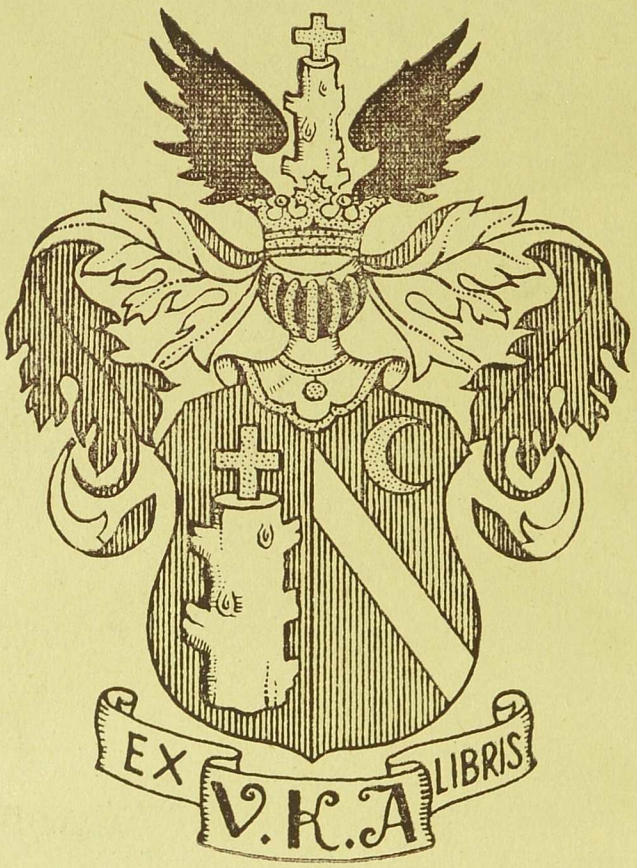
Hans Christian Andersen's

Fairy Tales



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FAIRY TALES AND STORIES.

BY

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH

BY CARL SIEWERS.

WITH MORE THAN 200 ILLUSTRATIONS BY EMINENT SCANDINAVIAN ARTISTS

SPECIALLY DRAWN FOR THIS EDITION.

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FAIRY TALES AND STORIES.

I.

THE TINDER-BOX.



A SOLDIER came marching along the high-road—one, two! one, two! He had his knapsack on his back and a sword by his side, as he had been in the wars and was now returning home. Then he met an old witch on the road; she was frightfully ugly, and her under-lip hung right down on her chest. Says she, "Good evening, soldier! What a fine sword and big knapsack you have got! You seem indeed a real soldier, and now you shall have as much money as you care about."

"Thank you, old witch," said the soldier.

"You see that big tree there," said the witch, pointing to a tree close by. "It is hollow, and you shall climb up to the top, when you will see a hole, through which you will slide to the bottom. I will fasten a rope round your body, and haul you up when you call to me."

"What shall I do in the tree?" said the soldier.

"Fetch money," replied the witch. "When you reach the bottom you will find yourself in a great corridor light as day, for hundreds of lamps are burning there. Then you will see three doors which you can open, as the keys are in the holes. When you enter the first chamber you will see a large trunk in the middle of the floor, on which sits a dog with eyes as big as a pair of teacups; but don't let that frighten you. I give you my blue check apron, which you spread on the floor; then go straight up to the dog and place him on it. You may then open the trunk and take as much money as you like. It's all copper; but if you prefer silver, go into the next chamber, where there sits a dog with eyes as big as windmills. But don't let that frighten you; put him simply on my apron, and take the money. Should you, however, prefer gold, you can have it, and as much as you can carry, if you go into the third chamber. But the dog which sits on the trunk there has eyes as big as the Round Tower.[1] That *is* a dog, I can tell you. But don't be afraid of him; only put him on my apron, and he won't touch you, and then take as much gold from the trunk as you like."

"That's not a bad offer," said the soldier. "But what are you to have, old witch? Some of it you want too, of course."

"No," said the witch, "not a single coin do I want. You shall only fetch me an old tinder-box, which my grandmother forgot when she was last down there."

"Well, tie the rope round me, then," said the soldier.

"Here it is," said the witch, "and here is my apron."

And so the soldier climbed up the tree, slid through the hole, and stood next in the great corridor, where hundreds of lamps were burning. Lo! there sat the dog with eyes as big as teacups, staring at him.

"You are a nice fellow," said the soldier, placed him on the witch's apron, took as many copper coins as he could get into his pockets, locked the trunk, put the dog back on it, and went into the next chamber. Lo! there sat the dog with the eyes as big as windmills.

"You should n't stare at me so," said the soldier, "it might injure your eyes." And so he placed the dog on the witch's apron; but when he saw all the silver coin in the trunk he threw away all the copper ones, and filled his pockets and his knapsack with silver instead.

[1] The tower of the Trinity Church in Copenhagen. — TR.

Then he went into the third chamber. What a terrible sight! The dog there had really eyes as big as the Round Tower, and they rolled around in his head like wheels.

"Good evening," said the soldier, and touched his cap, as he had never seen such a dog before. But having had a good look at him he thought that would do, lifted him on to the floor, and opened the trunk. Dear me, what a quantity of gold! With that he could have bought the whole of the capital, all the gingerbread pigs, and all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the whole world. Then the soldier threw away all the silver coin with which he had filled his pockets and knapsack, and put gold into them instead, as well as in his boots and cap, so that he was hardly able to walk. Now he had indeed money! The dog he placed on the trunk, slammed the door, and called to the witch: —

"Now, haul me up, old witch!"

"Have you got the tinder-box?" asked the witch.

"Really," said the soldier, "I had quite forgotten that," and went back to fetch it. The witch hauled him up, and he stood again in the road, with pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap full of money.

"What are you going to do with that tinder-box?" asked the soldier.

"That 's no business of yours," said the witch. "You have got your money. Give me then the tinder-box."

"Nonsense," said the soldier. "Tell me at once what you want to do with it, or I draw my sword and cut your head off."

"No, I won't!" said the witch.

So the soldier cut her head off. There she lay! But he tied up all the money in her apron, slung the bundle on his back, put the tinder-box in his pocket, and made straight for the town. It was a pretty town, and he put up at the best inn, engaged the very finest rooms, and ordered the dishes he liked best, because now with all the money he had he was a rich man. True, the waiter who cleaned his boots thought that they were rather a queer pair of old things for such a rich gentleman; but he had not yet bought new ones. The next day he obtained fine boots and clothes; and now the soldier had become quite a swell, and the people told him about all the beautiful things to be found in the town, about the King, and how lovely the Princess his daughter was.

"Where is she to be seen?" asked the soldier.

"She is not to be seen at all," they all said; "she lives in a great copper castle, with such a number of walls and towers around it!

Nobody but the King is allowed to visit her, because it has been prophesied that she shall marry a private, and that the King cannot endure."

"I should indeed like to see her," thought the soldier; but that was of course out of the question.

Now he lived a merry life, went to the theatre, drove in the park, and gave much money to the poor; and that was kind of him. He knew from former days how hard it was not to have a penny. He was rich now, had fine clothes, and made many friends, who all said that he was a very good fellow and a real gentleman, and the soldier liked to hear that. But as he paid away money every day and had none in return, he had soon only a few coppers left, and was obliged to remove from the splendid rooms he had occupied, to a small garret right up under the roof, clean his own boots and patch them with a darning-needle, and none of his friends came to see him any more, as there were so many stairs to mount.

It was a pitch-dark evening, and he could not even afford to buy a candle, when he remembered that there was a little bit in the tinder-box, which he had fetched from the hollow tree into which the witch had helped him. He brought out the tinder-box and the bit of candle; but as soon as he struck fire and the sparks flew from the flint, the door sprang open and the dog with eyes as big as teacups, which he had seen down in the tree, stood before him and said, "What are your orders, Sir?"

"What does this mean?" said the soldier. "That is indeed something like a tinder-box. Can I thus get what I ask for? Get me some money, then," he said to the dog, which was gone in an instant, and returned as quickly with a bag of money in its mouth.

Yes, now the soldier knew what a splendid tinder-box it was. If he struck it once, the dog sitting on the trunk with the copper coin appeared; if twice, that sitting on the trunk with the silver ones; and if three times, the one on that with gold in it.

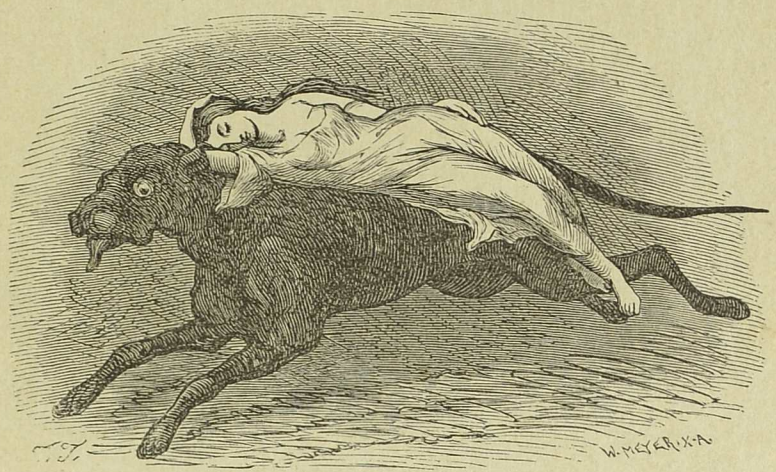
Now he moved back to his splendid rooms, and again dressed in his fine clothes, and all his former friends welcomed him and courted him again very much.

Once he said to himself: "It is strange that that Princess is not to be seen. She is so lovely everybody says; but what's the good of that, if she is always to be locked up in that great copper castle with the many towers? Cannot I possibly get a look at her? Where is my

tinder-box?" And then he struck fire, and lo! there was the dog with eyes as big as teacups.

"It is certainly midnight," said the soldier; "but I should so very much like to see the Princess only for a moment."

The dog at once ran out, and before the soldier knew of it was back with the Princess. She lay sleeping on the dog's back, and was so lovely that everybody could see she was a real Princess. The soldier could not help kissing her, as he was a true soldier. The dog ran back with the Princess; but the next morning, at the King and Queen's break-



"EVERYBODY COULD SEE SHE WAS A REAL PRINCESS."

fast, the Princess said she had had such a funny dream in the night, of a dog and a soldier. She had ridden on the dog's back, and the soldier had kissed her.

"That is indeed a nice story," said the Queen.

The following night one of the old ladies of the court had to watch by the bed of the Princess in order to see if it really was a dream, or what it might be.

The soldier longed immensely to see the Princess again, and in the night the dog came, took her on his back, and ran off as fast as he could; but the old lady put on hunting-boots and followed just as quickly. When she saw them disappearing in a big house, she thought, "Now I know where it is," and made a cross with a piece of chalk on the door of the house. Then she went home to bed, and soon the dog came back with the Princess; but when he saw that a cross had been made on the door of the house where the soldier lived, he too took a

piece of chalk and made a cross on all the doors of the town; and that was cleverly done, as now the old lady could not find the right one, there being crosses on all.

Early in the morning the King, the Queen, the old lady, and all the officers of the court went forth to see where the Princess had been.

"Here it is," said the King, seeing the first door with a cross on it.

"No, it is there, my dear," said the Queen, seeing another with a cross on.

"But there is one, and there is another," they all said. Wherever they turned their eyes there were crosses on the doors, and they saw it was useless to try to find the right one.



"'NO, IT IS THERE, MY DEAR,' SAID THE QUEEN."

But the Queen was a very clever woman, who knew more than driving about in a carriage. She took her great gold scissors, cut up a large piece of silk and made a neat little bag, which she filled with grits and tied it to the Princess's back, and then cut a hole in the bag so that the grits should run out all along the road the Princess took.

The next night the dog came back, took the Princess on his back and ran with her to the soldier, who loved her dearly, and wished he was a prince so that he might marry her.

The dog did not notice the grits trailing behind, right from the castle to the soldier's window, where he ran up along the wall with the Princess.

In the morning the King and Queen saw plainly where their daughter had been, and so the soldier was arrested and put in jail.

There he was now, and oh! how dark and dismal it was there; and then they told him, "To-morrow you are to be hanged." That was not pleasant to hear, and he had left the tinder-box at the inn.

In the morning he could see, through the bars of the little window, people hurrying out of the town to see him hanged. He heard the drums beaten and saw the soldiers march past. Every one was on his legs. There was even a cobbler's 'prentice with his apron and slippers on, who ran so fast that one of the slippers flew off his foot and right up against the wall where the soldier sat looking through the bars.



"BUT THE BIGGEST DOG SEIZED BOTH HIM AND THE QUEEN."

"Hi! here, you cobbler's 'prentice," shouted the soldier. "You need not be in such a hurry, as nothing will be done till I come.[1] But if you will run to where I lived, and fetch me my tinder-box, I will give you a shilling; but mind you make use of your legs."

The cobbler's 'prentice liked to earn the shilling, and ran as fast as he could to fetch the tinder-box, which he gave to the soldier, and — yes, now you shall hear!

Outside the town a high gallows had been erected, and around it stood soldiers and thousands of people. The King and Queen sat on a beautiful throne right opposite the judge and the whole council.

The soldier stood already on the top of the ladder; but as they were

[1] Has since become a common adage in Scandinavia. — TR.

putting the rope around his neck, he said that the condemned was always granted an innocent wish before he suffered his punishment. He would so much like a smoke; it would be the last in this world.

The King could not well refuse this; and so the soldier took his tinder-box and struck fire. One — two — three, and there stood all three dogs before him: that with eyes as big as teacups, that with eyes as big as windmills, and that with eyes as big as the Round Tower. "Now help me not to be hung!" said the soldier; and so the dogs rushed at the judge and the whole council, seized one by the leg and



"AND THE DOGS, TOO, SAT AT TABLE."

another by the nose, and threw them so high into the air that they were smashed into bits.

"I won't," said the King; but the biggest dog seized both him and the Queen and threw them after the others.

Then all the soldiers became frightened; and the people shouted, "Dear soldier, you shall be King and have the lovely Princess."

So they seated the soldier in the King's carriage, and the three dogs jumped before it and shouted, "Hurrah!" The boys whistled with their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The Princess came forth from the copper castle and became Queen, which pleased her well enough. The marriage feast lasted a whole week, and the dogs, too, sat at table staring about with their big eyes.

II.

LITTLE KLAUS AND BIG KLAUS.

In a village there lived two men both with the same name, both being named Klaus; but one had four horses and the other only one, and in order to distinguish between them, the one who had four horses was called Big Klaus, and the one who had only one, Little Klaus. Now you shall hear what happened to them both, as this is a true story.

All through the week Little Klaus was compelled to plough for Big Klaus, and lend him his only horse; and in return for this, Big Klaus helped him with his four, but only once a-week, and that was on Sunday.[1] Hi! Hi! how Little Klaus cracked his whip over the five horses! they were as good as his own on that day. The sun shone brightly, and the church-bells called people to service. They were all dressed in their best, and had prayer-books under their arms, and they looked at Little Klaus who ploughed with five horses, who in return, feeling very pleased, cracked his whip and called out, "Gee, woh! all my horses!"

"You must n't say that," said Big Klaus, "you know only one is yours."

But when some more church people went by Little Klaus forgot he was not to say that, and again called out, "Gee, woh! all my horses!"

"Now I shall trouble you not to say that," said Big Klaus; "because if you say it once more I will kill your horse, and there is an end of it."

"I promise I won't say it again," said Little Klaus; but when people again passed, and they nodded "How are you," he felt so proud, and thought it looked so grand to have five horses to plough with, that he again cracked his whip and called out, "Gee, woh! all my horses!"

"I will 'Gee, woh!' your horses, I will," said Big Klaus, and seizing a big wooden club, struck Little Klaus's only horse on the head and it fell down dead.

[1] A custom not uncommon in Scandinavia. — Tr.

"Oh dear! oh dear! now I have no horse," said Little Klaus, and began to cry. Then he flayed the horse, dried the skin well, put it in a sack, which he flung on his back, and set out for the town to sell it.

He had a long way to walk, and the road lay through a big, dark forest, when a terrible storm came on. He lost his way, and before he found it again evening set in, and he was too far away from the town and his own home to reach either before nightfall.

Close to the road lay a big farm; the shutters were closed, but the light within penetrated through the chinks above.



"'I WILL "GEE WOH!" YOUR HORSES, I WILL,' SAID BIG KLAUS."

"There I may be allowed to remain for the night," thought Little Klaus, and went up and knocked at the door.

The farmer's wife unlocked it, but having heard his supplication, asked him to be off, as her husband was away and she did not want any guests.

"Well, I must stay outside then," said Little Klaus; and the farmer's wife shut the door in his face.

Close by stood a haystack, and between that and the house, there was a little shed with a flat thatched roof.

"I can sleep up there," said Little Klaus, seeing the roof. "It is a fine bed; but I hope the stork won't come down and bite my legs." For on the roof stood a live stork which had its nest there.

So Little Klaus climbed up on to the shed, where he lay for a while, turning hither and thither to find a comfortable place. The shutters

before the windows did not quite close at the top, so that he could see straight into the room.

There was a big table laid, with wine, roast beef, and a splendid fish. The farmer's wife and the sexton were alone at table, and she filled his glass, while he made short work of the fish, as that was something he was very fond of.

"Oh, if I could only get a bit!" said Little Klaus, stretching his head right opposite the window. Oh, what a delicious cake he also saw! There was, indeed, a feast!

Then he heard somebody approaching on horseback in the road; it was the farmer coming home.

He was a very kind fellow, but had the peculiar weakness of not being able to tolerate sextons. If he saw one he became nearly mad with rage. It was for this reason that the sexton had called on his wife when he knew the farmer was away, and of course the good woman had put before him the best things she had got.

When they heard the husband coming they became so frightened that the wife asked the sexton to hide in a big, empty trunk standing in a corner, which he did, knowing that the poor husband could not bear the sight of a sexton. The woman quickly hid all the choice dishes and the wine in the oven, as, if her husband had seen them, he was sure to have asked what they meant.

"Oh, oh!" sighed Little Klaus on the roof, when he saw all the good things disappear.

"Is there anybody up there?" asked the farmer, looking up at Little Klaus. "Why do you lie there? Much better for you to come indoors." And Little Klaus told him how he had lost his way, and begged him to let him stay the night.

"Certainly," said the farmer. "But we must first have something to eat."

The wife received them both most kindly, laid the table, and gave them a big dish of porridge. The farmer was hungry and eat with good appetite; but Little Klaus could not get the thought out of his mind of the splendid roast beef, the fish, and the cake, which he knew were in the oven.

Under the table by his feet he had flung the sack containing the horse-hide, which we know he had with him to sell in town. The porridge would not go down; so he trod on the sack, and the dry hide in it crackled quite audibly.

"Be quiet," said Little Klaus, but trod at the same moment again on it, so that it crackled louder than before.

"What have you got in your sack?" asked the farmer.

"Oh, it's a sorcerer," said Little Klaus. "He says that we ought not to eat porridge, as he has filled the whole oven with roast beef, fish, and cake by his sorcery."

"What!" exclaimed the farmer, and opened the door, where he beheld all the choice food his wife had hidden, but which he believed were brought there by sorcery. The wife did not dare to say anything, but placed the food at once on the table; and so they eat both the fish and the beef, and the cake into the bargain.

Again Little Klaus trod on the sack, making the hide crackle.

"What does he say now?" asked the farmer.

"He says he has also brought us three bottles of wine, which are in the oven."

The wife had to produce the wine she had hidden, and the farmer drank and became quite merry; such a sorcerer as that Little Klaus had in his sack he would much like to possess.

"Can he call up the devil, too?" asked the farmer. "I would like to see him as I am merry now."

"I tell you," said Little Klaus, "my sorcerer can do everything I command. Cannot you?" he inquired, treading on the sack so that it crackled. "Can you hear him saying yes? But the devil is so ugly that you had better not see him."

"Oh, I am not afraid; I only wonder what he is like."

"Why, he is exactly like a sexton!"

"Whew!" said the farmer; "that is awful. I must tell you I cannot bear the sight of a sexton. But never mind, now when I know it is the devil I think I can stand it better. I am not afraid now; but he must n't come too near."

"Well, I will ask my sorcerer," said Little Klaus, treading again on the sack and listening.

"Well, what does he say?"

"He says that if you open the trunk in the corner there, you will see the devil crouching inside, but keep the lid well down, so that he does not escape."

"Will you not help me to keep it down?" said the farmer, going toward the trunk where his wife had hidden the real sexton, who sat there trembling in his shoes.

The farmer lifted the lid a little and peeped underneath it.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, and started back. "Yes, indeed, I did see him; he is exactly like our own sexton. How awful!"

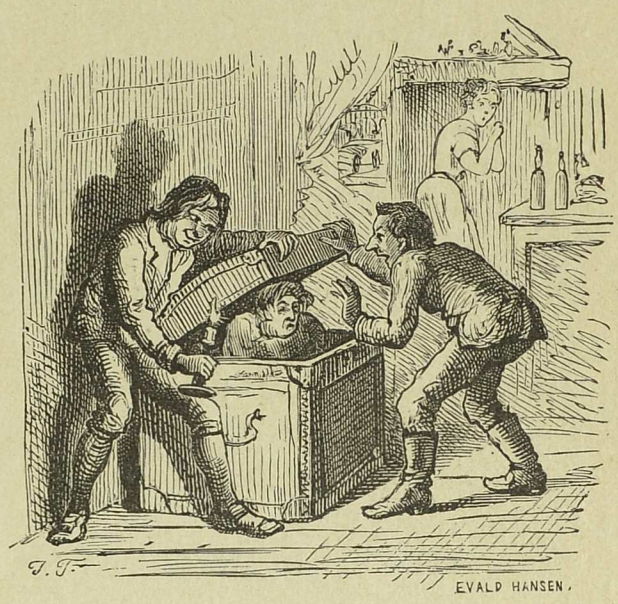
After that they required something more to drink, and so they made merry till far into the night.

"You must sell me that sorcerer," said the farmer. "Ask as much as you like. I will give you a whole bushel of money down."

"No, I cannot," said Little Klaus; "only think of what great use he is to me!"

"I should so much like to have him," said the farmer, continuing to press him.

"Well," said Little Klaus at last, "since you have been so good as to give me shelter for the night, I must agree to it. You shall have the sorcerer for a bushel of money; but I want it heaped up."



"THE FARMER LIFTED THE LID A LITTLE."

"You shall have it," said the farmer; "but you must also take away that trunk there; I won't have it an hour longer in the house; I don't know whether he is n't there still."

Little Klaus handed the farmer the sack with the dry hide, and received in exchange a whole bushel of money, and that heaped up too. The farmer also gave him a large wheelbarrow to carry the money and the trunk on.

"Good-by," said Little Klaus, wheeling off with the money and the big trunk in which the sexton was still sitting.

On the other side of the forest was a deep, wide river, where the current was so strong that hardly any swimmer could breast it. A large new bridge had been built across it, on the middle of which Little Klaus halted and said so loudly that the sexton could hear him: —

"What am I to do with this stupid trunk? It is as heavy as if it were full of stones. I am quite tired of wheeling it longer, and shall pitch it into the river. If it then floats home to my house it is all right; if not, never mind."

He seized the trunk with one hand, and lifted it up as if about to pitch it into the water.

"Halloo! Stop! Stop!" roared the sexton in the trunk. "Let me get out first!"

"Whew!" exclaimed Little Klaus, pretending to be frightened; "he is still there. I shall throw the trunk into the river at once and drown him."

"No, no, for heaven's sake!" roared the sexton. "I will give you a whole bushel of money if you don't."

"That's quite a different matter," said Little Klaus, and opened the trunk.

The sexton at once crawled out, shoved the empty trunk into the water, and went home, where Little Klaus received a whole bushel full of money. One bushel he had already received of the farmer, and now he had the whole barrow full of money.

"Well, that horse was well paid," he said to himself when he came home and piled all the money in a heap on the floor. "Big Klaus will get into a rage when he hears how rich my only horse has made me; but I shall not tell it to him straight."

He then sent a boy to Big Klaus to borrow a bushel measure.

"I wonder what he wants that for, now?" said Big Klaus to himself, and smeared some tar over the bottom, so that a little of what was measured should stick; and so it did. When he received the measure back, three new silver coins stuck to the bottom.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Big Klaus, and ran at once across to Little Klaus. "Where have you got all that money from?"

"Why, I got it for the hide of my horse, which I sold last night."

"That was indeed well paid," said Big Klaus. He hurried home, and seizing an axe killed all his four horses, flayed them, and drove with the hides to the town.

"Hides! Hides! Who will buy hides?" he cried in the streets.

All the bootmakers and tanners came running up inquiring what the price was.

"A bushel of money for each," said Big Klaus.

"Are you mad?" they all asked. "Do you think we have money by the bushel?"

"Hides! Hides! Who will buy hides?" he called out again; but to all who asked the price he replied, "A bushel of money."

"He is making fools of us," they all said; and so the bootmakers

seized their thongs and the tanners their leather aprons and began to belabor Big Klaus.

"Hides! Hides!" they cried sneeringly. "Yes, we will tan your hide for you. Out of the town with him!" they shouted; and Big Klaus had to make the best use of his legs. Such a thrashing he had never had in his life.

"Very well," he said to himself when he reached home. "I 'll make Little Klaus smart for this; I 'll kill him for his trouble."

Now it happened that in the mean time Little Klaus's old grandmother had died; and although she had been very unkind to him, he took her death much to heart, and placed the old woman in his own warm bed to try if he could not bring life into her again. She was to stay there all the night, while he would sleep on a chair in the corner, as he had done many a time before.

As he sat thus in the night, the door opened and Big Klaus entered with an axe. He knew quite well where Little Klaus's bed stood, and went straight up to it and struck the dead old grandmother with the axe on the head, in the belief that it was Little Klaus.

"Take that!" he said; "now we shall see whether you 'll make a fool of me a second time." And so he went home.

"He is really a bad, wicked man," said Little Klaus. "He wanted to kill me; and it was well that old granny was dead, or else he would have killed her."

He then dressed the old grandmother in her Sunday best, borrowed a horse from a neighbor, which he put to a cart, and placed her in the back seat, so that she should not fall out while driving; and so he set out through the forest. When the sun rose, they were outside a big inn, where Little Klaus stopped to get some refreshment.

The innkeeper was a very, very rich man, and a good fellow into the bargain, but as quick-tempered as if he had gunpowder in his body.

"Good morning," he said to Little Klaus. "How early you have got your Sunday clothes on!"

"Yes," said Little Klaus, "I am on the way to the town with my old grandmother, who is sitting out in the cart, but I cannot persuade her to come inside. Won't you take her out a drop of something? But you must speak loud, as she is nearly deaf."

"I am sure I shall be delighted," said the innkeeper, and filled a glass of rum, which he carried to the dead grandmother, who was sitting bolt upright in the cart.

"Here's a glass of rum from your son," he said; but the dead woman said nothing, and sat very quiet.

"Don't you hear?" he shouted as loud as he could. "Here is a glass of rum from your son!"

Once more he repeated his request, and once again; but when she did not move at all, he lost his temper and threw the glass right into her face, so that the rum ran down her nose, and she fell backward into the cart. She was, of course, only seated upright, and not tied to the cart.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Little Klaus, who ran out and caught the innkeeper by the collar. "You have killed my grandmother! Look! she has a big hole in the head."

"Dear me, dear me! what a misfortune!" cried the innkeeper, clasping his hands. "It's all caused through my temper. My dear Klaus, I'll give you a whole bushel of money, and bury your grandmother as if she were my own, if you will hold your tongue; otherwise they will cut my head off,[1] and that's nasty."

So Little Klaus was paid a whole bushel full of money, and the innkeeper buried the old grandmother as if she were his own.



"SHE IS MY GRANDMOTHER; I HAVE KILLED HER."

When Little Klaus came home again with all the money, he at once sent his boy across to Big Klaus, to ask him to lend him a measure.

"What does this mean?" said Big Klaus. "Have n't I killed him? I will go and see myself." And he went across to Little Klaus with the measure.

"But where have you got all that money from?" he asked, with eyes wide-open, seeing the heap which had been added.

"It was my grandmother, not me, you killed," said Little Klaus, "and I have sold her for a bushel of money."

"That was indeed well paid," said Big Klaus, and hurrying home, seized an axe and killed his grandmother, whom he then laid on a cart, drove to the town, to the druggist's, and asked him if he would buy a dead body.

[1] The way the extreme penalty of the law is carried out in Scandinavia. — Tr.

"Who is she, and where have you got her from?" asked the druggist.

"She is my grandmother; I have killed her to get a bushel of money for her."

"The Lord forbid!" said the druggist. "What are you saying? Don't say that to anybody; it might cost you your head." And then he told him what a frightful crime he had committed, what a wicked man he was, and that he ought to be punished.

Big Klaus became so frightened at these words that he ran out of the shop, jumped into his cart, lashed the horses, and drove home as fast as they would run. But the druggist and everybody else thought he was mad, and therefore let him go where he liked.

"You shall pay for this," said Big Klaus, when he was again on the high-road. "Yes, you shall pay for it, my dear Little Klaus." And when he got home, he took the biggest sack he could find, and walked across to Little Klaus, saying, "You have made a fool of me a second time. First I killed my horses, then my old grandmother. It is all your fault; but you shall not make a fool of me again." And so he seized Little Klaus round the waist and put him in the sack, which he flung across his shoulder, saying, "Now, I am going to drown you."

He had a long way to walk before he reached the river, and Little Klaus was no light weight. The road lay by a church, in which the organ sent forth music and the people sang so beautifully that Big Klaus put the sack with Little Klaus in it down by the church door, thinking he would like to go in and hear a hymn before proceeding. Little Klaus could of course not get out, and everybody was inside; so he went in.

"Oh, dear me! dear me!" Little Klaus sighed in the sack, turning and twisting; but he could not untie the string.

At that moment an old drover, with silvery hair and a long staff, went by. He was driving a whole herd of cattle, and the animals ran up against the sack in which Little Klaus sat, upsetting it.

"Oh, dear me!" Little Klaus sighed. "To be so young, and to have to go to heaven!"

"And I, wretch," said the drover, "am so old, and yet cannot get there!"

"Untie the sack," cried Little Klaus, "and crawl in in my place, and you will at once go to heaven."

"I will do that with all my heart," said the drover, untying the sack, from which Little Klaus jumped at once.

"You 'll take care of the cattle for me," said the old drover, crawling into the sack, which Little Klaus tied up, and then went away with the cattle.

Shortly afterward Big Klaus came out of church and flung the sack on his back, thinking, however, that it had become rather light, as the old drover was not more than half the weight of Little Klaus. "How light he has become!" thought Big Klaus; "but perhaps it is through my having heard a hymn." And then he went to the river, which was both deep and wide, and throwing the sack with the old drover in it into the water, shouted, in the belief that it was Little Klaus, "Now I think you won't make a fool of me again!"

He then set out for home; but having reached a spot where two roads met, he beheld Little Klaus driving his cattle before him.

"What's this?" said Big Klaus. "Have n't I drowned you?"

"You did," said Little Klaus; "only half an hour ago you threw me into the river."

"But where have you got all those fine cattle from?" asked Big Klaus.

"It's water-cattle," said Little Klaus. "You shall hear everything; and many thanks for drowning me, as now I am rich, I can tell you. I was very frightened being in the sack, and the wind whistled about my ears as you threw me from the bridge into the cold water. I sank at once to the bottom, but without hurting myself, as the softest grass grows there, and on that I fell. Immediately the sack was untied, and the loveliest maiden, in snow-white garments, and with a green wreath around her wet hair, took me by the hand and said, 'Is that you, Little Klaus? Here you have a few cattle for a start. A mile farther on you will find another herd, of which I also make you a present.' Then I saw that the river was a big main-road for the people of the sea. On the bottom they walked, and drove right away from the sea far into the country where the river rises. There were such lovely flowers and the freshest grass, and the fish swimming in the water shot past my ears as the birds do here in the air. And what a quantity of fine people there were, and what herds of cattle were grazing by the roadside!"

