully to obey his orders, watched him step into his chariot, and stood waving her hand to him from the palace gates as he drove away. Scarcely was the carriage out of sight than Fatima began to wonder what could possibly lie hidden behind the closet door. However, she had little time to think about it, for the guests who had been invited to keep her company during her husband's absence began to arrive, and for some time she was so busy entertaining them that she did not think about the keys. But presently, looking for the key of one of the great treasure-chests, something seemed to burn her hand.

It was the key of the little closet at the end of the long gallery.

Her guests were busy admiring the beautiful ornaments and dresses that Bluebeard had presented to his pretty bride; so she stole softly from the room, ran like a hare down the narrow passage, and fitted the key into the lock. For a moment she paused, remembering her husband's command, but her curiosity was too much for her; she turned the key, and

entered the room. She uttered a cry of horror, and the key fell from her trembling hand, for the sight which met her wondering gaze froze the blood in her veins. Upon the floor lay the bodies of all the lovely ladies Bluebeard had married, and who had disappeared so mysteriously! Their heads were severed from their bodies, and hung in a row upon the wall!!

With a sinking heart, and cheeks as white as snow, Fatima returned to her guests; but she was too terrified to attend to their comfort or to attempt to entertain them; so one by one they bade their hostess good-bye, and went home, until at last there was no one left with her except her sister Anne.

It was then that Fatima noticed a spot of blood upon the fatal key! She wiped it carefully, but the spot remained; then she washed it and scoured it with sand; but it was all in vain, for it was a fairy key, and as fast as she washed away the blood on one side it appeared on the other.

Early the next evening, Bluebeard unexpectedly returned. He had met a horseman by the way, he said, who had told him that the "business" had already been settled, so that it was no longer necessary for him to continue his journey.

Fatima tried to welcome her husband with every appearance of pleasure, but all the time she was dreading the moment when he would ask for the keys. This he did not do until the following morning, and then she gave them to him with a hand which shook so terribly that Bluebeard easily guessed what had happened. "How is it that you have not brought me the key of the little closet?" he asked sternly.

"I must have left it upstairs," answered the poor girl.

"Bring it to me at once!" said Bluebeard, and Fatima was forced to go upstairs and make a pretence of looking for the key, which was hidden in her pocket the whole time.

At last Bluebeard became so angry that she was obliged to give him the key, and he at once demanded the cause of the stain upon it.

"I do not know!" faltered Fatima.

"But *I* know," thundered her lord. "You have disobeyed my commands and have visited the room which I ordered you not to enter. You shall go there again, madam, but you will never return. You shall join the company you were so curious to see."

Fatima fell upon her knees at his feet and begged for mercy, but the

"I forbid you to use that key.'

cruel man bade her prepare for death. "Give me but a few minutes," she cried, and Bluebeard answered: "Ten minutes only will I grant you; after that you must die."

Poor Fatima hastened to the little turret chamber, to which her sister had fled in terror, and cried in grief: "Sister Anne, mount, I pray you, to the top of the tower, and see if my brothers are not in view. They promised to visit me to-day, and if you should see them, sign to them to make haste." So the sister mounted the little staircase leading to the tower, and Fatima cried again: "Sister Anne, sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?"

"I see nothing but the sun, whose slanting rays are like dust, and the grass which grows tall and green."

The ten minutes had passed away, and Bluebeard had sharpened his two-edged scimitar and stood at the foot of the staircase, calling to his wife to come down. "One moment longer," said she, and called very softly to her sister: "Sister Anne, sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?"

Sister Anne replied sadly: "I see nothing but the sun, whose slanting rays are like dust, and the grass which grows tall and green."

"Come down at once," Bluebeard cried, in great wrath, "or must I come and fetch you?"

"Sister Anne, sister Anne," sobbed the wretched wife, "look once again, I pray you. Is there *no* one upon the road?" And the weeping sister replied: "I see a cloud of dust, which rises on one side."

"Perchance it is my brothers," said Fatima.

"Alas! no," sister Anne said, it is but a flock of sheep."

"Fatima, I command you to come down," roared Bluebeard.

"One moment—only one moment more," said his wife. "Sister Anne, sister Anne, is there *no* one in sight."

"I see," cried Anne, "two horsemen, but they are yet a great way off."

"Heaven be praised!" said the poor wife. "They must be my brothers. Oh! sign to them to hasten."

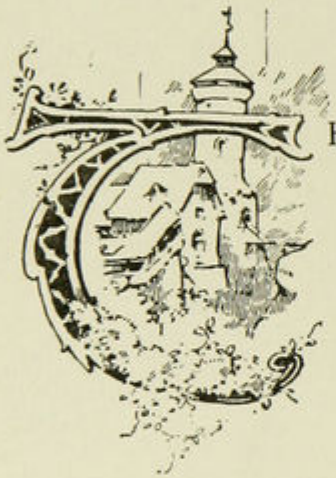
By this time Bluebeard was so enraged that his loud voice, as he shouted to his wife to come down, shook the whole castle. Fatima dared not delay any longer, but descended to the great hall, threw herself at her wicked husband's feet, and besought him once more to spare her life.

"Silence!" cried Bluebeard, and seizing her by her lovely, rippling hair, he raised his scimitar to strike.

At that moment there was a loud knocking at the castle gates. Bluebeard paused, and before he had time to let the scimitar fall upon his wife's neck, the two brothers burst into the hall. One of them tore his sister from Bluebeard's grasp, whilst the other plunged a sword into his heart.

So the wicked Bluebeard perished miserably; and Fatima divided all his great wealth between herself, her faithful sister, and her two brave brothers, and they lived happily together ever afterwards.

The Wandering Minstrels.



THERE once lived a donkey, who for many a long day, had cheerfully carried his master's sacks to the mill, but who was beginning to get old and infirm, so that he was almost useless as a servant. Then the master thought to get rid of him, but the donkey guessed there was an ill wind blowing, and took to his heels.

He chose the road to the town of Bremen, where he made up his mind to become a street musician. He had not gone far before he met a hound, lying in the road, and whining, as though he were footsore and weary.

"What are you whining for, old Belltongue?" asked the donkey.

"Oh!" said the hound sadly, "every day I grow older and weaker, and can no longer follow the hunt. For this reason my master would have slain me, had I not run away. But alas! how shall I ever earn a living now?"

"I have an idea!" the donkey cried: "I am going to Bremen to become a street musician; why not join the profession, and go with me? I will play the lute, and you can beat the kettledrum."

The idea pleased the dog, so they journeyed on together.

Before long they met a cat, sitting on a path, with a face as long as three wet days.

"What's the matter with you, old Whisker-washer, that you pull such a long face?" said the donkey.

"Who could be merry with his neck in danger?" answered the cat. "My mistress has ordered me to be drowned, simply because, being old, and with no teeth to speak of, I naturally prefer a warm corner by the hearth, to chasing rats and mice. It is true I have made my escape, but give me a word of advice—whither shall I go?"

"Go with us to Bremen. You understand evening melodies, and are therefore quite competent to become a street musician."

The cat was willing, so on they trudged together. Presently the three fugitives came to a courtyard, on the gate of which sat a cock, crowing with might and main.

"Hush!" cried the donkey, "your voice goes through one. What is all this noise about?"

"I prophesy fine weather," crowed the cock. "To-morrow I am to be cooked for dinner, and therefore I am anxious to make all the noise I can, in the short time left to me."

"Come, Redcap," said the donkey. "Don't give in. You had much better join our party and go with us to Bremen. At least you will find something better than death. You have a good voice, and when we play in concert the effect should be very fine indeed."

The suggestion seemed a good one, so the cock joined the little party, and on they went.

As they could not hope to reach Bremen that day, they decided to pass the night in a neighbouring wood. The donkey and the dog lay down at the foot of a great tree, but the cat and the cock sprang up into the branches, the cock being determined to roost upon the very top of the tree, where he knew he could rest in safety.

Before he settled himself to sleep, he had a good look round, and fancied he could see a bright little spark shining in the distance.

He called to his comrades, and told them that there must be a house near, for he could see a light burning.

Said the donkey: "We had better rouse ourselves and go there; the shelter here is not so good as we could wish for." The dog, too, thought he could eat a couple of bones and a plate of meat.

So they got up and went in the direction of the light, which soon

became larger and brighter, until at length they stood before a well-lighted house, which belonged to a band of robbers.

The donkey, being the biggest, approached the window and peeped in.

"What do you see, Greysteed?" questioned the cock.

"What do I see?" answered the donkey. "A table covered with the most delicious food and drink, and robbers sitting round it, enjoying the good things."

"I wish it belonged to us," said the cock.

"So do I," answered the donkey.

The four comrades laid their heads together and soon resolved on a plan to frighten the robbers away.

The donkey stood upon his hind legs, placing his fore-feet upon the window-sill, the dog sprang upon his back, the cat climbed upon the dog, and the cocked settled himself upon the cat's head. As soon as this was done, at a given signal, they all began to sing. The donkey brayed, the dog barked, the cat mewed, and the cock crowed. Then they flung themselves against the window. Crash! went the panes, and into the room they came tumbling. The robbers sprang from their seats, screaming with terror, for they believed a bogey was in the midst of them, and ran for their lives, out into the dark wood.

The four friends then seated themselves at the table, and ate and drank as though they were not to taste food again for a month.

When they had finished their meal, they put out the lights and prepared for bed, each seeking the couch his nature taught him to consider the most comfortable. The donkey laid himself upon a heap of refuse in the courtyard, the dog curled up behind the door, the cat made a bed of the warm ashes upon the hearth, and the cock flew up to the rafters.

Being very tired with their long journey, they were soon sound asleep.

Midnight came, and the robbers, watching from a distance, saw that no light streamed from the windows of their house, and that all was still; so the captain said—

"How foolish we were to allow ourselves to be so easily frightened!" and, calling one of his men, ordered him to go back to the house and see if all was right there.

The man crept up to the house and, hearing no sound, entered the kitchen. Of course he needed a light, and seeing the cat's eyes gleaming in the darkness, mistook them for live coals, and held a match towards them expecting it would kindle.

But the cat was very angry, and flew at his face, spitting and scratching.

He started back in alarm, and made for the door, disturbing the dog, who sprang out and bit him in the leg. Out into the courtyard he rushed, only to be received by the donkey, who struck out with his hind hoofs, and almost stunned him.

All this noise had awakened the cock, and he was as lively as a cricket.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" he cried; "cock-a-doodle-doo!"

The man waited for no more, but ran back to his captain as fast as he could.

"Woe is me!" he cried. "A horrible witch has taken possession of the house; she spat at me, and scratched my face with her long nails; by the door stood a man who stuck his knife into my leg; and in the

courtyard a black monster met me and struck me with a club, whilst on the roof sat the judge, who cried with a loud voice, 'Bring the rascal here!' So I thought it was time I came away."

After this the robbers were afraid to trust themselves in the house again, and as the four wandering minstrels found it very much to their taste, they made up their minds to stay there.

And that is the last I heard of them.

CHICKEN-LICKEN

AS Chicken-licken was going one day to the wood, whack! an acorn fell from a tree on his head.

"Gracious goodness me!" said Chicken-licken, "the sky must have fallen; I must go and tell the King."

So Chicken-licken turned back, and met Hen-len.

"Well, Hen-len, where are you going?" said he.

"I'm going to the wood," said she.

"Oh, Hen-len, don't go!" said he, "for as I was going the sky fell on to my head, and I'm going to tell the King."

So Hen-len turned back with Chicken-licken, and met Cock-lock.

"I'm going to the wood," said he.

Then Hen-len said: "Oh, Cock-lock, don't go, for I was going, and I met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on to his head, and we are going to tell the King."

So Cock-lock turned back, and they met Duck-luck.