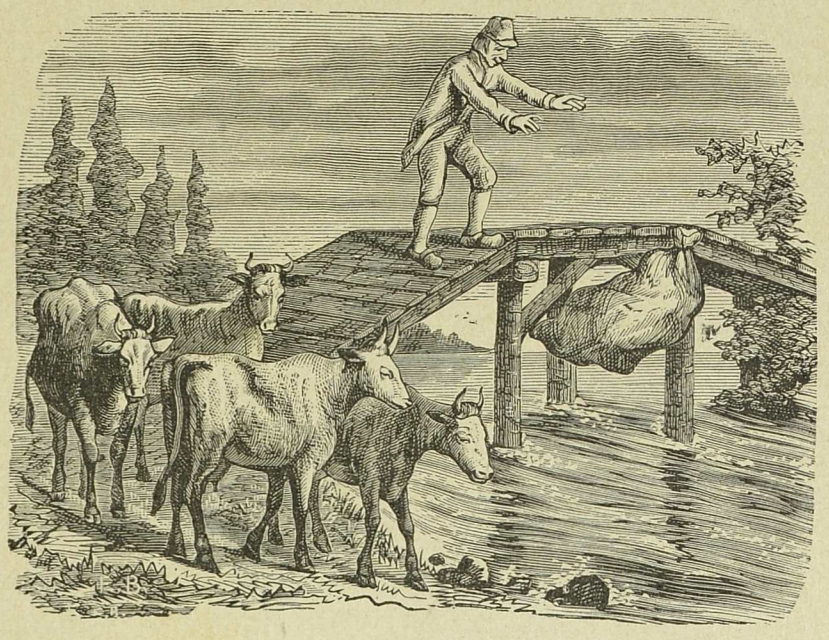
"But why did you return to us at once?" asked Big Klaus; "I would n't have done that if it was so pretty down there."

"Why," said Little Klaus, "don't you see how artful that was of me? I told you the maid said that a mile farther on the road — and by

road she means of course the river, as elsewhere she cannot get — a whole herd of cattle is waiting for me; but I know how the river winds, first hither then thither, — it is a nasty crooked road; so of course, in order to shorten the way, I get up on dry land, where I can make a short cut from one bend to another, as in that manner I save quite a mile, and reach my cattle sooner."

"You are a lucky dog, indeed," said Big Klaus. "Do you think I should get some sea-cattle too, if I go down to the bottom of the river?"

"I have n't the least doubt about it," said Little Klaus. "But you are too heavy for me to carry to the river in a sack; however, if you



"SPLASH! AND BIG KLAUS LAY IN THE RIVER."

will walk there, and then get into the sack, I will throw you in with great pleasure."

"Thank you, really," said Big Klaus. "But if I don't get sea-cattle when I am down there, I'll give you a jolly good thrashing, depend upon it!"

"Oh, don't be so cruel!"

So they went to the river, and as soon as the cattle, being thirsty, saw the water, they ran as fast as they could, to drink.

"Just see what a hurry they are in to get to the bottom again," said Little Klaus.

"Yes, I see," said Big Klaus; "but now help me first, or else you 'll get a whacking." And so he crawled into a big sack which had been lying on the back of one of the bullocks. "Put a stone into it, else I am afraid I shan't sink," said Big Klaus.

"Oh, yes, you will," said Little Klaus; but he nevertheless put a big stone into it, tied the string tight, and shoved it into the water. Splash! and Big Klaus lay in the river, sinking at once to the bottom.

"I am afraid he won't find the cattle," said Little Klaus, and drove home those he had.

III.

THE PRINCESS ON THE PEA.

THERE was once a Prince who wanted to marry a Princess; but she was to be a *real* Princess. So he travelled all over the world in order to find one, but everywhere there was something amiss. Of Princesses there were plenty; but if they were *real* Princesses he could not discover, because there was always something which did not seem quite right. He therefore returned home much depressed in mind, as he wanted so very much to marry a real Princess.

One night a terrible storm arose; it thundered and lightened, and the rain came down in torrents; it was quite awful. Just then there came a knock at the gate of the tower, and the old King himself went down to open it.



"THE OLD KING HIMSELF WENT DOWN TO OPEN IT."

It was a Princess who stood outside. But, good heavens! what a state she was in! The water streamed from her hair and clothes, and ran in at the toes of her shoes and out at the heels; but she said she was a *real* Princess.

"Oh! we will soon find out," thought the old Queen; but she said nothing, went into the bedroom, took all the things off the bed, and laid a pea on one of the bars. Then she laid twenty mattresses on the pea and twenty eider-down beds upon the mattresses. There the Princess should sleep for that night.

In the morning they asked her how she had slept.

"Oh, awfully bad!" she said. "I have hardly had a wink all the night. Heaven only knows what there was in the bed! I have been lying on something hard, which has made me black and blue all over. It is something frightful!"



"I HAVE BEEN LYING ON SOMETHING HARD."

It was evident now that she was a *real* Princess, since she had felt the pea through twenty mattresses and twenty eider-down beds. Only a *real* Princess could be so thin-skinned.

So the Prince married her, for he knew that here was a *real* Princess; and the pea was placed in a museum, where it may still be seen if somebody has not taken it away.

Now this *is* a true story.



IV.

LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS.

"My poor flowers are quite dead," said little Ida. "They were so lovely last night, and now all the leaves are withered. Why is that?" she asked the student from the university, who was sitting on the sofa, for she was very fond of him; he knew all the pretty stories, and cut such amusing scraps for her, — hearts with old women dancing inside, flowers, and big castles, of which the doors opened. He was such a jolly and lively student.

"Why do the flowers look so wretched to-day?" she asked again, showing him a large bouquet all withered.

"Don't you know what's the matter with them?" said the student. "The flowers went to a dance last night; that's why they hang their heads."

"But flowers cannot dance," said little Ida.

"Oh, yes, they can," said the student; "when it's dark and we sleep, they run merrily about; almost every night they have a dance."

"Cannot any children go to the dance?"

"Yes," said the student, "tiny daisies and lilies-of-the-valley."

"But where do the loveliest flowers dance?" asked little Ida.

"Have n't you often been out by the big castle, where the King lives in the summer, where that beautiful park is with such a quantity of flowers? Have n't you seen the swans swimming towards you when you offer them bread-crumbs? Out there are balls, I can tell you."

"I was out in the park yesterday with mamma," said Ida; "but all the leaves had fallen off the trees, and there were no more flowers. Where have they gone to? In the summer there were so many."

"They are inside, in the castle," said the student. "As soon as the King and all his courtiers move into the town, the flowers run at once into the castle and make merry. That 's something you would like to see. The two loveliest roses place themselves on the throne, and they are then King and Queen. All the red coxcombs range themselves by the side of it, and stand bowing; they are pages in waiting. Then all the prettiest flowers arrive, and so there is a great ball. The blue violets are little middies, and dance with hyacinths and crocuses, whom they call young ladies. The tulips and the great yellow lilies are old matrons, who see that the dancing is carried on properly and with decorum."

"But does nobody hurt the flowers because they dance in the King's castle?"

"No one really knows anything about it," said the student. "Sometimes certainly in the night the old steward comes to see that everything is all right out there, and he carries a large bunch of keys; but as soon as the flowers hear them jingle they become very quiet, and hide behind the long curtains with their heads stretched forward. 'I smell there are flowers here,' says the old steward, but he cannot see them."

"Oh, what fun!" said little Ida, clapping her hands. "But should I not be able to see the flowers either?"

"Oh, yes," said the student; "remember when you are again out there to peep through the windows; then you will see them sure enough. I did so to-day; there lay a long yellow lily stretched on the sofa; she fancied she was a maid of honor."

"And can the flowers in the Botanical Garden also get as far?"

"Oh, yes, certainly they can," said the student, "because they can fly when they like. Have n't you seen the lovely butterflies, red, yellow, and white? They look almost like flowers, and that is what they have been; they jumped from the stem high into the air, and flapped their leaves as if they were really tiny wings, and so they were off. And

when they behaved well, they were allowed to fly about in the daytime too, and had not to fly home again and sit quiet on the stem; and so at last the leaves became real wings. That you have seen yourself. But, of course, maybe the flowers in the Botanical Garden have never been out to the King's Castle, or know what merry-making goes on there of a night. Therefore I 'll tell you something which will astonish the Professor of Botany, who lives close by; you know him, don't you? When you go into his garden, you tell one of the flowers that there is a great ball out at the castle, and she will tell it to all the others, and then they will fly off. When the Professor comes into his garden, there will not be a single flower left, and he cannot understand where they have gone."

"But how can the flower tell the others? Flowers cannot talk?"

"No, that is true," said the student, "but they can make signs. Have n't you noticed when there is a little wind the flowers nod and move their green leaves? That is as good as speaking."

"And does the Professor understand the signs?" asked Ida.

"Oh, yes, certainly he does. One morning when he came into the garden he saw a great nettle making signs to a beautiful red carnation, meaning, 'You are very pretty, and I love you dearly.' That sort of thing the Professor cannot bear; so he slapped the nettle on the leaves, as they are its fingers, and stung himself, and since then he never ventures to touch a nettle."

"Oh, what fun!" cried little Ida, laughing.

"How can any one make the child believe such nonsense!" said the tedious chancery counsellor, who had come to pay a call, and was sitting on the sofa. He did not like the student, and always grumbled when he saw him cutting out the funny scraps, — now a fellow hanging in the gallows with a heart in his hand, as he was a robber of hearts, now an old witch riding on a broom with her husband on her nose. This the counsellor could n't bear, and used to say, as now, "How can anybody make the child believe such nonsense? It is all that stupid imagination."

But still little Ida thought that what the student related about her flowers was very funny, and she pondered a good deal over it. The flowers hung their heads because they were tired from dancing all the night; they were certainly ill. So she carried them to her other playthings, which stood on a little pretty table, the drawer of which was quite full of lovely things. In the doll's bed lay her doll Sophy; but

little Ida said to her, "You must really get up, Sophy, and be contented with lying in the drawer to-night, because the poor flowers are ill, and must lie in your bed, which will perhaps put them right again." And she raised the doll, which looked sulky, and did not say a word, as she was angry because she could not keep her bed.

Then Ida laid the flowers in the doll's bed, drew the little cover over them, and told them to lie very quiet, and she would make them some tea, so that they might be quite well the next morning and get up again. She then drew the curtains round the bed so that the sun should not shine in their eyes.

All the evening she could not get out of her head what the student had told her; and before she had to go to bed herself she was obliged to peep behind the window curtain, where her mother's flowers stood in pots, — hyacinths as well as tulips, — and whisper quite softly, "I know you 're a-going to a dance to-night." But the flowers looked as if they did not understand anything of what she said, and did not move a leaf; but little Ida knew what she knew, for all that.

When she was in bed she thought for a long time what a pretty sight it would be to see the lovely flowers dance out there in the King's castle. "I just wonder whether *my* flowers took part in it?" she said to herself, and then went to sleep.

In the night she awoke; she had dreamt about the flowers and the student, about whom the counsellor had grumbled, saying he was only trying to make her believe a lot of nonsense. It was very quiet in the room where little Ida lay; the night-light burned on the table, and her father and mother were asleep.

"I wonder whether my flowers are still lying in Sophy's bed?" she said to herself. "Oh, I wish I knew!"

She raised herself up a little in bed, and looked toward the door, which was half open; in there lay the flowers and all her playthings. She listened, and thought she heard the piano played in the next room, but quite softly, and more beautifully than she had ever heard it before.

"Now all the flowers in there are no doubt dancing," she said. "Oh, how I wish I could see them!" But she dared not get up, as then she would have awakened her father and mother. "If they only would come in here!" she said. But the flowers came not, and the music continued so beautifully. At last she could not keep quiet any longer; it was too lovely. So she crept out of her little bed, went softly across

the floor, and peeped into the room. Oh, what a lovely sight she beheld!

There was no night-light there; still it was quite light. The moon shone through the window on to the floor; it was nearly as bright as daylight. All the hyacinths and tulips stood in two rows on the floor; there were none in the windows, only the empty pots. On the floor all the flowers danced so prettily about and formed quite a chain, holding each other by the long green leaves when they turned. But at the piano sat a big yellow lily which Ida was sure she had seen in the summer, as she remembered quite well that the student had said about her, "Oh, how she is like Miss Lina!" and then everybody laughed at him; but now Ida herself thought that the long yellow flower really was like the young lady, and she behaved exactly like her while playing, — bent her long yellow face first on one then on the other side, nodding the time to the beautiful music. Nobody noticed little Ida. Then she saw a big blue crocus jump right on to the table where the playthings stood, go straight up to the doll's bed and draw aside the curtains; there lay the sick flowers, but they rose at once and nodded to the others that they too wanted to share in the dance. The old porcelain shepherd on the mantel-piece, on whom the under-lip had been broken, stood up and bowed to the pretty flowers, which now did not look at all ill, but jumped down to the others and were right merry.

It sounded as if something fell from the table. Ida looked thither: it was the shrove-tide fagot[1] which had jumped down; it considered itself belonging to the flowers. It was also very pretty, and at the end of it there was a little wax-doll, with a broad-brimmed hat just like that the counsellor used to wear. The fagot jumped on its three red legs among the flowers and stamped heavily; it danced the mazurka, which the flowers could not dance, as they were so light and could not stamp.

The wax-doll on the fagot became suddenly big and long, twisted round above the paper flowers crying out quite aloud, "How can any one make the child believe such nonsense! it is only that stupid imagination." And now the wax-doll was exactly like the old counsellor with the broad-brimmed hat, looking just as yellow and fretful. But the paper flowers beat it around the thin legs, and then it shrunk and

[1] It is the custom for children in Scandinavia to make an ornamented fagot of twigs at shrove-tide, wherewith those who can be surprised in bed asleep are struck, the victim having to pay forfeit in buns. — TR.

became again the little wax-doll. It was all so funny that little Ida could not help laughing. The fagot continued to dance, and the counsellor had to dance too whether he would or not; whether he made himself big and long, or remained the little yellow wax-doll with the big black hat. In the same moment there was a hard knock in the drawer where Ida's doll, Sophy, lay with all the other playthings. The shepherd ran as fast as he could to the edge of the table, lay down flat, and opened the drawer a little. Then Sophy got up and looked about quite surprised.

"Why, there seems to be a dance here!" she said. "Why did n't somebody tell me?"

"Will you dance with me?" said the shepherd.

"Oh, *you* are a nice fellow to dance with, indeed!" she said, and turned her back upon him. Then she sat down on the drawer, thinking that one of the flowers should come and engage her; but no one came. So she began to cough, "Hem, hem, hem!" but no one came all the same. The shepherd now danced quite alone, and not so badly either.

As none of the flowers seemed to notice Sophy, she let herself fall flop on the floor with a great noise, and that brought all the flowers around her asking if she had hurt herself, and they were very kind and polite to her, especially those which had occupied her bed; but she was not hurt in the least. And all Ida's flowers thanked her for her nice bed, became very fond of her, took her out on the floor where the moon shone, and danced with her, while the rest of the flowers danced in a ring around them; and now Sophy was so pleased that she said they might have her bed with pleasure; she was quite content with lying in the drawer. But the flowers said, "Very many thanks, but we cannot live so long; to-morrow we shall be dead. But tell little Ida to bury us in the garden where the canary lies, and we shall grow again next summer and be much prettier."

"But you must not die!" said Sophy, kissing the flowers. At the same moment the door opened and a whole host of lovely flowers came dancing in. Ida could not understand whence they came; they were, no doubt, the flowers from the King's castle. In front walked two lovely roses with golden crowns on their heads, — it was the King and Queen, — and behind them followed the sweetest narcissus and pinks, which bowed to both sides. They had music with them, great poppies and peonies blowing on pea-shells till they were quite red in the face,

while the bluebells and snow-drops jingled exactly like metal bells. It was a merry music. After them came many other flowers, and they all danced, — the blue violets and the red amaranths, the daisies and the lilies-of-the-valley; and they all kissed each other. It was too delightful to look at.

At last the flowers bid good-night to each other, and then little Ida crept back to her bed, where she dreamt of all she had seen.

As soon as she was dressed the next morning she went to the little table to see if the flowers were still there. She drew the curtains from



"THE TWO BOYS WALKED IN FRONT WITH THEIR CROSS-BOWS."

the little bed; and, yes, there they all lay, but they were quite withered, — a great deal more so than the day before. Sophy lay in the drawer where she had put her, and looked quite sleepy.

"Do you remember what you were to tell me?" asked little Ida; but Sophy only looked stupid and did not answer.

"You are not at all kind," said Ida, "although everybody danced with you." She then took a little cardboard box on which pretty little birds were painted, opened it, and laid the dead flowers therein. "That will be a fine coffin," she said; "and when my Norwegian cousins come, they shall help me to bury you in the garden, so that you may grow up next summer and become much prettier."

The Norwegian cousins were two lively boys, John and Adolphus, whom their father had given a cross-bow each, which they had brought to show Ida.

She told them about the poor flowers which were now dead, and so they were allowed to bury them. The two boys walked in front with their cross-bows on their shoulders, and little Ida behind with the dead flowers in the little pretty box. They dug a small grave in the garden, and having kissed the flowers, placed the box in the earth, and the cousins fired their bows over the grave, as they had neither rifles nor guns.

V.

LIZZIE THUMB.

ONCE upon a time there was a woman who wished so much to have a baby; but she did not know where to get it from, so she went to an old witch, and said to her, "I wish so very much to have a baby; do tell me how I can get one."

"Oh, yes, that can easily be managed," said the witch. "Here is a barleycorn, but of quite a different kind to those the farmer grows in his fields or the hens get to eat. Put it in a flower-pot, and you shall see what you shall see."

"Many thanks," said the woman, gave the witch some money, and went home and sowed the barleycorn. Immediately a large, magnificent flower sprang up, looking exactly like a tulip, but the petals of the flower were closed, as if it were still in bud.

"That is a lovely flower," said the woman, kissing the beautiful red and yellow petals; but just as she did so the flower burst open with a loud bang. Everybody could now see that it was a real tulip; but in the middle of it sat a tiny, tiny girl, so pretty and so delicate; and being only the length of a thumb, she was called Lizzie Thumb.

She had a fine lacquered walnut-shell for a cradle, blue violet-leaves were her mattress, and a rose-leaf was her coverlet. There she slept at night; but in the daytime she played on the table, on which the mother had placed a plateful of water with flowers all round the edges. In the middle floated a large tulip-leaf, and on this Lizzie Thumb sat, sailing from one side of the plate to the other, having two white straws to row with. It was *such* a pretty sight! And she could sing too, and oh, how sweetly! Nobody had ever heard anything like it.

One night, while she was lying in her pretty bed, an ugly toad jumped in through the window, where a pane was broken. The toad was so ugly, big, and wet, and jumped right on to the table where Lizzie Thumb lay sleeping under the pink rose-leaf.

"That will be a charming wife for my son," said the toad, and seizing the walnut-shell, in which Lizzie Thumb was sleeping, jumped with it through the window into the garden below.

There flowed a big river there; but near the shore it was swampy and muddy, and here the toad lived with her son. Whew! how ugly he was too; exactly like his mother.

"Coax, coax, brecke-ke-kex!" was all he could say when he saw the little pretty girl in the walnut-shell.

"Don't speak so loud, or you 'll wake her," said the old toad; "she might get away even now, for she is as light as swan's-down. We will put her out in the river on one of the big water-lily leaves. It will be like being on an island to her, who is so small and light, and from there she cannot get away; and in the mean time we shall be at work preparing the best room under the mud, where you are to live."

Out in the river there grew such a lot of water-lilies with big, green leaves, looking as if they floated in the water. The leaf which was farthest out was the biggest, and thither the old toad swam with the walnut-shell in which Lizzie Thumb lay.

The poor little mite awoke quite early, and seeing where she was, began to cry most bitterly, as there was water on all sides of the big leaf so that she could not get ashore.

The old toad sat down in the mud, decorating the room with rushes and yellow water-lilies, so that everything should be very smart for her new daughter-in-law, and when all was ready swam with her ugly son out to the leaf, where Lizzie Thumb stood. They were first to fetch her pretty bed, which was to be placed in the bridal chamber, before she came herself.

The old toad bowed low to her and said, "Here is my son, who is to be your husband; and you will be most comfortable down in the mud."

"Coax, coax! brecke-ke-kex!" was all the son could say.

And so they took the pretty little bed and swam away with it, while Lizzie Thumb sat all alone on the green leaf crying, as she would not live with the ugly toad or have her son for a husband.

The little fishes swimming about in the water had no doubt seen the toad and heard what she said; so they popped their heads out of the water, waiting to see the little girl. As soon as they saw her they thought her so pretty that they felt quite grieved she should have to go down and live with the ugly toad. "No, that they never would

allow." So they gathered round the green stalk of the leaf on which Lizzie Thumb was sitting, and gnawed it through, so that the leaf floated down the river far away, where the toad could not reach it.

Lizzie Thumb floated past so many places, and the little birds which sat in the trees saw her and sang, "What a pretty little girl!" And the leaf floated farther and farther away, and thus Lizzie Thumb reached foreign parts.

A pretty little butterfly kept fluttering around her, and finally alighted on the leaf, as it liked little Lizzie Thumb very much, who was now so happy because the toad could not reach her, and it was so



"THE OLD TOAD BOWED LOW TO HER."

lovely where she floated. The sun shone on the water, its rays glittering like gold.

Then she took her girdle, fastened one end around the butterfly and the other to the leaf, which then moved much faster, as well as herself.

Suddenly a big cockchafer came along buzzing, and seeing Lizzie Thumb, at once caught hold of her slender waist with its claws, and flew with her into a tree. The green leaf floated on down the river, and the butterfly too, for it was tied to it and could not get away.

Oh, how frightened poor Lizzie Thumb was when the cockchafer carried her up into the tree! But she was still more grieved for the beautiful white butterfly she had tied to the leaf, as it could not get away and therefore would starve to death. But the cockchafer asked

no questions as to that. He placed her on the biggest green leaf in the tree, gave her honey from the flowers to eat, telling her she was really lovely, although not like a cockchafer. Later on all the other cockchafers living in the tree came to pay a call; they examined Lizzie Thumb, and the cockchafer maids turned up their feelers and said: "Why, she has only two legs! How ridiculous that looks! And she has no feelers! How small she is round the waist! How horrible! She looks like a human being. How ugly she is!" they all cried; and still Lizzie Thumb was so very lovely. And so thought the cockchafer who had carried her off; but as they all said she was ugly, he believed them at last, and would not have her: she might go where she liked. They now carried her down from the tree, and placed her on a chickweed, where she sat crying because she was so ugly that the cockchafer would not have her; and still she was the loveliest little thing any one could imagine, as delicate and soft as the most beautiful rose-leaf.

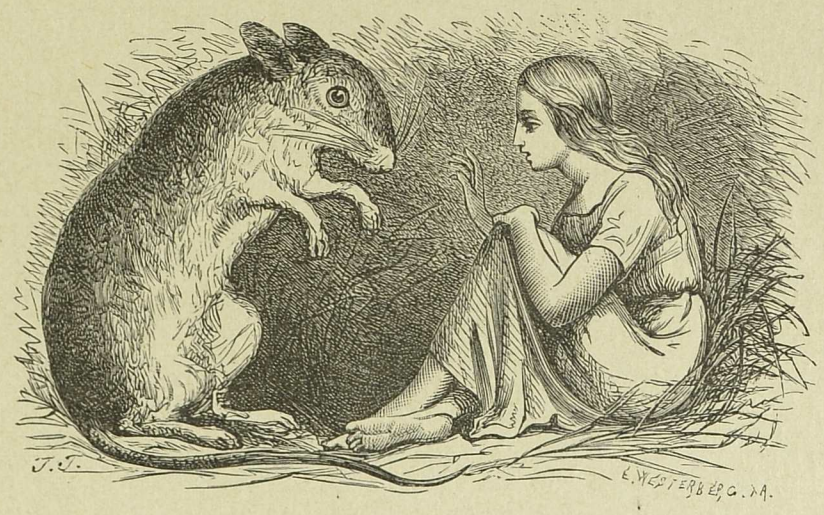
All through the summer poor Lizzie Thumb lived quite alone in the big forest. She twined herself a bed of grass-blades, which she hung up under a big burdock-leaf where the rain could not reach her; she eat the honey from the flowers, and drank the dew which every morning fell on the leaves. Thus summer and autumn passed by; but then came the winter, — the long, cold winter. All the birds, which had sung so beautifully to her, departed; the trees and flowers withered; the big burdock-leaf under which she had lived shrivelled up, and only a yellow withered stalk remained; and she felt the cold most dreadfully, as her clothes were torn, and she was so delicate and tiny, poor Lizzie Thumb! that she would doubtless perish from cold. It began to snow, and every flake which touched her was like a shovelful thrown at one of us, because we are big; but poor little Lizzie was only a thumb in height. Then she wrapped herself in a withered leaf, but it did not warm her, and she shook with cold.

Just out of the forest where she now was, lay a big cornfield, but the corn was removed long ago, and only the naked dry stubble rose from the frozen earth. The stubble was like a big forest for her to wander in, and, oh, how she shook with cold! Then she reached the door of the field-mouse, a hole under the stubble, where the mouse had warm and snug quarters, the whole room being full of corn, — a fine larder and kitchen! Poor Lizzie Thumb slunk inside the door like any other beggar-girl, and begged for a small piece of barleycorn, as she had not eaten anything for two days.

"You poor little thing!" said the mouse, for at heart she was really a kind old field-mouse, "step into my warm room and eat with me." And as she liked Lizzie Thumb very much, she said, "You may stay with me through the winter, on condition that you keep my room clean and nice and tell me stories, for those I am very fond of."

And Lizzie Thumb did as the good old field-mouse desired, and fared very well with her.

"Now we shall soon have company," said the field-mouse; "my neighbor comes to see me once a week. He is much better off than I am, has large rooms, and wears such a beautiful black fur coat. If you could only get him for a husband you would be well provided for, but he is blind. You must tell him all the loveliest stories you know."



"AND TELL ME STORIES, FOR THOSE I AM VERY FOND OF."

But Lizzie Thumb was not at all anxious about this, and would not marry the neighbor, as he was a mole. He came and paid a visit in his black fur coat; he was so rich and so learned, said the field-mouse; his dwelling was twenty times larger than the field-mouse's, and he had learning, he had. But the sun and the lovely flowers he could not bear, but always sneered at them, as he had never seen either. Lizzie Thumb sang to him, and had to sing both "Lady bird, lady bird, fly away," and other songs, so that the mole fell in love with her through her sweet voice; but he said nothing, as he was a very prudent man. He had recently dug a little passage underground from his to their dwelling, in which the field-mouse and Lizzie Thumb were permitted to walk as often as they liked. But he asked them not to be afraid of the dead bird lying in the passage; it was a whole bird with feathers, beak, and

all, which had most probably died quite recently, at the beginning of the winter, and had been buried just where the mole had made his passage.

The mole took a bit of touchwood in his mouth, which shines like fire in the dark, and went in front to light them in the long, dark passage. When he reached the spot where the dead bird lay, the mole put his broad snout against the roof and threw up the earth so that there was a hole in the ground through which daylight could shine. In the middle of the passage lay a dead swallow, with its pretty wings pressed tight against its sides and its legs and head drawn in under the feathers. The poor bird had doubtless frozen to death. Lizzie Thumb felt quite grieved for it, because she loved all the little pretty birds so much; she remembered how they had sung and chirped to her during the long summer. But the mole kicked him with his short legs and said: "Now he won't pipe any more. How wretched it must be to be born a bird! Thank goodness, none of my children will! Why, a bird knows only its twittering, and in the winter dies of hunger."

"Yes, a sensible man like you may well say so," said the field-mouse. "What is a bird, for all its twittering, when the winter comes? It must starve and freeze; but that is something mighty and grand too, I suppose."

But Lizzie Thumb said nothing; however, as soon as they turned their backs to the bird she stooped down, pushed the feathers aside where the head was, and kissed it on the closed eyes.

"Perhaps it was you who sung so beautifully to me in the summer," she thought. "What pleasure the dear pretty bird gave me."

The mole now filled up the hole through which daylight penetrated, and then saw the ladies home.

But at night Lizzie Thumb could not sleep; so, getting up, she plaited a large, pretty mat of straw, and going down wrapped it around the dead bird, laying some soft wool at its sides so that it should lie warm in the cold earth.

"Good-by, you darling little bird," she said. "Good-by; and thanks for your beautiful song last summer when all the trees were green and the sun shone so warm upon us."

She then laid her head against the breast of the bird; but became at once terribly frightened, hearing something beat inside. It was the bird's heart. The bird was not dead, it was only in a trance, and being warmed had come to life again.

Little Lizzie quite trembled with fright, as the bird was so big, — so big compared with her, who was only the height of a thumb. But she gathered courage, pressed the wool closer to the poor swallow, fetched a mint-leaf which had been her own covering, and laid it over the bird's head.

The next night she again stole down to it, and now there was distinct life in the bird; but it was so exhausted that it could only open its eyes for a few moments to look at Lizzie Thumb, who had a piece of touch-wood in her hand, as there was no other candle.

"Thank you very, very much, you pretty little child," said the sick swallow to her. "I am beautifully warm now; I shall soon regain my strength and be able to fly out into the warm sunshine."

"Alas!" said little Lizzie, "it is so cold out there, it snows and freezes. You stay in your warm bed; I will take care of you."

She then brought the swallow some water in a leaf, and the bird drank, and told her how it had wounded its wing on the bramble, and therefore could not fly as fast as the other swallows when they departed to the warm lands far away. At last it had fallen to the ground; but more the bird could not recollect, and did not know how it had got where it was.

During the whole winter the bird stayed down there, and Lizzie Thumb was kind to it and loved it so dearly; but neither the mole nor the field-mouse knew anything of this, for they could not bear the poor wretched swallow.

As soon as spring came, and the warmth of the sun penetrated the earth, the swallow said good-by to Lizzie Thumb, who opened the hole the mole had made in the roof. The sun shone so beautifully down to them, and the swallow asked her if she would not come with it; she could sit on its back and they would fly far away into the green woods. But Lizzie Thumb knew that it would grieve the old field-mouse if she left her thus.

"No, I cannot," said Lizzie Thumb.

"Good-by, good-by, you dear, kind girl," said the swallow, and flew out into the sunshine.

Lizzie Thumb gazed longingly after the bird, and tears came into her eyes, for she loved the swallow so dearly.

"Quiwit, quiwit," twittered the bird, and flew into the green woods.

Lizzie Thumb was very sad; she was not allowed to go into the warm sunshine, as the corn sown in the field above the dwelling of the

field-mouse had shot up so high that it was quite a thick, big forest to the little girl who was only a thumb in height.

"You must work on your wedding outfit during the summer," said the field-mouse to her; for her neighbor, the tedious old mole with the black fur coat, had proposed to her. "You must have woollen as well as linen clothes, and plenty of everything, when you become the mole's wife."

Lizzie Thumb had to work at her spindle day and night, and the field-mouse hired four spiders besides to spin and weave day and night. Every evening the mole paid a visit, and was always saying that when the summer was past the sun would not be nearly as hot; now it had baked the earth as hard as a brick. Yes, when summer was past he was to be married to Lizzie Thumb; but she was not at all pleased with the prospect, as she did not like the tedious mole.

Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it set, she stole into the opening of the hole, and when the wind separated the corn so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how bright and lovely everything was out there, and she wished with all her heart again to see the dear swallow; but it never came. It had no doubt flown far, far away into the lovely green wood.

When autumn came, Lizzie Thumb had her wedding outfit quite ready.

"In four weeks' time you will be married," said the field-mouse to her. But Lizzie Thumb cried, and said that she would not have the tedious mole.

"Fiddlesticks!" said the old mouse. "Now, don't be obstinate, or I'll bite you with my white teeth. You will get a fine husband; not even the Queen herself has such a fur coat. His larder and cellar are full. You thank Providence you get a husband like *him*."

And so the wedding was to take place. The mole had already come to fetch her; she was to live with him far down in the earth, and never again come into the warm sunshine, as he could not stand it. The poor little child was so sad at heart, for now she had to say good-by to the lovely sun, which she at all events had been allowed to see from the hole of the field-mouse.

"Good-by, you bright sun!" she said, raising her hand towards it; and she went even a little way outside the field-mouse's dwelling, as by this time the corn was cut, only the dry stubble remaining. "Good-by, good-by," she again said, and threw her tiny arms around a little

red flower near her. "Remember me to the dear swallow, if you happen to see it."

"Quiwit, quiwit!" it sounded at that moment overhead, and when she looked up, lo! there came the swallow flying. When the swallow saw Lizzie Thumb it became very happy, and Lizzie Thumb told it how unwilling she was to marry the nasty mole, and that she was to live far underground, where the sun never shone. She could not help crying at the very thought.

"The cold winter is coming," said the swallow, "and I am flying far away to warm lands; will you come with me? You can sit on my back, only tie yourself fast with your girdle, and we will fly away from the nasty mole and his dark dwelling, far away over the mountain to the warm lands where the sun shines brighter than here, and where there is always summer and lovely flowers. Come with me, you dear little Lizzie Thumb, who saved my life when I lay frozen down in the dark earth."

"Yes, I will come with you," said Lizzie Thumb, and seated herself on the back of the bird, with her feet on its outstretched wings, tied her girdle to one of the strongest feathers, and the swallow flew high into the air, over woods and lakes, far above lofty mountains where the snow is eternal, and little Lizzie Thumb felt cold in the crisp air; but then she crept under the bird's warm feathers, keeping only her head out to look at the beautiful scene below.

At length they reached the warm lands where the sun shines much brighter than here, where the sky is twice as deep, and where the loveliest green and blue grapes grow by the roadside and on the hedges. In the woods glistened oranges and lemons; the air was sweet with the aroma of myrtle and mint, and on the roads ran the prettiest children playing with big, many-hued butterflies. But the swallow flew on still farther, and the country became more and more lovely. Under the magnificent green trees, by an azure lake, stood a shining white palace of marble, of great age, the lofty columns of which were garlanded by the vine; and here, high up by the roof, lived the swallow that had carried Lizzie Thumb, together with many others.

"This is my dwelling," said the swallow; "but you had better select one of the lovely flowers growing down there and I will place you in it, and you will be as happy as you could ever wish."

"Oh, how delightful!" cried little Lizzie, clapping her tiny hands.

On the ground lay a large white marble column which had broken

into three pieces, among which grew the most beautiful big white flowers. The swallow flew down with Lizzie Thumb and placed her on one of the broad petals, and, lo! how surprised she was! There sat a little man in the middle of the flower, white and transparent as if he were of glass, with the loveliest gold crown on his head and the prettiest delicate wings on his shoulders, and he was not taller than Lizzie Thumb herself. It was the angel of the flower. And in every other also dwelt such a little man and woman; but he was King of them all.

"Oh, how handsome he is!" whispered Lizzie Thumb to the swallow.



"HE TOOK OFF HIS GOLDEN CROWN AND PLACED IT ON HER HEAD."

The little sovereign was greatly frightened by the swallow, for compared to him it was quite a monster bird in size; but when he beheld Lizzie Thumb he became overjoyed, as she was the loveliest little maiden he had ever seen. And he took off his golden crown and placed it on her head, asked her name, and whether she would become his wife, and Queen of all the flowers. This was, indeed, a husband of a different position from the son of the toad, and the mole with the black fur coat.

So she said "yes" to the handsome Prince; and from every flower came a little lady and cavalier to do homage to her, all so lovely it was a pleasure to look at them. And every one made a present to Lizzie Thumb; but the prettiest was a pair of lovely wings of a great

white fly, which Lizzie Thumb fastened to her shoulders; and now she too was able to fly from flower to flower. And there was great joy, and the swallow sat up in its nest and sang to them as well as it was able; but it was sad at heart at having to part from Lizzie Thumb, whom it loved so dearly.

"You shall not be called Lizzie Thumb any more," said the angel; "it is an ugly name, and you are so pretty. We will call you May."

"Good-by, good-by!" cried the swallow; and it flew away from the warm lands back to Denmark. There it had a little nest above the window where the man lives who tells the fairy tales; to him it twittered, "Quiwit, quiwit!" and it is from that we have the whole story.

VI.

THE NAUGHTY BOY.

THERE was once an old poet, such a true, good old poet, who one evening was sitting at home when a great storm arose. The rain came down in torrents; but the old poet sat warm and comfortable by the fireside, where the logs roared and the roasted apples hissed in the pan.

"There won't be a dry thread on the poor wretches who are out in this weather," he said to himself; for he was such a good-hearted poet.

"Oh, do let me in, I am so cold and wet!" cried a little child outside. It wept, and knocked at the door, while the rain poured down and the wind made the windows rattle.

"The poor little fellow!" said the old poet, and went to open the door. There stood a little boy quite naked, with the water streaming from his long golden hair. He trembled with cold, and if he was not let in he would certainly die in the terrible weather.

"You poor little fellow!" said the old poet, taking him by the hand. "Step in, and I will soon make you warm. You shall have an apple and a glass of wine, because you are such a very pretty boy."

And so he was. His eyes were like two bright stars, and although the water streamed down his golden hair, it curled into the prettiest ringlets. He was like a child from heaven, but oh! so pale with cold, and he trembled all over. In his hand he carried a pretty bow, but it was quite damaged by the rain, and all the colors on the pretty arrows were smudged by the water.

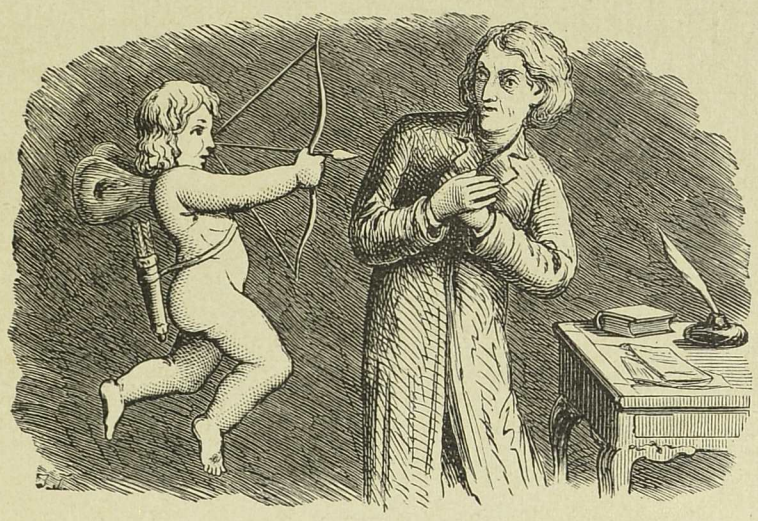
The old poet seated himself by the fire, took the little boy on his knee, wrung the water from his hair, warmed his hands in his own, and gave him some hot, sweet wine. And then the boy recovered, the color came back into his cheeks, and he jumped down and began to dance round the old poet.

"You are a merry little boy," said the old man. "What is your name?"

"My name is Cupid," he said. "Don't you know me? There is my bow, I can shoot, I can tell you. But look! the weather is again fine, and the moon shining."

"But your bow is damaged," said the old poet.

"That's a pity," said the little boy, taking it up and looking at it. "Oh, it is already dry and has not suffered anything. The string is quite strong. Now I'll try it." Then he drew it, laid an arrow on the string, aimed, and — oh! shot the good old poet right through the heart.



"AND SHOT THE GOOD OLD POET RIGHT THROUGH THE HEART."

"You see my bow is all right," he cried with a ringing laugh, and ran away.

The naughty boy! To shoot the old poet who had taken him into his warm room, given him such nice wine and the best apple!

The good poet lay on the floor crying; he was really hit right in the heart, and he said, "Oh, what a naughty boy that Cupid is! I will tell all good children to take heed and not play with him, as he does them harm only."

And all the good children, girls and boys, to whom he told this story, took care to avoid the naughty Cupid; but he cheated them, nevertheless, as he is so artful.

When the students are returning from their lectures, he runs by their side with a book under his arm, wearing a black coat. They

do not recognize him, but take his arm in the belief that he is a fellow-student, and then he thrusts the arrow into their hearts. Again, when the girls are coming from church, he follows *them*. Yes, he always bothers people. He sits in the big chandelier in the theatre, and is so bright that people believe it is a real gas-jet; but he soon teaches them something different. He runs about in the parks and everywhere. Yes, he has even once shot your papa and mamma through the heart. Only just ask them and hear what they say!

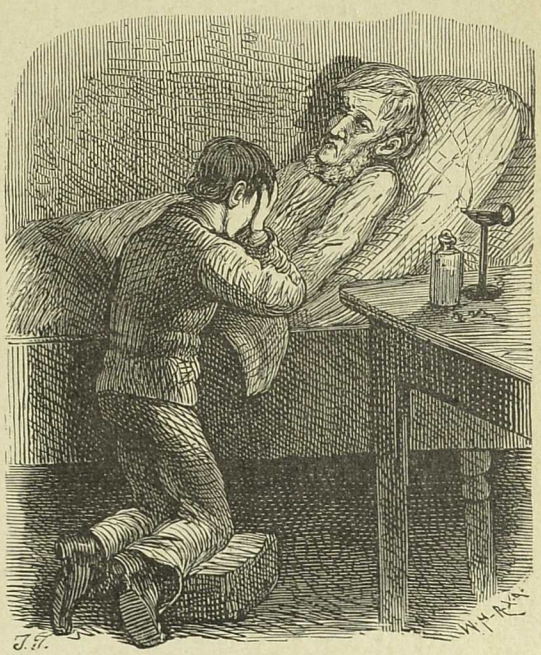
Yes, he is a naughty boy, that Cupid; and you should not have anything to do with him. He runs after everybody. Would you believe it? He shot, indeed, my old grandmother once; but that is long ago, and she has got over it now, though she never will forget it. The naughty Cupid! But now you know what a wicked boy he is.

VII.

THE TRAVELLING COMPANION.

POOR Johnny was very, very sad, for his father was quite ill, being on the point of dying. There was nobody besides the two in the little room; the lamp on the table was burning low, as it was very late.

"You have been a good son, John," said the dying father, "and God is sure to help you through the world." And he looked at him with mild, grave eyes, drew a deep breath, and died. It was like sleep. But John wept; now he was quite alone in the world, had neither father nor mother, sister nor brother. Poor John! He knelt before the bed, and kissing the hand of his dead father, wept many a bitter tear. At last, however, his eyes closed, and he fell asleep with his head resting on the hard edge of the bed.



"'YOU HAVE BEEN A GOOD SON, JOHN,' SAID THE DYING FATHER."

Then he had a most remarkable dream. He saw the sun and moon bow down before him, and he saw his father hale and well, and heard him laugh as he used to when in his best mood. A lovely girl with a golden crown on her long, beautiful hair held out her hand to John, and his father said: "See what a bride you have! She is the most beautiful in the whole world."

Then he awoke, and all the splendor was gone; his father lay dead and cold in the bed, and they were quite alone. Poor John!

Next week the deceased was buried; John followed close behind the coffin, but he would see his kind father, who had loved him so much, no more. He heard the earth thrown on the coffin; there was only a corner of it left visible, and the next shovelful covered this also, and John felt as if his heart would break with grief. The mourners sang a hymn; it sounded so beautifully that tears came into John's eyes; he wept, and it eased his heart. The sun shone so brightly on the green trees, as if it would say, "Don't be so sad, John; see how beautifully blue the sky is, and your father is now up there, praying the good God that your life may be a happy one."

"I will always be good," said John, "and I shall join my father in heaven. Oh, what joy to meet him again! How much I shall have to tell him, and how much *he* will have to show *me* and teach *me* of the heavenly splendor, as he taught me here on earth! Oh, what joy!"

John's thoughts assumed such reality that he actually laughed in spite of the tears in his eyes. The little birds sat in the chestnut-trees, twittering, "Quiwit! quiwit!" They were so happy, although they too had been to the funeral; but they knew well enough that the dead man was now in heaven, and had wings more lovely and far greater than theirs, and that he was happy because he had been good on earth, and therefore they were so glad. John saw them flying from the green trees far away out in the world, and he longed to follow them; but first he made a large wooden cross for his father's grave, and when he carried it thither in the evening he found the grave neatly trimmed with sand and flowers: that was the act of strangers who loved his kind old father who was now gone.

Early the next morning John made a bundle of his things, put his inheritance, consisting of five pounds and a few shillings, into his girdle, and thus he was ready to wander into the world. But first he went to the cemetery, to his father's grave, where he prayed, and said, "Good-by, my dear father. I will always be good, and therefore you may pray of the good God that all may go well with me."

Out in the fields where John was walking all the flowers stood so fresh and beautiful in the warm sunshine, and they nodded their heads in the wind just as if they meant to say, "Welcome into the green fields! Is it not lovely out here?" But John turned round once more to have a last look at the old church where he had been christened, and where he had prayed and sung every Sunday with his old father.

Just then he saw, high up in one of the dormer windows, the church-brownie [1] with his little red pointed cap on, shading his eyes with his arm, as the sun was shining right in his eyes. John nodded good-by to him, and the little fellow waved his red cap, laid one hand on his heart and kissed the other several times, to show how hearty his wishes were that he might have a lucky journey.

And John thought of all the splendid things he should see in the great magnificent world, and wandered farther and farther away, — much farther than he had ever been. Now he did not even know the towns through which he passed, nor the people he met; he was among strangers.

The first night he had to sleep on a haycock out in the fields, as he had no other bed; but he thought that delightful; the King himself could not have had a better one. The great field with the river, the hay with the blue sky above, was indeed a splendid bedroom. The green grass, with the little red and white flowers, was the carpet, the elder and the brier bushes bouquets of flowers, and for a bath he had the whole river with its clear, fresh water, in which the rushes swayed to and fro, saying both good-night and good-morning. The moon furnished a fine big night-light, high up under the blue ceiling, and it would not set fire to the curtains. John might sleep in peace; and that he did too, awaking first when the sun rose, and all the birds around him began to sing, "Good-morning! good-morning! Are you not up yet?"

The bells rang for church, for it was Sunday. The people were going to the service, and John followed them, sang a hymn, and listened to the Word of God, and it seemed to him exactly as if he were in his church at home, where he was christened and sang hymns with his father.

Out in the churchyard there were many graves, and the grass grew high on some of them. Then John thought of his own father's grave, and that it would soon look like one of these, now that he could not weed and trim it. He therefore sat down, pulled up the grass, righted the wooden crosses which had fallen, put the wreaths which had blown away back in their places, thinking all the while, "Perhaps some one will do the same to *my* father's grave now that I cannot do it."

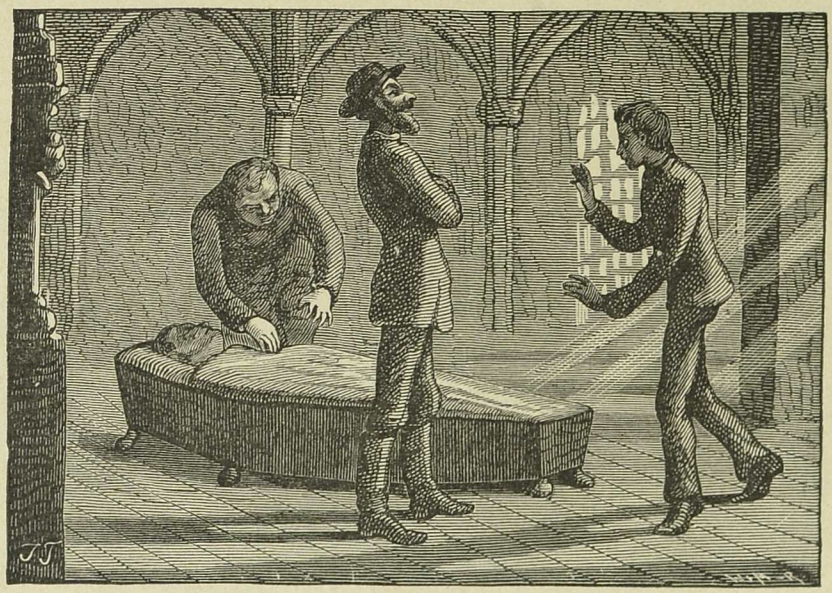
At the gate of the church stood an old beggar leaning on his crutch.

[1] The belief used to be prevalent among Scandinavian peasants that the village church, like every farm, had its "brownie" (*Nisse*). — TR.

John gave him the silver coin he had, and then went on happy and cheerful.

Towards night a terrible storm arose, and John hurried to obtain shelter, but it soon became pitch dark. At last he reached a little church standing solitary on an eminence, the door of which was open; so he slipped in, intending to remain there till the storm was over.

"I will sit down in a corner," he said; "I am so tired and want a rest." And he sat down, folded his hands, said his prayers, and before he was himself aware of it was asleep, dreaming peacefully, while it lightened and thundered without.



"IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CHURCH STOOD A COFFIN."

When he awoke it was midnight, but the storm was past and the moon shone down through the windows. In the middle of the church stood a coffin with a body in it which had not yet been buried. But John was not the least frightened, for he had a good conscience and knew that the dead do no harm; it is only the living wicked people who do that. Two such wicked men stood near the body, which had been placed in the church before being buried, and they wanted to insult it by taking it out of the coffin and throwing it outside the church. Poor, dead man!

"Why do you want to do that?" asked John. "It is wicked to do that; let him rest in the Lord's name."

"Nonsense," said both the wicked men. "He has cheated us; he owes us money he could not pay, and now he is dead into the bargain,

so we shall not get a penny, and therefore we want to be revenged; he shall lie like a dog outside the church."

"I have only five pounds," said John; "it is my whole inheritance, but I will gladly give it to you if you promise me honestly to leave the dead man in peace. I shall get on without the money somehow; I am well and strong, and God will help me."

"Well," said the two wicked men, "if you pay his debt thus, we will leave him in peace, you may rely on it." And they took the money John offered them, laughed at his kind-heartedness, and went away. But John put the body back into the coffin, folded the hands, said good-by to the dead man, and went happy and cheerful forth through the big forest.

All around him where the moonbeams fell between the trees he saw the prettiest little elves dance merrily. They were not afraid of John; they knew that he was good and innocent, and it is only the wicked who cannot see the elves. Some of them were not longer than a finger, and had long golden hair fastened up with combs of gold. Two and two they sat rocking on the big dew-drops which lay on the leaves and the high grass. Sometimes a drop would roll down between the high grass, and with it the elves on it, and then there was great laughter and merriment among the rest of the little company. It was quite a delight to watch them. They sang, and John recognized quite distinctly all the pretty songs he had learned as a little boy.

Great colored spiders with silver crowns on their heads spun long suspension bridges and palaces from one hedge to another, which looked, when the fine dew settled on them, like shining glass in the bright moonlight. Such the play went on till sunrise. Then the little elves crept into the flower buds, and the wind caught their bridges and palaces and carried them into the air, where they looked like great cobwebs.

John had just got out of the forest, when a man's strong voice called out behind him, "Halloo, comrade! where are you going to?"

"Out into the wide world," said John. "I have neither father nor mother, and am a poor boy, but I am sure the Lord will help me."

"I am also going out into the wide world," said the stranger. "Shall we go together?"

"With all my heart," said John; and so they went together.

They soon began to like each other very much, for they were both good. But John soon discovered that the stranger knew more than

he, as he had been over nearly the whole world and could tell about everything.

The sun was already high in the sky when they sat down to breakfast under a big tree. Just then an old woman came along. She was very, very old, and quite bent, leaning on a crutch, and on her back she carried a bundle of fagots which she had gathered in the wood. She had tucked up her apron, and John saw three big brooms made of willow sprigs and fern in it. Just as she was quite close to them her foot slipped and she fell, uttering a loud cry, for she had broken her leg, poor old woman!

John at once proposed to carry her home; but the stranger opened his satchel, took out a box with some ointment in it, saying that it would make her perfectly well again, and that she might even walk home as if nothing had happened. But for this he required that she should give him the three brooms she had in her apron.

"That's well paid," said the old woman, and nodded her head very strangely. She did not want to part with her brooms, but it was not pleasant to lie there with a broken leg, so she gave them to him. And he had no sooner rubbed the leg with the ointment than the old woman rose, and walked better than before, — such properties had the ointment; but that was not to be had at the chemist's.

"What are you going to do with those brooms?" John asked of his companion.

"They are three pretty nosegays, I think; they are to my taste; I am a funny fellow." And so they covered a good bit of road.

"Look, what is rising yonder?" said John, pointing before him. "What heavy clouds!"

"No," said his companion, "they are not clouds, but mountains, — high, lovely mountains, on the top of which you are above the clouds. That is something delicious, I can tell you; to-morrow we shall have reached them."

But they were not so near as they appeared, and it took them a whole day to reach them, and there were forests growing right up to the sky, and stones lying about as big as whole towns. It would no doubt require great exertion to climb them; and therefore John and his companion went into an inn to have a good rest first, and gather strength for the morrow.

Down below in the parlor of the inn there were a good many people, as there was a man there who had a doll's theatre. He had just begun,

and the people were sitting around to see the play, and right in front sat a stout old butcher, occupying the best seat, who had a big dog, — oh! such a brute; how ferocious it looked! It was sitting next to him, staring like everybody else.

And now the play began. It was a beautiful little play with a king and a queen in it who sat on a velvet throne with golden crowns on their heads, and wore long trains, for they could afford it. The most lovely wooden dolls with eyes of glass and big moustachios stood at the doors, opening and shutting them, so that the room should be well aired. It was such a pretty play, and not at all serious; but no sooner did the queen rise to walk across the floor, than the dog, — Heaven only knows what he could be thinking of, — as the butcher was not holding him, jumped right on to the stage, and bit the queen across her slender waist, which went, "Krick, krack." How very dreadful it was!

The poor man who had the theatre was quite frightened, and very sorry for his queen, as she was the prettiest doll he had, and now the nasty dog had bitten her head off; but when the people had gone, the stranger who was in John's company said he would repair her; and he brought out the jar and rubbed the queen with the same ointment with which he had helped the poor old woman when she had broken her leg. And no sooner had the doll been rubbed than she was not only mended, but she could move her limbs; there was no necessity for pulling any strings. She was like a human being, with the exception of being unable to talk. The man who owned the little theatre was in high glee, as the doll now wanted no attention, but could dance by herself. None of the others could do that.

But when night came, and everybody had gone to bed, there was somebody sighing so awfully heavy and so long that they all got up to see who it was. The man who had effected the performance went to his little theatre, as it was inside it somebody sighed. The dolls were lying in a heap, the king among his pages, which were all sighing, and staring with their big glass eyes, as they all wanted to be rubbed like the queen and be able to move about at will. The queen fell on her knees, raised her pretty golden crown, and prayed that it might be taken, if they only would rub her husband as well as the courtiers. And the poor man who owned the theatre could not help weeping, as he was so very sorry for them; so he promised the travelling companion to give him all the money he might take the next night if he

would but rub four or five of his prettiest dolls. But the travelling companion said he desired nothing else than the big sword he carried; and having received it, he rubbed six dolls, which at once began to dance so prettily that all the servant-girls — the living ones — began to dance too. The coachman danced with the cook, and the boots with the chambermaid; and all the strangers present, yes, even the coal-shovel and the tongs, tried to join; but they fell at their first steps. That was a merry night indeed!

The next morning John and his companion left them all, and went up the lofty mountains and through the great fir forests. At last they were so high up that the church-spires down below looked like little red berries among the green, and they could see many, many miles farther, where they had never been. Such a lovely view of the earth John had never beheld; and the sun shone so warmly through the fresh blue air, while among the mountains he could hear the huntsmen wind their horns so beautifully that tears rose into his eyes through joy, and he could not help exclaiming, "Oh, beloved God, let me thank thee from my heart, because thou hast given us such loveliness as that on earth!"

His companion too stood with folded hands, looking down upon the forest and the villages in the bright sunlight. At that moment there was a delightfully sweet sound above their heads, and they looked up, and, lo! a large white swan was floating in the air, which was so lovely, and sang more beautifully than they had ever heard before; but the song became weaker and weaker, the lovely bird bent its head, and finally sank down dead at their feet.

"Two such beautiful wings, so large and white as these," said the travelling companion, "are worth money; I will take them with me. You see how lucky it is I got the sword;" and with one stroke he cut off the wings of the dead swan, and took them with him.

They travelled many, many miles farther over the mountains, till at last they saw a large town before them with more than a hundred towers, which glistened like silver in the sun; and in the middle of it was a palace of marble with a roof of burnished gold, and in this the King resided.

John and his companion decided not to enter the town at once, but to put up at an inn outside it, in order to smarten themselves a little, as they liked to look well in the streets. The host told them that the King was a very kind man, who never did anybody any harm; but his

daughter — may Heaven protect us! — was a very wicked Princess. Beauty she had enough: there was nobody lovelier; but what good did it do, when she was a wicked witch who had caused the death of so many handsome Princes? She permitted any one who wished to propose to her, were he prince or beggar; but he had to guess three things she asked him: if he did that, she would marry him and he would become King of the whole country when her father died. But if he could not guess them, she had him hanged or beheaded, — so wicked was the lovely Princess. This caused her father, the old King, much sorrow; but he could not prevent her being so wicked, as he had once promised he would not interfere with her wooers, and that she might do as she pleased. Every Prince who came, failed in the task, and was hanged or beheaded; he had been warned beforehand, and need not propose. The old King was so very sad at all the grief and misery caused thereby, that for a whole day, every year, he and all his soldiers lay on their knees praying that the Princess might become good; but she would not. Even the old women who drank gin colored it quite black before drinking it, so much did they mourn; and more they could not be expected to do.

"The wicked Princess!" said John; "she ought to be whipped; it would do her good. If I were the old King she should smart for it."

At the same moment they heard the people outside shout, "Hurrah!" The Princess was passing on horseback, and was so beautiful that everybody forgot how wicked she was, and therefore they shouted, "Hurrah!"

Twelve lovely maidens, all in white silk and with a tulip of gold in the hand, rode by her side on black shining horses, while she herself was seated on a snow-white one, ornamented with diamonds and rubies; and her riding-habit was of pure gold, the whip she held in her hand looking like a sunbeam. The golden crown on her head looked as if made of little stars from the heavens above, and the mantle was woven of thousands of butterflies' wings; but in spite of that she was more lovely than all her clothes.

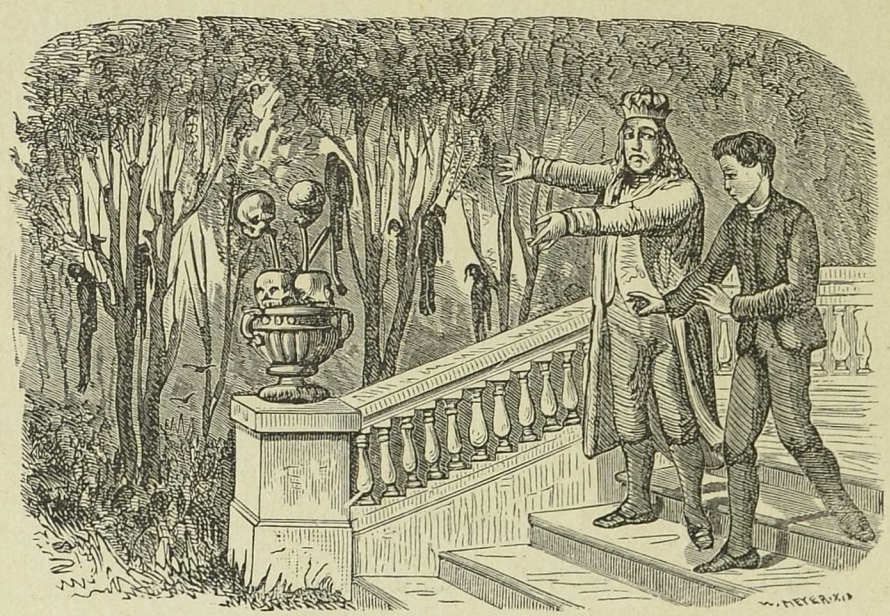
When John saw her he turned as red as a drop of blood, and he could hardly speak a word: the Princess was exactly like the handsome girl with the golden crown on her head he had seen in the dream the night his father died. He thought her so beautiful he could not help loving her very much. "It was no doubt not true," he said, "that she

was such a wicked witch as to let those who could not guess what she asked be hanged or beheaded."

"Every one is allowed to propose to her," he said to himself, "even the poorest beggar; I cannot help going up to the palace."

Every one warned him not to do it, as he would doubtless share the fate of the others; even his companion advised him not to go; but John said it would be all right, and having polished his boots, brushed his coat, washed his face and hands, and combed his pretty golden hair, he went quite alone into the town and up to the palace.

"Come in," said the old King, when John knocked at the door. John opened it, and the old King, in his dressing-gown and embroid-



"WHAT A HORRIBLE SIGHT MET HIM!"

ered slippers, came to meet him. He had the golden crown on his head, the sceptre in one hand, and the golden globe in the other.

"One moment," he said, and stuck the globe under his arm, in order to shake hands with John. But as soon as he heard that he was a wooer, he began to cry so much that the globe and the sceptre fell on the floor, and he had to dry his eyes with the dressing-gown, — the poor old King!

"Don't do it," he said. "You will share the fate of the others. Come and look."

And he took John into the Princess's garden, and what a horrible sight met him!

In every tree hung the skeletons of three or four princes who had proposed to the Princess but failed to guess her questions, and at every gust of wind they rattled, and frightened the little birds so that they never came into the garden. All the flowers were tied up to human bones, and in the flower-pots were grinning skulls. It was indeed a garden for a Princess!

"Look for yourself," said the old King. "You will share the fate of the others you see here; do not persist, therefore. You make me quite unhappy, for I take it so to heart."

John kissed the hand of the good old King, and said that all would go well, he loved the beautiful Princess so dearly.

Just then she came riding into the courtyard with all her ladies, and they went out to greet her. She was indeed lovely; and she gave John her hand, and he liked her better than ever; she could not be the wicked witch, he thought, which everybody said she was. They then went up into the drawing-room, where little pages handed round sweets and gingerbread-nuts; but the old King was so grieved he could eat nothing; besides, the gingerbread was too hard for his teeth.

It was then arranged that John should come back the next morning, when the judges and all the privy counsellors would be present to hear how he guessed. If he answered rightly he would have to come twice more; but as yet nobody had guessed right the first time, and therefore they had lost their lives.

John was not the least afraid, but only glad thinking of the lovely Princess, and firmly believed that God would help him, but how, he did not know, and he did not care to think about it. He ran gayly along the road to the inn, where his companion awaited him.

John could never get tired of relating how kind the Princess had been and how lovely she was; he longed already for the next day, when he was to try his luck at guessing. But his companion shook his head and was very unhappy.

"I like you so much," he said. "We could have been companions a good while longer, but now I shall lose you. My poor, dear John! I could cry; but I do not wish to make you unhappy the last evening we shall probably spend together. We will be merry, really merry, and to-morrow, when you are gone, I will cry."

It had soon become known all over the city that a new suitor to the Princess had arrived, and grief prevailed in consequence everywhere. The theatre was closed and all the old women tied crape round their

cakes, while the King and the priests lay on their knees in the church. Sorrow reigned everywhere, as it was expected John would share the fate of the others.

In the evening the travelling companion prepared a bowl of punch, and said to John they would be merry, and drink the health of the Princess. But when John had drunk two glasses, he became so sleepy he was unable to keep his eyes open any longer, and he fell asleep. His companion raised him quietly from his seat, and placed him on the bed, and when it was quite dark, fetched the two big wings he had cut off the swan and fastened them to his shoulders. He then thrust



"AND WHIPPED HER WITH THE BROOM TILL THE BLOOD CAME."

the biggest broom which the old woman who broke her leg had given him into his pocket, opened the window, and flew over the town to the palace, where he concealed himself below the window of the Princess's bedroom.

It was very quiet in the town, when the clock struck a quarter to twelve, and the window opened, and the Princess, in a great white cloak with black wings, flew out toward a big mountain. But the travelling companion made himself invisible, so that she could not see him, flew behind her, and whipped her with the broom till the blood came. Oh, what a speed! And the wind caught her cloak, which spread itself out like a large sail, and the moon shone through it.

"Oh, how it hails! how it hails!" cried the Princess at each stroke from the broom; but she fully deserved every one.

At last she reached the mountain and knocked. There was a noise like thunder when it opened, and the Princess went in; but the travelling companion followed, as nobody could see him. They walked through a broad passage, the walls of which glittered strangely, thousands of spiders running up and down them, shining like fire. They reached a big hall of gold and silver, where flowers big as sunflowers, red and blue, shone on the walls; but nobody could gather them, as the stems were real poisonous snakes, and the flowers ejected fire from their throats. The whole ceiling was studded with glow-worms and blue bats which flapped their wings: it was a most extraordinary sight. In the middle stood a throne supported by four skeletons of horses with harness of red fire-spiders; the throne itself was of milk-white glass, and the cushions made of little black mice biting each other's tails. Above it was a canopy of purple cobweb, studded with the prettiest little green flies, shining like diamonds. On the throne sat an old sorcerer, with a crown on his frightful head and a sceptre in his hand. He kissed the Princess on the forehead, let her take a seat by his side, and the concert began: great big black grasshoppers played the jew's-harp, while the owl beat its own stomach, there being no other drum. It was a funny concert! Tiny goblins with will-o'-the-wisps on their caps danced in a ring in the hall; but nobody could see the travelling companion, who had taken up his stand just behind the throne, where he heard and saw everything. The courtiers, who now entered, were fine and grand, but any one looking at them closely soon saw what they really were. They were only fagots with cabbages at the top, into which the sorcerer had inspired life by witchcraft and given fine clothes. But it did not matter much, as they were only for show.