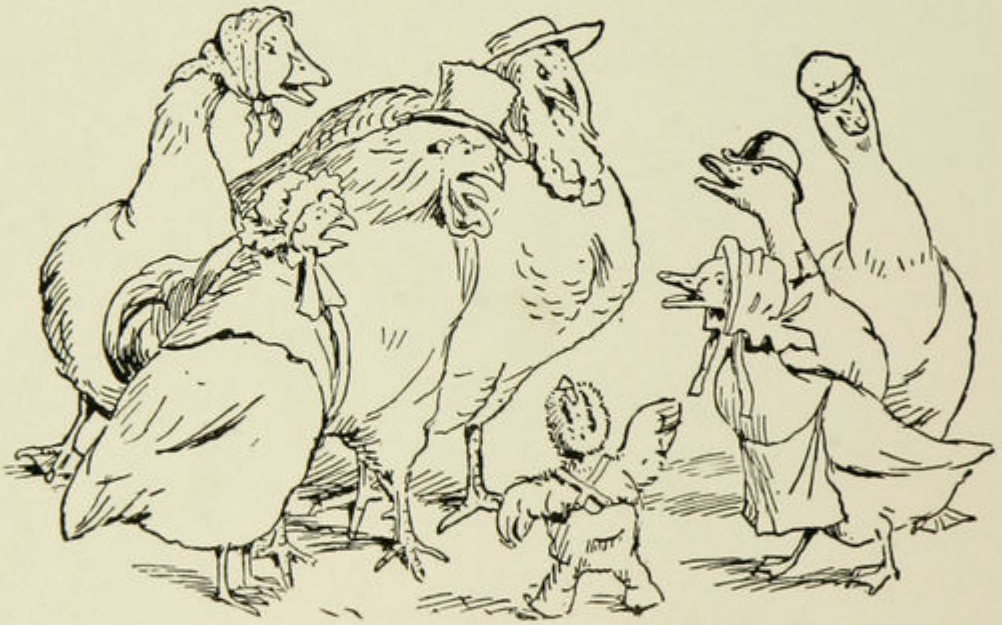
"Well, Duck-luck, where are you going?"

And Duck-luck said: "I'm going to the wood."

Then Cock-lock said: "Oh! Duck-luck, don't go, for I was going, and I met Hen-len, and Hen-len met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on to his head, and we are going to tell the King."

So Duck-luck turned back, and met Drake-lake.

"Well, Drake-lake, where are you going?"



And Drake-lake said: "I'm going to the wood."

Then Duck-luck said: "Oh! Drake-lake, don't go, for I was going, and I met Cock-lock, and Cock-lock met Hen-len, and Hen-len met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on to his head, and we are going to tell the King."

So Drake-lake turned back, and met Goose-loose.

"Well, Goose-loose, where are you going?"

And Goose-loose said: "I'm going to the wood."

Then Drake-lake said: "Oh, Goose-loose, don't go, for I was going,

and I met Duck-luck, and Duck-luck met Cock-lock, and Cock-lock met Hen-len, and Hen-len met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on to his head, and we are going to tell the King."

So Goose-loose turned back, and met Gander-lander.

"Well, Gander-lander, where are you going?"

And Gander-lander said: "I am going to the wood."

Then Goose-loose said: "Oh! Gander-lander, don't go, for I was going, and I met Drake-lake, and Drake-lake met Duck-luck, and Duck-luck met Cock-lock, and Cock-lock met Hen-len, and Hen-len met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on to his head, and we are going to tell the King."

So Gander-lander turned back, and met Turkey-lurkey.

"Well, Turkey-lurkey, where are you going?"

And Turkey-lurkey said: "I am going to the wood."

Then Gander-lander said: "Oh! Turkey-lurkey, don't go, for I was going, and I met Goose-loose, and Goose-loose met Drake-lake, and Drake-lake met Duck-luck, and Duck-luck met Cock-lock, and Cock-lock met Hen-len, and Hen-len met Chicken-licken, and Chicken-licken had been at the wood, and the sky had fallen on to his head, and we are going to tell the King."

So Turkey-lurkey turned back, and walked with Gander-lander, Goose-loose, Drake-lake, Duck-luck, Cock-lock, Hen-len and Chicken-licken.

And as they were going along, they met Fox-lox. And Fox-lox said: "Where are you going?"

And they said: "Chicken-licken went to the wood, and the sky fell on to his head, and we are going to tell the King."

And Fox-lox said: "Come along with me, and I will show you the way."

But Fox-lox took them into the fox's hole, and he and his young ones soon ate up poor Chicken-licken, Hen-len, Cock-lock, Duck-luck, Drake-lake, Goose-loose, Gander-lander, and Turkey-lurkey; and they never saw the King to tell him that the sky had fallen.

The Frog Prince

LONG, long ago, in the days when one had only to wish for a thing to possess it, there lived a King who had the most beautiful daughters in the world.

The youngest was so lovely that even the sun, who has seen so much, wondered at her beauty each time that he shone upon her face.

Not far from the Royal castle was a thick wood, and in this wood, beneath a tall lime-tree, was a deep, dark pool. Whenever the weather was warm, the King's little daughter would go and sit beside the pool, and if she

were dull, she would take out her golden ball and play with it, tossing it into the air and catching it again, for the ball was her favourite toy.

Now, it happened once that the Princess let the ball slip through her fingers and roll with a splash into the pool. She followed it with her eyes, but the ball disappeared, for the pool was too deep for her to see down to the bottom. Then she began to weep, and sobbed as though she would never find comfort again. But in the midst of her weeping, someone cried to her—

"What ails thee, Princess? Thy tears would melt even a heart of stone."

The Princess turned her head to see who was speaking to her, and to her surprise she found that it was a big ugly frog.

"Ah! Froggy, is it you?" she said. "I am weeping for the loss of my golden ball, which has fallen into the pool."

"Do not weep, little Princess," answered the frog. "I can find your ball for you again, but what will you promise me if I do?"

"Whatever you will, dear Frog," said she. "My dresses, my pearls and jewels, or even the golden crown that I wear."

But the frog shook his head. "Your dresses and jewels would be useless to me," he said, "and I will have none of them. I only want you to love me a little. If you will let me be your playfellow, sit beside you at table, eat from your plate, and sleep in your little white bed at night, I will give you back your golden ball."

And the Princess promised, but she thought to herself—

"How foolishly the frog talks, to be sure! As if he could be *my* companion! He can only sit in the water all day and croak to the other frogs."

The frog no sooner heard her promise than he dived beneath the water, and after a minute or two reappeared with the ball in his mouth, and threw it upon the grass.

The Princess was so pleased to have her pretty plaything again that she picked it up and ran off with it without once remembering the poor frog.

"Wait, wait," he cried; "I cannot run as fast as you, and you must take me with you."

But it was of no use, for, croak as loud as he would, she would not

listen to him, but hastened home to the palace, where she soon forgot all about him, so that there was nothing for it but to hop back into his pool again.

The next day, when the Princess sat at table with the King her father, and all the nobles of the Court, and ate daintily from her golden plate, there was heard a pitter-patter, pitter-patter, up the marble stairs. Then came a knocking at the door and a harsh voice cried—

"King's daughter, King's daughter, open the door!"

So the Princess ran to see what it could be, and there sat the frog.

She shut the door hastily, and went back to her seat, but she was very much afraid.

The King could hear his little daughter's heart beating fast, so he asked her—

"Child, of what are you afraid? Is there a giant at the door who has come to fetch you?"

"No father," she answered. "It is no giant, but an ugly frog."

"And what does the frog want?" asked the King.

"Yesterday, as I played beside the pool," replied the Princess, "I

dropped my golden ball into it, and while I sat and wept for the loss of it, the frog came to me and told me he would bring it back to me again if I would let him be my playfellow. This I promised readily enough, for I thought he would never be able to leave the water to come after me. But now he sits at the door and wants to come in."

At that moment the frog knocked again, and cried—

"Little Princess
So dear, so dear,
Open the door—
I am waiting here!
By the deep pool
You promised me
My little playfellow
You would be."

Then said the King: "That which you have promised must be performed. Open the door to him, my child."

So she opened the door, and the frog hopped in and followed her as she went back to her chair. Then he stopped and cried: "Lift me up!"

The Princess hesitated, but the King ordered her to take him up and put him on the chair beside her. From the chair he hopped upon the table, and bade the Princess push her golden plate nearer to him, so that he might eat with her.

This she unwillingly did and the frog made a hearty meal, but the Princess could touch nothing. When the frog had finished his supper, he told the Princess that he was tired, and she must carry him upstairs and put him to sleep in her soft silken bed.

Then the Princess began to cry; she did not like to touch him, and could not bear to think of him sleeping in her clean, white bed. But the King was very angry with her. "He helped you in your distress," he said to his daughter, "and now you must keep your promise to him."

So she lifted the frog between her finger and thumb, carried him upstairs to her room, and put him away in the farthest corner.

Then she jumped into bed herself, and laid there cosily enough until the frog came creeping up to her and said: "I am tired and would sleep as well as you. Take me up, or I will tell your father of you."

Then the Princess was so angry that she took the frog in her hand

and threw him with all her strength against the wall, crying: "Now take your rest, you ugly frog!"

But he was no longer a frog; for as he fell he changed into a handsome Prince, with beautiful, smiling eyes; and with her father's consent he became both her companion and her bridegroom.

Then he told her how a wicked witch had cast her spells upon him, and changed him into a frog, and that the Princess alone had the power to release him, but that now they would go back to his kingdom together.

The next morning, as soon as the sun rose, a magnificent carriage drew up at the palace gates. It was drawn by eight snow-white steeds, wearing ostrich plumes upon their heads, and harnessed in chains of pure gold. Behind stood the young Prince's servant, who was called "the faithful Henry."

This servant had grieved so sorely when his dear master was changed into a frog that, had he not bound three iron bands around his heart, it would have broken in two.

But now, having handed the Prince and his bride into the carriage which was to take them back to their kingdom, his heart began once more to beat high with joy.

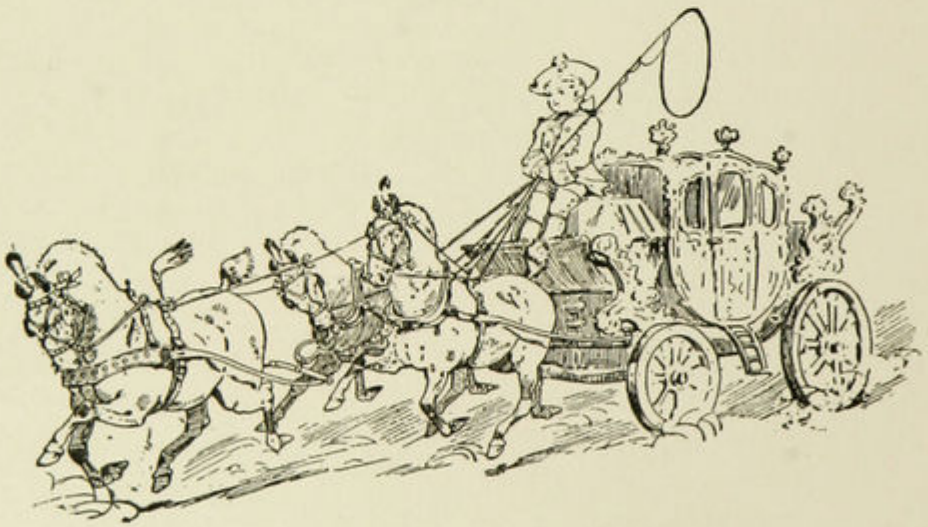
Before they had driven far, the Prince heard a loud cracking noise behind him, so he turned in his seat and cried: "Henry, the wheel must be breaking."

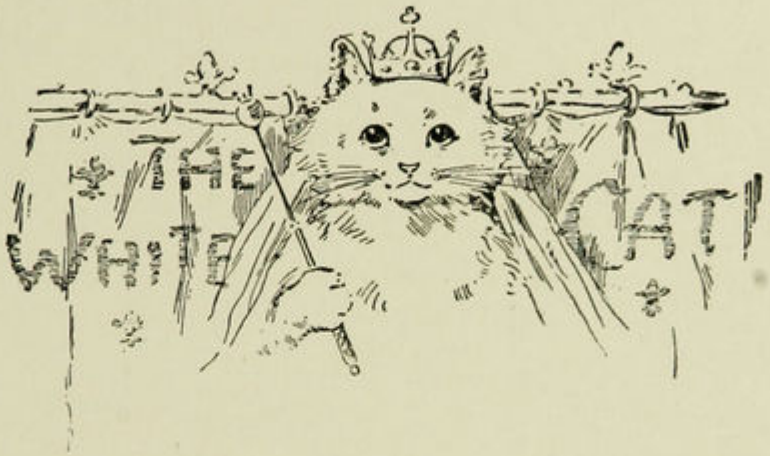
But Henry replied:—

"Nay, master, 'twas my joyful heart,
Which burst an iron band apart."