When dancing had gone on awhile, the Princess told the sorcerer that she had a new suitor, and asked what question she should put to him when he came to the palace the next morning.

"Listen to me," said the sorcerer; "I'll tell you. Ask something very easy, and he won't guess it. Think of your shoe. He won't guess that. Then cut his head off, and do not forget when you come to-morrow to bring me his eyes; I like to eat them."

The Princess courtesied low, saying she should not forget them. The sorcerer then opened the mountain, and she flew home again; but the travelling companion followed her, and whipped her so dreadfully

with the broom that she sighed heavily at the violent hail, and hurried as fast as she could to reach her bedroom, while the travelling companion flew back to the inn, where John was still asleep, took off his wings, and went to bed too, as he had reason to be tired.

John rose quite early the next morning, when his companion also got up, and told him that he had had such a funny dream in the night about the Princess and her shoe, begging him to ask if she had thought of that. It was exactly what he had heard from the sorcerer in the mountain, but he would not tell John that, begging him only to ask if she had not thought of the shoe.

"I may as well ask that as anything else," said John. "Maybe what you have dreamt is right, and I am sure that God will help me. But I will nevertheless say good-by to you, because I may guess wrong, and in that case I shall never see you again."

They then embraced each other, and John went into the town and up to the palace. The whole hall was full of people, the judges sitting in arm-chairs with eider-down cushions behind their heads, for they had such a lot to think about. The old King rose and wiped his eyes with a white pocket-handkerchief. Just then the Princess entered, being more beautiful than on the previous day, and bowing so kindly to everybody. But to John she gave her hand, saying, "Good-morning."

And now John was to guess what she had thought of; and oh, how kindly she looked at him! But no sooner had he uttered the single word "shoe," than she turned deadly pale, trembling all over; but it was of no use, as he had guessed right.

Oh dear, how delighted the old King was! He turned such a summersault that the dust flew about him, and all the people clapped their hands thereat and to John, who had guessed right the first time.

His companion was beside himself with joy when he heard how well everything had gone; but John folded his hands and thanked God, who would doubtless also help him on the next two occasions. On the following day he had to guess again.

The evening was spent like the former. When John was asleep, his companion followed the Princess to the mountain, whipping her harder than the night before, for he had now taken two brooms. Nobody could see him, but he heard everything. The Princess thought of her glove, and he told John so, as if it were a dream. So John guessed right once more, and there was great joy at the palace.

All the courtiers turned summersaults as they had seen the King do before; but the Princess lay on a couch and would not say a word. Everything now depended on whether John could guess right the third time. If he did that, he would have the Princess and inherit the whole kingdom when the old King died; if not, he would forfeit his life, and the sorcerer would eat his pretty blue eyes.

At night John went early to bed, said his prayers, and slept quite peacefully; but his companion fastened the wings to his shoulders, tied the sword to his side, took all three brooms, and flew to the palace.

It was pitch dark, and the wind was so high that the tiles flew off the roofs, while the trees in the garden, with the skeletons, swayed to and fro like reeds in a gale. It lightened every moment, and the thunder rolled so incessantly that it was like one continuous clap. Just then the window opened and the Princess flew out. She was pale as death, but laughed nevertheless at the weather, thinking it was not bad enough. Her great white cloak fluttered in the wind like a big sail; but the travelling companion whipped her with the three brooms till the blood trickled on to the ground, and she was hardly able to proceed. At last, however, she reached the mountain.

"It hails and blows awfully," she said; "I have never been out in such weather."

"One may have too much, even of a good thing," said the sorcerer.

The Princess then told him that John had guessed right the second time also; if he did so on the morrow he had won the game, and she should never be able to come to the mountain again, or practise sorcery as before; she was therefore quite sad.

"He shall not guess it," said the sorcerer; "I will think of something he will never guess, or else he is a greater sorcerer than myself. But now let us be merry!"

And he took the Princess's two hands and they danced with all the little goblins and the will-o'-the-wisps. The red spiders ran gayly up and down the walls, and the fire-flowers looked like shooting sparks; the owl beat the drum, the crickets chirped, and the black grasshoppers played the jew's-harp. It was indeed a merry ball!

When the dancing had gone on for a while the Princess was obliged to return, as they might miss her at the palace. The sorcerer said he would accompany her, so that they might be together a little while longer.

They flew out in the terrible storm, and the travelling companion wore his three brooms out on their backs. The sorcerer had never been out in such a hail. Outside the palace he said good-by to the Princess, at the same time whispering in her ear, "Think of my head." But the travelling companion heard it all the same, and at the same moment the Princess rushed in through the window of her bedroom, and the sorcerer was on the point of returning; he seized him by his long black beard and with his sword severed his ugly head from the body before he knew anything about it. The body he threw into the sea to the fishes; but the head he only dipped in the water, tied it into his silk handkerchief, and took it with him to the inn, where he went to sleep.

The next morning he gave John the handkerchief, but requested him not to untie it until the moment the Princess asked him what she had been thinking of.

There were so many people in the great hall at the palace that they were packed as closely as herring in a barrel. The judges and the privy counsellors sat in their chairs with the soft cushions under their heads, and the old King had a new suit of clothes on; the golden sceptre and the crown were furbished up, and everything looked very grand. But the Princess was very pale, and wore a jet-black dress, as if she were in mourning.

"Of what have I been thinking?" she said to John; and he at once untied the handkerchief, but became very much horrified on seeing the ugly head of the sorcerer. Everybody shuddered, for it was awful to look at; but the Princess sat like a statue and could not open her lips.

At last she rose and gave her hand to John, for of course he had guessed right. She looked, however, neither right nor left, but only said with a deep sigh, "Now you are my master, and to-night our marriage shall take place."

"That's what I like," said the old King. "That's as it ought to be."

All the people shouted "Hurrah!" the band played in the streets, the bells pealed, and the old women selling cakes took the crape off their gingerbread; for joy reigned among all. Three whole oxen stuffed with ducks and fowls were roasted in the market-place, any one being allowed to carve off them. The fountain ran with the choicest wines, and any one who bought a twopenny cake at the

baker's received six buns into the bargain, — and those buns with raisins in them.

At night the whole town was illuminated, and the soldiers fired off cannon and the boys squibs ; and eating, drinking, playing, and dancing went on at the palace, where all the handsomest men and the loveliest ladies danced together.

But the Princess was still a witch, and did not care about John. This his companion discovered, and gave him, therefore, three feathers of the swan's wings and a little flask with some drops in it, telling John to place a bath full of water by the side of the Princess's bed, and when she was about to get into the bed to give her a push, so that she



"BUT THE PRINCESS SAT LIKE A STATUE."

would fall into the water, in which he should dip her three times, having previously dropped the feathers and the drops into it. She would then become freed from the spell of witchery, and would love him very much.

John did everything his companion told him to do; the Princess shrieked when he dipped her under the water, and struggled in his hands in the shape of a big black swan with flaming eyes. When she rose the second time, the swan was white, with a black ring round the neck. John prayed sincerely to God, and let the water for the third time cover her, and at the same moment she became a lovely Princess.

She was a great deal more beautiful than before, and thanked John with tears in her eyes for having broken the witchery.

The next morning the old King called, with his whole court, and the congratulations lasted all the morning; at last came the travelling companion, who had his stick in his hand and his satchel on his back. John embraced him several times, begging him not to leave; he should stay with him, being the cause of all his happiness. But his companion shook his head, and said quite kindly: "No, my time is up. I have



"AND HIS GRANDCHILDREN RODE ON HIS KNEE."

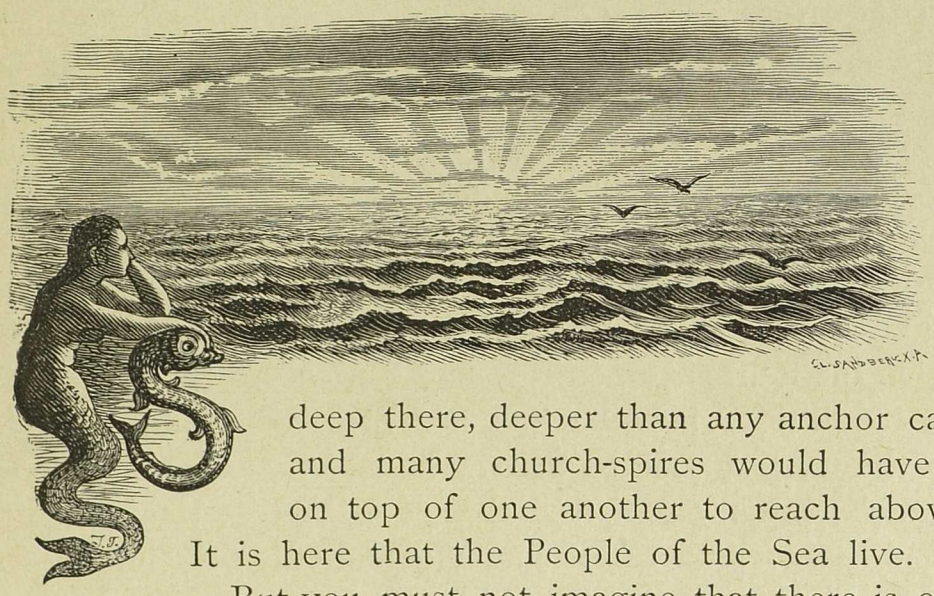
only paid my debt. Do you remember the body of the man which those wicked men were going to insult? You gave all you possessed that it should rest in peace. I am that man."

In the same instant he disappeared.

The marriage festivities lasted a whole month, and John and the Princess loved each other very dearly. The old King lived to enjoy many a happy day, and his grandchildren rode on his knee and played with his sceptre, while John became King over the whole country.

VIII.

THE LITTLE MERMAID.



FAR out in the ocean the water is as blue as the loveliest corn-flower, and as clear as the purest glass; but it is very deep there, deeper than any anchor cable can reach, and many church-spires would have to be placed on top of one another to reach above the surface. It is here that the People of the Sea live.

But you must not imagine that there is only a flat white sand-bottom there; no, the most wonderful trees and shrubs grow there, which are so pliant that they move by the slightest agitation of the water just as if they were alive.

Fishes great and small slip through the branches, just like the birds up in the air.

In the very deepest spot is the palace of the Sea King. The walls are of coral, the long pointed windows of the purest amber, while the roof is formed of mussels, which open and close their shells according to the flow of the water, which looks very pretty, as in each one lie shining pearls, every one of which would be a splendid ornament in the crown of a Queen.

For many years the Sea King down there had been a widower, but his old mother kept house for him. She was a very clever woman, but proud of her birth, and therefore she had twelve oysters on her tail, — the most noble being allowed to carry only six. Otherwise she deserved

much praise, particularly for loving the little Sea Princesses her granddaughters so much. They were six in number; but the loveliest of them all was the youngest. Her complexion was as soft and delicate as a rose-leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest lake; but like her sisters she had no legs, her body finishing in a fish-tail.

All the day long they played in the great halls of the palace, where living flowers grew from the walls. They opened the great amber windows, and fishes swam into them, just like the swallows flying in when we open ours; but the fishes swam up to the Princesses, ate from their hands, and allowed themselves to be stroked.

Outside the palace was a large garden with purple and indigo-blue trees. The fruit shone like gold and the flowers like fire, while they always moved their stems and leaves. The ground was the finest sand, blue as the flames of burning sulphur. Over everything there lay a peculiar bluish glimmer; you might almost fancy that you were high up in the air, with the sky above and below, rather than at the bottom of the sea.

In calm weather the sun would look like a large crimson flower from the calyx of which the light streamed.

Each one of the little Princesses had her piece of ground in the garden, where she dug and planted what she liked best. One gave it the shape of a whale, another preferred that of a little mermaid, while the youngest made hers round as the sun, and had only flowers, like it, crimson in color. She was a peculiar child, quiet and thoughtful; and when the other sisters decorated their little gardens with all the strange objects they obtained from foundered vessels, she would only, besides the crimson flowers, have the statue of a pretty boy of pure white marble, which had come down with a wreck. By the side of it she planted a crimson weeping-willow, which grew splendidly, overhanging it with its fresh green boughs, while the shadows on the blue sand moved with them. It looked as if the crown and the roots were playing, wishing to kiss each other.

She had no greater pleasure than to hear talk of the world above, and her old grandmother had to tell her all she knew of ships and cities, human beings and animals. What seemed particularly strange to her was that on earth the flowers had scent, which they had not at the bottom of the sea, and that the woods were green, and that the fishes among the boughs could sing so beautifully that it was a pleasure to listen to them. They were the little birds, which her grandmother

called fishes; for otherwise she would not have been understood, as they had never seen a bird.

"When you have filled your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you shall be allowed to rise to the surface of the sea, sit in the moonlight on the rocks, and see the big ships pass, and even woods and cities."

Next year the eldest was fifteen, and there being one year between each, the youngest would still have to wait five years before being allowed to come up and see how our world looked. But one promised the other to relate what she had seen and found most beautiful the first day, as their grandmother did not tell them everything, and there was much they wished to know.

None of them longed more warmly for this event than the youngest, who was just the one who had to wait the longest and who was so quiet and thoughtful. Many a night she stood at the open window looking up through the deep-blue water, where the fishes splashed with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and the stars, and though they looked pale, they seemed, through the water, bigger than with us. If then something like a dark cloud glided before them, she knew that it was a whale, or a ship with many people on board, which passed above her. They hardly thought that a pretty little Mermaid stood down below raising her white arms towards them.

The eldest Princess was now fifteen, and was allowed to ascend to the surface.

On her return she had a hundred things to relate; but the most delightful of all was, she said, to lie in the moonshine on a sand-bank, in calm water, close to the shore, looking at a big town where the lights twinkled like thousands of stars, to listen to the music, the noise of carriages, and the hum of human voices; to see the many churches with their spires, and hear the peal of bells. And the youngest longed all the more for all this just because she was not allowed to go up.

How attentively she listened! and when later on in the evening she stood at the open window looking up through the deep blue water, she thought of the big town with its noise and hum, and she even fancied she heard the church-bells peal.

The following year the second sister was allowed to ascend and swim whither she liked. She rose just as the sun was setting, and this was the spectacle she thought most lovely. The whole sky looked as of gold, she said; and the clouds! — she was unable to describe their

beauty. Red and violet ones had floated above her, but still faster flew a flock of wild swans across the water towards the sun, looking like a long white veil. She swam towards it herself, but it sank, and the rosy tint on sea and clouds faded away.

The following year the third sister ascended. She was most venturesome of them all, and swam up a big river falling into the sea. She beheld lovely green hills covered with vine, and castles and houses peeping from among splendid woods; she heard the birds sing, and the sun shone so hot that she was often obliged to dive in order to cool her burning face. In a creek she came upon a number of children who were walking about and splashing in the water quite naked. She wanted to play with them, but they ran away frightened, and a little black animal came, — it was a dog, but she had never seen one, — which barked so furiously at her that she became frightened and went into the sea again. She should never forget the splendid woods, the green hills, and the lovely children who could swim in the water although they had no fish-tails.

The fourth sister was not so venturesome, but remained out at sea, and she said that was the loveliest place: she had a view of many, many miles all round, and above her the heavens, looking like a gigantic cupola. She had seen ships, but they were so far that they looked like gulls; the merry dolphins had turned summersaults, and the big whales blown water through their nostrils, as if there were hundreds of fountains at work all round.

At last the turn came to the fifth sister. Her birthday happened to be in winter, and therefore she saw what the others had not seen the first time. The sea was quite green in color, and icebergs were floating all around, each of which looked like a pearl, she said, and still they were bigger than the churches built by men. They had the most weird forms, and glittered like diamonds. She had seated herself on one of the largest, the wind playing with her long hair, and every ship had avoided it in great fear. Towards night the sky became overcast, and it thundered and lightened, while the black waves hove the big icebergs upwards, so that they shone in the fierce lightning. On board every ship the sails were reefed, and great fear prevailed; but she sat quiet on the big, floating berg, and looked at the blue, flaming, forked lightning in zigzag strike the shining waves.

The first time either sister had come up to the surface she was delighted with all the new and beautiful things she saw; but now that

they were grown up, and could rise when they liked, they were indifferent, and they longed for their home; so that after a month's time they considered that the loveliest place, which they liked best.

Many a night the five sisters rose, arm in arm, to the surface, and when the weather became stormy, threatening the wreck of a vessel, swam before it singing so beautifully — for they had the loveliest voices, far lovelier than any human being — about the delights of the bottom of the sea, begging the sailors not to be afraid of descending thither; but the sailors could not understand what they said, and believed it was only the wind; neither did they see the delights down there, as when the ship went down they were drowned, and reached only when dead the palace of the Sea King.

When in the evening the mermaids rose arm in arm, their little sister remained behind alone gazing after them, and she felt as if she could cry; but mermaids have no tears, and suffer, therefore, the more.

"Oh, if I only were fifteen!" she said. "I feel I shall like the world up there so much, and the people who dwell in it."

At last she was fifteen.

"Well, now you too are fledged," said her grandmother, the old Dowager Queen. Come, let me decorate you like your sisters." And the old lady fastened a wreath of white lilies round her hair, each petal of which was half a pearl, and next she stuck eight big oysters on to her tail, to show her high rank.

"Oh, how it hurts!" exclaimed the little Mermaid.

"Yes, but *noblesse oblige*," said the old Queen.

She would so gladly have thrown off this splendor and laid aside the heavy wreath: her crimson flowers suited her far better; but she dared not.

"Good-by," she cried, and rose through the water as lightly and clear as a bubble.

The sun had just set when she raised her head above the water; but still the clouds shone like gold and purple, and in the crimson sky the evening star twinkled so clearly and beautifully, and the air was fresh and balmy, and the sea calm and silent. A big ship lay there, with three masts; she had all her sails spread, for there was not a breath of wind, and the sailors were sitting in the rigging and on some of the yards. There was music and singing on board, and as the evening closed in hundreds of Chinese lanterns of all colors were lighted; it looked as if all the flags of the world were fluttering in the

air. The little Mermaid swam right up to the window of the great cabin in the stern, and every time a wave lifted her up she could see through the crystal windows; there were many splendidly dressed people in it, but the handsomest of all was a young Prince with large black eyes. He could hardly be more than sixteen; it was his birthday, and in consequence all this gayety. The sailors danced on deck, and when the young Prince came forth hundreds of rockets darted into the air; they were as bright as day, and the little Mermaid became so frightened she dived under the water; but when she a moment after rose again, it seemed to her as if all the stars of heaven were falling. She had never before seen such a magic fire-display. Big suns wheeled around, while magnificent serpents of fire darted through the blue air, and all was reflected in the calm crystal sea. On the ship itself it was so light that every cord was visible, besides the people. Oh, how handsome the young Prince was! and he shook hands with everybody and laughed and talked, while the music sounded in the lovely night.

It grew late, but the little Mermaid could not turn her eyes from the ship and the handsome Prince. The colored lanterns were put out, no more rockets rose into the air, and the guns were silent; but far down in the sea there was a rumbling, sullen noise. She lay still in the water, rocking up and down so that she could look into the cabin. But now the ship began to move swifter; sail after sail was filled; the waves rose high; dark clouds came rolling up, and far away it began to lighten. Alas! a terrible storm was approaching, therefore the sailors began to shorten sail. The big ship rolled madly in the wild sea; the waves rose like big, dark mountains, which threatened to sweep over the masts, but the vessel dived like a swan between them, rising again on their towering crests.

The little Mermaid just thought it a delightful race, but not so the sailors. The vessel creaked and strained, the thick planks were bulged out by the heavy shocks of the seas, the mast snapped like a reed, and the ship heeled over so that the water filled the hold. The little Mermaid saw that they were in danger, and she too had to take care of the spars and splints floating about. One moment it was so pitch-dark she could see nothing; but in the next, when there was a flash of lightning, it became so light she could see everything on board.

Every one tried to save himself; but she sought the young Prince in particular, and when the ship broke to pieces she saw him sink into the

deep waters. At first she was very glad, because he would come down to her; but then she recollected that men could not live in the water, and that only his dead body would reach her father's palace. No, die he should not! So she swam in between the spars and planks floating about, entirely forgetting they might crush her, dived very deep and rose again, until she was close to the young Prince, who was hardly able to keep himself above water in the terrible sea; his arms and legs began to grow heavy, his pretty eyes closed, and he would have been drowned had not the little Mermaid come to his aid. She held his head above the water, and let the waves carry them both along.



"SHE COULD SEE EVERYTHING ON BOARD."

By the morning the storm had passed, and of the ship there was no trace. The sun rose red and shining from the sea, and it seemed to impart life into the cheeks of the Prince, but his eyes remained closed. The Mermaid kissed his fine high forehead and turned back his wet hair; she thought he was like the marble statue down in her little garden, and she kissed him repeatedly, and wished he might live.

Now she saw land before her: high, blue mountains, on the tops of which white snow glistened as if it was a flock of swans; by the shore there were beautiful green woods, and in front lay a church or convent, she could not say which, but it was some building. Lemon and orange trees grew in the garden, and before the gate stood tall palm-trees. The sea formed a small bay here, calm and quiet, but very deep, right

up to the rocks, where the fine white sand was heaped up. She swam thither with the handsome Prince, and laid him on the sand, with his head high in the warm sunshine.

Just then the bells in the great white building sounded and many young girls came walking through the garden. Then the little Mermaid swam farther out behind some big stones rising above water, threw foam over her hair and breast so that nobody could see her face, and began to watch what became of the poor Prince.

It was not long before a young girl came thither; she appeared to be frightened, but only for a moment. She ran at once for assistance, and the Mermaid saw the Prince reviving and laugh to those around him; but to her he did not laugh, for of course he did not know she had saved him. She felt quite a pang when he was taken into the big house, and dived sadly into the sea and went home to her father's palace.

She had always been quiet and thoughtful, but now she became still more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen the first time she ascended, but she related nothing.

Many a night and morning she rose to where she had left the Prince. She saw the fruit in the garden ripen and gathered; she saw the snow melt on the lofty mountains, but she saw not the Prince, and therefore she always returned home more sad at heart. Here it was her only consolation to sit in her little garden with her arms round the pretty statue, which was like the Prince, but she cared not for her flowers; they grew wild in the paths and twined their long tendrils and leaves into the boughs of the trees, so that it was nearly dark there.

At last she could bear it no longer, but confided her secret to one of her sisters, and soon all the others knew it; but nobody else besides a few other mermaids, who only told it to a few intimate friends. One of them knew who the Prince was, and had even seen the festivities on board the ship, and knew whence he came, and where his kingdom lay.

"Come, little sister," the other Princesses said; and with their arms entwined they rose to the surface of the sea, just where they knew the palace of the Prince stood.

It was built of a shining light yellow stone, with great marble stairs, one of which reached right down to the sea. Magnificent gilt cupolas rose above the roof, and between the pillars running round the whole building stood marble statues looking as if they were living. Through

the crystal glass in the high windows one could see into the most splendid apartments, hung with the costliest silk curtains and tapestry; while the walls were also ornamented with great paintings which it was quite a pleasure to look at.

In the middle of the largest *salon* splashed a big fountain, the jets of water rising high up against the glass cupola in the roof, through which the sun shone on the water and the lovely plants in the great basin.

Now she knew where he lived, she came on the water many a night, and much nearer the shore than any of the others had ever ventured; yes, she went even right up into the little canal under the magnificent marble balcony, which threw a long shadow over the water. Here she remained watching the young Prince, who thought he was quite alone in the bright moonlight.

She saw him on many other nights sailing away under music in his splendid yacht with fluttering pennants. She peeped out from the green reeds, and the wind caught her long silver-white veil, and when any one saw it he thought it was a swan lifting.

Often of night she heard the fishermen, who were out at sea listening, relate how kind the young Prince was; and it pleased her that she had saved his life when he floated half-dead on the waves, and she thought how heavily his head had rested on her bosom and how warmly she had kissed him. But he knew nothing of this, and could not even dream of her.

She began to love human beings more and more, and like to rise up among them. She thought their world much larger than hers, because they could fly in their ships across the sea and ascend mountains above the clouds, while the lands belonging to them, with forests and fields, reached farther than she could see. There was much she wished to know; but her sisters could not answer all her questions, and therefore she asked her old grandmother, for she knew the world above very well, as she justly called the lands above the sea.

"If human beings are not drowned," asked the little Mermaid, "do they live forever, and do they not die like us in the sea?"

"Yes," said the old lady, "they too must die, and their lives are even shorter than ours. We may live three hundred years; but when we cease living down here we become but foam on the sea, and have not even a grave down here among those we love. We have no immortal soul, and never come to life again. We are like the green reed; when once cut, it never grows again. Men, on the other hand, have souls, which

live even when the bodies are dust. Souls rise through the pure air up to shining stars; and just as we rise up through the water and see the lands of man, so men rise to unknown lovely regions which we shall never behold."

"Why have we not immortal souls too?" asked the little Mermaid, sadly. "I would give all my hundred years to be a human being for one day, and thus share in the heavenly world."

"You should not think of such things," said the old lady. "We are much better and happier than the people up there."

"I must die, then, and float like foam on the sea, and shall not be able to hear the music of the waves, see the lovely flowers and the red sun. Cannot I do something to gain an immortal soul?"

"No," said the old lady; "only if a man came to love you so that you were dearer to him than his father and mother, and, centring his whole thought and love in you, let the priest lay his right hand in yours, with a pledge of constancy here and after, his soul would merge into your body, and even you would have a share of human happiness. Then he would give you his soul, and still retain his own. But that can never be. Just what we think lovely, — namely, your tail, — they consider ugly on earth; of course they do not know any better; to be handsome there, you must have two awkward supporters called legs."

The little Mermaid sighed, and looked with sadness at her tail.

"Let us be contented," said the old lady; "we will dance and romp during the three hundred years we have to live in; that is long enough. To-night we have a grand ball."

There was indeed a magnificence seldom seen on earth. The walls and roof of the great ball-room were of thick but transparent glass. Several hundreds of gigantic conches, purple and emerald, stood in rows on each side, with a blue burning flame, lighting the whole room, and shining through the walls so that the sea outside was illuminated. One could see innumerable fishes, big and small, swimming up to the glass walls; on some the scales shone with a purple lustre, on others like silver and gold. Right through the hall ran a broad stream, and in this danced mermen and mermaids to their own lovely song. No human beings have such lovely voices. The little Mermaid sang more beautifully than any one else, and they clapped their hands to her, and for a moment she felt glad at heart, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of all on land and sea. But she soon thought of the world above; she could not forget the handsome Prince, and her grief

at not having an immortal soul like him. Therefore she stole from her father's palace, and while song and mirth prevailed inside she sat sad in her little garden. Just then she heard a horn sound through the water, and she thought, "Now he sails up there, he whom I love above father and mother, he to whom my thoughts cling and in whose hand I will gladly place the fortune of my life. I will brave anything to win him and an immortal soul. While my sisters are dancing in my father's palace, I will go to the Witch of the Sea, whom I have always been so afraid of; perhaps she can help me."

The little Mermaid left her garden and passed toward the roaring sea-currents, behind which the Witch dwelt. She had never been that way before; here grew no flowers and no weeds, there was only the barren gray sand-bottom stretching toward the currents, in which the water whirled like the wheels of a water-mill, dragging everything it seized into the abyss below. She had to pass through these terrible whirlpools to reach the domain of the Sea Witch, and here she had to pass a hot bubbling slime which the Witch called her peat-bog. Behind it lay her dwelling, in the middle of a weird forest. All trees and bushes were polypi, — half animal and half plant, — looking like hundred-headed snakes growing out of the ground; all the branches were long, slimy arms with fingers like pliant worms, and every limb, from the root to the top, moved. They clung to everything in the sea they could lay hold of, and never let it go again. The little Mermaid stood before them quite frightened, her heart beating with fear so that she nearly turned back; but she thought of the Prince and the human soul, and gathered courage. She tied her long, waving hair firmly to her head, so that the polypi should not catch her by it, laid her arms crosswise over her breast, and sped — as only fishes can — in between the horrible polypi, which stretched their pliant arms and fingers after her. She saw that every one of them held something it had caught, hundreds of little arms holding it like strong iron bands. Men, who had been drowned and sunk, remained like skeletons in the arms of the polypi. They held rudders and charts, skeletons of animals, and even a little Mermaid whom they had caught and smothered; and this was to her the most horrible sight of all.

She now reached the great slimy place in the forest where big fat water-snakes wallowed, showing their disgusting yellowish bellies. In the middle a house had been built of the white skeletons of drowned people; and here sat the Sea Witch, letting a toad eat out of her mouth,

just as we give a canary sugar; she called the horrible fat water-snakes her little chicks, and let them roll on her great slimy breast.

"I know what you want," said the Witch; "and although it is foolish of you, you shall have your way, because it will bring you misfortune, my pretty Princess. You wish to get rid of your tail and have two stumps instead, to walk on like human beings, in order that the young Prince shall fall in love with you, and you may marry him and obtain an immortal soul;" saying which she laughed so loudly and repulsively that the toad and the snakes fell rolling to the ground.

"You are just in time," said the Witch; "to-morrow, when the sun rises, it would have been too late until another year has passed. I will prepare you a draught with which you must swim ashore before the sun rises, and drink it. Your tail will then part, shrinking into what men call pretty legs; but it will hurt just as if a sword were thrust through you. All who see you will say that you are the most beautiful being they have seen. You will retain your floating gait, which no ballet dancer can equal; but every step you take, you will feel as if you trod on sharp knives, and your blood will be shed. If you will endure all this I will help you."

"Yes," said the little Mermaid with trembling voice, thinking of the Prince and of gaining an immortal soul.

"But remember," said the Witch, "that when once you have assumed a human form you can never become a mermaid again. You can never return to your sisters or your father's palace, and if you do not gain the Prince's love, so that for you he forgets father and mother and clings to you with his whole soul, and the priest unites you as man and wife, you will gain no immortal soul. The morning after he has married another, your heart will break and you will turn to foam on the sea."

"I consent," said the little Mermaid, pale as death.

"But you must pay me too," said the Witch, "and it is not little I demand. You have the most beautiful voice of all down here, and with that you no doubt think to charm him; but that voice you must give to me. The best gift you possess I must have for my costly draught. I have to give you my own blood in it, that it may be as cutting as a two-edged sword."

"But if you take my voice, what have I left?" asked the little Mermaid.

"Your lovely figure," said the Witch, "your floating gait, and your

speaking eyes; with those you may well fascinate the heart of a human being. Have you lost courage? Come, put out your little tongue, and I will cut it off in payment for the powerful draught."

"So be it," said the little Mermaid; and the Witch put her kettle on the fire to boil the magic draught.

"Cleanliness is next to godliness," said the Witch, and scoured out the kettle with snakes she had tied together. She then lanced her bosom and let the blood trickle into it, the steam from which formed the most weird figures, enough to frighten any one. Every moment the Witch threw new things into the kettle, and when it began to boil it sounded like the crying of a crocodile.



"AND ROSE UP THROUGH THE DEEP BLUE WATERS."

At last it was ready, and looked like the clearest water.

"Here it is," said the Witch, and cut off the little Mermaid's tongue, who was now dumb, and unable to speak or sing.

"If the polypi try to catch you when you return," said the Witch, "throw only a single drop of this at them and their arms and fingers will break into a thousand pieces."

But that was not necessary, for the polypi drew back in terror when they beheld the draught shining in her hand like a bright star; and she soon passed through the forest, the swamp, and the whirlpool.

She could see her father's palace. The lights were extinguished in the great ball-room, and no doubt they were all asleep there; but still

she dared not go to them, as she was now dumb, and on the point of leaving them forever. She felt as if her heart would break with grief. She stole into the garden, took a flower from the bed of each of her sisters, and kissing her hand a hundred times to the palace, rose up through the deep blue waters.

The sun had not yet risen when she reached the Prince's palace and raised herself on to the marble stairs. The moon shone brightly. She then drank the sharp, burning draught, and she felt as if a two-edged sword had cut her in twain; she fainted from the pain, and lay like dead.

When the sun shone upon the sea she awoke, feeling a cutting pain; but before her stood the handsome young Prince, who fixed his dark eyes upon her, so that she cast down her own; and then she saw that her fish's tail was gone, and that she had instead the prettiest little white legs a young girl could possess. But as she was quite nude, she covered herself with her rich, long hair. The Prince asked her who she was and how she came there; and in response she looked at him so tenderly, but at the same time so sorrowfully, with her deep blue eyes, for speak she could not.

He then took her by the hand and led her into the palace; but every step she made felt, as the Witch had foretold, like walking on sharp knives and pins; but she bore that willingly, and by the hand of the Prince stepped as lightly as a fairy, so that he and everybody else wondered at her lovely, floating gait.

Costly dresses of silk and muslin were given to her, and she was the loveliest maiden in the palace; but dumb she remained, and could neither speak nor sing.

Beautiful female slaves clad in garments of silver and gold came and sang before the Prince and his royal parents. One sang lovelier than the other, and the Prince clapped his hands and smiled to her, which made the little Mermaid so sad; for she knew she had sung much finer, and thought, "Oh, if he only knew that in order to be near him I have sacrificed my voice forever!"

The slaves now moved with pretty, graceful step to the loveliest music, when the little Mermaid rose on the points of her toes, and raising her beautiful snow-white arms, glided across the floor, and danced as none had done before. At every movement her beauty became more striking, and her eyes spoke more to the heart than the singing of the slaves.



"HE THEN TOOK HER BY THE HAND AND LED HER INTO THE PALACE."

All were delighted, especially the Prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced more and more, although each time her foot touched the ground she felt as if treading on knives. The Prince said she should always be near him, and she was allowed to sleep on a velvet cushion at his door.

He had a male dress made for her, so that she could accompany him on horseback; and they rode through the fragrant woods, where the green boughs stroked her shoulders and the little birds sang behind the new leaves. She climbed the highest mountains with the Prince; and although her tender feet bled so that the others could see it, she only laughed, and followed him till they saw the clouds floating beneath them like a flock of birds migrating to another land.

At night, at the palace, when everybody was asleep, she would go down the broad marble steps, as it cooled her burning feet to stand in the cold sea-water; and then she thought of those in the deep.

One night her sisters came arm in arm, singing so sadly as they floated on the waves. She made signs to them, and when they recognized her told her how she had grieved them all. Afterwards they came every night; and once she saw, far out at sea, her old grandmother, who had not been up for many years, and the Sea King with his crown on his head, stretching their arms toward her; but they did not venture so close to the shore as her sisters.

Every day the Prince liked her better; he loved her as one loves a good, dear child; but to make her his Queen he never dreamt of, and his wife she had to become, or she would not gain an immortal soul, but die the morning after his marriage and become foam upon the sea.

"Do you not love me more than everybody else?" the eyes of the little Mermaid seemed to ask when he took her in his arms and kissed her beautiful forehead.

"Yes, you are dearest to me," said the Prince, "for you have the best heart of them all and are most devoted to me; besides, you are like the young girl I saw once, but whom I feel sure I shall never see again. Once I was on board a ship which foundered; the waves cast me ashore by a holy convent where several young girls were novices, the youngest of whom found me by the shore and saved my life. I saw her but twice; she is the only one whom I could love in this world; but you are like her, and have almost driven her image out of my mind. She belongs to the convent, and therefore my good star has sent me you in her place, and we will never part."

"Oh, he does not know I saved him," thought the little Mermaid; "I carried him through the waves to the woods where the convent stands; I sat behind the foam to see if anybody came. I saw the lovely girl he loves more than me;" and the Mermaid sighed deeply, for she could not cry. "The girl belongs to the convent," she continued; "she will never come into the world any more; they will never meet again; I am near and see him every day; I will tend him, love him, and give my life for him."

Then it was rumored that the Prince was about to marry the daughter of the neighboring King, and that for this purpose he was equipping a fine ship. It was added that he was only going to pay a visit to the King's country; but it was in reality to see his daughter, and he was to be accompanied by a large retinue. But the little Mermaid only shook her head and laughed; she knew the Prince's heart better than anybody else.

"I must travel," he had said to her; "I must see this lovely Princess, as my parents desire it; but to compel me to bring her home as my bride they shall not. I cannot love her, as she is not like the beautiful girl whom you are like. If I ever should choose a bride, it would be you, rather, my dumb foundling with the speaking eyes." And he kissed her rosy lips, played with her long hair, and laid his head on her heart, so that it dreamt of human happiness and an immortal soul.

"You are not afraid of the sea, are you, my dumb child?" he asked as they stood together on the deck of the magnificent vessel which should carry him to the country of the neighboring King; and he told her of storm and calm, of the curious fishes in the deep, and what the divers had seen there; and she smiled at what he told her: for she knew better than anybody all about the bottom of the sea.

In the moonlight night, when all except the man at the wheel were asleep, she sat down by the gunwale of the vessel, gazing down into the transparent water, and she thought she saw her father's palace, where her old grandmother was standing with her silver crown on her head, looking up through the waters to the keel of the ship. Then her sisters rose above the sea; they looked at her very sadly and wrung their white hands. She beckoned to them and laughed, wanting to let them understand that she was well and happy, when a sailor boy came along, and her sisters dived, he believing that what he had seen was foam on the sea.

The next morning the vessel entered the port of the magnificent city

of the neighboring King. All the church-bells pealed, and from the lofty towers trumpet blasts were sounded, while the soldiers formed a guard of honor. Fêtes, balls, and parties followed each other every day, but the Princess had not yet come; she was being brought up far away, it was stated, in a holy convent, where she was taught all royal virtues. At last she came.

The little Mermaid stood anxiously waiting to see her, and she was obliged to confess a lovelier being she had never seen. Her complexion was clear and peachy, and from behind her long dark eyelashes smiled a pair of deep-blue, loving eyes.

"It was you who saved me when I lay like dead on the shore," said the Prince, pressing his blushing bride in his arms.

"I am too happy," he said to the little Mermaid. "What I hardly dared to hope is realized. You ought to rejoice at my happiness, for you love me better than any of them."

And the little Mermaid kissed his hand, and seemed already to feel her heart breaking for his bridal morning would kill her, and change her into foam on the sea.

All the church-bells pealed, and heralds rode through the streets announcing the betrothal. On all altars scented oil was burning in valuable silver lamps, the priests swung censers, and bride and bridegroom gave each other their hands and received the blessing of the bishop.

The little Mermaid stood, clad in gold and silk, holding the train of the bride; but her ears heard not the festive music, nor saw her eyes the holy ceremony: her mind was bent upon her own death and all she had lost.

Already the same evening bride and bridegroom went on board the ship, the guns thundered forth a salvo, the pennants fluttered, and in the middle of the ship a royal tent was raised of gold and purple with the softest cushions: here the bridal couple were to sleep.

The sails swelled in the wind, and the vessel glided softly onward, almost without movement, across the crystal surface.

When it became dark, colored lanterns were lighted, and the sailors danced on the deck. The little Mermaid could not help thinking of the first time she had risen above the sea, when she saw the same splendor and rejoicing, and she whirled along in the dance as the swallow floats when it is pursued, and everybody applauded. She had never danced so well.

She felt as if sharp knives were cutting her tender feet, but she heeded it not: her heart was cut deeper. She knew it was the last night she should see *him* for whom she had renounced family and home, sacrificed her lovely voice, and daily suffered indescribable tortures, without his knowing the least thereof.

It was the last night she breathed the same air as he, and saw the deep sea and the star-studded sky: an eternal night, without thought or dream, awaited *her*, who had no soul and could not gain one.

All was gayety and merriment on board till long past midnight, and she danced and laughed, with the certainty of death in her heart. The Prince kissed his lovely bride, and she played with his dark hair, and arm in arm they went to rest in the magnificent tent.

All was quiet on board; only the man at the wheel was awake, when the little Mermaid laid her white arms on the gunwale of the vessel, gazing towards the east and the dawn of day, for she knew that the first rays of the sun would kill her.

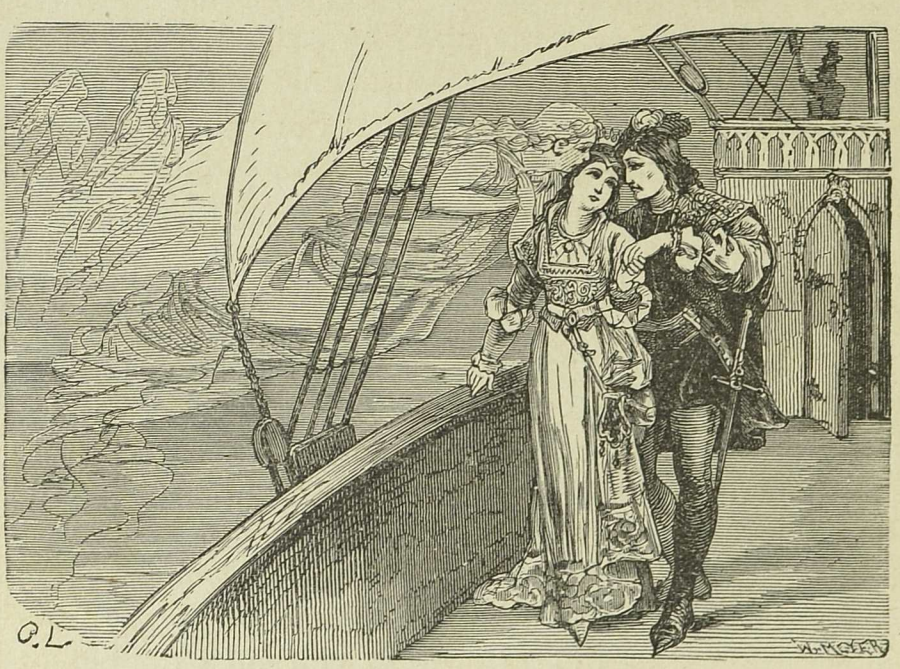
She then saw her sisters rise out of the sea; they were as pale as she, and their long lovely hair fluttered no more in the wind: it was cut off.

"We have given it to the Witch, in order that she shall help us to prevent your death to-night. She has given us a knife; here it is; see how sharp it is! Before the sun rises you must plunge it into the heart of the Prince, and when his warm blood stains your feet they will again turn into a fish's tail, and you will again become a mermaid, can return to us, and live your three hundred years before you become the lifeless, salt sea-foam. Be quick! He or you must die before the sun rises. Our old grandmother mourns so that her silvery hair has fallen off, as ours fell before the scissors of the Witch. Kill the Prince, and come back to us! Be quick! Do you see the purple streak yonder in the sky? In a few minutes the sun rises and you must die." And they heaved a strange deep sigh and sank down between the waves.

The little Mermaid drew back the purple curtain from the tent and saw the beautiful bride asleep with her head on the breast of the Prince. She stooped, kissed his fine forehead, looked at the sky, which was becoming redder and redder, looked at the sharp knife, then at the Prince, who in his dreams murmured the name of his bride, for she alone was in his thoughts; the knife trembled in her hand for an instant, and then — she threw it far out into the sea. The water gleamed purple where it fell, looking as if drops of blood bubbled in the water. Once more she looked at the Prince with sorrowful eyes, then threw

herself from the vessel into the sea and felt her body becoming dissolved into foam.

The sun now rose above the water, and the rays fell so warmly upon the icy-cold foam that the little Mermaid did not feel death. She saw the bright sun, and above her floated hundreds of transparent, beautiful beings, through whom she could see the white sails of the ship and the red clouds in the sky. Their voices sounded like music, but it was so ethereal that no human ear could hear it, nor human eye see them; and though without wings, they were so light that they floated in the air.



"INVISIBLE, SHE KISSED THE BRIDE'S FOREHEAD."

The little Mermaid saw she had a form like theirs, which rose higher and higher out of the foam.

"Whither am I going?" she asked; and her voice sounded like that of the other beings, — so ethereal that no earthly music could render it.

"To the Daughters of the Air," they answered. "Mermaids have no immortal soul, and can never gain one unless they obtain the love of a man; their eternal existence depends upon another power. Neither have the Daughters of the Air an immortal soul, but they may gain it by good actions. We fly to the hot countries, where the stifling desert-air kills men, and we waft coolness to them. We diffuse the scent of flowers through the air, and restore life and health. When for three hundred years we have striven to do all the good we can, we obtain an

immortal soul, and share in the eternal bliss of mankind. You, little Mermaid, have all your life striven to do the same as we. You have suffered and endured, and have raised yourself to the sphere of the Spirits of the Air. Now you may, in three hundred years, by your own actions obtain an immortal soul." And the little Mermaid raised her white arms toward God's glorious sun, and for the first time shed tears.

On board the ship there was again life and bustle; she saw the Prince and his lovely bride searching for her, and they looked sorrowfully at the bubbling foam, as if they knew she had plunged into the waves. Invisible, she kissed the bride's forehead, smiled to the Prince, and then rose, with the other Daughters of the Air, up upon the purple clouds floating above. "When three hundred years have elapsed we shall glide thus into heaven."

"We may even get there before," whispered one. "Invisible we glide into the dwellings of mankind where there are children, and for every day we find a child that pleases its parents and gains their love, God shortens the time of our probation. The child does not know when we glide through the room, and when we can smile with pleasure at its behavior a year is taken off the three hundred. But if, on the other hand, we meet with a wicked and naughty child, we must shed tears of sorrow, and every tear adds one day to the time of our probation."

IX.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW SUIT.

MANY years ago there was an Emperor who was so immensely fond of new clothes that he spent all his money in order to be really well and smartly dressed. He did not care about his soldiers, nor for going to the theatre, or driving about in the public promenades, save to show a new suit. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as it is said of a king, he is with the Cabinet, so it was always said here, "The Emperor is in his dressing-room."

The town in which he resided was a very gay one, and many strangers journeyed thither, and one day also two swindlers. They pretended that they were weavers, and said that they could weave the most beautiful cloth any one could ever imagine. Not only were the colors and the design something unusually pretty, but the clothes made from the same had also the remarkable peculiarity that they could not be seen by anybody who was incapable in his office or else was more than ordinarily stupid.

"That would be a fine suit indeed," thought the Emperor; "when I had that on I should be able to discover whom in my empire are unfit for the offices they hold, and be able to distinguish the clever from the stupid. I must have some of that cloth woven for me;" and he gave the two swindlers a large sum of money on account, in order that they should begin their work.

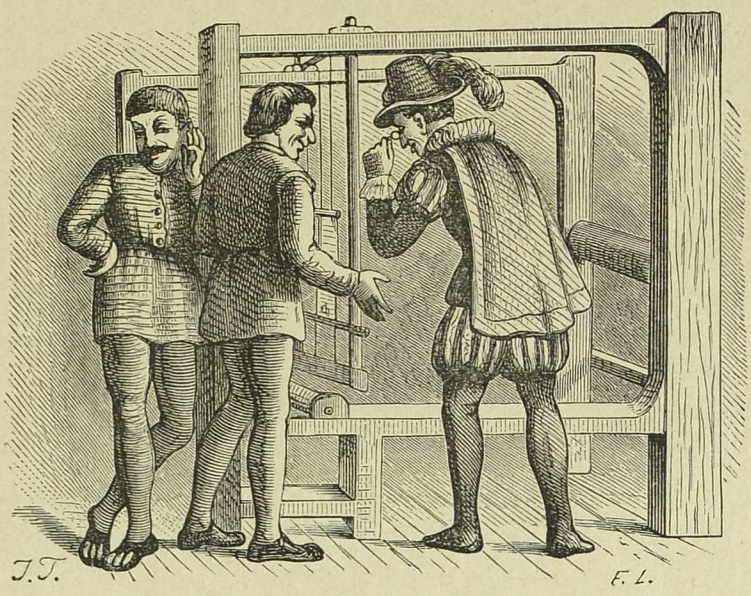
They set up two looms, and appeared as if they were working at something; yet the looms had nothing on them. The swindlers asked constantly for the finest silks and the most magnificent gold cloth; but the proceeds they put into their pockets, and kept on working at the empty looms till far into the night.

"I would indeed like very much to see how far they have got on with the cloth," thought the Emperor; but at the same time he was a little anxious in his mind at the thought that he who was stupid or

unfit for his office could not see it. For his own part he thought he need not be afraid, but he would, however, send somebody to see it first. Every man in the town knew the peculiarity of the cloth, and each one wished to discover how stupid or incapable his neighbor was.

"I will send my old, honest minister to the weavers," thought the Emperor; "he will best be able to see what the cloth is like, for he has sense, and nobody is better fitted for his office than he."

The old, honest minister went to the room where the two swindlers sat working at the empty looms. "Heaven preserve me!" thought the old minister, opening his eyes wide. "Why, I cannot see anything!" But he did not say so.



"WHY, I CANNOT SEE ANYTHING!"

The two swindlers invited him to come closer, asking him if it was not a lovely pattern and fine colors, pointing to the empty loom. But the poor old minister continued to keep his eyes open, and still could see nothing, for there was nothing to see. "Bless me," he thought, "am I really a fool? I never thought so, and nobody must know it. Am I not fit for my office? No, it will never do to say I cannot see the cloth."

"But you say nothing," said one of the weavers.

"Oh, it is very pretty, exceptionally pretty," said the old minister, looking through his glasses. "What a design and colors! I shall certainly not fail to tell the Emperor that it pleases me very much."

"We are delighted to hear it," said both the weavers, describing the

colors and the peculiar design. The old minister listened attentively, in order to be able to say the same to the Emperor when he returned; and he did so.

The swindlers now asked for more money, and more silk and gold, which they wanted for the stuff. It all went into their pockets, and not a single thread was put upon the looms; but they still continued to pretend to work.

Shortly after, the Emperor sent another honest official to see how the cloth progressed and whether it would soon be ready. It was exactly with him as with the minister: he looked and looked, but as there were only the empty looms, he could see nothing.

"Is n't it a handsome cloth?" asked the two swindlers, pointing to and explaining the pretty design, which did not exist at all.

"I am not a fool," thought the man. "It must be my easy appointment I am not fit for? It is really strange, but I must not show it." And he praised the cloth, which he could not see, and assured them he was highly pleased with the pretty colors and the handsome design. "It is indeed very fine," he said to the Emperor.

Everybody in the town was talking of the handsome cloth, and the Emperor wished to see it himself while it was still on the loom. Accompanied by a number of excellent men, and among them the two old respectable officials who had been there before, he went to the cunning swindlers, who were weaving with all their might, but without anything on the looms.

"Yes; is n't it splendid?" said the two honest officials. "May it please your Majesty to look at the design and the colors?" And they pointed to the empty looms, believing the others could see the cloth.

"What does this mean?" thought the Emperor. "I can see nothing; it is really awful. Am I a fool? Am I not fit to be Emperor? It would be the most frightful thing that could happen."

"Oh, it is very handsome," he said. "It has my most gracious approval." And he nodded approvingly and looked at the empty looms, for he would not say he could not see anything.

The whole *suite* with him looked and looked, but could not see anything more than the others; but they nevertheless said, like the Emperor, "Oh, it is very handsome!" advising him to wear the fine suit on the occasion of the great procession about to take place.

"It is magnificent, splendid, *charmante*," sounded from mouth to mouth, and every one was exceedingly satisfied with it. The Emperor

gave each of the swindlers a cross to wear in the buttonhole as court weavers.

All the night long before the morning the procession was to take place the swindlers were busy, burning more than sixteen wax-candles. People could see they had enough to do to get the Emperor's new suit ready. They pretended to take the cloth from the loom, they cut in the air with big scissors, they sewed with needles without thread, and said at last, "Now the suit is finished."

The Emperor went thither with his principal cavaliers, and the swindlers lifted up their arms, as if holding something, saying, "Here are the trousers; here the coat; here the mantle;" and so forth.



"BUT HE HAS NOTHING ON," SAID A LITTLE BOY.

"They are as light as a cobweb; one would think one had nothing on; but that is just the peculiarity of the suit."

All the courtiers said "Yes," but they could not see anything.

"If it might now please your most gracious Majesty to undress, we will fit the new suit on before the great glass there," said the swindlers.

The Emperor undressed entirely, and the swindlers pretended to hand him piece after piece of the new suit; they caught him round the waist, and pretended to fasten something round him: it was the train, and the Emperor twisted and turned before the glass.

"How handsome it is! how well it fits!" they all said. "What a design! what colors! It is a splendid suit!"

"The canopy to be borne over your Majesty in the procession is waiting," said the Grand Master of Ceremonies.

"Very well; I am ready," said the Emperor. "Does n't it fit well?" And he turned round once more before the glass, as if really pretending to look at his splendor.

The pages who were to carry the train pretended they were holding up the train, with their hands in the air, for they would not let any one know they could not see anything.

So the Emperor walked in the procession, under the splendid canopy, and everybody in the streets and the windows said, "Dear me, how fine the Emperor's new suit is! What a handsome train! How well it fits!" Nobody would acknowledge he saw nothing, for then he would have been unfit for his position, or very stupid. None of the Emperor's suits had been such a success.

"But he has nothing on!" said a little boy.

"Good Heavens! listen to the innocent thing's voice!" said the father. And one whispered to the other what the child had said.

"A little child says he has nothing on," some said.

"But he *has* nothing on!" all the people exclaimed at last, and the cry made the Emperor's marrow creep, for he agreed with them; but he thought he must put a good face upon it till the end. And he kept himself more upright than before, and the pages continued to carry the train which did not exist.

X.

THE DAISY.

NOW you shall hear!

Out in the country, close by the roadside, stands a villa, — you have no doubt seen it yourself some time or another, — in front of which is a little garden with flowers in it, and surrounded by railings. Close to it, at the edge of the ditch, in the middle of the finest greensward, grew a little Daisy; and the sun shone as warmly and beautifully on the little daisy as on the great splendid flowers in the garden beyond, and therefore it kept on growing.

One morning it was in full bloom, with its little dazzling white petals, which like rays enclose the yellow little sun in the middle. It did not know that nobody saw it in the grass, and that it was a poor despised flower; no, it was quite contented, and looked straight at the warm sun while it listened to the lark singing in the air.

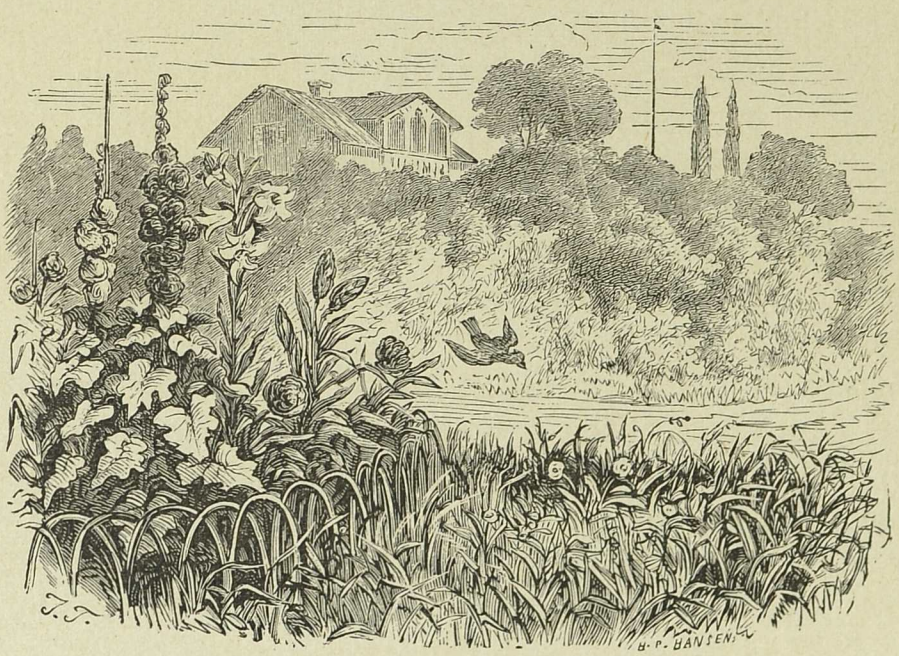
The little Daisy was as happy as if it had been one of the greatest days of festival in the year; and still it was only an ordinary Monday. All the children were at school, and while they sat on their forms learning something, the Daisy sat on its tiny green stalk, learning also from the warm sun and everything around how good God is; and it thought that the little lark just expressed in song all that it felt, and the Daisy looked up with a sort of veneration to the happy bird which could sing and fly; but it was not at all sorry it could not do so itself.

"I can see and hear," it thought. "The sun shines on me, and the wind kisses me. Oh, how favored I am!"

Inside the railings stood many stuck-up, grand flowers; the less scent they had the more proudly they held themselves. The peonies, puffed up with pride, tried to look bigger than the roses; but everything does not depend on size. The tulips had the grandest colors, and they knew it; therefore they kept themselves more straight, so that they should be seen better. They took no notice whatever of the

Daisy outside, but the Daisy looked the more at them, and thought, "How rich and lovely they are! To visit them no doubt the dear bird will come down. I am so glad I am so near that I can at all events look at their splendor." And just as it thought so, "Quirrevit!" it sounded above, and the lark swept down, but not to the peonies and tulips; no, down into the grass to the poor Daisy, who became so frightened with delight that it knew not what to think.

The little bird hopped around it singing, "Oh, how soft the grass is! and lo! what a dear little flower with gold in the heart and silver on its



"AND THE LARK SWEPT DOWN."

dress." For the little yellow spot in the Daisy looked like gold, and the little petals around were silvery white.

Nobody can imagine how happy the little Daisy was! The bird kissed it with its beak, sang to it, and then flew up into the air. It certainly was half an hour before the flower was itself again. Half ashamed but still very delighted, it looked toward the flower in the garden; for they had of course seen the honor done, and they must realize its pleasure; but the tulips stood as upright as before, and looked sour and red in the face, for they were very angry. As for the thick-headed peonies, it was well they could not speak, for the Daisy would have received a good scolding. The poor little flower could see that they were in a bad temper, and it was so very, very sorry.

At that moment a girl entered the garden with a big knife, so sharp and shining, and she went straight up to the tulips and cut one off after another. "Oh dear, how horrible!" sighed the little Daisy; "now all is over with them." So the girl went away with the tulips, and the Daisy was glad it was out in the field and was a poor little flower; it felt so very grateful, and when the sun set it folded its petals, went to sleep, and dreamt all the night of the sun and the little bird.

The next morning when the flower, quite happy, again stretched its white petals, like tiny arms, out toward the air and the light, it recognized the bird's voice; but its song was very sad. The poor lark had good cause for it: it had been caught, and sat now in a cage by the open window. It sang of liberty and of flying freely about, of the young green seed in the fields, and about the delightful journeys it could make high up in the air on its swift wings. The poor bird was not in a happy mood; it sat captive in the cage.

The little Daisy wished so much it could help, but how? It was difficult to decide. It quite forgot how beautiful everything was around, how warm the sun shone, and how lovely and delicate its petals were. Alas! it could only think of the captive bird, for which it could do nothing.

Just then two little boys came out of the garden, one of whom had a knife in his hand as big and sharp as the one the girl had used for cutting the tulips. They went straight up to the little Daisy, which could not understand what they wanted.

"Here we will cut a nice piece of turf for the lark," said one of them, beginning to cut out a square around the Daisy, so that it stood in the middle.

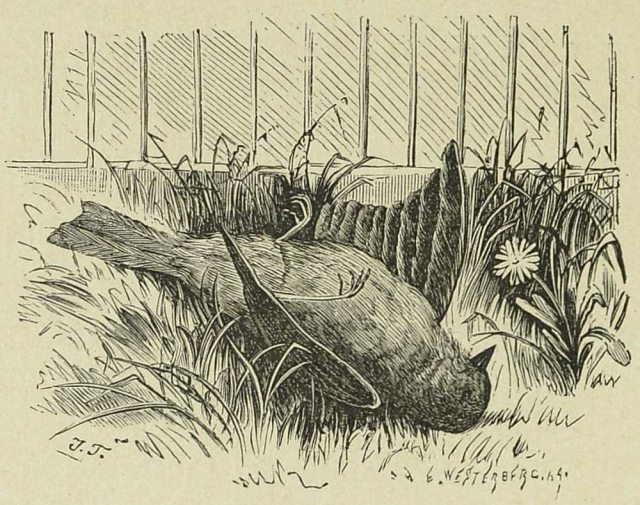
"Pull up that flower," said the other boy, and the Daisy trembled with fear; for to be pulled up was of course the same as to die, and now it wished so much to live, as it was to go with the turf into the cage of the captive bird.

"No, let it be," said the other; "it looks nice there." And it was left, and went into the cage of the lark.

But the pretty bird complained quite loudly of its lost liberty, and beat its wings against the wire cage; the little Daisy could not speak, nor say a comforting word however much it wished. In this manner the morning passed.

"Here is no water," cried the captive lark; "they have all gone out and forgotten to give me a drop of water. My throat is dry and

parched; there is fire and ice inside me, and the air is so heavy. Alas! I must depart from the warm sunshine, the fresh greensward, and from all the beauties God has created." And the bird bored its little beak into the cooling turf, to be a little refreshed, when its eyes fell upon the Daisy, and it nodded to the flower, kissed it with its beak, and said: "You must also wither here, you poor little flower! You and the little bit of turf are all they have given me in exchange for the whole world I had outside. Each little blade of grass shall be a green tree for me, and each one of your white petals a fragrant flower. Alas! you only remind me of all I have lost!"



"THE POOR BIRD'S HEART BROKE, FROM WANT AND LONGING."

"Oh, if I only could console it!" said the Daisy; but it could not move a petal. The scent from the delicate flower was, however, far more fragrant than it usually is from this flower, which the bird noticed; and though it tore up the grass in its agony, it did not touch the flower.

Evening came, and still nobody brought the poor bird a drop of water. Then it stretched out its beautiful wings, shook them convulsively, and gave vent to a plaintive, "Pip, pip." The little head drooped toward the flower, and the poor bird's heart broke, from want and longing. Now the Daisy could not, as the night before, fold its petals and sleep, but hung its head sick and sorrowful.

First the next morning the boys came; and when they saw that the bird was dead they wept bitterly, and dug it a grave which they ornamented with flowers. The bird's body was put into a red box, for it

was to have a royal funeral. The poor bird! When it was alive and singing they forgot it, and let it sit in the cage wanting, but now it was made much of and cried over.

But the clod of turf with the Daisy on it was thrown into the dust in the road; nobody thought of the little flower which had felt most for the bird, and wished so much to have been able to console it.

XI.

THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER.

THERE were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, who were all brothers, for they were born together of an old tin spoon. They had guns at the shoulder, looked straight before them, and their uniform was very pretty, being red and blue. The very first word they heard in this world, "Tin soldiers," was when the lid was taken off the box in which they lay; and that was exclaimed by a little boy who was clapping his hands, the tin soldiers being his birthday present. He stood them up on the table; each one was like the other, only one being different, having only one leg, as he had been cast last and there was no more tin; but he stood nevertheless as firmly on his one leg as the others on their two, and it is of him we shall tell.

On the table where they stood there was a lot of other playthings; but that which attracted the eye most was a pretty castle made of cardboard. Through the little windows you could see right into the rooms, and outside stood tiny trees around a little looking-glass, which was meant for a lake, and which reflected some wax swans upon it. It was all so very pretty; but still prettier was a little maiden, standing in the open door, and cut from cardboard; but she had on a dress of the finest muslin, and a little blue sash across her shoulders, in the middle of which was fastened a glittering tinsel star as big as her face. The little maiden stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and she raised one leg so high that the Tin Soldier could not see it, so he thought that she too had only one leg like himself.

"That would be just the wife for me," he thought; "but she is high-born, and lives in a castle, while I have only a box, and *that* there are twenty-five of us to share. It is not a fit place for her, but I will nevertheless try to make her acquaintance." And he laid himself down behind a snuff-box on the table, whence he could have a real good

look at the pretty little lady, who continued to stand on one leg without overbalancing herself.

At night the rest of the tin soldiers were put into the box, and the family in the house went to bed. Then the playthings began to play among themselves at giving "at homes," dances, and go to war, so that the tin soldiers began to kick in their box, as they wanted to share the fun; but they could not get the lid off. The nut-crackers turned summersaults, while the pencil danced a hornpipe on the slate, and there was such a noise that the canary woke and began to join in, and that in verse too. The only two who remained quiet were the Tin Soldier and the little Dancer; she stood still erect on the tip of her toe,



"BUT HE DID NOT TAKE HIS EYES OFF HER FOR AN INSTANT."

with her arms stretched out, and he as firmly on his one leg; but he did not take his eyes off her for an instant.

Just then the clock struck twelve, and Bang! the lid flew off the snuff-box. There was, however, no snuff in it, only a little black imp like a "Jack-in-the-box."

"Tin Soldier," said the imp, "you keep your eyes to yourself!" But the Soldier pretended not to hear him.

"Well, you just wait till to-morrow," said the imp.

The next morning, as soon as the children were up, the Tin Soldier was placed on the window-ledge; and, whether it was the imp or the draught, — anyhow, the window suddenly flew open, and the Soldier fell headlong from the second story into the street. It was a frightful fall;

he held his leg straight upwards and landed on his shako, with his gun embedded between two paving-stones.