Again there was a mighty crack, then once again, and each time the Prince and the Princess thought that surely the carriage *must* be breaking.

But it was the three iron bands around the faithful Henry's heart, which were bursting because his heart was too full of joy over his master's release to be bound by them any longer.





THERE was once a King who had three sons, and because they were all so good and handsome, he could not make up his mind to which of them to give his kingdom. For he was growing an old man, and began to think it would soon be time for him to let one of them reign in his stead.

So he determined to set them a task to perform, and whichever should be the most successful was to have the kingdom as his reward.

It was some time before he could decide what the task should be. But at last he told them that he had a fancy for a very beautiful little dog, and that they were all to set out to find one for him. They were to have a whole year in which to search, and were all to return to the castle on the same day, and present the various dogs they had chosen at the same hour.

The three princes were greatly surprised by their father's sudden fancy for a little dog, but when they heard that whichever of them brought back the prettiest little animal was to succeed his father on the throne, they made no further objection, for it gave the two younger sons a chance they would not otherwise have had of being King.

So they bade their father good-bye, and after agreeing to be back at the castle at the same hour, and on the same day, when a year should have passed away, the three brothers all started together.

A great number of lords and servants accompanied them out of the city, but when they had ridden about a league they sent everyone back, and after embracing one another affectionately, they all set out to try their luck in different directions.

The two eldest met with many adventures on their travels, but the youngest saw the most wonderful sights of all.

He was young and handsome, and as clever as a prince should be, besides being brave.

Wherever he went he enquired for dogs, and hardly a day passed without his buying several, big and little, greyhounds, spaniels, lap-dogs, and sheep-dogs—in fact, every kind of dog that you could think of, and very soon he had a troop of fifty or sixty trotting along behind him, one of which he thought would surely win the prize.

So he journeyed on from day to day, not knowing where he was going, until one night he lost his way in a thick dark forest, and after wandering many weary miles in the wind and rain he was glad to see at last a bright light shining through the trees. He thought he must be near some wood-cutter's cottage, but what was his surprise when he found himself before the gateway of a splendid castle!

At first he hesitated about entering, for his garments were travel-stained, and he was drenched with rain, so that no one could have possibly taken him for a prince. All the beautiful little dogs he had taken so much trouble to collect had been lost in the forest, and he was thoroughly weary and disheartened.

However, something seemed to bid him enter the castle, so he pulled the bell. Immediately the gateway flew open, and a number of beautiful white hands appeared, and beckoned to him to cross the courtyard and enter the great hall.

Here he found a splendid fire blazing, beside which stood a comfortable arm-chair; the hands pointed invitingly towards it, and as soon as the prince had seated himself they proceeded to take off his wet, muddy clothes, and dress him in a magnificent suit of silk and velvet.

When he was ready, the hands led him into a brilliantly-lighted room, in which was a table spread for supper. At the end of the room was

a raised platform, upon which a number of cats were seated, all playing different musical instruments.

The prince began to think he must be dreaming, when the door opened, and a lovely little White Cat came in. She wore a long black veil, and was accompanied by a number of cats, dressed in black, and carrying swords.

She came straight up to the prince, and in a sweet, sad little voice, bade him welcome. Then she ordered supper to be served, and the whole company sat down together.

They were waited on by the mysterious hands, but many of the dishes were not to the prince's liking. Stewed rats and mice may be a first-rate meal for a cat, but the prince did not feel inclined to try them.

However, the White Cat ordered the hands to serve the prince with the dishes he liked best, and at once, without his even mentioning his favourite food, he was supplied with every dainty he could think of.

After the prince had satisfied his hunger, he noticed that the Cat wore a bracelet upon her paw, in which was set a miniature of himself; but when

he questioned her about it, she sighed, and seemed so sad that, like a well-behaved prince, he said no more about the matter.

Soon after supper, the hands conducted him to bed, when he at once fell fast asleep, and did not awaken until late the next morning. On looking out of his window, he saw that the White Cat and her attendants were about to start out on a hunting expedition.

As soon as the hands had dressed him in a hunting-suit of green, he hurried down to join his hostess.

The hands led him up to a wooden horse, and seemed to expect him to mount. At first the prince was inclined to be angry, but the White Cat told him so gently that she had no better steed to offer him, that he at once mounted, feeling very much ashamed of his ill-humour.

They had an excellent day's sport. The White Cat, who rode a monkey, proved herself a clever huntress, climbing the tallest trees with the greatest ease, and without once falling from her steed.

Never was there a pleasanter hunting party, and day after day the time passed so happily away that the prince forgot all about the little dog he was searching for, and even forgot his own home and his father's promise.

At length the White Cat reminded him that in three days he must appear at Court, and the prince was terribly upset to think that he had now no chance of winning his father's kingdom. But the White Cat told him that all would be well, and giving him an acorn, bade him mount the wooden horse and ride away.

The prince thought she must be mocking him, but when she held the acorn to his ear, he heard quite plainly a little dog's bark.

"Inside this acorn," she said, "is the prettiest little dog in the world. But be sure you do not open the fruit until you are in the King's presence."

The prince thanked her, and having bidden her a sorrowful farewell, mounted his wooden steed and rode away.

Before he reached the castle, he met his two brothers, who made fine fun of the wooden horse, and also of the big ugly dog which trotted by his side.

They imagined this to be the one their brother had brought back from his travels, hoping that it would gain the prize.

When they reached the palace, everyone was loud in praise of the

The Castle of the White Cat

two lovely little dogs the elder brothers had brought back with them, but when the youngest opened his acorn and showed a tiny dog, lying upon a white satin cushion, they knew that this must be the prettiest little dog in the world.

However, the King did not feel inclined to give up his throne just yet, so he told the brothers that there was one more task they must first perform: they must bring him a piece of muslin so fine that it would pass through the eye of a needle.

So once more the brothers set out upon their travels. As for the youngest, he mounted his wooden horse and rode straight back to his dear White Cat.

She was delighted to welcome him, and when the prince told her that the King had now ordered him to find a piece of muslin fine enough to go through the eye of a needle, she smiled at him very sweetly, and told him to be of good cheer.

"In my palace I have some very clever spinners," she said, "and I will set them to work upon the muslin."

The prince had begun to suspect by this time that the White Cat was no ordinary pussy, but whenever he begged her to tell him her history, she only shook her head mournfully and sighed.

Well, the second year passed away as quickly as the first, and the night before the day on which the three princes were expected at their father's court, the White Cat gave the young prince a walnut, telling him that it contained the muslin. Then she bade him good-bye, and he mounted the wooden horse and rode away.

This time the young prince was so late that his brothers had already begun to display their pieces of muslin to the King when he arrived at the castle gates. The materials they had brought were of extremely fine texture, and passed easily through the eye of a darning-needle, but through the small needle the King had provided they would *not* pass. Then the youngest prince stepped into the great hall and produced his walnut. He cracked it carefully, and found inside a hazlenut. This when cracked held a cherrystone, inside the cherrystone was a grain of wheat, and in the wheat a millet-seed. The prince himself began to mistrust the White Cat, but he instantly felt a cat's claw scratch him gently, so he persevered, opened the millet-seed, and found inside a beautiful piece of soft white muslin that was four hundred ells long at the very least. It passed

with the greatest ease through the eye of the smallest needle in the kingdom, and the prince felt that now the prize must be his.

But the old King was still very loth to give up ruling, so he told the princes that before any one of them could become King he must find a princess to marry him who would be lovely enough to grace her high station; and whichever of the princes brought home the most beautiful bride should *really* have the kingdom for his own.

Of course the prince went back to the White Cat, and told her how very unfairly his father had behaved to him. She comforted him as best she could, and told him not to be afraid, for she would introduce him to the loveliest princess the sun had ever shone upon.

The appointed time passed happily away, and one evening the White Cat reminded the prince that on the next day he must return home.

"Alas!" said he, "where shall I find a princess now? The time is so short that I cannot even look for one."

Then the White Cat told him that if only he would do as she bade him all would be well.

"Take your sword, cut off my head and my tail, and cast them into the flame," she said.

The prince declared that on no account would he treat her so cruelly; but she begged him so earnestly to do as she asked that at last he consented.

No sooner had he cast the head and the tail into the fire than a beautiful princess appeared where the body of the cat had been. The spell that had been cast upon her was broken, and at the same time her courtiers and attendants, who had also been changed into cats, hastened in in their proper forms again, to pay their respects to their mistress.

The prince at once fell deeply in love with the charming princess, and begged her to accompany him to his father's Court as his bride.

She consented, and together they rode away. During the journey, the princess told her husband the story of her enchantment.

She had been brought up by the fairies, who treated her with great kindness until she offended them by falling in love with the young man whose portrait the prince had seen upon her paw, and who exactly resembled him.

Now, the fairies wished her to marry the King of the Dwarfs, and were

so angry when she declared she would marry no one but her own true love, that they changed her into a White Cat as a punishment.

When the prince and his bride reached the Court, all were bound to acknowledge that the princess was by far the loveliest lady they had ever seen.

So the poor old King felt that now he would be obliged to give up his kingdom. But the princess knelt by his side, kissed his hand gently, and told him that there was no reason for him to cease ruling, for she was rich enough to give a mighty kingdom to each of his elder sons, and still have three left for herself and her dear husband.

So everyone was pleased, and there was great rejoicing and feasting in the King's palace, and they all lived happily ever after.

THE COBBLER AND THE BROWNIES

THERE WAS ONCE a cobbler who, though he worked early and late, could never manage to earn a living, and at last became so poor that he had nothing left but a little leather, which was just sufficient to make one pair of shoes. He cut out the shoes at night, meaning to set to work upon them the next morning, and then, knowing that he had done his best, he laid himself to rest, prayed God to bless him, and fell asleep.

The next morning he rose, said his prayers, and sat down to his work; but what was his surprise to find the shoes standing upon his bench, already finished!

He took them in his hand and examined them carefully. There was not a false stitch nor a raw edge anywhere. They were perfect!

Presently a customer came in and admired the shoes so much that he not only bought them, but paid more than twice the ordinary price,

so that the cobbler was able to buy enough leather to make two pairs of shoes.

He cut them out in the evening, and determined to rise early the next morning and get them finished in good time.

But there was no need, for, when he rose, the shoes were already made, and soon afterwards two customers entered and bought them, paying an extra good price because they were so neatly sewn.

And now the cobbler was able to buy leather for four pairs of shoes.

Early in the morning the four pairs of shoes were finished, and so it went on. Whatever he cut out at night was made up by the morning, so that at length he began to have quite a large business, and was a well-to-do man.

One night, when Christmas was near at hand, the cobbler cut out the leather as usual, but before going to bed he said to his wife—

"How would it be if we were to sit up to-night and watch? Perhaps we might see who it is that gives us such a helping hand."

The wife was willing, so she lighted a candle, and then the two hid themselves in the corners of the room, behind some coats and dresses that were hanging up, and watched.

At midnight a number of little naked men appeared, seated themselves at the cobbler's bench, took up the pieces of leather, and began, with skilful fingers, to sew and hammer. The cobbler could scarce believe his eyes.

The brownies worked straight on, until the shoes were all finished, and then they disappeared.

The next morning the cobbler's wife said to her husband—

"The little men have made our fortune; we must do something to show them how grateful we are. Poor little things, they must be cold with no clothes on; I will make a little shirt, a coat and vest, and a pair of breeches for each of them, and knit them some nice warm stockings, too; you can make them each a little pair of shoes."

The man was well pleased, and in the evening, when all the clothes were finished, instead of the leather they laid the presents upon the cobbler's bench, and hid themselves, so that they might see what the little men would do.

At midnight the brownies came dancing in, all ready for work. When

they could find no leather, but saw the pretty little garments put in the place of it, they were at first too much astonished to do anything.