The servant and the little boy went down at once to find him; but though they nearly trod upon him they could not see him. Had the Tin Soldier called out, "I am here!" they would have found him, no doubt; but he did not consider it soldier-like to shout while in uniform.

It began to rain, the drops falling faster and faster, and it soon came down in torrents.

When the rain was over, two street-urchins came along, one of whom exclaimed, "Look! there lies a Tin Soldier; let us give him a sail in the gutter."

And they made a boat out of a piece of newspaper, put the soldier into it, and so he sailed down the gutter, both boys running alongside, clapping their hands. Oh, how high the waves ran in the gutter, and how strong the current was! But it had been pouring down. The paper boat bobbed up and down, and sometimes spun round so fearfully that the Soldier trembled; but he remained firm, and, not moving a muscle and looking straight before him, kept his gun at the shoulder.

Suddenly the boat drifted under a broad crossing and it became as dark as in the box.

"Where am I going to now, I wonder?" he thought. "I am sure this is the imp's doing. However, if only the little girl was in the boat with me it might really be twice as dark."

Now a large water-rat appeared, which lived under the crossing.

"Have you a pass?" it asked. "Hand it over!" But the Tin Soldier did not say a word, and only clasped his gun firmer. The boat shot along, and the rat followed. Oh, how fearfully it ground its teeth, while calling out to bits of wood and straw, "Stop him! stop him! he has not paid toll, and he has not shown a pass."

But the current became stronger and stronger; the Tin Soldier now saw daylight where the crossing ceased, but he heard also a roaring noise which might well terrify the bravest. Only imagine; where the crossing ceased, the water in the gutter fell straight into a big canal,—a descent as dangerous as that of a waterfall to us.

Now he was so near it he could not stop the boat, and down it went, but the poor Tin Soldier remained as firm as he possibly could; nobody could say that he even blinked his eyes.

The boat spun round three or four times, filled nearly to the edge, and was on the point of sinking. The Tin Soldier was in water up to

his neck, while the boat sank deeper and deeper; the paper became more and more undone, and now the water was above the head of the Soldier. At that moment he thought of the pretty little Dancer, whom he should never see again. Now the paper broke, he fell through, and was in the same instant swallowed by a big fish.

Oh, how dark it was in there! much darker than under the crossing; and so little room too; but the Tin Soldier remained steadfast, lying full length with his gun in his arm.

The fish jumped about in the most violent manner; but all of a sudden it became quiet, and something like a ray of light penetrated



"SHE TOOK HIM WITH HER TWO FINGERS."

into it. The light became quite distinct, and somebody said aloud, "A Tin Soldier!"

The fish had been caught, sold in the fish-market, and carried into the kitchen, where the cook was cutting it up with a big knife. She took him with her two fingers and carried him to the sitting-room, where everybody wished to see the remarkable being who had travelled about in the stomach of a fish; but the Tin Soldier was not at all proud.

They placed him on the table, and — wonder of wonders! — the Tin Soldier was in the same room as before; he saw the same children, and the same playthings on the table. The fine castle and the pretty little Dancer were still there; she was still on her one leg, with the other

high in the air; she too was firm. The Tin Soldier was so affected he could have cried, but that would not have been soldier-like. He looked at her, and she at him, but neither said anything.

In the next moment one of the little boys threw the Soldier, without giving any reason, right into the fire; it was, no doubt, the imp's doing again.

The Tin Soldier stood in the full glare, and felt a heat quite dreadful; but whether it was the fire or love he knew not. He had quite lost his colors, but nobody could tell whether on the journey or through grief. He looked at the little maiden, and she at him; he felt he was melting, but still he stood firm with his gun at his shoulder. Just then a door was opened, and the draught catching the Dancer, she flew like a sylph right into the fire where the Soldier stood, blazed up, and disappeared.

The Tin Soldier had now melted into a lump, and when the servant the next morning cleared out the ashes, she found him in the form of a tin heart, while of the Dancer only the tinsel star remained, and that was burned quite black.

XII.

THE WILD SWANS.

FAR away, whither the swallows fly when winter comes to us, there lived a King who had eleven sons and one daughter, Elizabeth. The eleven brothers — they were of course princes — went to school with a star on the breast and a sword at the side, and wrote with diamond pencils on slates framed with gold, and read and wrote so well one could at once see they were princes. Their sister, Elizabeth, sat on a little stool of crystal glass, and had a picture-book which had cost half a kingdom.

How happy were those children! but it was not to last.

Their father, who was King of the whole country, married a wicked Queen, who was very unkind to the poor children. Already on the wedding-day they felt this. There was a great fête at the castle, and the children played at "giving a ball;" but instead of having plenty of cakes and fruit, as before, the Queen gave them a cupful of sand, saying that they might fancy it was something nice.

The following week she sent the little Elizabeth into the country to a peasant's cottage; and before long she made the King believe so many bad things she told him about the poor princes, that he became quite indifferent to what became of them.

"Fly out into the world, and take care of yourselves," said the wicked Queen; "fly in the form of great birds without voices." But she could not do them all the injury that she really wished, and they became eleven beautiful wild swans, which with a weird cry flew out of the windows across the park and the woods.

It was still quite early when they flew past the cottage where Elizabeth was lying asleep. They flew several times round the roof, twisting their long necks and flapping their wings, but nobody heard or saw them. They had to continue their flight far into the wide world, and they flew into a big dark forest reaching down to the shore.

Poor little Elizabeth stood in the peasant's cottage playing with a green leaf, — for she had nothing else to play with, — and she pricked a hole in it, looked through it at the sun, and she thought she saw her brothers' bright eyes; while every time the hot rays fell on her cheek she thought of their kisses.

One day passed like another. If the wind sighed in the rose-bushes outside, it said to the roses, "Who can possibly be more beautiful than you?" But the roses shook their heads and said, "Lizzie is." And if on Sundays the old peasant-woman sat in the porch reading the Bible, the wind turned the leaves and said to it, "Who can possibly



"FLY OUT INTO THE WORLD, AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES."

be as good as you ordain?"[1] "Lizzie is," the Bible would answer. And it was but the truth what the roses and the Bible said.

When she reached the age of fifteen she was called home; but when the Queen saw how lovely she was, she became very wroth and jealous of her, and would gladly have changed her into a wild swan; but she dared not just then, as the King wished to see his daughter.

Early in the morning the Queen went into the bath-room, which was built of marble and furnished with the softest cushions and the choicest carpets, taking three toads with her, which she kissed, saying to the first, "Place yourself on Elizabeth's head when she gets into the bath, so that she may become as stupid as you;" and to the second,

[1] A slight and justifiable alteration of the original. — TR.

"Place yourself on her brow, so that she may become as ugly as you, and that her father may not know her;" while to the third she said, "Settle yourself near her heart, and let her get a mind so wicked that she will suffer for it." Then she threw the toads into the water, which assumed a greenish color thereby, called Elizabeth, undressed her, and let her get into the bath. At the same instant she dipped under the water one toad settled in her hair, one on her brow, and the third on her bosom; but she did not seem to notice it. When she rose from the water, three red poppies floated on the surface. If the toads had not been poisonous and kissed by the Witch, they would have been changed into red roses. Flowers they still became by resting on her head and bosom; but she was too good and innocent for the witchery to have any effect on her.

When the wicked Queen saw that, she rubbed Elizabeth with walnut-juice, so that her skin became brown, smeared a nasty ointment over her lovely face, and entangled her beautiful hair, so that nobody could recognize the charming Elizabeth.

When her father saw her, he became quite frightened, and said it was not his daughter. Nobody else would acknowledge her but the yard-dog and the swallows; but they were poor, and had little voice in the matter.

Poor Elizabeth began to cry, and thought of her eleven brothers, who were all gone. Sorrowful she stole out of the palace, and wandered the whole day across fields and moors into a great forest. She did not know whither to go; she was so unhappy, and longed for her brothers; they had surely been driven into the world like herself; she would seek them.

She had only been in the forest a little while when night set in. She had lost her way, but lay down peacefully on the soft moss, said her prayers, and rested her head against the stem of a tree. Everything was so quiet and calm, the air so balmy, and round about in the grass and on the moss shone hundreds of glow-worms like green fire, and when she touched the boughs with her hands they fell down like little shooting stars.

All through the night she dreamt of her brothers; they played again together as when children, wrote with diamond pencil on gold slates, and looked into the beautiful picture-book which had cost half a kingdom; but they did not write figures and words as before; no, they related their bravest deeds, all that they had experienced and said, and in the picture-book all was alive: the birds sang, and people

came out of the book and spoke to her; but as soon as she turned the leaves they again jumped into their places, so that there should be no confusion among them.

When she arose, the sun was already high; she could not see it, as the boughs of the high trees were so close, but the rays played outside like a fluttering veil of gold. The greensward smelt so fresh, and the birds very nearly alighted on her shoulders. She could hear the noise of a brook; it was a water-course falling into a pond with the softest sand bottom. It was almost surrounded by close underwood, but in one spot the stags had made a path, and by this Elizabeth reached the water, which was so clear that had not the wind shaken the trees and shrubs they would have appeared as if painted on the bottom.

When she saw her own face, she became very frightened, so brown and ugly she was; but as soon as she had rubbed her face with her little hand her white skin came out, and she took off her garments and went into the refreshing water. A lovelier princess did not exist in the whole world.

When she had dressed, and plaited her long hair, she went to a bubbling spring, drank some water from her hand, and walked farther into the forest without knowing whither. She thought of her brothers, and of the good Lord, who would not desert her, for He made the wild apples grow to feed the hungry. She soon found some on a tree, the fruit weighing down the boughs. On these she made a meal, and then wandered into the darkest part of the forest. It was so still here she could hear her own footsteps and every leaf rustling under her foot. Not a bird could be seen, and not a ray of the sun could penetrate the thick leafy covering. The tall stems stood so close together that they had the appearance of wooden palisades on all sides, and there was a solitude here she had never experienced before.

The night following was very dark, not a single glow-worm shining on the moss, and she went sorrowful to sleep. Then she fancied that the boughs above her parted, and that the Lord, surrounded by little angels, looked down upon her.

When she awoke, she knew not whether it was a dream or reality.

When she had walked some distance, she met an old woman with berries in a basket, who gave her some. Elizabeth asked her if she had seen eleven princes ride through the forest. "No," the woman said; "but yesterday I saw eleven swans with golden crowns on their heads in the river close by."

And she led Elizabeth a little way farther, to a hill, below which ran a river nearly overshadowed by leafy trees.

Elizabeth said good-by to the old woman, and wandered along the river till it flowed into the sea.

The great lovely ocean lay before the young maiden, but not a single vessel or boat was to be seen, and how, then, was she to get farther? She looked at the thousands of pebbles on the shore, polished and rounded by the water. Glass, iron, stones, everything piled up there, had been given the same shape by the water, which was nevertheless softer than her hand. "The water never ceases rolling, and the hard substances become moulded; neither will I tire," she thought. "Thanks for your teachings, you crystal, rolling waves. Some time, so my heart tells me, you shall carry me to my dear brothers."

On the weed cast up by the sea lay eleven white swan's feathers, which she gathered; there were drops of water on them, but whether they were dew or tears nobody could tell. It was lovely by the shore, but she did not notice it, for the sea was in constant motion, displaying in a few hours more variety than a lake in a year. If a great dark cloud came floating above, the sea seemed to say, "I, too, can look dark," and the wind blew harder, and the waves donned their white caps; and if the clouds were red and the wind slept, the sea looked like a rose-leaf; now it was green, now white; but however calm it was, there was always a gentle motion by the shore: the sea swelled like the breast of a sleeping child.

As the sun was setting, Elizabeth saw eleven white swans, with golden crowns on their heads, flying toward the shore. One flew behind the other, looking like a long white ribbon. Elizabeth went up on the hill by the shore, hiding herself behind a shrub, and the eleven swans settled close by, flapping their great white wings.

Just as the sun set, the swans' feathers fell off, and there stood Elizabeth's brothers, the eleven princes. She uttered a loud cry; for, though they had altered much, she was sure it was they, and she threw herself into their arms, called them by name, and they became delighted at seeing their little sister, who had grown so lovely. They laughed and wept, and had soon told one another how cruel their step-mother had been to them all.

"We are all doomed to fly about as swans as long as the sun is up," said the eldest brother, "but as soon as it sets, we regain our natural form; therefore we have to take care to have land under our feet at

sunset, for if we are high up in the air we should fall down like other human beings. We do not dwell here. On the other side of the water is a land as beautiful as this, but the way thither is long; we have to cross a great ocean, and there is no island on the way where to rest for the night, only a solitary rock rises from the middle of the ocean. It is not bigger than we can just find a resting-place on it when sitting close together, and when the sea is high the waves dash over us; but still we are thankful for it. There we rest for the night in our human form, and without this rock we should never be able to visit our beloved country, as we require the two longest days in the year for our flight.



"AND SHE STROKED ITS SNOW-WHITE NECK."

Only once a year we may visit our home; we may remain there eleven days, and fly across this great forest, whence we can see the palace in which we were born and where our father resides, and also the church in which our mother lies buried. Here we imagine that the trees and shrubs are related to us; here the wild horses canter over the plain as in our childhood; here the charcoal-burner sings the same old songs to which we danced when young; here is our country; hither we feel drawn, and here we have found you, dear little sister. Two days more we may remain here; then we must depart for the other beautiful land across the sea, but which is not our country. How shall we be able to take you with us, having neither vessel nor boat?"

"Oh, how can I save you?" said the sister.

And they talked nearly the whole night, sleeping only a few hours.

Elizabeth woke at the sound of swans' wings above her. Her brothers were already transformed, and they flew in great circles, and then far away. But one, the youngest, remained, and it laid its head in her lap, and she stroked its snow-white neck. They were together the whole day, and toward evening the others returned, and as soon as the sun had set they assumed their human form.

"To-morrow we leave here, and may not return for a year," said the eldest; "but we cannot leave you here. Have you courage to come with us? My arm being strong enough to carry you through the forest, we shall all of us be strong enough to carry you across the sea."

"Oh, yes, take me with you!" said Elizabeth.

The whole night was spent in making a net of soft willow-bark and tough reeds, and it was large and strong. On this Elizabeth went to rest, and when the sun rose and the brothers were transformed into wild swans, they seized it with their beaks, and flew with their dear sister, who was still asleep, high up toward the clouds. And as the sun shone right on her face, one of the swans flew above her head so as to shade it with its big wings. They were far out at sea when Elizabeth awoke; she thought she was still dreaming, so strange it seemed to her to be borne through the air across the sea. At her side lay a bough with delicious berries on it, and a bundle of sweet roots which had been gathered for her by her youngest brother, and she smiled gratefully to him, recognizing him flying above her and shading her.

They were so high up that the greatest ships they saw below looked like gulls on the sea. A great cloud was behind them; it was a mountain, and Elizabeth saw her own and the shadows of the eleven swans on it in gigantic size. It was the most magnificent spectacle she had ever beheld, but as the sun rose higher the floating shadows disappeared.

All the day long they kept on their course with the speed of arrows; but still they flew slower than on other occasions, as they had Elizabeth to carry. A storm approached, and evening drew near. Trembling with terror, Elizabeth saw the sun sink, and still the solitary rock in the sea was not to be seen; it seemed as if the swans redoubled their efforts. Oh! she was the cause of their slow flight. When the sun set they would become human beings, fall into the sea, and be drowned. She prayed ardently to her Father, but still the rock was not in sight.

The dark clouds drew nearer and nearer, and the fierce gusts of wind bespoke a storm; the clouds looked like a great threatening wall, which moved forward heavy as lead, and one flash of lightning followed upon another.

Now the sun's disc touched the horizon. Elizabeth's heart trembled; but then the swans shot down so quickly she thought she was falling, but they still flew. The sun was half under water, when, lo! she beheld the little rock, not bigger than the head of a seal, above water. The sun sank rapidly; it was now only as big as a star, when she touched the rock with her foot, and at the same moment the sun went out like the last spark in a burnt piece of paper. She saw her brothers stand around her arm-in-arm, but there was only room for herself and them. The waves swept over the rock and drenched them, the sky looked as if on fire, and peals of thunder followed each other; but sister and brothers held one another's hands, and sang a hymn which gave them courage.

At daybreak the air was calm and quiet, and as soon as the sun rose the swans flew away from the rock with Elizabeth. The sea was still rough, and when they were high up in the air the white foam on the dark-green water looked like a number of swans floating on the waves.

When the sun had risen higher, Elizabeth saw before her, as if floating in the air, a mountainous land capped with glittering glaciers, and a palace nearly a mile long, with striking rows of columns rising one above the other, while below rose forests of palms and the most gorgeous flowers.

She asked if it was the land they were bound for; but the swans shook their heads, for what she saw was the lovely fairy-castle of *Fata Morgana*, whither it would be fatal to carry any human being. As Elizabeth was looking at it, mountains, forests, and palace fell into a chaotic mass, and in their places rose twenty grand cathedrals, all alike, with high towers and pointed windows. She thought she heard the swell of the organs, but it was that of the sea. When close upon the cathedrals, they changed into a fleet of ships sailing below her; she looked down and found that it was only a mist sweeping over the sea. A constant change went on before her eyes, when at last she beheld the real land whither she was bound. There rose lovely blue mountains, with cedar forests, towns, and castles; and long before the sun set she was seated on a mountain, before a great cave overgrown with splendid green creepers, looking like embroidered tapestry.

"Now we shall see what you will dream to-night," said her youngest brother, showing her sleeping apartment to her.

"May I but dream how I shall save you!" she said.

The thought occupied her very much, and she prayed to God to assist her, and even in her sleep continued her prayer. Then it seemed to her as if she were flying high up in the air, toward the palace of *Fata Morgana*, and that the Fairy came to meet her, so beautiful and resplendent; but still she was like the old woman who gave her the berries in the forest and told her of the swans with the golden crowns.

"Your brothers may be saved," she said; "but have you the courage and perseverance?" The sea is certainly softer than your fine hands, and still moulds the hard stones; but the sea has no heart, and does not know the pain that your fingers will suffer; it does not endure the agony you will have to. Do you see the stinging nettle I hold in my hand? Many like it grow around the cave in which you sleep; only those which grow there and in the churchyards are of use, remember that! Those you must gather, however much they sting your skin into blisters; crush them with your feet; and you will obtain yarn, of which you must spin eleven shirts with long sleeves; throw these over the eleven swans, and the witchery will be broken. But remember, from the moment you begin this task, and till it is fulfilled, you must not speak, even if it takes you years; the first words you utter will penetrate like a dagger into the hearts of your brothers; on your tongue their lives depend. Remember all this!"

And at the same moment she touched her with the nettle, and it stung her like fire, so that she awoke. It was broad daylight, and close by her lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. Then she fell on her knees and thanked God, and went out of the cave to begin her task.

She caught the nasty nettles with her hands, and they burnt her like fire, great blisters forming on her hands and arms; but that she suffered gladly for the sake of rescuing her dear brothers. She crushed every nettle with her soft naked feet, and wound the green yarn.

As the sun was setting, her brothers returned, and when they found her so silent they thought it was some fresh witchery of their wicked step-mother; but when they saw her hands, they understood what she was doing for their sake, and the youngest brother began to cry; but where his tears fell the pain ceased, and she felt not the burning blisters.

She spent the night in her task, for she had no peace till she had saved her brothers; and the whole of the next day, while the swans were absent, she sat in solitude, but the time had never passed so quickly with her. One shirt was already finished, and she began the second one.

Then all of a sudden horns sounded among the mountains, and she became very frightened; but the sound came nearer, and she heard the hounds baying; terrified, she ran into the cave, tied the nettles she had collected, and the shirt, into a bundle, and sat down upon it.

At the same moment a dog came out of the underwood, and soon after another; they barked furiously, ran back, and returned, and shortly afterward all the huntsmen stood outside the cave, the handsomest of whom was the King of the land; and he went up to Elizabeth, saying, "How did you get here, you lovely child?"

Elizabeth shook her head; she did not dare to speak, for on that depended her brothers' life and rescue; and she hid her hands under her apron, so that the King should not see her sufferings.

"Come with me," he said; "you must not remain here; and if you are as good as you are beautiful, I will give you dresses of silk and velvet, and place a golden crown on your head, and you shall reside in my finest palace."

He lifted her upon his horse, though she cried and wrung her hands; but the King said, "I wish only to be kind to you, and some day you will thank me therefor." And he rode off with her before him on the horse, the huntsmen following.

At sunset the splendid royal city with its spires and cupolas lay before them, and the King led her into his palace, where great fountains splashed in lofty marble halls, and beautiful pictures decorated the walls; but she had no eyes for anything, and wept from grief. Indifferent, she let the tiring-maids dress her in royal robes, twine pearls in her hair, and draw soft gloves on her blistered hands.

When she appeared in all her splendor, she was so lovely that the Court bowed lower for her than before, and the King at once chose her for his bride, although the Archbishop shook his head, and whispered that the lovely forest maiden was sure to be a witch, who had blinded his eyes and deceived his heart.

But the King paid no heed to this, and let the bands play, and had the costliest dishes set forth, while the loveliest maidens danced before them. And she was led through fragrant gardens into magnificent



"THE HANDSOMEST OF WHOM WAS THE KING OF THE LAND."

chambers; but not a smile crossed her lips or shone in her eye: grief was in her face, as if being her heirloom. The King opened a little room adjoining her sleeping apartment, which was covered and hung with the costliest mats, and exactly like her cave; on the floor lay the yarn she had made from the nettles, and on the wall hung the shirt which was ready. One of the huntsmen had brought it all away as a curiosity.

"Here you may fancy you are still in your old home," said the King. "Here is the work you were engaged in, and in the midst of all your splendor it will please you to look back upon that time."

When Elizabeth saw what was uppermost in her mind, a smile played on her lips, and the blood returned to her cheeks; she thought of the saving of her brothers, and kissed the King's hand, who pressed her to his heart and let the marriage be announced. The lovely, dumb forest maiden was to become the Queen of the land.

The Archbishop whispered evil words into the King's ear, but they did not touch his heart. The wedding took place, and the Archbishop had himself to place the crown on her head, which he did, pressing it in anger down on her forehead so heavily that it hurt her. But she felt a greater pain in her heart, through the loss of her brothers. Her mouth was closed, for a single word would have been the death of her brothers; but her eyes spoke love to the kind, handsome King, who did all he could to please her. Every day she became fonder of him. Oh, had she only dared to confide to him her sufferings! But she must remain dumb; dumb she had to accomplish her task. Therefore she stole in the night from his side into the little secret chamber, and finished one shirt after another; but when she began the seventh she had no more yarn.

She knew that the nettles she required grew in the churchyard, and that she must gather them herself; but how to get there?

"Oh, what is the pain in my hands compared with the sufferings of my heart?" she thought. "I must risk it. God will protect me."

With a trembling heart, as if she was doing something wrong, she stole in the moonlit night into the garden, passed through the long avenues into the deserted streets, to the churchyard, where she beheld a number of vampires sitting on the gravestones, quite naked, who were digging up bodies from the newly made graves and eating the flesh. Elizabeth had to pass close to them, and they glared at her; but, saying a prayer, she gathered the nettles and returned home.

Only one person had seen her, namely, the Archbishop. He was up while others were sleeping, and he now became convinced that the Queen was a witch, who had bewitched the King and the whole people.

In the confessional he told the King what he had seen, and what he thought of it; but as the words passed his lips the saintly images around shook their heads, as if to say, "It is not so; Elizabeth is innocent." But the Bishop interpreted the action differently; namely, that they were shaking their heads at her wickedness. Two big tears rolled down the King's cheeks, and he went home with a doubting heart. Pretending to sleep at night, but not closing an eye, he felt Elizabeth rising from



"'THE PEOPLE MUST JUDGE HER,' HE SAID."

the bed, which she repeated every night; and every time he followed her and saw her go into her secret chamber.

Every day he became more gloomy. Elizabeth noticed it, but did not suspect the cause. It made her, however, uneasy, and she suffered much for her brothers. Her tears fell like sparkling diamonds on the purple and velvet, though everybody who saw her splendor envied her.

At last she had finished all the shirts but one, and for that she had neither yarn nor nettles. Once more, for the last time, she had to go to the churchyard. She thought with horror of the lonely walk and the disgusting vampires, but her resolution was as firm as her confidence in God.

Elizabeth went, but was followed by the Archbishop and the King,

who saw her go in through the gate of the churchyard; and when they came up, they saw the vampires sitting on the gravestones, and the King turned his head away at the sight, thinking of her who had only just quitted his side.

"The people must judge her," he said; and the people condemned her to be burnt.

From the stately apartments of the palace she was taken to a dark and damp dungeon, where the wind whistled through the grated windows, and instead of velvet and silk cushions to lie on she was given the bundle of nettles she had gathered, as well as the shirts she had made. But they could not have given her anything she cared more for, and cheerfully she set to work, and prayed to God. Outside, the mob were singing songs in derision of her, and nobody said a kind word to her.

Toward night she heard the whirring of swan's wings near the grating of her window. It was her youngest brother, who had discovered her place of confinement, and she wept with pleasure, though she knew that probably it was her last night; now, however, her task was nearly finished, and her brothers were near her.

The Archbishop came to stay with her during her last hours, according to his promise to the King; but she implored with signs and eyes to be left alone; for this night was the last of her task, and without it all her sufferings, tears, and sleepless nights would be endured in vain. The Bishop went away after upbraiding her; but she knew she was innocent, and continued her work.

Little rats came to assist her as far as in their power by carrying the nettle to her feet, while a thrush settled itself at the window and sang merrily the whole night, so that she should not lose her courage.

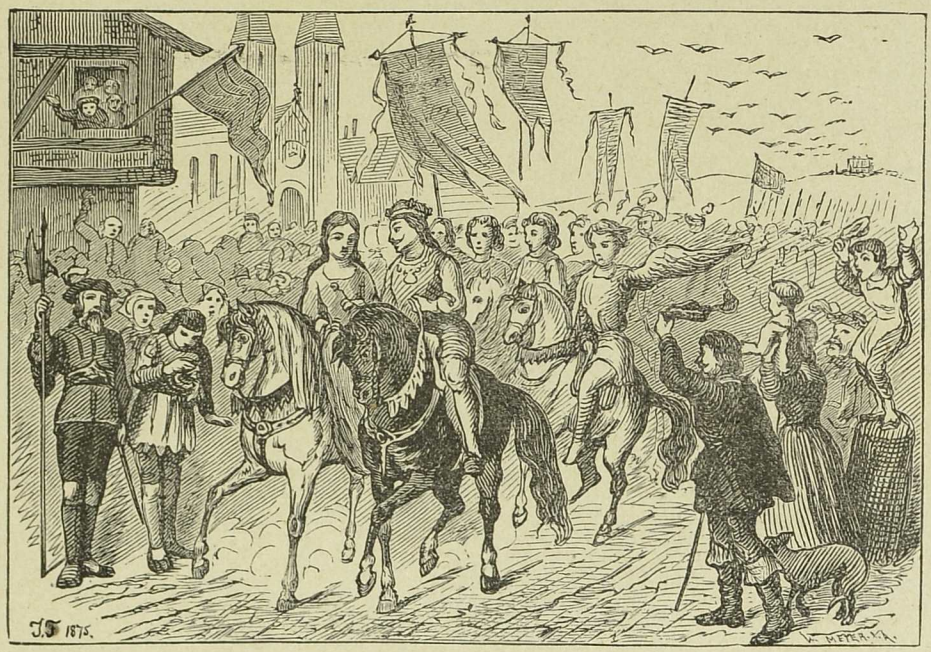
It was still daybreak, and it wanted an hour to sunrise, when suddenly the eleven brothers appeared at the gate of the palace asking to see the King; but they were told they could not, as the King was still in bed and nobody dared to wake him. They begged and they threatened, so that the guard was called; but in the same instant the King appeared, asking what the noise was about, when, lo! the sun arose, the princes disappeared, and eleven wild swans flew away over the palace.

A great number of people were passing out of the city to see Elizabeth burned. A wretched hack drew the cart on which she sat dressed in coarse sackcloth. Her long golden hair hung loosely

down her shoulders, her cheeks were deadly pale, and she moved her lips slightly as she wove the green yarn; for even on the road to another world she did not cease working. The ten shirts lay at her feet, and she was working on the eleventh.

The mob began to jeer at her, calling out, "Look at the witch, how she mumbles! She has n't even got a prayer-book; she prefers her wicked work. Take it away from her!"

And they crowded in upon her to tear it away, when eleven white swans flew up, and seated themselves around her on the cart, striking about with their great wings.



"THERE WAS A PROCESSION BACK TO THE PALACE SUCH AS NOBODY HAD EVER BEHELD."

The people fell back in terror, whispering, "It is a sign from above! She is certainly innocent!"

Then the executioner caught her by the hand, and at the same moment she threw the eleven shirts over the swans, and, lo! there stood the eleven handsome princes; but the youngest had a swan's wing instead of his right arm, as Elizabeth had not been able to finish it.

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

And the people, who saw what had happened, bowed down before

her as to a saint; but she sank senseless into her brothers' arms, quite overcome with anxiety and pain.

"Yes, she is innocent," said the eldest brother, relating all; and while he spoke, a scent as from a thousand roses filled the air, for every fagot of wood in the pyre had struck root and begun to grow. There was soon a hedge of red roses, and above them all hung a snow-white flower, shining like a star, which the King broke and laid on Elizabeth's breast, and she awoke with peace and happiness in her heart.

All the church-bells began to peal of their own accord; while thousands of birds flocked around, and there was a procession back to the palace such as nobody had ever beheld.

XIII.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

THERE was once a Prince who had the most splendid and numerous collection of books in the world, from which he could learn all that took place, and see the events illustrated by the most graphic drawings. He could gain information of every nation and every country; but where the Garden of Eden was situated he could not discover, and that was what he thought most of.

His grandmother had told him, when he was quite a boy and was going to school, that every flower in the Garden of Eden was a big tart, and the juice in them the most delicious currant wine: on one was written history, on another geography, on a third mathematics, and he need only eat to know his lessons; the more he ate the more he would know of the subjects.

He believed this at the time; but as he grew bigger he became wiser, and concluded that there must be something far more splendid and delightful in the Garden of Eden.

"Oh, why," he exclaimed, "did Eve pluck the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, or why did Adam eat it? Had I been in his place it would not have happened, and sin would never have come into the world."

He said so then, and he said the same still when he was seventeen years of age; the Garden of Eden occupied all his thoughts.

One day he was walking in the woods alone, for that was his greatest pleasure; when the evening closed in the clouds gathered, and it began to rain as if the heavens had opened their flood-gates. It was as dark as in the middle of the night. Now he slipped on the wet grass, then fell over rough stones in the rough ground. Water had saturated everything, and the poor Prince was wet through. He had to crawl uphill, where the water oozed out from the moss; and he was just on the point of sinking to the ground, when he heard a strange

sound like the moaning of the wind, and he saw before him a great cavern fully lit up.

In the middle was a fire large enough to roast a whole stag by; and this was indeed being done, a splendid animal with high antlers being turned slowly round on a spit. By the fire sat an old woman, tall and muscular as a man, who was throwing wood on the fire.

"Come closer," she said, "and take a seat by the fire and get yourself dry."

"There is an unpleasant draught here," said the Prince, seating himself on the floor.



"BY THE FIRE SAT AN OLD WOMAN."

"It will be worse when my sons return home," said the woman. "You are now in the Cavern of the Winds, and my sons are the four winds of the earth."

"Where are they now?" asked the Prince.

"It is not easy to answer foolish questions," the woman responded. "My sons are at large; they are playing football with the clouds up there," pointing to space above.

"I see," said the Prince; "you are a little rough in your talk, and not so soft as the women I usually come among."

"Probably they have nothing else to do. But I must be rough if I am

to keep my boys in order; but I can manage it, though they have stiff necks. Do you see the four sacks on the wall? They are as afraid of those as you used to be of the cane. I can double them up, I tell you; and I put them in the sacks, for I stand no nonsense from them. There they must remain, and do not get out again till it pleases me. But here is one of them."

It was the North Wind who entered, accompanied by an icy chill, hails as big as pigeon's eggs being scattered about, mingled with great flakes of snow. He was dressed in bear-skin, with a cap of seal-skin on his head, drawn down over his ears, while long icicles hung from his beard, and hail upon hail fell from his collar.

"Don't go close to the fire at once," said the Prince, "or your face and hands may be frost-bitten."

"Frost-bitten!" said the North Wind, with a shout of laughter; "frost-bitten! why, that is my greatest delight! But who are you; and how did you get into the Cavern of the Winds?"

"He is my guest," said the old woman, "and if you ask more questions you shall be put into the sack. And now you know what you may expect."

Well, that had effect; and the North Wind began to relate whence he came, and what he had been doing during the whole month he had been away.

"I am returning from the Polar Sea," he said; "I have been to Beeren Island with the Russian walrus-hunters. I sat sleeping at the helm when they sailed from the North Cape, and when I awoke for a moment Mother Carey's chickens began to fly below me. They are jolly birds; first they flap their wings quickly, and then they float along on them, keeping them stretched out."

"Don't be too prosy," said the Mother of the Winds; "you reached Beeren Island, then?"

"Yes; and that is a delightful place. There is a floor to waltz on as flat as a pancake. It is covered with snow and moss, and skeletons of walrus and polar bears, looking like the bones of giants. One would imagine the sun never shone there. I breathed a little on the fog, and a hut became disclosed, built from wreckage and covered with walrus-skins, and on the roof of it sat a polar bear growling. I walked along the shore looking into the birds' nests and at the unfledged young ones which were shrieking with open beaks. I breathed into them and taught them to shut their beaks."

"You relate well, my son," said the woman, "and it makes my mouth water when I hear you."

"Next the hunting began. Harpoons were thrown into the walrus, and steaming jets of blood spouted forth across the ice. Then I thought of my own game, and opening my lungs sent my ships, the lofty icebergs, to crush their boats. Ho-ho! how the sailors shrieked and shouted! But I shrieked louder still. They had to take everything on board out on the ice, and covering all with snow and ice, I sent them drifting northwards; they will see Beeren Island no more."

"So you have done something wicked," said the mother.



"SENT MY SHIPS, THE LOFTY ICEBERGS, TO CRUSH THEIR BOATS."

"What good I have done, the others can state," said the North Wind. "Here comes my brother from the West; I like him best, for he smacks of the sea and carries such a refreshing coolness with him."

"Is that little Zephyr?" asked the Prince.

"It is," said the woman; "but he is not so little, though. Once he was a pretty little boy, but that is gone now."

He looked like a savage, and had a slouched hat on to protect himself, while in his hand he carried a mahogany club, cut in an American forest; and less would hardly have done.

"Whence do *you* come?" asked his mother.

"From the primeval forests," he answered, "where the thorny cacti form hedges between the trees, where water-snakes lie in the moist grass, and where man seems not to be wanted."

"What did you do there?"

"I gazed at the deep rivers, and the waters falling from cliff to cliff; and the foam from the same dashed towards the sky to support the rainbow. I saw the ferocious buffalo trying to swim the rivers, and be drowned, while the wild ducks floated where they sank. I raised a storm so violent that the oldest trees were scattered like leaves."

"Is that all you have done?" the old woman asked.

"Well, I have turned summersaults in the savannas, I have stroked the wild horses, and shaken down cocoanuts from the tall palms; but I don't think it is right to tell all one knows. You agree, don't you, mother?" he said, kissing her so violently that she nearly fell backward. He was a very wild fellow.

The South Wind came next, wearing a turban and flowing Bedouin mantle.

"It is cold in here," he said, throwing more wood on the fire; "one can feel that the North Wind has arrived first."

"It is hot enough to roast a polar bear," said the North Wind.

"You are one yourself," answered the South Wind.

"Do you wish to be put in the sack?" said the old woman. "Just take a seat on this stone and tell me where you have been."

"In Africa, mother," he answered. "I have been lion-hunting with the blacks. Oh, what fresh green grass covers the plains there! The ostrich ran a race with me, but I am swifter of foot. I reached the desert, the yellow sand of which is like the sea-bottom. I overtook a caravan just as they were killing their last camel for the sake of the water; but it was not much they got. The sun burnt from above, and the hot sand from below. The vast desert had no limit. I rolled myself in the fine loose sand, whirling it up in huge columns: that was something like a dance! You should have seen how terrified the dromedary looked, and the trader drew his cloak over his head. He sank down before me as before Allah, his God. Now they are all buried under a pyramid of sand, and when I remove it some day, the white bones will show that people have been in the desert before, otherwise nobody would believe it."

"So you have only done harm," said the mother. "In the sack with you!" And before the South Wind knew of it, she had caught him round the waist and thrust him into the sack; and as he began to roll about and kick, she kept him quiet by sitting on him.

"Your boys are lively boys," said the Prince.

"Yes, you are right," she answered, "and I know how to keep them in order, too. Here is the fourth."

It was the East Wind, who wore the dress of a Chinese.

"Do you come from that part?" asked his mother; "I thought you had been to the Garden of Eden."

"I go there to-morrow," he answered. "To-morrow it is a hundred years since I was there. I now come from China, where I set all the bells in the Porcelain Tower ringing. In the streets public functionaries, from the first to the ninth degree, were being caned, and they kept on calling out, 'We thank you, we thank you, parental benefactor!' but they did not mean it; and I rang the bells, singing, 'Tsing, tsang, tsu.'"



"I OVERTOOK A CARAVAN."

"You are a wild fellow," said his mother. "I am glad you are going to the Garden of Eden to-morrow, for that improves your manners. Take a good draught from the Fountain of Wisdom, and bring me a bottle full."

"That I shall not fail to do," said the East Wind. "But why have you put my brother from the South in the sack? Let him out! I want him to tell me about the bird Phœnix, for the Princess in the Garden of Eden always asks me about it. Do let him out, dearest of mothers, and I will bring you two pockets-full of tea as green and as fresh as the soil can produce."

"Now, well, for the sake of the tea, and because you are my favorite child, I will let him out."

That she did, and the South Wind crawled out; but he looked very sheepish because the strange Prince had witnessed the scene.

"Here is a palm-leaf for the Princess," said the South Wind. "It was given to me by the old bird Phœnix, the only one in the world. He has pricked on it with his beak an account of all he has experienced during the hundred years he lived; but she will read that herself. I saw him set fire to his nest himself, and burn in it like the widow of a Hindoo. The dry boughs crackled and sparkled, and there arose a fragrant aroma and smoke. At last all blazed up, and the bird was reduced to ashes; but in the embers lay a glowing red egg, which burst with a loud report, and a young Phœnix flew out, and is now Ruler of all birds, and the only one of its kind in the world. He has pricked a hole in the leaf; it is his greeting to the Princess."

"Now let us have something to eat," said the Mother of the Winds; and they all sat down to the venison, the Prince sitting by the side of the East Wind, and they soon became the best of friends.

"I wish you would tell me who is the Princess you have been speaking about, and where the Garden of Eden lies," said the Prince.

"If you wish to get there," said the East Wind, "accompany me to-morrow; but I must tell you no human being has been there since the time of Adam and Eve. But I dare say you know that from the Bible?"

"Of course I do," said the Prince.

"When they were driven from Paradise," continued the East Wind, "the Garden sank into the earth; but it retained its sunshine, its delicious air, and all its splendor. The Queen of the Fairies dwells within it, and there is also the Island of Bliss, whither Death never comes. Oh, what a lovely spot! Seat yourself on my back to-morrow, and I will carry you; I dare say it can be managed. But now you must n't talk any more, for I want to sleep."

And so they all went to sleep.

Early in the morning the Prince was not a little surprised, when he awoke, to find he was high up in the air. He was seated on the back of the East Wind, who held him safe; and they were so high up that fields, forests, rivers, and lakes down below looked like those on a great colored map.

"Good morning," said the East Wind. "You might as well have slept a little longer, for there is but little to see on the flat country below us; that is, if you do not care to count the churches, which are

like chalk-marks on a green board." It was the fields and meadows he called the green board.

"It was rather impolite of me not to say good-by to your brothers," said the Prince.

"Well, being asleep is excuse enough," replied the East Wind; and then they flew much faster. They could hear that from the tops of the trees, for when they passed over them boughs and leaves rustled; and from the lakes and the sea, for when they passed across them the waves rose higher, and the great ships dived like big swans.

When it became dark the great illuminated cities looked very curious, being like the sparks in a bit of burnt paper. And the Prince clapped



"HE WAS SEATED ON THE BACK OF THE EAST WIND."

his hands, delighted with the sight; but the East Wind asked him not to do that, if he did not wish to tumble down and be caught on a church-steeple.

The eagles in the dark forest were light on the wing, but the East Wind was lighter still. The Cossack swept over the plain swiftly on his little horse, but the Prince swept on swifter still.

"Now you can see the Himalaya," said the East Wind; "we shall soon be in the Garden of Eden."

They now took a more southerly course, and the scent of flowers and spice ascended to them. Figs and pomegranates grew wild, and the wild vine bore green and blue grapes. They descended, and lay down

to rest in the soft grass; and the flowers nodded to the East Wind as if they were wishing him "Welcome back!"

"Is this the Garden of Eden?" asked the Prince.

"Oh, dear, no!" answered the East Wind; "but we shall soon be there. Do you see that great cave in the mountain yonder, encircled by the vine-like green curtains? We have to pass through that. Wrap your cloak around you. Here the sun is scorching; but a step, and it will be as cold as ice. The bird which swept past the cave has one wing in cold and the other in hot air."

"Ah! so that is the way to the Garden of Eden," said the Prince; and so they swept into the cave. Oh, how cold it was there! But it did not last long. The East Wind spread out his wings, which shone like fire. What a splendid cave! The rocks, from which water dripped, had the most fantastic shapes, and sometimes the passage was so narrow that they had to creep on their hands and knees, while in others there seemed no limit to its height. It looked like a huge cathedral, with silent organ-pipes and petrified banners.

"It seems we have to pass through the Valley of Death to reach the Garden of Eden?" said the Prince. But the East Wind answered not, only pointed to a splendid blue light before them. The rocks overhead became more and more like mist, which at last shone like a bright cloud in moonlight, and lo! they were in the most refreshing and balmy air, — fresh as the mountain air, balmy as that of the valley.

A river flowed past, transparent as the air itself, and the fish in it looked like bits of gold and silver. Purple-colored eels, which at every turn emitted blue sparks, played down in it, and the broad leaves of the water-lily shone with all the colors of the rainbow, — the flower itself being an orange-colored flame fed by the water, like the oil of a lamp, thus being always burning. A solid marble bridge, so light and ornamental that it looked as if of lace and glass, led across the river to the Island of Bliss, in which was the Garden of Eden.

The East Wind took the Prince in his arms and carried him across to it. Here the flowers and plants chanted all the airs he had heard in his childhood, but far more sweetly than he had ever heard them sung.

Were the trees yonder palms, or gigantic water-plants? The Prince could not tell; he had never seen such fine trees before. The long creepers formed festoons, such as are only seen in old ornamented books: it was the most wonderful combination of birds, flowers, and creepers. In the grass close by stood a flock of peacocks with out-

spread tails; at all events, they looked like it. But as soon as the Prince touched one he discovered they were not birds, but plants. They were large burdock-leaves, which glittered like the tails of peacocks. Lions and tigers jumped about like cats between the hedges, which latter smelt like the flowers of the olive-tree; and the animals were all tame, the wood-pigeon even descending on the neck of them. The antelope, generally so timid, stood by nodding its head as if anxious to play.

Now the Fairy of the Garden of Eden approached. Her garments shone like the sun, and her countenance was as mild as that of a mother smiling to her child. She was young and lovely, and she was accompanied by the handsomest maidens, each of whom had a bright star in the hair.

The East Wind handed her the leaf with the history of the Phœnix, and her eyes beamed with delight. Then she took the Prince by the hand and led him into her palace, the walls of which had colors like that of the tulip when held to the sun; the roof was one great flower, and the more one looked at it the deeper the calyx appeared.

The Prince went to one of the windows, and looking through it beheld the Tree of Knowledge, with the serpent in it; and close by stood Adam and Eve.

"But were they not banished?" he inquired. And the Fairy smiled, and explained to him that Time had engraved events on each pane, but not like ordinary illustrations; no, everything moved as living things reflected in a looking-glass. He looked through another pane, and he saw Jacob's dream, the ladder reaching right up to heaven, and angels ascending and descending it. Every event in the history of the world lived and moved in the panes; such pictures Time alone could delineate.

The Fairy smiled, and led him into a large lofty hall, the walls of which were transparent paintings, in which one face was lovelier than another. The faces were those of millions of saved beings whose voices flowed into one delightful melody, those who were farthest off looking like rosebuds. In the middle of the hall stood a great tree with luxuriant hanging boughs, while golden apples of all sizes hung between the green leaves. It was the Tree of Knowledge, of whose fruit Adam and Eve had eaten; and from every leaf dripped a red drop, as if the tree was shedding tears of blood.

"Let us enter the boat," said the Fairy; "we will take some refresh-

ments on the cooling surface. The boat rocks, but remains in the same spot while all the countries in the world pass in review."

And it was indeed a grand spectacle to see the scenes shift. Now the lofty, snow-covered Alps were seen approaching, with clouds and dark forests: the horns sounded melodiously, and the shepherd in the valley yodled in response. Then the bananas bent their long hanging boughs over the boat. Black swans swam on the surface of the water, and the most peculiar animals and flowers were seen on shore: it was Australia, the fifth continent, gliding past. The chants of priests were next heard, and then savages were seen dancing to the sound of drums and pipes of bone. The pyramids of Egypt followed next, rising toward the clouds, with pillars and sphinxes half buried in the sand. Finally a magnificent aurora borealis came in view, with the snow-mountains of the North, — fireworks no human being could match. And the Prince felt so happy; and he beheld many more scenes than those described.

"May I always be allowed to remain here?" he asked.

"That depends upon yourself," answered the Fairy. "If you are not tempted to do what is forbidden, like Adam, you may."

"I shall not touch the fruit on the Tree of Knowledge," said the Prince, "for here are thousands of fruits just as inviting."

"Examine yourself," said the Fairy; "and if you find you are not strong enough, return with the East Wind who brought you: he is returning, and will not be back again for a hundred years. The time here will pass as quickly for you as if they were only a hundred hours, but that is long enough for temptation and sinning. Every night when I leave you I must call to you, 'Follow me!' and beckon to you; but do not come, for at every step your desire to do so will become stronger. You will enter the hall in which stands the Tree of Knowledge, below whose fragrant, drooping boughs I sleep; you will stoop over me, and I must smile to you; but if you imprint the faintest kiss on my lips, the Garden of Eden sinks deep into the earth and is lost to you forever. The keen cutting wind from the desert will chill you, and cold rain fall on your head. Sorrow and misery will be your lot."

"I will remain," said the Prince. And the East Wind kissed him on the brow, and said, "Be strong, and we shall meet in a hundred years. Farewell! Farewell!" He then spread out his great wings, which shone like sheet-lightning in the autumn or the aurora borealis in the midst of winter. "Farewell! Farewell!" it sounded from trees and

flowers, while storks and pelicans followed the Wind to the borders of the garden, looking like long, fluttering pennons.

"Now our dance begins," said the Fairy; "towards the end, when I have danced with you, and just as the sun sinks, you will hear me call to you to follow me, but do not come. Every night during a hundred years I must do the same, and every time you will gain in strength, till at last you will take no heed. To-night is the first occasion. Remember, I have warned you!"

Then the Fairy led him into a great room of white transparent lilies, every stamen of which was a little golden harp that gave forth the most delicious music. The loveliest girls, dressed in flowing garments which displayed their beautiful limbs, danced about singing how pleasant it was to live, that they would never die, and that the Garden of Eden would always bloom.

And as the sun set, the whole sky became golden in color, imparting to the lilies a rosy tint; and the Prince drank the sparkling wine offered to him by the maidens, and he felt a happiness never experienced before. He saw the back of the room drawn aside, and the Tree of Knowledge shine with a lustre which dazzled him, while within sounded the loveliest music.

Then the Fairy beckoned to him, and called out so lovingly, "Follow me, follow me!" that he forgot his promise and rushed toward her, though it was only the first night; and she continued beckoning and smiling. The aroma, the most delicious aroma, became more and more sweet, while the harps sounded more and more melodious, and it seemed as if millions of heads in the hall nodded and sang, "Man must know everything; he is the Lord of the Creation." Tears of blood seemed no longer to fall from the leaves of the Tree of Knowledge, but purple stars.

"Follow me, follow me!" it sounded in soft cadence; and at every step the Prince took, his cheek glowed more passionately and the blood coursed quicker through his veins.

"I cannot resist," he said; "it cannot be any sin. Why may I not follow the call of beauty and pleasure? I must see her asleep. Nothing is lost if I only do not kiss her, and that I will not do, for I am strong of mind and firm of will."

And the Fairy threw off her splendid garments, turned aside the branches, and the next moment she was hidden within.

"I have not sinned yet," said the Prince; "and neither do I intend

to;" and he turned aside the branches. She was already asleep, and looked so lovely, as only the Fairy of the Garden of Eden could; and he leaned over her, and saw tears on her beautiful eyelashes. "Are you weeping for me?" he whispered. "Do not weep, you lovely being. First now I understand the heavenliness of the Garden of Eden in my blood and in my mind. I feel the strength and eternal life of the angel within me. Even if eternal night is awaiting me, a minute such as this is bliss enough." And he kissed the tears from her eyes, and his lips touched hers.



"HE LEANED OVER HER, AND SAW TEARS ON HER BEAUTIFUL EYELASHES."

At that moment a clap of thunder was heard, so loud and so awful that no one has ever heard the like, and everything disappeared. The lovely Fairy and the gorgeous Garden of Eden sank deeper and deeper. The Prince saw it sink in the darkness like a shooting star. A death-like chill shook his frame, and he lay with his eyes closed, as if dead, for a long while.

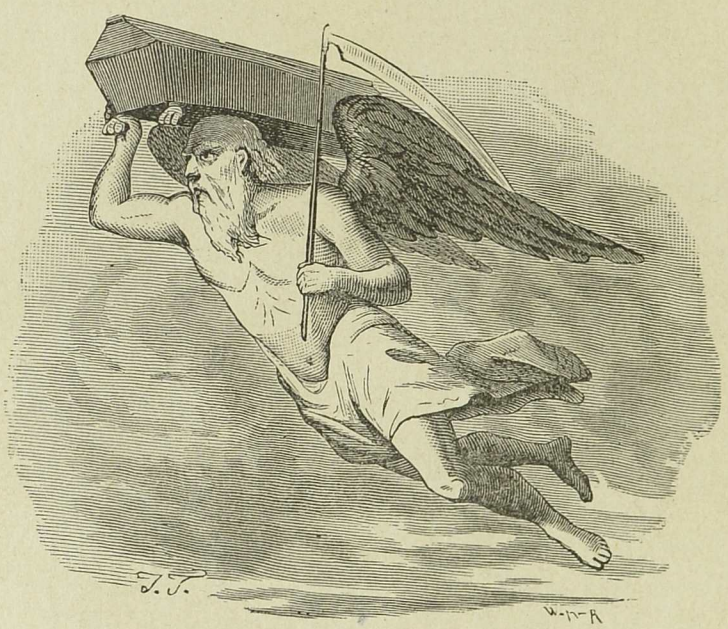
But the cold rain falling on his face, and the cutting wind, brought his senses back.

"What have I done?" he asked. "Oh, I have sinned like Adam, — sinned so that the Garden of Eden has sunk into darkness." And he opened his eyes, and beheld a star twinkling far away, like the sinking Paradise; it was the morning star.

He raised himself, and saw that he was in the great forest near the Cavern of the Winds, and by his side sat the Mother of the Winds looking very angry.

She raised her arm and said, "The very first night. I thought so. If you were *my* son, you would now be in the sack."

"Thither he shall also go," said Death, a strong old man with a scythe in his hand, and large black wings. "He shall go into the



"I FLY WITH IT UP TO THE STARS."

coffin, but not just yet. I only mark him now; in the mean time he may wander upon earth to atone for his sins and become better. My time will come. When he least expects it, I place him in the black coffin, and putting it on my head I fly with it up to the stars. There, too, is a Garden of Eden, and if he be good he shall enter. But if he be wicked in mind he will sink in the black coffin deeper than the Garden of Eden sank, and only once in a thousand years I fetch him, that he may sink still deeper, or reach the shining star above."

XIV.

THE FLYING TRUNK.

THERE was once a merchant who was so rich that he could have paved the whole street in which his house stood with silver, and perhaps also a by-street running into it. But he did not do any such thing; he knew better what use to make of his money. If he paid away a penny it came back to him a shilling: that was the sort of merchant he was. But then he died.

Now the son inherited all his money, and he began to live a merry life, went to balls and parties every night, made kites out of bank-notes, and threw ducks and drakes on the water with gold pieces instead of pebbles, so it was not to be wondered at that the money went fast; and it did too.

At last he had nothing left but a shilling-piece, and no other clothes than a pair of slippers and an old dressing-gown, so of course his friends "cut him," for they could no longer go about with him; but one of them, who was more kind-hearted than the others, sent him an old trunk, telling him "to pack up." That was all very well to tell him to do, but he had nothing to pack. So he placed himself in the trunk.

It was a very funny trunk, however, for as soon as the lock was pressed, the trunk flew into the air; that it did now, and it flew with him up through the chimney, and high up above the clouds, farther and farther away, till the bottom began to creak, and he became greatly afraid it would break to pieces, when he would have had a nice tumble. Heaven forbid!

At last he reached the land of the Turks, and having concealed the trunk under some leaves in a forest, he went into the town; for he might well do that, as the Turks, of course, went about in slippers and dressing-gowns, like himself.

On his way he met a nurse with a little child.

"Look here, nurse," he said; "what castle is that close to the town, with windows so high up?"

"The King's daughter lives there," said the nurse. "It has been prophesied that she shall be unhappy on account of her sweetheart, and therefore nobody is allowed to come near her unless the King and Queen are present."

"I am much obliged for what you have told me," said the merchant's son; and going into the forest, and seating himself in the trunk, he flew upon the roof of the castle, whence he crept through the window into the Princess's room.



"AND HE BECAME GREATLY AFRAID IT WOULD BREAK TO PIECES."

She was lying asleep on the sofa, and she was so beautiful that the merchant's son could not resist kissing her, whereby she woke, greatly frightened. But he told her that he was the God of the Turks, who had come through the air to see her, which she liked very much.

Then he seated himself by her side and began to tell her stories. He told her that her eyes were like lovely deep lakes, where her thoughts flitted to and fro like charming mermaids; that her brow was like a snow-white mountain with the most splendid chambers within; and about the storks, which bring the little children.

Yes, they were indeed stories! And so he proposed to the Princess, who at once accepted him.

"You must return on Saturday," she said; "for then the King and Queen take tea with me. They will be very proud of my marrying the God of the Turks; but take care to have a nice story for them, for they are very fond of such. My mother likes them to be aristocratic and with a moral; but my father prefers something to laugh at."

"I shall bring you no other present than a story," he said; and so they parted, the Princess having given him a sword set with gold pieces, and these were of course useful.

He flew away, bought a new dressing-gown, and sat down in the forest to compose a new story; it had to be finished by Saturday, and that was no easy task.

When Saturday came it was ready, and the King and Queen, with the whole court, were waiting tea at the Princess's, where the suitor was received most politely.

"Will you oblige by telling us a story?" said the Queen, — "something instructive and profound."

"But still something to laugh at," said the King.

"Most certainly," he answered; "and now you shall hear something worth listening to."

"There was once a bundle of matches which were proud beyond measure by being of high birth. Their first ancestor — namely, the great fir-tree of which each one was a sprig — was an old tree in a northern forest. Now, the matches were lying on a shelf in the kitchen, between a tinder-box and an old iron pot, to whom they were telling about their youth.

"'Yes; when we were up in the world we were really up,' they said. 'Every morning and night we had the finest tea, — it was the dew, — and all the day sunshine, when the sun shone, while all the little birds had to tell us stories. We knew too that we were rich; for while the other trees had green dresses during the summer only, we and our relatives could afford to wear a green dress winter as well as summer. But then the woodcutters came — it was the great revolution — and our family were separated. Our first ancestor became the mainmast of a splendid ship which could have sailed round the world; the branches went into other situations; and we have now the function of lighting up for the plebeian crowd; but that is the reason why we aristocrats are here.'

"'Well, the case has been different with me,' said the iron pot, next to which the matches lay. 'From the first time I went into the world

I have been scrubbed and boiled. I see to the substantial part of the household, and I am, in fact, the most important in the house. My greatest joy is to lie on the shelf after dinner, clean and shining, and have a sensible talk with my companions. And if I except the pail, which sometimes goes into the yard, we all of us live secluded indoors. The only one who brings us any news is the market-basket; but he is so violent in his criticism of the Government and the people that the other day an old jar fell down and broke in sheer fright over it.

"'He is a radical, you see.'

"'You chatter too much,' said the tinder-box; and the steel struck the flint so violently that it emitted sparks. 'Now let us have a merry evening.'

"'Yes; let us talk about who is of noblest birth,' said the matches.

"'Well, *I* don't care to talk about myself,' said an earthen jar; 'let us have an evening's entertainment. I will begin, and I will tell something which every one has experienced and which every one therefore understands, which is, of course, the best part of it.

"'On the shores of the Baltic, among the Danish beeches — '

"'What a delightful beginning!' said the plates; 'that is something we shall all like.'

"'— There I spent my youth happily in a quiet family where the furniture was polished, the carpet swept, and clean white curtains hung up every fortnight.'

"'You do indeed tell something interesting,' said the broom. 'One can hear at once that it is a lady who relates, there is something so clean and tidy in it all.'

"'Yes, to be sure,' chimed in the pail, making such a jump with delight that it came bang on the floor.

"And the jar continued to relate, and the end was as good as the beginning.

"All the plates rattled with delight, and the broom took some green parsley and crowned the jar with it; for the broom knew that if it crowned the jar to-day, the jar would crown it in turn to-morrow, and that would make the others angry.

"'Now I am going to have a turn,' said the tongs, and she danced. Oh, dear, how high she lifted one leg! Indeed, the old chair-cover in the corner split by looking at her. 'Now crown me too,' she said; and that she was.

"'They are only a low-born lot,' thought the matches.

"Then the tea-urn was asked to sing, but she excused herself by saying she had a cold; she could not sing without being hot. But that was only pride; she would only condescend to sing when on the table before her master and mistress.

"In the window lay an old quill which the servant was in the habit of writing with. There was nothing more remarkable about her than that she had been dipped too far into the inkstand; but of that *she* was proud.

"'If the tea-urn won't sing,' she said, 'she is quite welcome not to. Outside is a nightingale in a cage, who *can* sing. True, he has not much learning; but we won't refer to unpleasant things to-night.'

"'I think it is highly improper that a foreign bird like that should be listened to,' said the tea-kettle, who was kitchen-vocalist, and step-sister to the urn. 'Is that patriotism? I shall ask the market-basket.'

"'It disgusts me,' said the market-basket, indignantly; 'I am as disgusted as I well can be at the bare idea. Is this a proper manner in which to spend the evening? Would it not be more fun to turn the house topsy-turvy? Then everybody would be in his right place, and I should lead you all. That *would* be fun!'

"'Yes, let us have a regular row,' they all cried; but at the same moment the door opened and the servant entered, when all were immediately as quiet as mice. Still, each one was quite sensible of its qualities and position.

"'Had *I* only wanted,' each said, 'it would indeed have been a merry night.'

"The girl took the matches and lighted the fire. Oh, how they fizzed and sparkled!

"'Now,' they thought, 'it is not difficult to see that we are the highest born.' What a light! — and then they were gone."

"That was a *very* pretty story," said the Queen. "I quite imagined being in the kitchen with the matches. Yes, you shall have our daughter."

"Yes, certainly," said the King; "you shall have her, and that next Monday."

Thus the wedding-day was fixed, and the night before it the whole town was illuminated. Cakes and biscuits were thrown broadcast, and the boys stood on their toes to see, hurrahing and whistling. It was something grand indeed to look at.

"Well, I suppose I ought to do something too," thought the mer-

chant's son; and he bought a quantity of rockets, squibs, and all kinds of other fireworks, which he put into his trunk and flew up into the air.

What a cracking and whizzing! It made all the Turks jump so high into the air that their slippers flew about their ears. Such a display they had never witnessed. They saw at once that it was the God of the Turks who wanted to marry their Princess.



"SHE SAT BY THE BALCONY THE WHOLE DAY, WAITING FOR HIM."

When the merchant's son reached the forest with his trunk he thought, "I should like to go into the town and hear what it looked like;" and that was but natural.

And what things he did hear!

Every one had something to say about it, and all agreed it was very beautiful.

"I saw the God himself," said one; "he had eyes like bright stars, and a beard like the foaming brook."

"He was enveloped in a mantle of fire," said another, "and little angels peeped from the folds."

Yes; he heard, indeed, some pretty things, and the next day he was to be married.

He now hurried back to the forest to rest in his trunk; but, oh! where was it?

It was burnt! A spark left in it had set it on fire, and the trunk was in ashes. He could no more reach his bride!

She sat by the balcony the whole day, waiting for him. She is waiting still, while he wanders homeless about the world telling stories; but they are not so good as the story about the matches.

XV.

THE STORKS.[1]

On the last house in a little village was a stork's nest. The stork-mother sat in the nest with her four young ones, which stretched out their heads with the little beaks still black, for they had not yet become red. A little farther off on the roof stood the stork-father, stiff and erect; he had drawn up one leg, so that might at all events be at ease while he stood sentinel. One might have thought he was carved in wood, so still he stood. "It looks, of course, grand for my wife to have a sentinel by the nest," he thought. "Nobody knows I am her husband, and I am sure they think I have been ordered to stand here. It looks imposing;" and he continued to stand on one leg.

Down in the street a number of children were at play; and when they saw the storks they began to sing an old rhyme about them: —

"Stork, stork, old father stork,
Why do you stand there on one leg?
Your wife has four uglies in her nest.
One we will burn,
Another we will flay,
The third we will shoot,
And the fourth we will slay."

"Listen to what the boys are singing," said the little storks; "they say we shall be burnt and flayed."

"Don't take any notice of what they say," said the stork-mother. "It means nothing."

But the boys continued to sing and point their fingers at the storks; only one, by name Peter, would not join in it, saying it was wicked to make fun of the good birds.

[1] In Denmark, the storks are looked upon by the peasantry with a certain amount of superstition and veneration, and their settling on the roof of a house as a "sign of luck." Children are also told that the storks bring the newly born babies. — Tr.

The stork-mother consoled her young ones, repeating, "Don't take any notice of them; only look how calm your father stands, and that on one leg too."

"We are frightened," said the young storks, and drew their heads in.

The next day, when the children were again playing, they began again to sing, —

"One we will burn,
And another we will flay."

"Shall we be flayed and burnt?" asked the young storks.

"Nonsense," said the stork-mother. "You shall learn to fly, and I'll teach you. We will fly into the meadows and visit the frogs, which bow before us in the water, singing, 'Quack, quack, quack!' and we will eat them. That will be fun indeed!"

"And what next?" asked the storks.

"Oh, afterward," said the mother, "all the storks in the land gather, in order to begin the autumn manœuvres, and then it is necessary to fly well; for he who cannot, the general kills with his beak. Look, therefore, that you learn something before they begin."

"Then we shall be killed after all, as the boys are singing!" the young ones cried.

"Listen to me, and not to them," said the mother; "when the great manœuvres are over, we fly to the warm lands, far, far away, across mountains and forests. We fly to Egypt, where there are triangular houses of stone rising in a point to the clouds; they are called pyramids, and are older than any stork can form an idea of. There is a river there which overflows its banks, and we walk in the mud eating frogs."

"Ah, how nice!" cried all the young ones.

"Yes, that it is," said the stork-mother. "We do nothing all the day but walk about eating; and when we are feasting there is not a leaf on any tree up here. Here it is so cold that the clouds break to pieces and fall down in little white flakes." It was the snow to which she referred, but she did not know how to explain it better.

"Do the wicked boys also break to pieces?" asked the young storks.

"Oh, not quite, but very nearly; and they have to sit moping indoors, while you may enjoy yourselves in a warm country where there are flowers and sunshine."

Some time after the storks were big enough to stand up in the nest and look round; and stork-father brought them every day such dainties

as frogs and little worms. And how funny were his antics before them! He laid his head right back on his tail, while he made a noise with his beak like a rattle, and told them stories of the swamp.

"Now, listen to me!" said the stork-mother one day. "Now you must learn to fly;" and the four young ones had to get out on the roof. Oh, how they flapped their wings and tried to balance themselves; still they were very near falling down.

"Now, look at me," said the mother. "This is the way to hold your head, and you put your legs thus. One, two! One, two! That is what will help you on in the world." And she flew a little way, and the young ones made an awkward jump, when plump, down they went, for they were too heavy.