But they soon recovered from their surprise, and then they did not know how to express their joy. They dressed themselves with haste, patted the coats, and admired the fit, and then began to sing:—

"Such pretty dainty boys as we
Can no longer cobblers be!"

Then they danced and jumped for joy, chased one and another over tables and chairs, and at length danced out of the room.

They never came again, but so long as the cobbler lived, things went well with him, and whatever he took in hand was sure to prosper.

A MERCHANT was coming from the fair with his money-bags well filled with gold and silver, for he had had a good day's business, and had sold all his wares. He was anxious to reach home before night came on, so he had packed his money-bags in a large box and placed it behind him on his horse. At midday he rested for a while at an inn, and when it was time to start again the ostler who brought him his horse told him that there was a nail wanting on its left hind shoe. "Never mind," said the merchant, "the shoe will hold very well without it, I daresay. I am in a hurry and cannot wait."

In the afternoon he dismounted at a wayside inn to give his horse a feed of corn, and the ostler who brought it told him, just as the first had done, that a nail was wanting in his horse's left hind shoe, and asked if he should take it to the blacksmith's.

"No, no," said the merchant, "I have not far to go now. I am in a hurry and cannot wait, and the shoe will hold till I get home."

He rode away, but very soon the horse began to limp. It had not been limping long before it began to stumble, and it had not been stumbling long before it fell down and broke a leg.

The merchant was obliged to leave the horse lying in the road, strap the box of money to his own shoulders, and trudge the rest of the way on foot, so that, of course, it was long past nightfall when he reached home. "And all my misfortunes are owing to the loss of that unlucky nail," said he to himself.

More haste, less speed!

THE VALIANT LITTLE TAILOR

ONCE, on a summer morning, a little tailor was sitting on his table and sewing away with all his might, quite merrily.

Presently a woman came up the street, crying out; "Good preserves for sale! Good preserves for sale!"

This sounded very sweet to the tailor's ears, so, putting his cunning little head out of the window, he called her—

"Come up here, my good woman; bring your wares up here!"

The woman went up the three steps with her heavy basket to the tailor, and began to unpack all the pots before him. He looked at them all, held them up to the light, smelt them, and said at last: "These preserves seem to be very good; weigh me out three ounces, my good woman, and if it comes to a quarter of a pound, it does not matter."

The woman, who had hoped to find a good customer, gave him what he asked for, but she went away grumbling, and looking very cross.

"Now, Heaven send me a blessing on this preserve!" cried the little man, "and it will give me fresh strength and vigour." And taking some bread out of the cupboard, he cut a slice the size of the whole loaf and spread the jam thickly upon it.

"That won't taste half so bad," said he, chuckling, "but I will finish this doublet before I eat it."

So he placed the appetising morsel down by his side, and stitched away, making larger and larger stitches every time for joy.

Meanwhile, the smell of the delicious jam mounted to the wall, where numbers of flies were sitting, so that it enticed them down in swarms, and they settled on the bread.

"Ha! who invited you, may I ask?" exclaimed the little tailor, chasing away the uninvited guests. But the flies who did not understand English, would not be driven away, and came down again in much larger numbers than before.

This put him in a terrible rage, so he reached down an old piece of cloth from his collection, and saying: "Now, you shall catch it!" he dealt them an unmerciful blow.

When he raised it again, he counted no fewer than seven lying dead before him, with their legs stretched out.

"What a fellow you are!" he said, wondering at his own great bravery; "the whole town must be told of this!"

So in great haste he cut out a belt for himself, hemmed it, and sewed on these words in large letters:—

"SEVEN AT A BLOW!"

"What do I say? the *town!*" said he presently; "not only the town, but the whole world, shall hear of it!" and his heart fluttered with joy, like the tail of a lambkin.

Presently the little man tied the belt round his body, and set out into the wide world, for he thought that his workshop was far too small for his valiant deeds.

Before he started, he searched about his house to see if there were anything which he could take away with him, but he found nothing except an

old cheese, which he put in his pocket. By the door he caught sight of a bird which had become entangled in the bushes, so he took it, and pocketed that also.

Then he set out on his travels with a brave heart, and, as he was light and active, he did not feel at all tired.

His road led him up a mountain, and when he had gained the summit there sat a tremendous giant, who was looking about him quite composedly. Our hero marched boldly up to him, and spoke to him, saying—

"Good day, comrade! Mercy on me, thou sittest there and lookest down at the whole world stretching around thee! I am on my road to it to try my fortune. How wouldst thou like to join me?"

The giant looked down with great contempt at the little tailor, and said: "Thou miserable fellow, thou pigmy!"

"That may be," replied the tailor, unbuttoning his coat to show the giant his belt, "but read this, and thou wilt see for thyself the sort of man I am!"

The giant read: "*Seven at a blow!*" and thinking, of course, they must be men that the tailor had killed, he began to feel a kind of respect for the little fellow.

But he wanted to prove him first, so he picked up a stone, and squeezed it in his hand until water dropped from it.

"Do that after me!" said the giant, "if thou art man enough."

"Oh, is that all?" replied the little tailor coolly, diving into his pocket, "that is mere child's-play with me." So saying, he drew out the soft cheese, and squeezed it so that the whey ran out of it.

"It strikes me," he said, "that was a trifle better than yours!"

The giant was at a loss as to what he should say, and could not believe it of the little man.

Then he picked up another stone and threw it so high that one could scarcely see it in the distance.

"Now, you mannikin!" he said, "do that!"

"Well thrown!" exclaimed the tailor, "but the stone will come down again to the ground; now, I'll throw one that will not come back!"

He put his hand in his pocket, drew out the bird, and threw it up in the air. The little creature, rejoicing in its freedom, rose like a flash, flew away, and did not return.

"How doth that little feat please thee, comrade?" enquired the tailor.

"Thou canst throw well, that is certain," answered the giant; "but now we will see if thou art man enough to carry something out of the common."

So saying, he led the little tailor to a gigantic oak tree, which had fallen, and was lying on the ground.

"Now, if thou art strong enough, help me to carry this to my cave; then thou shalt stay with me and have a merry time."

"With all my heart," said the little man. "Come thou and take the trunk upon thy shoulder, and I will raise the boughs and branches and carry those, for they are certainly the heavier part."

The giant heaved the trunk on his shoulder, but the tailor, knowing that his companion was not able to look back and see him, cooly sat on one of the branches, so that the giant was obliged to carry the whole tree and the tailor as well.

There he sat, as merrily as possible, chuckling over his own cleverness, and whistling the song: "*There rode three tailors out at the gate,*" just as if the carrying of trees was mere child's-play.

But when he came to the giant's cave, he did not like the look of it, so he slid off the branch and ran away, fearing danger.

So the little tailor journeyed on, always following his own sharp little nose

After he had wandered on for a long distance, he came to the courtyard of a royal palace, and as he felt very tired, he stretched himself upon the soft grass and fell fast asleep.

While he was lying there, the people came and looked at him, examined him on all sides, and read on his belt: "*Seven at a blow!*"

"Oho!" said they, "what does this great warrior do here in time of peace? This must be some mighty hero!"

So they went and told the King, thinking that, in the event of war, here

was an important and practical man with whom it would be sheer folly to part, and whom they should on no account allow to go away.

The King was pleased with the counsel, and sent one of his courtiers to the tailor to ask him for his military services.

The messenger remained by the sleeper's side until he had stretched his limbs, yawned, and opened his eyes, and then gave him the King's message.

"I came here for that very reason," replied the little tailor; "I am quite ready to enter into the King's service."

He was then led into the palace, received with much honour, and a finely-appointed house was given him in which to live.

The men in the army, however, were all hostile to him, and wished that he were a thousand miles away.

"What will come of it all?" said they among themselves; "for when we are in battle, and he kills seven at one blow, we shall be nowhere, and we cannot stand that." So they all made up their minds to send in their resignations to the King.

"We are not made," said they, "to fight by the side of a man who can kill seven at one blow."

This grieved the King, who could not bear to lose all his faithful soldiers for the sake of one; so he heartily wished he had never set eyes on the little man, and would now gladly be rid of him.

However, he feared very much to dismiss him, because he was afraid, if he did, that the tailor would kill him, and place himself on the throne.

The King thought over it for a long time, until at last he came to a decision; so he sent for the little man and told him that, seeing that he was so great a hero, he wished to beg a favour of him.

"In my kingdom," said the King, "there is a certain forest, wherein two terrible giants are living, who have laid waste by fire, committed murder and robbery, and done great havoc in the land. Now, no one dare go near them without imperilling his own life. If thou conquerest and killest both these giants, I will give my only daughter for thy bride, and the half of my kingdom for thy marriage portion; I will also send a hundred troopers to travel with thee as thy bodyguard."

"Anyhow, that is something for such a man as I am," thought the

tailor to himself; "the beautiful daughter of a King and half a kingdom are not offered to one every day."

"Oh, yes," he replied, "I will soon subdue those two giants, and the hundred troopers are really not necessary to me, for a man who can kill seven at a blow need not stand in any fear of two!"

Whereupon the little tailor set out, the hundred horsemen following him. When they came to the borders of the forest, he turned to his followers and said: "All of you stay here; I would rather fight these giants alone," and, eager for the fray, he started off into the forest, peering about to the right and left of him.

After a while, he caught sight of the two giants, who were lying asleep under a tree, and snoring so loudly that the branches shook to and fro.

The little tailor filled his pockets full of stones, and clambered up the tree as bravely as possible.

When he had climbed to the middle, he slid along a branch, until he came right over the sleepers' heads; then he sat down and began to drop one stone after another on the chest of one of them. For some time the giant did not seem to feel it; but at last he awakened, and, pushing his companion, said—

"Why art thou hitting me?"

"Thou art dreaming," answered the other; "I never touched thee."

So they settled themselves again to sleep. Presently, the tailor threw a stone upon the other giant. "What art thou doing?" cried this other; "why dost thou knock me about?"

"I am not touching thee," answered the first, in a rage. Then they wrangled over it

for some time; but, both being very tired, they said, "Never mind!" and once more closed their eyes.

The little tailor began his sport afresh, and picking out the biggest stone from his pocket, he threw it down on the first giant with all his might.

"That is too bad!" cried the giant, springing like a madman on his companion, and throwing him against the tree, which made it rock to and fro. Now the fight began in earnest

The two giants rooted up trees with which to beat each other about, and they did so in such a terrible way that they both fell dead on the ground.

Then the little tailor sprang down, drew his sword, and, cutting a deep wound in the breast of each giant, he went back to the horsemen and said—

"The deed is done! I have put an end to both the giants."

The troopers would not believe it, or give him credit for such bravery, so they rode into the forest to see for themselves; and there they found the two giants lying in their blood, and the uprooted trees strewn all around them.

The tailor then demanded his reward from the King, who began to repent of his promise, and tried to think of some new plan to get rid of the hero.

"Before thou dost receive my daughter and the half of my kingdom," said the King, "thou must perform yet one more heroic deed. In the forest a unicorn is running wild, which does no end of damage; thou must first catch it."

"A unicorn will be much less trouble than two giants. '*Seven at a blow!*'—that is my motto!" said the tailor.

Then he took a rope and an axe with him into the forest, and bade those who accompanied him to wait on the outskirts.

He had not to search very long, for the unicorn soon appeared, and immediately made a wild rush at him, as if he would pierce the tailor on the spot.

"Gently, gently!" exclaimed the latter; "I am not so quickly killed, my friend!" and waiting until the animal was close upon him, he jumped nimbly behind a tree.

The unicorn rushed with all its force against the tree, and fixed its horn so firmly in the trunk that it could not draw it out again, and thus it was imprisoned.

"Now I have caught my little bird," said the tailor; and, coming from behind the tree, he bound the rope round its neck, and then, chopping the horn out of the tree with his axe, he put everything in order and led the animal back to the King.

The King, however, was still unwilling to give him the promised reward, and made him a third challenge.

Before the wedding took place, he was to catch a wild boar which was doing great injury everywhere; and he was allowed to have the huntsmen to help him.

"With pleasure," said the tailor; "that is mere child's-play."

However, he left the huntsmen behind, much to their satisfaction, for the wild boar had already hunted them so often that they had no desire

to lie in wait for it. Directly the boar caught sight of the tailor, it rushed upon him in a fury, but our hero sprang into a chapel that happened to be near, and leaped through the open window down on the other side.

The boar ran after him, and the tailor, by rushing round, shut the door behind it, and thus the furious beast was caught.

The little man called the huntsmen, as he wished them to see the prisoner with their own eyes.

When our hero presented himself, the King was obliged to fulfil his promise, whether he would or not, and to surrender his daughter and the half of his kingdom.

The wedding took place with great splendour, but with small rejoicing, and a king was made out of a tailor.

Some little time afterwards, the young Queen heard her husband saying these words in his sleep:—

"Boy, make me this doublet, and stitch up these breeches for me, or I will lay the yard-measure about thine ears!"

Then the Queen guessed in what rank of life her lord had been born. So she went to her royal father in the morning and complained to him about it, asking him to free her from her husband, who was nothing but a tailor.

The King comforted her and said—

"To-night, leave the door of thy chamber open; my servants shall stand outside, and when thy husband is fast asleep, they shall enter, bind him, and carry him off to a ship, which shall bear him away into the wide world."

This scheme delighted the young wife, but the old King's armour-bearer, who had overheard everything and was devoted to the new King, ran to him and disclosed the whole plot.

"I will shoot a bolt on this affair," said the little tailor.

At night, he went to bed at the usual hour, and, when the young Queen thought he was fast asleep, she ran to the door and opened it.

The tailor, however, having only pretended to be asleep, now began to call out in a loud voice—

"Boy, make me this doublet, and stitch up these breeches, or I will lay the yard-measure about thine ears! I have killed seven at a blow, I

have slain two giants, I have captured a unicorn, and I have caught a wild boar, and shall I have any fear of those who stand without my chamber?"

When the men heard these words spoken by the tailor, they were seized with a great dread, and ran away as if an army of savages were behind them; and after this no man was brave enough to oppose him.

Thus the little tailor became a king, and remained one all the rest of his days.

GOLDILOCKS; OR THE THREE BEARS.

LITTLE Goldilocks was a pretty girl who lived once upon a time in a far off country.

One day she was sitting on the hearthrug playing with her two kittens, and you would have thought she was as happy as a queen, and quite contented to stay where she was instead of wanting to run about the world meddling with other people's property. But it happened that she was rather a mischievous little maid, and could not resist teasing her pets, so one of them scratched her, and then she would play with them no longer.

She got up and trotted away into the wood behind her mother's house, and it was such a warm, pleasant day that she wandered on and on until she came into a part of the wood where she had never been before.

Now, in this wood there lived a family of three Bears. The first was a GREAT BIG BEAR, the second was a MIDDLING-SIZED BEAR, and the third was a LITTLE TEENY TINY BEAR, and they all lived together in a funny little house, and very happy they were.

Goldilocks stopped when she came to the Bears' house, and began to wonder who lived there.

"I'll just look in and see," she said, and so she did; but there was no one there, for the Bears had all gone out for a morning walk, whilst the soup they were going to have for dinner cooled upon the table.

Goldilocks was rather hungry after her walk, and the soup smelt so good that she began to wish the people of the house would come home and invite her to have some. But although she looked everywhere, under the table and into the cupboards, she could find no one, and at last she could resist no longer, but made up her mind to take just a little sip to see how the soup tasted. The soup had been put into three bowls—a Great Big Bowl for the Great Big Bear, a Middling-sized Bowl for the Middling sized Bear, and a Teeny Tiny Bowl for the Teeny Tiny Bear; beside each bowl lay a spoon, and Goldilocks took one and helped herself to a spoonful of soup from the Great Big Bowl.

Ugh! how it burnt her mouth; it was so hot with pepper that she did not like it at all; still, she was very hungry, so she thought she would try again.

This time she took a sip of the Middling-sized Bear's soup, but she liked that no better, for it was too salt. But when she tasted the Teeny Tiny Bear's soup it was just as she liked it; so she ate it up every drop, without thinking twice about it.

When she had finished her dinner she noticed three chairs standing by the wall. One was a Great Big Chair, and she climbed upon that and sat down. Oh, dear! how hard it was! She was sure she could not sit there for long, so she climbed up on the next, which was only a Middling-sized Chair, but that was too soft for her taste; so

"WHO HAS BEEN SITTING ON MY CHAIR?"

But the Teeny Tiny Bear cried out in a Teeny Tiny Voice of anger:

"WHO HAS BEEN SITTING ON MY CHAIR, AND SAT THE BOTTOM OUT?"

By this time the Bears were sure that someone had been in their house quite lately; so they looked about to see if someone were not there still.

There was certainly no one downstairs, so they went up the staircase to their bedroom.

As soon as the Great Big Bear looked at his bed, he cried out, in his Great Big Voice:

"WHO HAS BEEN LYING ON MY BED?"

And the Middling-sized Bear, seeing that the coverlet was all rumpled, cried out, in a Middling-sized Voice:

"WHO HAS BEEN LYING ON MY BED?"

But the Teeny Tiny Bear cried out, in a Teeny Tiny Voice of astonishment:

"WHO HAS BEEN LYING ON MY BED AND LIES THERE STILL?"

Now, when the Great Big Bear began to speak, Goldilocks dreamt that there was a bee buzzing in the room, and when the Middling-sized Bear began

to speak, she dreamt that it was flying out of the window; but when the Teeny Tiny Bear began to speak, she dreamt that the bee had come back and stung her on the ear, and up she jump·d. Oh! how frightened she was when she saw the three Big Bears standing beside her.

She hopped out of bed and in a second was out through the open window. Never stopping to wonder if the fall had hurt her, she got up and ran and ran and ran until she could go no farther, always thinking that the Bears were close behind her. And when at length she fell down in a heap on the ground, because she was too tired to run any more, it was her own mother who picked her up, because in her fright she had run straight home without knowing it.

ONCE upon a time there was a rich merchant, who had three daughters. They lived in a very fine house in a beautiful city, and had many servants in grand liveries to wait upon them. All their food was served on gold and silver dishes, and their gowns were made of the richest stuff sewn with jewels.

The two eldest were called Marigold and Dressalinda. Never a day passed but these two went out to some feast or junketing; but Beauty, the youngest, loved to stay at home and keep her old father company.

Now, it happened that misfortune came upon the merchant. Ships of his which were sailing the high seas laden with merchandise of great

price, were wrecked, and in one day he found that he was no longer the richest merchant in the city, but a very poor man.

There was still left to him a little house in the country, and to this, when everything else had been sold, he retired. His three daughters, of course, went with him.

Marigold and Dressalinda were very cross to think that they had lost all their money, and after being so rich and sought after, they must now live in a miserable cottage.

But Beauty's only thought was to cheer her old father, and while her two sisters sat on wooden chairs and cried and bewailed themselves, Beauty lighted the fire and got the supper ready, for the merchant was now so poor that he could not even keep a servant.

And so it went on. The two eldest sisters would do nothing but sulk in corners, while Beauty swept the floors and washed the dishes, and did her best to make the poor cottage pleasant. They led their sister a dreadful life too, with their complaints, for not only did they refuse to do anything themselves, but they said that everything she did was done wrong. But Beauty bore all their unkindness patiently, for her father's sake.

In this way a whole year went by, and then one day a letter came for the merchant.

He hastened to find his daughters, for he was anxious to tell them the good news contained in the letter.

"My dear children," he said, "at last our luck has turned. This letter says that one of the ships supposed to have been lost has come safely home to port, and if that be so, we need no longer live in poverty, We shall not be so rich as before, but we shall have enough to keep us in comfort. Get me my travelling-cloak, Beauty. I will set out at once

to claim my ship. And now tell me, girls, what shall I bring you when I come back?"

"A hundred pounds," said Marigold, without hesitating an instant.

"I want a new silk dress," said Dressalinda, "an apple-green one, sown with seed pearls, and green shoes with red heels, and a necklace of emeralds, and a box of gloves."

"And what shall I bring for you, my Beauty?" asked the father, as his little daughter helped him to put on his travelling-cloak.

"Oh, bring me a rose," said Beauty hastily.

Her father kissed her fondly, and set out.

"You silly girl," said Marigold, "you just want our father to think you are more unselfish than we are—that's what you want! A rose, indeed!"

"Indeed, sister," said Beauty, "that was not the reason. I thought our father would have enough to do in seeing to the safety of his ship, without being troubled to do shopping for me."

But the sisters were very much offended, and went off to set in their own room to talk of the fine things they would have when their father came back.

In the meantime the merchant went his way to the city, full of hope and great plans as to what he would do with his money.

But when he got there, he found that someone had played a trick on him, and no ship of his had come into harbour, so that he was just as badly off as before.

He spent the whole day looking about to make sure there was no truth in the letter he had received, and it was beginning to get dusk when he started out, with a sad

heart, to make the journey home again. He was tired and miserable, and he had tasted no food since he left home in the morning.

It was quite dark by the time he came to the great wood through which he had to pass to get to his cottage, and when he saw a light shining through the trees, he decided not to go to his home that night, but to make his way towards the light in the wood and ask for food and shelter.

He expected to find a woodcutter's cottage, but what was his surprise, as he drew near to the light, to find that it came from the windows of a large and beautiful palace!

He knocked at the gates, but no one answered, and presently, driven by hunger and cold, he made bold to enter, and mounted the marble steps into the great hall.

All the way he never saw a soul. There was a big fire in the hall, and when he had warmed himself, he set out to look for the master of the house. But he did not look far, for behind the first door he opened was a cosy little room with supper set for one, a supper the mere look of which made you hungry.

So the merchant sat down as bold as you please, and made a very hearty supper, after which he again thought he would look for the master of the house.

He started off and opened another door, but there he saw a bed, merely to look at which made you sleepy, so he said to himself:

"This is some fairies' work. I had better not look any farther for the master of the house."

And with that he tumbled into bed, and, being very tired, he went to sleep at once, and slept like a top till it was time to get up in the morning.

When he awoke he was quite surprised to find himself in such a soft and comfortable bed, but presently he remembered all that had happened to him.

"I must be going," he said to himself, "but I wish I could thank my host for my good rest and my supper."

When he got out of bed he found he had something else to be grateful for, for on the chair by the bedside lay a fine suit of new clothes,

marked with his name, and with ten gold pieces in every pocket. He felt quite a different man when he had put on the suit of blue and silver, and jingled the gold pieces of money in his pockets.

When he went downstairs, he found a good breakfast waiting for him in the little room where he had supped the night before, and when he had made a good meal, he thought he would go for a stroll in the garden.

Down the marble steps he went, and when he came to the garden, he saw that it was full of roses, red and white and pink and yellow, and the merchant looked at them, and remembered Beauty's wish.

"Oh, my poor daughters," he said, "what a disappointment it will be to them to know that my ship has not come home after all: but Beauty at any rate can have what she wanted."

So he stretched out his hand and plucked the biggest red rose within his reach.

As the stalk snapped in his fingers, he started back in terror, for he heard an angry roar, and the next minute a dreadful Beast sprang upon him. It was taller than any man, and uglier than any animal, but what seemed most dreadful of all to the merchant, it spoke to him with a man's voice, after it had roared at him with the Beast's.

"Ungrateful wretch!" said the Beast. "Have I not fed you, lodged you, and clothed you, and now you must repay my hospitality by stealing the only thing I care for, my roses?"

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the merchant.

"No," said the Beast, "you must die!" The poor merchant fell upon his knees and tried to think of something to say to soften the heart of the cruel Beast; and at last he said: "Sir, I only stole this rose because my youngest daughter asked me to bring her one. I did not think, after all you have given me, that you would grudge me a flower."

"Tell me about this daughter of yours," said the Beast suddenly. "Is she a good girl?"

"The best and dearest in the world," said the old merchant. And then he began to

weep, to think that he must die and leave his Beauty alone in the world, with no one to be kind to her.

"Oh!" he cried, "what will my poor children do without me?"

"You should have thought of that before you stole the rose," said the Beast. "However, if one of your daughters loves you well enough to suffer instead of you, she may. Go back and tell them what has happened to you, but you must give me your promise that either you, or one of your daughters, shall be at my palace door in three months' time from to-day."

The wretched man promised.

"At any rate," he thought, "I shall have three months more of my life."

Then the Beast said, "I will not let you go empty-handed."

So the merchant followed him back into the palace. There, on the floor of the hall, lay a great and beautiful chest of wrought silver.

"Fill this with any treasures that take your fancy," said the Beast.

And the merchant filled it up with precious things from the Beast's treasure-house.

"I will send it home for you," said the Beast, shutting down the lid.

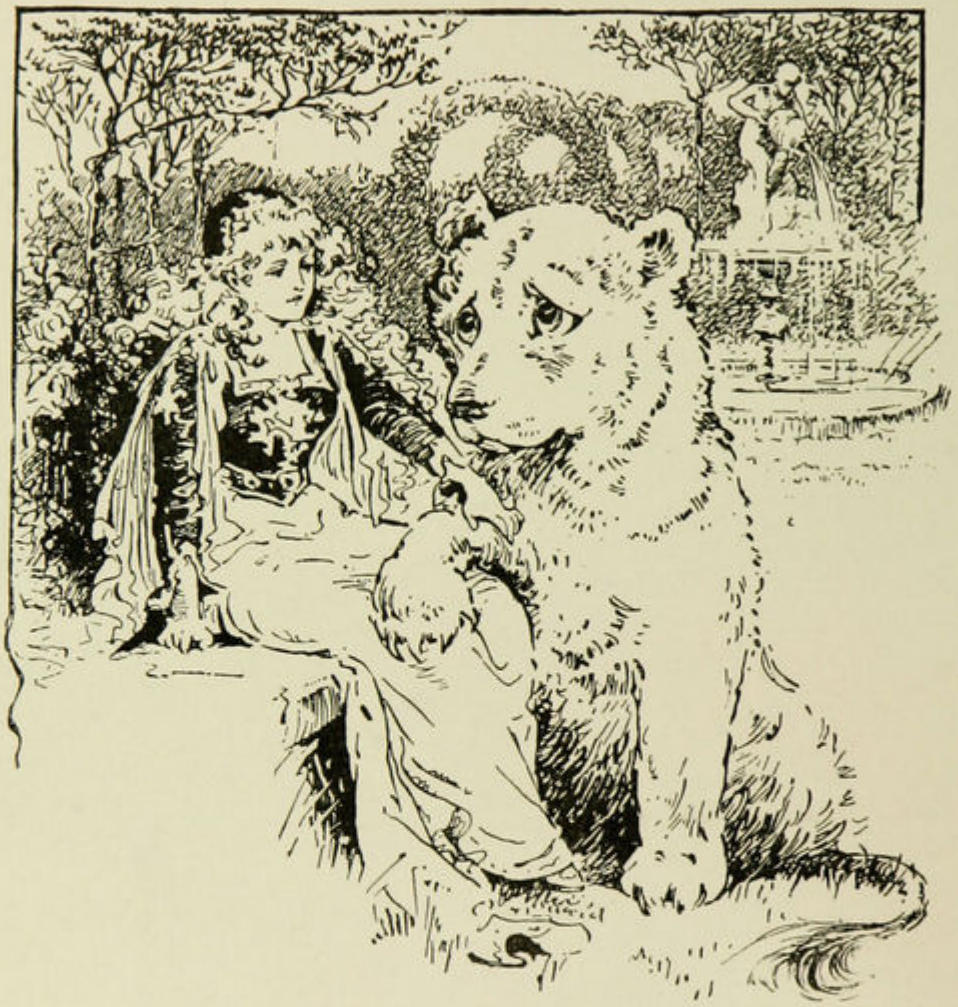
And so, with a heavy heart, the merchant went away; but as he went through the palace gate, the Beast called to him that he had forgotten Beauty's rose, and at the same time held out to him a large bunch of the very best.

The merchant put these into Beauty's hand when she ran to meet him at the door of their cottage.

"Take them, my child," he said, "and cherish them, for they have cost your poor father his life."

And with that he sat down and told them the whole story. The two elder sisters wept and wailed, and of course blamed Beauty for all that had happened.

"If it had not been for your wanting a rose, our father would have



left the palace in safety, with his new suit and his gold pieces; but your foolishness has cost him his life."

"No," said Beauty, "it is *my* life that shall be sacrificed, for when the three months are over, I shall go to the Beast, and he may kill me if he will, but he shall never hurt my dear father."

The father tried hard to persuade her not to go, but she had made up her mind, and at the end of the three months she set out for the Beast's palace.

Her father went with her, to show her the way. As before, he saw the lights shining through the wood, knocked and rang in vain at the great gate, warmed himself at the fire in the big hall, and then found

the little room with the supper on the table that made you hungry to look at. Only this time the table was laid for two.

"Come, father dear," said Beauty, "take comfort. I do not think the Beast means to kill me, or surely he would not have given me such a good supper."

But the next moment the Beast came into the room. Beauty screamed and clung to her father.

"Don't be frightened," said the Beast, gently, "but tell me, do you come here of your own free will?"

"Yes," said Beauty, trembling.

"You are a good girl," said the Beast, and then, turning to the old man, he told him that he might sleep there for that night, but in the morning he must go and leave his daughter behind him.

They went to bed and slept soundly, and the next morning the father departed, weeping bitterly.

Beauty, left alone, tried not to feel frightened. She ran here and there through the palace, and found it more beautiful than anything she had ever imagined.

The most beautiful set of rooms in the palace had written over the doors, "Beauty's Rooms," and in them she found books and music, canary-birds and Persian cats, and everything that could be thought of to make the time pass pleasantly.

"Oh, dear!" she said; "If only I could see my poor father I should be almost happy."

As she spoke, she happened to look at a big mirror, and in it she saw the form of her father reflected, just riding up to the door of his cottage.

That night, when Beauty sat down to supper, the Beast came in.

"May I have supper with you," said he.

"That must be as you please," said Beauty.

So the Beast sat down to supper with her, and when it was finished, he said:

"I am very ugly, Beauty, and I am very stupid, but I love you; will you marry me?"

"No, Beast," said Beauty gently.

The poor Beast sighed and went away.

And every night the same thing happened. He ate his supper with her, and then asked her if she would marry him. And she always said, "No, Beast."

All this time she was waited on by invisible hands, as though she had been a queen. Beautiful music came to her ears without her being able to see the musicians, but the magic looking-glass was best of all, for in it she could see whatever she wished. As the days went by, and her lightest wish was granted, almost before she knew what she wanted, she began to feel that the Beast must love her very dearly, and she was very sorry to see how sad he looked every night when she said "No" to his offer of marriage.

One day, she saw in her mirror that her father was ill, so that night she said to the Beast:

"Dear Beast, you are so good to me, will you let me go home to see my father? He is ill, and he thinks that I am dead. Do let me go and cheer him up, and I will promise faithfully to return to you."

"Very well," said the Beast kindly, but don't stay away more than a week, for if you do, I shall die of grief, because I love you so dearly."

"How shall I reach home?" said Beauty; "I do not know the way."

Then the Beast gave her a ring, and told her to put it on her finger when she went to bed, turn the ruby towards the palm of her hand, and then she would wake up in her father's cottage. When she wanted to come back, she was to do the same thing

So in the morning, when she awoke, she found herself at her father's house, and the old man was beside himself with joy to see her safe and sound.

But her sisters did not welcome her very kindly, and when they heard how kind the beast was to her, they envied her her good luck in living in a beautiful palace, whilst they had to be content with a cottage.

"I wish we had gone," said Marigold. "Beauty always gets the best of everything."

"Tell us all about your grand palace," said Dressalinda, "and what you do, and how you spend your time."

So Beauty, thinking it would amuse them to hear, told them, and their envy increased day by day. At last Dressalinda said to Marigold:

"She has promised to return in a week. If we could only make her forget the day, the Beast might be angry and kill her, and then there would be a chance for us."

So on the day before she ought to have gone back, they put some poppy juice in a cup of wine which they gave her, and this made her so sleepy that she slept for two whole days and nights. At the end of that time her sleep grew troubled, and she dreamed that she saw the

Beast lying dead among the roses in the beautiful gardens of his palace; and from this dream she awoke crying bitterly.

Although she did not know that a week and two days had gone by since she left the Beast, yet after that dream she at once turned the ruby towards her palm, and the next morning there she was, sure enough, in her bed in the Beast's palace.

She did not know where his rooms in the palace were, but she felt she

could not wait till supper-time before seeing him, so she ran hither and thither, calling his name. But the palace was empty, and no one answered her when she called.

Then she ran through the gardens, calling his name again and again, but still there was silence.

"Oh! what shall I do if I cannot find him?" she said. "I shall never be happy again."

Then she remembered her dream, and ran to the rose garden, and there, sure enough, beside the basin of the big fountain, lay the poor Beast without any sign of life in him.

Beauty flung herself on her knees beside him.

"Oh, dear Beast," she cried, "and are you really dead? Alas! alas! then I, too, will die, for I cannot live without you."

Immediately the Beast opened his eyes, sighed, and said:

"Beauty, will you marry me?"

And Beauty, beside herself with joy when she found that he was still alive, answered:

"Yes, yes, dear Beast, for I love you dearly."

At these words the rough fur dropped to the ground, and in place of the Beast stood a handsome Prince, dressed in a doublet of white and silver, like one made ready for a wedding. He knelt at Beauty's feet and clasped her hands.

"Dear Beauty," he said, "nothing but your love could have disenchanted me. A wicked fairy turned me into a Beast, and condemned me to remain one until some fair and good maiden should love me well enough to marry me, in spite of my ugliness and stupidity. Now, dear one, the enchantment is broken; let us go back to my palace. You will find that all my servants—who, too, have been enchanted, and have waited on you all this long time with invisible hands—will now become visible."

So they returned to the palace, which by this time was crowded with courtiers, eager to kiss the hands of the Prince and his bride. And the Prince whispered to one of his attendants, who went out, and in a very little time came back with Beauty's father and sisters.

The sisters were condemned to be changed into statues, and to stand at the right and left of the palace gates until their hearts should be softened, and they should be sorry for their unkindness to their sister.

But Beauty, happily married to her Prince, went secretly to the statues every day and wept over them.

And by her tears their stony hearts were softened, and they were changed into flesh and blood again, and were good and kind for the rest of their lives.

And Beauty and the Beast, who was a Beast no more, but a handsome Prince, lived happily ever after.

And indeed I believe they are living happily still, in the beautiful land where dreams come true.

E. Nesbit.

THERE was once a poor miller, who had but one treasure in the whole wide world, and that was his lovely little daughter.

It happened that once he came before the King, and because no one spoke to him or noticed him in any way, the foolish fellow must needs take to boasting, in order to make himself of more account.

"I have a daughter," quoth he, "who can spin common straw into the finest gold."

The King at once turned to the miller. "If this be true," he cried, "your daughter would please me well. Bring her to the castle to-morrow morning, and we will put her to the proof."

So the maiden came, and the King led her into a room full of straw, gave her a spinning-wheel and spindle, and bade her set to work at once; for, he said, unless she wished to lose her life, she must spin the straw into gold before the morning dawned. Then he shut the door and left her all alone.

Poor little maid! what could she do? She knew no art by which

"Rumpelstiltzkin is my name."

she could spin straw into gold, and so at length she began to cry. Suddenly the door flew open, and in walked a tiny little man.

"Good evening, my maid," said he; "why do you sit and weep?"

"Alas!" answered the maiden, "the King has bidden me spin this straw into gold; but I know not how I shall set about it."

"What would you give me were I to do it for you?" asked the little man.

"My necklace," answered the maiden.

So the little man took it, seated himself at the wheel, and, with a whirr, whirr, whirr, the bobbin was full; then another and another, until, when the morning dawned, the straw was all spun and the bobbins were full of gold.

At sunrise came the King, and you can think how pleased he was to see the glittering gold. He should have been satisfied with what he had, but he was not; and taking the poor little girl into another room full of straw, much larger than the first, he commanded her, as she valued her life, to turn the whole of it into gold before the morning.

The maiden knew not what to do, and again began to weep, but just as before the door flew open and the little man appeared, and said:

"What will you give me if I spin the straw into gold?"

"The ring from my finger," answered she.

The mannikin took the ring. Again the wheel went whirring round, and by the morning the straw had all been spun into shining gold.

The King's joy was boundless, but still the sight of the gold only made him long for more. He took the poor girl into a room larger still than either of the others, and packed full of straw, and said to her:

"This must you spin before morning, and then I will make you my Queen."

For he thought to himself; "though she be but a miller's daughter, I could never hope to wed a richer wife."

When the maiden was left alone, the little man came to her for the third time, and said:

"What will you give me this time if I spin the straw for you?"

"I have nothing left to give you," she answered sadly.

"Promise me then that when you are Queen you will give me your first little child."

Rumpelstiltzkin Spinning.

The maiden knew not what to do, and as she thought that many strange things might happen before the time came for the promise to be fulfilled, she at last agreed to the little man's proposal. So the mannikin once more spun the straw into gold, and left her.

When the King came in the morning, and found that the miller's daughter had done his bidding, he ordered the marriage feast to be prepared, and made the beautiful little damsel his Queen.

Time passed on, and the fairies brought her a sweet baby Prince; but she had forgotten all about her promise to the little man, when suddenly he entered her chamber, and cried:

"Give me that which thou hast promised!"

The Queen shrank back in horror, and offered the mannikin all the riches in her kingdom if only he would leave her her little child, but the little man said:

"No; a little living boy is dearer to me than all the treasures in the world."

Then the Queen wept and wailed so bitterly that the little man began to pity her.

"I will give you three days' time," he said, "in which to guess my name. If you can tell it to me at the end of that time you shall keep your child."

The whole night long the Queen sat and thought of all the names she had ever heard; she sent also a messenger throughout the land to collect whatever names he could.

The next day the little man came, and the Queen began to say every name she had thought of—Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar, and so on, one after another, but to every name the little man said: "No."

The second day she made inquiries in the neighbouring country, and heard many very unusual and strange names; so when the little man came she asked him:

"Are you called Ramshead or Crookedlegs?"

But he answered as before: "No, that is not my name."

On the third day the messenger returned, and said to the Queen:

"Not one single new name have I heard, your majesty, but as I was passing through a lonely corner of the wood, where the fox and the hare meet to say good-night, I saw a little house, and before the house burnt

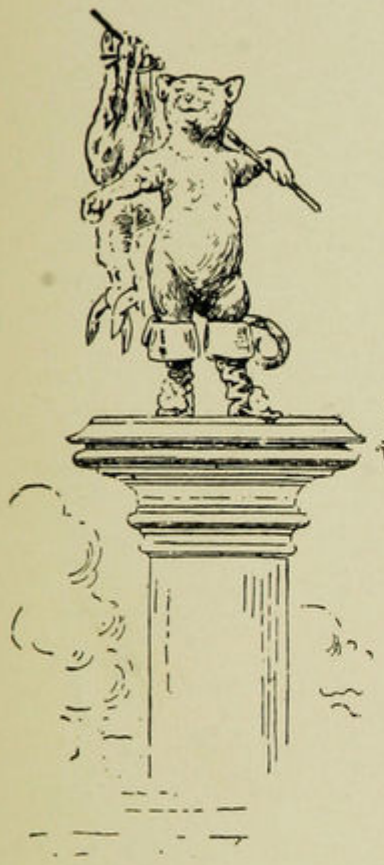
a fire, and round the fire danced upon one leg a queer little man, and as he danced he sang :—

"'To-day I bake, to-morrow I brew,
Then, little prince, I will come for you;
For no one knows, no matter his fame,
That Rumpelstiltzkin is my name.'"

The Queen's heart beat fast for joy; and as soon as the little man entered and asked: "Now, fair Queen, canst thou tell me my name?" she answered: "Is it Conrad?" "No." "Henry?" "No." "Then perhaps it is Rumpelstiltzkin?"

"What wicked little elf has told you that?" screamed the little man, beside himself with rage.

In his anger he stamped his foot so violently that it entered the ground and held him fast, and in his efforts to free himself the poor little mannikin tore himself in two.



Puss in Boots

ONCE upon a time there was a miller, who was so poor that at his death he had nothing to leave to his three children but his mill, his ass, and his cat. The eldest son took the mill, and the second the ass, so there was nothing left for poor Jack but to take Puss.

Jack could not help thinking that he had been treated shabbily. "My brothers will be able to earn an honest livlihood," he sighed, "but as for me, though Puss may feed himself by catching mice, I shall certainly die of hunger."

The cat, who had overheard his young master, jumped upon his shoulder, and, rubbing himself gently against his cheek, began to speak. "Dear master," said he, "do not grieve. I am not as useless as you think me, and will undertake to make your fortune for you, if only you will buy me a pair of boots, and give me that old bag."

Now, Jack had very little money to spare, but knowing Puss to be a faithful old friend, he made up his mind to trust him, and so spent all he possessed upon a smart pair of boots made of buff-coloured leather. They fitted perfectly, so Puss put them on, took the old bag which his master gave him, and trotted off to a neighbouring warren in which he knew there was a great number of rabbits.

Having put some bran and fresh parsley into the bag, he laid it upon the ground, hid himself, and waited. Presently, two foolish little rabbits,

sniffing the food, ran straight into the bag, when the clever cat drew the strings and caught them.

Then, slinging the bag over his shoulder, he hastened off to the palace, where he asked to speak to the King. Having been shown into the royal presence, he bowed and said:

"Sire, my Lord the Marquis of Carabas has commanded me to present these rabbits to your Majesty, with his respects."

The monarch having desired his thanks to be given to the Marquis (who, as you will guess, was really our poor Jack), then ordered his head cook to dress the rabbits for dinner, and he and his daughter partook of them with great enjoyment.

Day by day Puss brought home stores of good food, so that he and his master lived in plenty, and besides that, he did not fail to keep the King and his courtiers well supplied with game.

Sometimes he would lay a brace of partridges at the royal feet, sometimes a fine large hare, but whatever it was, it always came with the same message: "From my Lord the Marquis of Carabas"; so that everyone at Court was talking of this strange nobleman, whom no one had ever seen, but who sent such generous presents to his Majesty.

At length Puss decided that it was time for his master to be introduced at Court. So one day he persuaded him to go and bathe in a river near, having heard that the King would soon pass that way.

Jack stood shivering up to his neck in water, wondering what was to happen next when suddenly the King's carriage appeared in sight. At once Puss began to call out as loudly as he could:

"Help, help! My Lord the Marquis of Carabas is drowning!"

The King put his head out of the carriage window and, recognising the cat, ordered his attendants to go to the assistance of the Marquis. While Jack was being taken out of the water, Puss ran to the King and told him that some robbers had run off with his master's

clothes whilst he was bathing, the truth of the matter being that the cunning cat had hidden them under a stone.

On hearing this story the King instantly despatched one of his grooms to fetch a handsome suit of purple and gold from the royal wardrobe, and arrayed in this, Jack, who was a fine, handsome fellow, looked so well that no one for a moment supposed but that he was some noble foreign lord.

The King and his daughter were so pleased with his appearance that they invited him into their carriage. At first Jack hesitated, for he felt a little shy about sitting next to a Princess, but she smiled at him so sweetly, and was so kind and gentle, that he soon forgot his fears and fell in love with her there and then.

As soon as Puss had seen his master seated in the royal carriage, he whispered directions to the coachman, and then ran on ahead as fast as he could trot, until he came to a field of corn, where the reapers were busy.

"Reapers," said he fiercely, "the King will shortly pass this way. If he should ask you to whom this field belongs, remember that you say, 'To the Marquis of Carabas.' If you dare to disobey me, I will have you all chopped up as fine as mincemeat." The reapers were so afraid the cat would keep his word that they promised to obey. Puss then ran on and told all the other labourers whom he met to give the same answer, threatening them with terrible punishments if they disobeyed.

Now, the King was in a very good humour, for the day was fine, and he found the Marquis a very pleasant companion, so he told the coachman to drive slowly, in order that he might admire the beautiful country. "What a fine field of wheat!" he said presently. "To whom does it belong?" Then the men answered as they had been told: "To our Lord the Marquis of Carabas." Next they met a herd of cattle, and again to the King's question, "To whom do they belong?" they were told, "To the Marquis of Carabas." And it was the same with everything they passed.

The Marquis listened with the greatest astonishment, and thought what a very wonderful cat his dear Puss was; and the King was delighted to find that his new friend was as wealthy as he was charming.

Meanwhile Puss, who was well in advance of the Royal party, had arrived at a stately castle, which belonged to a cruel Ogre, the richest ever known, for all the lands the King had admired so much belonged to him. Puss knocked at the door and asked to see the Ogre, who received him quite civily, for he had never seen a cat in boots before, and the sight amused him.

So he and Puss were soon chatting away together.

The Ogre, who was very conceited, began to boast of what clever tricks he could play, and Puss sat and listened, with a smile on his face.

"I once heard, great Ogre," he said at last, "that you possessed the power of changing yourself into any kind of animal you chose—a lion or an elephant, for instance."

"Well, so I can," replied the Ogre.

"Dear me! how much I should like to see you do it now," said Puss sweetly.

The Ogre was only too pleased to find a chance of showing how very clever he was, so he promised to transform himself into any animal Puss might mention.

"Oh! I will leave the choice to you," said the cat politely.

Immediately there appeared where the Ogre had been seated, an enormous lion, roaring, and lashing with its tail, and looking as though it meant to gobble the cat up in a trice.

Puss was really very much frightened, and, jumping out of the window, managed to scramble on to the roof, though he could scarcely hold on to the tiles on account of his high-heeled boots.

There he sat, refusing to come down, until the Ogre changed himself into his natural form, and laughingly called to him that he would not hurt him.

Then Puss ventured back into the room, and began to compliment the Ogre on his cleverness.

"Of course, it was all very wonderful," he said, "but it would be more wonderful still if you, who are so great and fierce, could transform yourself into some timid little creature, such as a mouse. That, I suppose, would be quite impossible?"

"Not at all," said the vain Ogre; "one is quite as easy to me as the other, as I will show you." And in a moment a little brown mouse was frisking about all over the floor, whilst the Ogre had vanished.

"Now or never," said Puss, and with a spring he seized the mouse and gobbled it up as fast as he could.

At the same moment all the gentlemen and ladies whom the wicked Ogre had held in his castle under a spell, became disenchanted. They were so grateful to their deliverer that they would have done anything to please him, and readily agreed to enter into the service of the Marquis of Carabas when Puss asked them to do so.

So now the cat had a splendid castle, which he knew to be full of heaped-up treasures, at his command, and ordering a magnificent feast to be prepared, he took up his station at the castle gates to welcome his master and the royal party.

As soon as the castle appeared in sight, the King enquired whose it was, "For," said he, "I have never seen a finer."

Then Puss, bowing low, threw open the castle gates, and cried:

"May it please your Majesty to alight and enter the home of the most noble the Marquis of Carabas."

Full of surprise, the King turned to the Marquis. "Is this splendid castle indeed yours?" he asked "Not even our own palace is more beautiful, and doubtless it is as splendid within as without."

Puss then helped his Majesty to alight, and conducted him into the castle, where a group of noble gentlemen and fair ladies were waiting to receive them. Jack, or the Marquis as he was now called, gave his hand to the young Princess, and led her to the banquet. Long and merrily they feasted, and when at length the guests rose to depart, the King embraced the Marquis, and called him his dear son; and the Princess blushed so charm-

"Help! help! the Marquis is drowning!"

ingly and looked so shy and sweet, that Jack ventured to lay his heart and fortune at her feet.

And so the miller's son married the King's daughter, and there were great rejoicings throughout the land.

On the evening of the wedding-day a great ball was given, to which princes and noblemen from far and near were invited. Puss opened the ball, wearing for the occasion a pair of boots made of the finest leather, with gold tassels and scarlet heels. I only wish you could have seen him.

When the old King died, the Princess and her husband reigned in his stead, and their most honoured and faithful friend at Court was Puss himself, for his master never forgot to whom he owed all his good fortune. He lived upon the daintiest meat and most delicious cream, and was petted and made much of all the days of his life, and never again ran after mice and rats, except for exercise and amusement.

THERE was once a man who had three sons. Johnny, the youngest, was always looked upon as the simpleton of the family, and had very little consideration or kindness shown him.

It happened one day that the eldest son was going out into the wood to cut fuel; and before he started, his mother gave him a slice of rich plum-cake and a flask of wine, so that he might not suffer from hunger or thirst.

Just as he reached the wood, he met a queer little old man, dressed in grey, who wished him "Good day," and begged for a piece of the young man's cake and a drink of wine.

But the greedy youth replied: "If I were to give you cake and wine, I should not have enough left for myself; so be off with you, and leave me in peace."

Then he pushed the little man rudely on one side and went his way. He soon came to a likely-looking tree, and began to hew it down, but he made a false stroke, and instead of striking the tree he buried his axe in his own arm, and was obliged to hurry home as fast as he could to have the wound dressed.

And this was what came of offending the little grey man!

The following day the second son set out to the wood, and his mother treated him just as she had done her eldest son—gave him a slice of cake and a flask of wine, in case he should feel hungry. The little grey man met him at the entrance to the wood, and begged for a share of his food, but the young man answered:

"The more I give to you, the less I have for myself. Be off with you."

Then he left the little grey man standing in the road, and went on his way. But it was not long before he, too, was punished; for the first stroke he aimed at a tree glanced aside and wounded his leg, so that he was obliged to be carried home.

Then said the Simpleton: "Father, let me go to the wood for once. *I* will bring you home plenty of fuel."

"Nonsense," answered the father. "Both your brothers have got into trouble, and it is not likely that I am going to trust you."

But Johnny would not give up the idea, and worried his father, till at last he said:

"Very well, my son, have your own way. You shall learn by experience that I know better than you."

There was no rich cake for the Simpleton of the family. His mother just gave him a little loaf of dough and a bottle of sour beer.

No sooner did he reach the wood than the little grey man appeared.

"Give me a piece of your cake and a drink of your wine?" said he.

But the young man told him he had only a dough loaf and a bottle of sour beer.

"Still," said he, "you are welcome to a share of the food, such as it is."

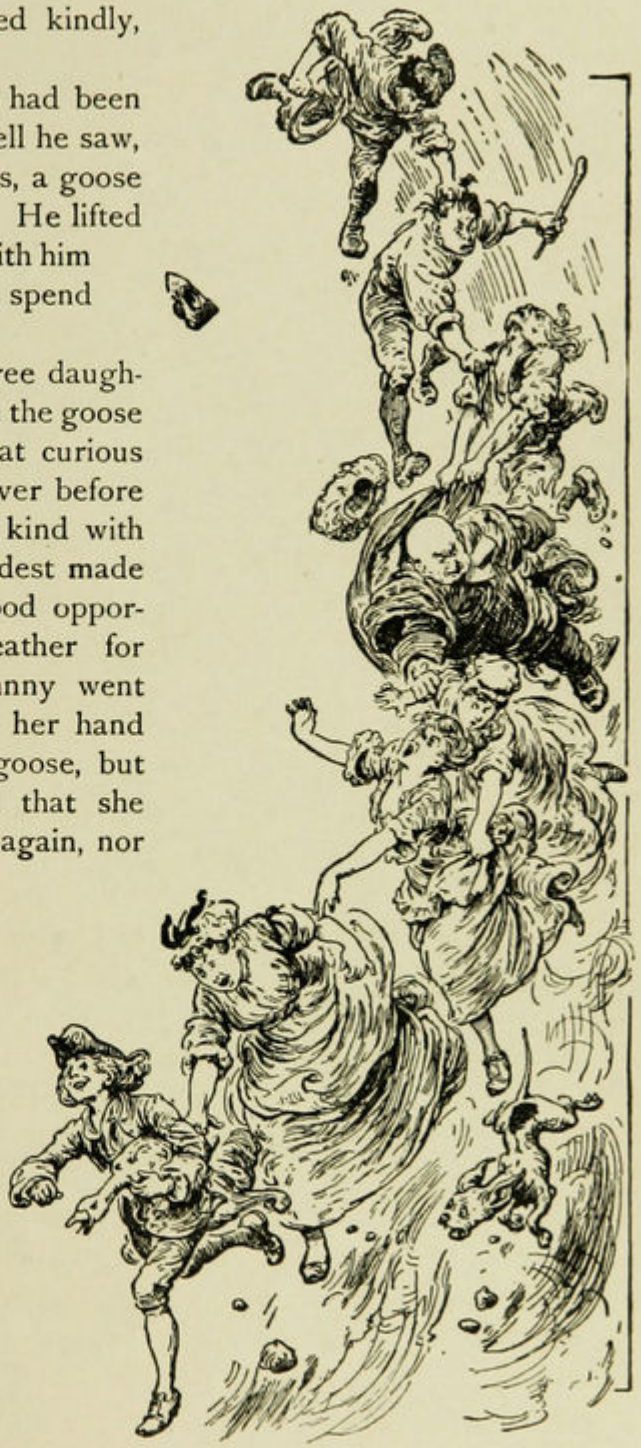
So the two sat down together; but when Johnny took his humble fare from his pocket, what was his surprise to find it changed into the most delicious cake and wine. Then the young man and his guest made a hearty meal, and when it was ended the little grey man said:

"Because you have such a kind heart, and have willingly shared your food with me, I am going to reward you. Yonder stands an old tree: hew it down, and deep in the heart of the roots you will find something."

The old man then nodded kindly, and disappeared in a moment.

Johnny at once did as he had been told, and as soon as the tree fell he saw, sitting in the midst of the roots, a goose with feathers of purest gold. He lifted it carefully out, and carried it with him to the inn, where he meant to spend the night.

Now, the landlord had three daughters, and no sooner did they see the goose than they wanted to know what curious kind of bird it might be, for never before had they seen a fowl of any kind with feathers of pure gold. The eldest made up her mind to wait for a good opportunity and then pluck a feather for herself. So as soon as Johnny went out of the room she put out her hand and seized the wing of the goose, but what was her horror to find that she could not unclasp her fingers again, nor even move her hand from the golden goose!



Very soon the second sister came creeping into the room, meaning also to steal a feather; but no sooner did she touch her sister than she, too, was unable to draw her hand away.

Lastly came the third, anxious to secure a feather before the goose's master returned.

"Go away! go away!" screamed her two sisters, but

she could not understand why she should not help herself as well as the others.

So she paid no heed to their cries, but came towards them and stretched out her hand to the goose.

In doing so she touched her second sister, and then, alas! she, too, was held fast.

They pulled and tugged with might and main, but it was all of no use; they could not get away, and there they had to remain the whole night.

The next morning Johnny tucked the goose under his arm, and went on his way, never troubling himself about the three girls hanging on behind.

Then what a dance he led them: over hedges and ditches, highways and byways! Wherever he led they were bound to follow. Half way across a sunny meadow, they met the parson, who was terribly shocked to see the three girls running after a young man.

"For shame!" he cried angrily, and seized the youngest by the hand to drag her away.

But no sooner did he touch her than the poor parson was made fast too, and had to run behind the girls, whether he would or no.

They had scarcely gone half a dozen paces before they met the sexton, who stared with astonishment to see his master running at the heels of the three girls.

"Hi! stop, your reverence," he cried. "You will be late for the christening."

He seized the parson's sleeve as he ran past him, but the poor sexton had to join the procession too.

So now there were five of them, and just as they turned a corner the parson saw two peasants, and called to them to set him and his sexton free.

They threw down their spades at once and tried to do so, but they too, stuck fast, and so Johnny had a fine string of seven folk hanging on to the wing of his golden goose.

On and on they ran, until at length they came into the country of a powerful King.

This King had an only daughter, who all her life had been so sad

that no one had ever been able to make her laugh. So the King made a decree that the man who could bring a smile to his daughter's face should have her for his bride.

When Johnny heard what the King had promised, he at once made his way into the princess's presence, and when she saw the goose, with the seven queer-looking companions hanging on behind, she burst into such a hearty fit of laughter that it was thought she would never be able to stop again.

Of course, the Simpleton claimed her as his bride, but the King did not fancy him for a son-in-law, so he made all sorts of excuses.

"You shall have her," said he, "if you can first bring me a man who can drink up a whole cellarful of wine."

Johnny at once remembered the little grey man, and, feeling sure that he would help him, he set out for the wood where he had first met him.

When he reached the stump of the old tree which he had himself hewn down, he noticed a man sitting beside it, with a face as gloomy as a rainy day.

Johnny asked politely what ailed him, and the man answered—

"I suffer from a thirst I cannot quench. Cold water disagrees with me, and though I have, it is true, emptied a barrel of wine, it was no more to me than a single drop of water upon a hot stone."

You can think how pleased Johnny was to hear these words. He took the man to the King's cellar, where he seated himself before the huge barrels, and drank and drank till, at the end of the day, not a drop of wine was left.

Then Johnny claimed his bride, but the King could not make up his mind to give his daughter to "a ne'er-do-weel" who went by such a name as "Simpleton."

So he made fresh excuses, and said that he would not give her up until the young man had found someone who could eat up a mountain of bread in a single day.

So the young man had no choice but to set out once more for the wood.

And again he found a man sitting beside the stump of the tree. He was very sad and hungry-looking, and sat tightening the belt round his waist.

"I have eaten a whole ovenful of bread," he said sadly, "but when one is as hungry as I am, such a meal only serves to make one more hungry still. I am so empty that if I did not tighten my belt I should die of hunger."

"You are the man for me!" said Johnny. "Follow me, and I will give you a meal that will satisfy even your hunger."

He led the man into the courtyard of the King's palace, where all the meal in the kingdom had been collected together and mixed into an enormous mountain of bread.

The man from the wood placed himself in front of it and began to eat, and before the day was over the mountain of bread had vanished.

A third time the Simpleton demanded his bride, but again the King found an excuse.

"First bring me a ship that can sail both on land and sea, and then you shall wed the princess," he said.

Johnny went straightway to the wood, where he met the little grey man with whom he had once shared his food.

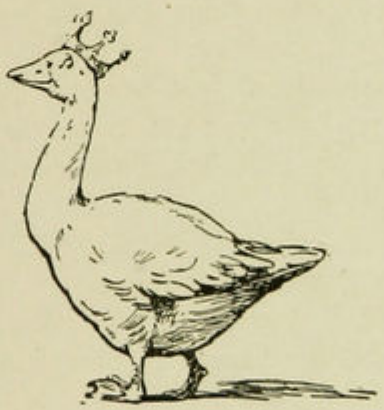
"Good day," he said, nodding his wise little head. "So you've come to

visit me again, eh? It was I, you know, who drank the wine and ate the bread for you, and now I will finish by giving you the wonderful ship which is to sail on either land or sea. All this I do for you because you were kind and good to me."

Then he gave him the ship, and when the King saw it he could find no further excuse.

So he gave the young man his daughter, and the pair were married that very day.

When the old King died, the Simpleton became King in his stead, and he and his wife lived happily ever after.



THE STAR FLORINS

THERE was once a little girl whose father and mother were dead, and who was so poor that she no longer had a little room in which to live, nor a little bed in which to sleep; and at last she had nothing more than the clothes on her body, and a small piece of bread in her hand, which a kind soul had given her.

But she was a good and pious little maid, and when she found herself forsaken by all the world, she went into the fields trusting in God.

There she met a poor man, who said: "Oh! give me something to eat, I am so hungry." The child gave him all her piece of bread, saying, as she handed it to him: "God bless thee," and went farther. Then she met a little girl who was crying bitterly, and who said: "Give me something to cover my head, it is so cold!" So she took off her own little hood and gave it her.

When she had gone still farther, she met another child that had no coat, so she gave away her own; and presently she met another who begged for her petticoat, and this she also parted with.

At last she reached the forest, and as it was growing dusk, she met a fourth, who asked for her little shirt, and the good little maiden said to herself: "It is a dark night, no one can see me, so I can easily give away my little shirt." So she took it off, and when she stood alone and unclothed, having nothing more in the world, suddenly the silver stars in heaven fell softly to the earth all around her, and they turned one by one to solid bright florins, and in the place of the little shirt she had given away she found herself clothed in a new one that was made of such fine linen that it was like silk.

Then the child picked up the glittering star-money, which made her rich all the rest of her life-time.