"I won't fly," said the youngest, and crept back into the nest. "I don't care to go to the warm lands."

"Do you prefer then to stay here when winter comes, and the boys to burn you? I am going to call them."

"No, no; don't!" it cried, and jumped back upon the roof.

On the third day they could really fly a little, and so they thought they could rest in the air; they tried it, but plump, they went down, and they had again to use their wings.

Then the boys in the street began again to sing: —

"The third we will shoot,
The fourth we will slay."

"May we fly down and peck out their eyes?" asked the young ones.

"No, leave them alone," said the mother. "Just pay attention to me, that is far more important. One, two, three; now wheel to the right. One, two, three; to the left round the chimney-stack. That was well done. Your last turn was so well done, that to-morrow you shall be allowed to come with me out into the swamp. Several charming stork families come thither with their children. Now, let me see you behave yourselves and keep your heads high, for that looks well and aristocratic."

"But cannot we revenge ourselves on those wicked boys?" asked the young storks.

"Let them cry as much as they like," said the mother; "you will fly towards the clouds and reach the warm countries all the same, while they will freeze and not have a green leaf or an apple."

"But we intend to be revenged," they whispered to each other; and so there was more exercise.

Of the boys in the street, he who had begun to jeer at the storks was the worst, though he was only some six years old; but the young storks thought he was at least a hundred, for he was bigger than either of their parents, and of course they knew nothing of the age and size of men and children. Their whole revenge should fall upon that urchin, for he had begun the annoyance, and kept it up still. The young storks were greatly incensed, and the bigger they grew the less they would



"TILL THEY ARE FETCHED BY THE STORK FOR THEIR FATHER AND MOTHER."

stand it. At last the mother had to promise them revenge; but it was only to be carried out on the last day they were in the country.

"We shall first see how you behave yourselves at the manœuvre," said the mother. "If you come off badly, the general will plunge his beak into your breast, and then the boys will be right in what they say, — at all events to some extent. But now let us see."

"You shall be satisfied," the young storks said, and they exerted themselves to the utmost. They trained every day, and at last flew so lightly that it was a pleasure to see them.

Now the autumn came, and all the storks gathered to fly to the warm

lands, while there was winter in the North. That was something like a manœuvre! They had to fly across towns and forests in order to test their strength, for it was a long way they had to fly when migrating. The young storks acquitted themselves of their task so well that they "gained honors," with a frog and a worm too. That was the highest award, and the latter they were allowed to eat.

"Now we will revenge ourselves," they said.

"Yes," said the stork-mother, "and I have hit upon the right plan. I know where the lake is in which all little children lie till they are fetched by the stork for their father and mother. The little ones sleep and dream there as they never will do again. Every father and mother wishes for such a baby, and all children wish for such a little brother or sister. Now we will fly to the lake and fetch a baby for each of the children who has not made fun of us; but those who have, shall not have any at all."

"But he who *began* the singing, — that nasty, wicked boy, what shall we do to him?" cried the young storks.

"In the lake lies a little dead child, who died in a dream," said the mother; "that we will bring to him, and then he will cry at having a dead little brother. But the good boy, — you have not forgotten him, I am sure? — he who said it was cruel to make fun of us, we will give a sister as well as a brother; and as the name of that boy is Peter, you shall all be called Peter."

And as she said, so it happened; and for that reason the stork is called Peter to this very day.

XVI.

THE BRONZE PIG.

In the city of Florence, not far from the Piazza del Granduca, runs a little cross-street which is called, I believe, Porta Rossa. Here lies, in front of a kind of bazaar where fruit is sold, a splendid chisled pig, cast in bronze.

The fresh crystal water gushes from the mouth of the animal, which from age is dark green in color. The snout alone shines as if it had been polished, which, in fact, it has by the numerous children and beggars who grasp it with their hands when drinking from it. It is quite a picture to see the well-shaped animal embraced by some pretty, half-naked boy as he puts his rosy lips to the spout.

Every visitor to Florence will easily find the spot; he need only ask the first chance beggar for the Bronze Pig.

It was late one winter's night. The mountains were covered with snow, but the moon was up, and moonlight in Italy gives as good a light as on a dark winter's night in the North; yes, better, in fact, for the clear blue air here elevates the mind, whereas in the North the cold steel-gray sky weighs as heavily as the cold hard earth which shall some day cover one's mortal shell.

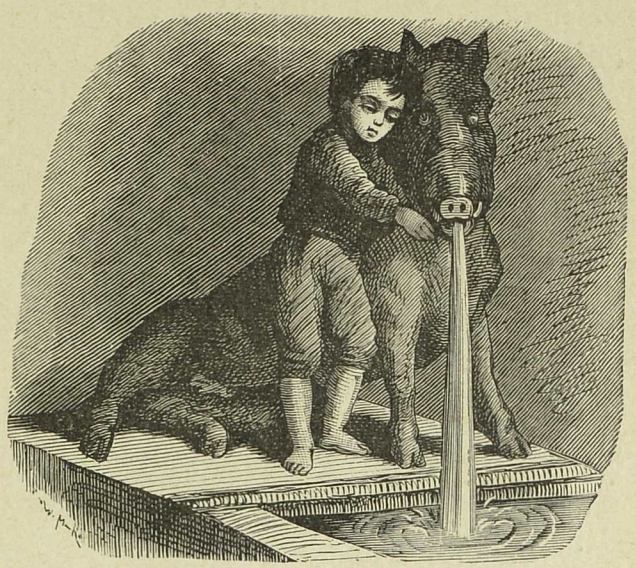
Away in the garden of the Grand Duke's palace, below the cover of the cypress, where even in winter thousands of flowers bloom, a little ragged boy had been sitting all the day, — a boy who might be the personification of Italy, smiling, and still so destitute. He was hungry and thirsty, for nobody had given him anything; and when it became dark the gate-keeper turned him out, as the garden was to be closed. For a long while he stood dreaming on the bridge across the Arno, looking at the images of the stars sparkling in the water below the splendid bridge.

He then approached the Bronze Pig, knelt down, put his little arms around its broad neck and his tiny mouth to the animal's shining snout,

and drank deep draughts of the refreshing fluid. Close by lay a couple of lettuce-leaves and some chestnuts ; these were his supper. Not a single person could be seen in the street; and being quite alone, he leaned up against the neck of the animal, resting his curly little head against that of the Pig, and in a few moments he was asleep.

The clock in the cathedral struck solemnly the midnight hour, and lo! the Pig was alive. The boy heard it say quite plainly, "Hold on, my little boy, for I am off;" and away it ran. It was a run indeed!

First they reached the Piazza del Granduca, and the bronze horse carrying the statue of the Grand Duke neighed loudly. The dazzling escutcheon on the old Town Hall shone like transparent pictures, and Michael Angelo's David swung his sling. There was indeed life! The bronze groups representing Perseus and "The Rape of the Sabines" were quite too real; for a cry of despair burst from them across the grand, silent square.



"HE LEANED UP AGAINST THE NECK OF THE ANIMAL."

Next, the Bronze Pig halted at the Palazzo degli Uffizi, in the colonnade, where the nobility gather for the carnival.

"Hold on," said the animal; "for now we run upstairs."

The little one did not say a word, for, though trembling a little, he felt so happy.

They entered a long gallery; he knew it well from former visits. On the walls hung paintings, and around stood statues and busts, all in the loveliest light, as if it were noonday. But the splendor seen when the door of a chamber at the end was opened far surpassed this. That sight the boy never forgot.

Here stood the statue of a woman, — a form as lovely as only Nature and the hand of the greatest master of the marble could mould. She moved her beautiful limbs; dolphins sprang at her feet, and immortality shone in her eyes. The world calls her the Medicean Venus.

On each side of her stood magnificent marble statues of men; one was sharpening a sword: he is called the Whetter. The Wrestling

Gladiators, the other group is called. The sword is sharpened, and the gladiators wrestle for the Goddess of Beauty.

The boy was dazzled with all the splendor; the walls shone with colors, and in everything was life and motion. But all the statues did not move from their places, for the glory from the heads of the Madonna, Christ, and St. John bound them. The holy figures were no longer paintings; they were the holy persons themselves.

What light and splendor in every hall! And the little boy saw it all, for the Bronze Pig took him into every one. But one painting in particular fixed itself in his mind, principally through the happy children in it. He had once nodded to them in daylight. It represents Christ descending to Hell, by Angelo Bronzino, and the expression of confidence in the faces of the children of reaching heaven is the chief beauty of the work. Two little ones embrace each other, and a third holds his hand out to another without, and points to himself as if to say, "I am going to heaven."

The boy looked longer at that painting than at any other, and the Bronze Pig, too, remained immovable before it. A faint sigh was heard. Did it come from the painting, or the animal? The boy held out his hand toward the smiling children, but the Bronze Pig ran away with him through the open antechamber.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and may God bless you for what you have let me see, dear animal!" said the boy, stroking it as it went thump! thump! down the stairs with him.

"The same to you," answered the Bronze Pig. "I have helped you, and you have helped me, for only with an innocent child on my back have I the power to move. You see I even dare to come under the rays of the lamp before the image of the Madonna. I may carry you everywhere except into the church; but if outside it, I may look in through the door. You must not, however, get down, for if you do I assume the form I have in the day at Porta Rossa."

"I shall not leave you, dear animal," said the little boy, who was at that moment being carried at a swift pace through the streets to the church Santa Croce. The great double portals flew open, and the light from the altar fell upon the deserted square. A strange glimmer streamed from a monument over a grave in one of the left side-aisles, thousands of stars forming like a glory around it. An escutcheon ornamented the grave, — a red ladder on blue ground, looking as if on fire. It was Galilei's grave. It is a simple monument, but the red ladder on

the blue ground is a very striking escutcheon, for it is the symbol of Art itself, along which Genius ascends to heaven.

In the right side-aisles every monument on the costly sarcophagi seemed to have become animated. Here stood Michael Angelo, there Dante with the laurel-wreath round his head, and Alfieri and Macchiavelli: side by side rest all these great sons of Italy.[1]

The church is a splendid one, and far more beautiful than the marble cathedral, though not so large.

The marble garments seemed to move as the great statues looked towards the altar, where white-clad boys swung golden censers, the fragrance from which streamed from the church into the square without.

The boy held forth his hand toward the splendid light, when at the same moment the Bronze Pig ran off with him. He held on to it with all his might, feeling the wind whistle in his ears. He thought he heard the portals of the church scrape on their hinges as they were closed, but in the same instant he felt losing his consciousness, an icy chill shook him, and he awoke.

It was morning, and he was leaning against the Bronze Pig at Porta Rossa, which looked just as usual.

Fear and terror filled his heart at the thought of her whom he called *mother*, who had yesterday sent him out to gain some money. He had none. He was hungry and thirsty, but still he embraced and kissed the Bronze Pig once more, nodded again to it, and then turned into a lane so narrow that a loaded donkey could hardly have passed along it. A great, iron-shod door stood ajar; here he went up a stone staircase, with dirty walls, and a rope for banister, till he reached an open gallery where clothes were drying. From here, steps led down into the court-yard, past the well from which the inhabitants of the house drew their water by means of iron chains, pail dangling by pail in the air, while the chains rattled and spilt the water into the yard.[2] One more stone staircase he scaled, when he encountered a woman, about middle age, with thick, black hair.

"What have you brought home?" she asked sternly.

[1] Michael Angelo's grave is just opposite Galilei's. On the monument is his bust and three figures, — Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. Close by is that of Dante, though the body lies at Ravenna. On the monument is seen Italy pointing to the statue of Dante, and Poetry weeping. A little farther off are the graves of Alfieri and Macchiavelli.

[2] I have deemed it right to leave out a passage here. — Tr.

"Please don't be angry," the boy pleaded; "I could not get anything, absolutely nothing," and he caught his mother's skirt as if wishing to kiss it. They then entered a wretched room, on the floor of which stood an earthen jar with charcoal in it, a so-called *marito*, which she took on her arms and warmed her hands by.

"I am sure you got something," she said to the boy, knocking him with her elbow.

The boy began to cry, and she kicked him so that he shrieked.

"If you don't be quiet," she said, "I will knock your brains out with the jar," at the same time swinging it in the air so menacingly that the boy threw himself on the floor with a piercing cry. Just then a neighbor entered, also with a *marito* on her arm.

"Felicita," said the latter, "what are you doing to the child?"

"The child is mine," said the other, roughly. "I can kill it if I like, and you too, Gianina; mind that;" and she swung the jar threateningly. The other woman held up hers for protection, and smash! went the jars, the bits, fire, and ashes being strewn over the room. But the boy had fled out of the room, across the courtyard, and out of the house.

The poor little boy ran till he lost his breath, when he happened to be at the church of Santa Croce, by the door of which he had stood the night before, and he entered.

It was fully lit up, and he knelt by the first grave on the right, that of Michael Angelo, and sobbed aloud. People came and went, mass was said, but nobody took any notice of the boy, except an elderly man who stood for a while looking at him and then went away.

Hunger and thirst tortured the poor little boy so that he nearly fainted, and he crept into a corner between the wall and the monument, where he went to sleep.

It was evening when he awoke by somebody shaking him. He rose quickly, and the elderly man stood before him.

"Are you ill? Where do you live? Have you been here all the day?" he asked. The questions being truthfully answered, the man led him to a little house in a by-street close at hand. They entered a glove workshop where his wife was busy sewing, while a little white Bolognese poodle was playing before her on the table, which rushed toward the boy.

"The two innocents know each other," said the wife, patting them both. The boy was then given food and drink by the kind people, and they told him he might remain with them for the night. The next

day Master Guiseppe would speak with his mother. He was given a plain little bed, but it was a royal one compared with lying on the hard stone floor at home, and he slept soundly and dreamt of the Bronze Pig.

The next morning Master Guiseppe went out, and that made the little boy very unhappy, for he knew he went to his mother to take him back; and he wept, and kissed the little dog. But the wife nodded to them both.

And what news did Master Guiseppe bring home? He spoke long with his wife, and she nodded, and patted the boy. "It is a nice boy," she said. "He may become as good a glove-maker as you are, and his hands are soft and pliant. Madonna has destined him for a glove-maker."

And the boy remained in the house, the wife herself teaching him to sew. He picked up and became happy, and began to tease Bellissima, as the little dog was called; but that made his mistress very angry, and the boy was very sorry for what he had done. Thoughtful he sat in his little chamber which looked on to the street, for he could not sleep. The Bronze Pig was in his thoughts, and suddenly he heard a noise outside, "Clauck! clauck!" "It must be the Bronze Pig," he thought, rushing to the window. But there was nothing down there.

"Help the signore to carry his paint-case," said his mistress the next morning, when a neighbor, a young painter, came out carrying a case and a large roll of canvas. The boy took the box and followed the painter, who proceeding to the picture-gallery went up the staircase the boy knew so well from the night he had run up the same on the Bronze Pig. He recognized the statues, the lovely Venus, and the splendid paintings.

Now they stood before Bronzino's painting of Christ and the little laughing children, and the boy laughed too, for he was with them in heaven.

"Well, now you had better go home," said the painter, as the boy had waited to see him raise his easel.

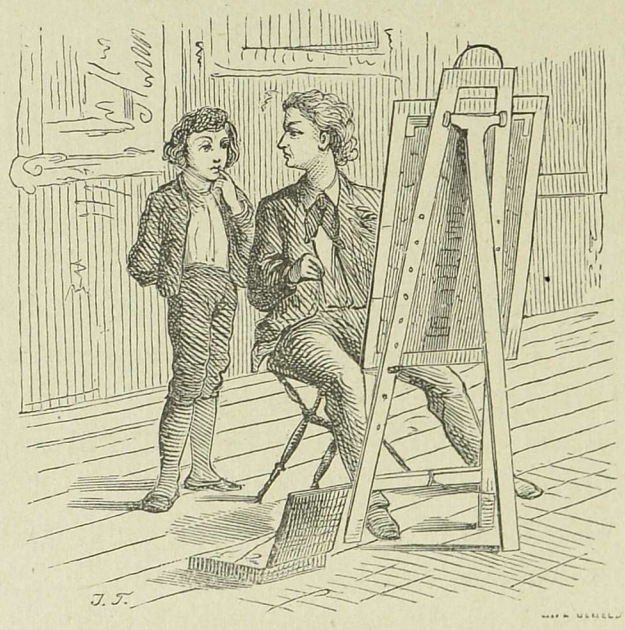
"May I look at you painting?" said the boy. "May I be allowed to see how you transfer the painting to that piece of white stuff?"

"I am not going to paint now," said the artist, opening his box of chalks. His hand travelled rapidly, while his eye rested on the great painting, and though the touches were faint, Christ was soon depicted on the canvas.

"But now you must be off," said the painter; and the boy went quietly home and took his place on the table, learning to sew gloves.

But all the day his thoughts were in the picture-gallery, and therefore he pricked his fingers and was very awkward; but he did not tease Bellissima. At night, the door being still open, he stole out. It was a cold but starlight night, so lovely and bright. He wandered through the streets, already quiet and deserted, and soon afterwards he stood before the Bronze Pig. He bent over it and kissed its shining snout.

"You dear animal," he said; "how I have been longing after you! To-night we must have a ride."



"'MAY I LOOK AT YOU PAINTING?' SAID THE BOY."

But the Bronze Pig did not stir, and the fresh water gushed from its mouth. Then, just as the little boy had seated himself on its back, he felt something tugging at his trousers; he looked down and beheld — Bellissima! The dog had stolen after him without being noticed, and he barked as if saying, "Don't you see me? What do you sit there for?" No fierce dragon could have frightened the boy more than the dog in that place. Bellissima in the streets, and without being "dressed," as his mistress called it. What would it end in? Bellissima never went out in the winter without wearing a little sheepskin coat, which had been made for him. It was tied with a red ribbon round the neck, and had a rosette and a bell. The dog looked almost like a little lamb when dressed thus for a walk with the signora. Bellissima

there without being dressed! All the boy's illusions were gone; but still he kissed the Bronze Pig, and took the dog, which trembled with cold, on his arms, and ran off for home as fast as he could.

"What are you running off with?" two policemen called out; and the dog began to bark. "Where have you stolen that pretty dog?" and they took it away from him.

"Oh, do give him back to me!" pleaded the boy.

"If you have n't stolen him, tell them at home that they can have him back at the station," they said, and walked off.

What terrible fear and despair! The boy did not know whether to throw himself in the Arno or go home and confess all. "They are sure to kill me," he thought. "But I should like to die, for then I should go to Jesus and the Madonna." And then he went home; but mostly because he wished to die.

The door was closed, and he could not reach the knocker. There was not a soul in the street; but a stone lying near, he began to knock with it.

"Who is that?" somebody asked within.

"It is I," he said. "Bellissima is lost. Open the door and kill me!"

The anxiety for Bellissima became very great, particularly on the part of the mistress of the house, who, looking on the wall, saw the sheepskin hang there.

"Bellissima at the station!" she called out. "You naughty boy! How did you get her out? She is sure to freeze to death. Fancy the delicate creature among the rough men!" Her husband had to go out. His wife cried with the boy, and all the people in the house, including the painter, appeared on the scene. He took the boy between his knees, and questioning him, gathered all about the Bronze Pig and the picture-gallery, though it was not easy to understand. The artist soothed the boy, and tried to put a kind word in for him with his mistress; but she was not pacified till her husband brought the dog. Now there was joy, and the artist patted the boy on the head and gave him a number of drawings.

What a collection! There were comical heads among others, but, what was the finest of all, the Bronze Pig itself. Could anything be better? There it was in a few touches, and even the house behind it.

"Oh, if I could only draw and paint," sighed the boy; "then I should possess all the world."

The next day, when he was alone, he seized a pencil and attempted

to copy the Bronze Pig; and he succeeded. It was certainly a little awkward and a little out of proportion, but still one could see what it was meant to represent, and the boy was delighted with the result. The pencil would at first not travel so well; but the following day there stood a second Bronze Pig by the side of the first, and it was a great deal better; and the third he drew was so good that everybody could see what it was meant to represent.

But he was slow in learning to sew gloves, and the errands in the city took very long, for the Bronze Pig had taught him that all pictures might be transferred to paper; and Florence is a huge picture-book to those who take the trouble to look at it.



"SO HE TIED IT ON TO A CHAIR BY ITS HEAD AND TAIL."

On the Piazza della Trinitá stands a column on the top of which the Goddess of Justice is placed, blindfolded, and with the scales and the sword. Soon she stood on the paper, and it was the glove-maker's little boy who had drawn it.

The collection of drawings increased, but still all in it were dead things, when one day Bellissima jumped before the boy. "Be quiet," he said, "and you shall come among my drawings." But the dog would not stand still, so he tied it on to a chair by its head and tail. The dog began to snarl and struggle, and in the same instant the signora entered.

"You wicked boy!" she cried in great rage, striking him at the

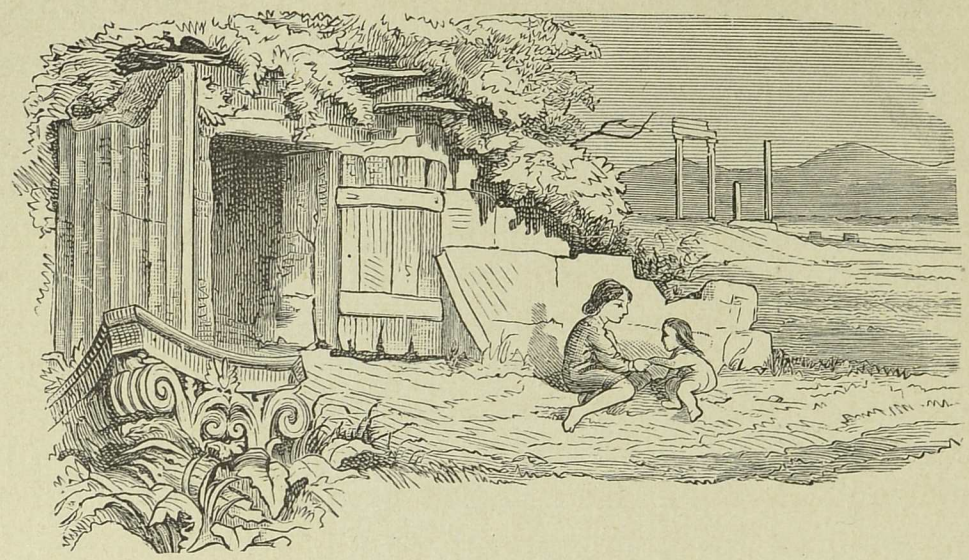
same time. "Out of the house with you at once! You are a nasty ungrateful wretch!" and she kissed her little dog.

As the boy was on the point of going, the artist came upstairs — and here was the turning-point in the boy's career.

In the year 1834 there was an exhibition of paintings in the Academie delle Arte in Florence, at which two paintings, hanging side by side, attracted immense attention. On the smallest was seen a lively little boy, who was in the act of drawing a little white poodle, which was tied on to a chair by its head and tail. There was a life and truthfulness in the painting which captivated everybody. The artist was, it was stated, a young Florentine who had been found in the street as a boy, and who, on being brought up as a glove-maker, had taught himself to draw. A now famous painter had discovered the boy's talent just as he was on the point of being dismissed because he had tied up the signora's pet dog to serve as his model.

The glove-maker's apprentice had become a great painter, — that, this picture alone testified; but the one next to it more so. It represented only a single figure; namely, a pretty, ragged boy lying asleep, leaning against the Bronze Pig in the street Porta Rossa. Every one knew the spot. The child's arms encircled the animal's head, and he was sleeping peacefully, while the lamp at the image of the Madonna threw a strong light on his pale, beautiful face. It was a grand painting, and mounted in a fine gilt frame, on the corner of which hung a wreath of laurels; but between the leaves fluttered a black ribbon, and a long black veil descended therefrom.

The young artist had the same day gone to his heavenly rest.



XVII.

THE BOND OF FRIENDSHIP.

WE have just finished a journey, and long already for another one. But whither? To Sparta, Mycenæ, or Delphi? There are thousands of places the mention of which makes the heart beat with delight.

We are now travelling on horseback along steep mountain paths, through woods and bracken, the solitary traveller boasting quite a caravan. He himself leads the way, accompanied by his *argojat*, or guide, next follows the pack-horse with the tent and traps, the rear being brought up by some soldiers for protection. However, no inn or comfortable bed awaits the traveller after a fatiguing day's journey, for the tent is his only shelter and the ground his bed, while thousands of gnats infest the air. It is a miserable night. The next morning the road lies through swollen rivers, where care has to be taken to keep in the saddle.

And what is the return for all these sufferings? The greatest, the most magnificent. Nature reveals herself here in all her grandeur. Every spot is historical: eye and mind experience joy. The bard may praise it in song, the painter immortalize it on the canvas, but the sense of reality which pervades the mind of the spectator neither can express.

The solitary shepherd yonder in the mountains may, however, by relating his life, better give you a glimpse of the Land of the Hellens than any travelling accounts.

Well, let him speak! And he will tell us of a custom, — a peculiar and pretty custom; namely, that of the Bond of Friendship: —

"Our hut was built of mud, but the door-posts were fluted marble columns, found in the spot where the hut stood. The roof reached nearly to the ground, and was black and ugly; but when it was laid it was made of oleander and laurel branches. There was not much space around the hut, mountains rising to the sky on all sides, and on the tops of which clouds sometimes hung like great phantoms. I never heard a bird sing here, neither the sound of bagpipes; but the spot was sacred from days of old, for it was — Delphi. The dark, sombre mountains were all capped with snow, and the highest, which shone longest in the purple of the setting sun, was Parnassus. The brook flowing past our door descended from it; even that had once been sacred. How well I remember every spot, and the deep, holy solitude. The fire was lit in the middle of the hut, and when the embers were high and glowing our bread was baked therein. When the snow lay around the hut, so as nearly to hide it, my mother was happiest, and she took my head in her hands, kissed my forehead, and sang the songs she never dared to sing at other times; for the Turks, our masters, disliked them. And she sang: —

"'On the top of Olympus the sacred
In the fragrant forest of pines,
Lay an old stag whose eyes were heavy with tears;
Red, green, and even azure tears he shed.
And a roe-buck went past, saying:
What ails you? Why do you cry?
Why these red, green, and azure tears?
Said the stag: The Turk has taken our land,
He has savage hounds for the chase;
A terrible pack.
Said the roe-buck: I will chase them to the islands,
To the islands I will chase them, and thence into the sea.
But when evening came the roe-buck was dead,
And when Night veiled Olympus the stag lay stark and low.'

"When my mother sang that song her eyes became filled with tears; but she hid them by turning the black bread in the embers. Then I knit my hands, and said, 'We will kill the Turks;' but my mother continued repeating the last lines of her song.

"We had been alone in our hut several days when my father returned. I knew that he brought me shells from the Bay of Lepanto, and

perhaps even a fine sharp knife. But he brought also a little child, a little girl, who was wrapped up in a sheepskin under his fur coat, and who, when she was taken out, had three silver coins entwined in her black hair. And my father told us that the Turks had killed her parents, and much more, of which I dreamt all the night. My father was himself wounded, the thick sheepskin cloak being saturated with blood, and my mother dressed the wound.

"The little girl was to be my sister, and she had a skin like alabaster, while her eyes were as soft as my mother's. She was called Anastasia, and her father was united to mine, — united according to an ancient custom, which we still observe. They had in their youth become friends through life and death, having chosen the most beautiful and virtuous maiden in the district to unite them in a Bond of Friendship. I often heard them speak of this pretty and strange custom.

"The little girl became my sister, and sat on my knee, and I brought her flowers and butterflies. We drank the water of Parnassus together, and slept head to head under the laurel roof of the hut, while my mother many a winter's night sang about the red, green, and azure tears; but I did not then know that it was the sufferings of my own people which were reflected in those tears.

"One day there came to us three men from the West, differently dressed. They brought with them beds and tents, and were escorted by some twenty Turkish soldiers, for they were friends of the Pasha. They came only to see our mountains and to ascend the Parnassus in snow and clouds. They raised their tents outside our hut, and roasted lambs and fowls, and drank hot, sweet wines; but the Turks dared not drink.

"When they left, I followed them a little distance, having Anastasia on my back sewed into a goat's skin; and one of the strangers, seeing us, drew us just as we were, so very lifelike. We looked like one being; and so we were in fact, for Anastasia either hung on my back or sat on my knee, and when I slept I dreamt of her.

"Two nights afterward we had another visit. They were men armed with guns and knives. They were Albanians, a brave race, — as my mother told us. They stayed only a short while, and one had Anastasia on his knee; but when they were gone she had only two silver coins left in her hair.

"They left, and my father followed them a little distance. Then we heard shots, and soon after soldiers entered our hut and took my mother, Anastasia, and myself prisoners. 'The brigands had been

sheltered by us,' they said; therefore we were prisoners. I saw the body of my father and those of the robbers, and I wept till I fell asleep.

"When I awoke we were in prison, but the room was not worse than our hut, and they gave us as good onions and wine as we had at home.

"How long we lay here I do not know; but it was many a day and night. When we were released it was Easter, and I carried Anastasia on my back, for my mother was ill. She could only walk slowly, and it took a long time before we reached the sea at the Bay of Lepanto.

"We entered a church, which blazed with images on a golden background; they were angels, and oh, so lovely! but still I thought Anastasia equally so. The priests announced, 'Christ is arisen!' The people embraced each other, and every one had a wax taper in his hand. I and Anastasia were also given one each, and the men danced hand-in-hand, while the women roasted the Easter lamb outside. We too were invited, and sat by the fire. A boy older than myself took me round the neck, and kissing me, said, 'Christ is arisen.' It was my first meeting with Aftanides.

"My mother could net fishing-nets, which paid her very well; so we stayed a long while by the sea, — the lovely sea, which reminded us of the tears of the stag, for it was soon red, soon green, and soon azure.

"Aftanides could manage a boat, and I sat in it with Anastasia by my side. When the sun set, the mountains became indigo-blue, one ridge peeping behind another, while far away stood Parnassus, capped in snow. It shone in the purple glow like molten iron, and it seemed as if the fire was emitted from within, for the glimmer remained in the blue air long after the sun had set. The white sea-birds swept the waters with their wings; otherwise it was as quiet here as between the dark mountains of Delphi. I lay on my back in the boat, while Anastasia sat on my lap, and the stars above shone brighter than the lamps in our church. They were the same stars, and stood exactly in the same place, as those I had looked up to at Delphi. I thought I was there still — when a splash! and the boat rolled heavily. I uttered a loud cry, for Anastasia lay in the water; but Aftanides was already in the water, and held her up to me, and I dragged them both on board.

"Summer came, and the sun burnt so fiercely that the leaves of the trees were scorched, and my thoughts wandered to the cooling mountains and the fresh water inland. My mother longed for them too, and one night we set out.

"How quiet and peaceful all was there! We wandered across the fragrant thyme, which the sun had not yet scorched; we did not meet a single shepherd nor see a hut. Silence reigned everywhere, only a solitary shooting-star now and then told us that up yonder there was life. I do not know whether the clear blue air emitted the light, or the stars, but we could clearly see the outlines of the mountains.

"My mother made a fire and roasted some onions she carried with her; and I and my little sister slept peacefully in the thyme, without fear of the horrible *smidraki*[1] or the wolf, for my mother sat by us.



"WHILE ANASTASIA SAT ON MY LAP."

"We soon reached our old home, but the hut was in ruins and a new one had to be built. Some women helped my mother, and in a few days the walls were raised and a roof of oleander branches made over them. My mother lived by twining willow baskets, and I guarded the herds of the peasants.

"One day the dear Aftanides paid us a visit. 'He longed so to see us,' he said; and he remained two days.

"After the lapse of a month he returned, and told us that he was to sail for Patras and Corfu. He came to say good-by to us, and brought

[1] According to Greek superstition this monster is born from the stomach of the sheep thrown into the fields. Fire emanates from its throat.

a big fish for my mother. He told us so much about the fishermen by the Bay of Lepanto and about the kings and the heroes who ruled Hellas of old.

"I have seen a rose-tree in bud and the same become a flower in the course of some days; and so it was with Anastasia too, for before I thought about it she was a fine blooming woman. I had also grown to be a man, and the wolf-skins on Anastasia's and my mother's beds were flayed from the animals I had slain.

"A year had gone by, when one evening Aftanides arrived, lithe of body and bronzed of visage. He embraced us all, and told us about the fortress of Malta and the pyramids of Egypt. His story sounded as strange as the legends of the priests, and I looked up to him with a sort of veneration.

"'How much you know,' I said; 'and how well you relate!'

"'Once you told me something better,' he said; 'namely, about that pretty old custom, the Bond of Friendship, a custom I should like to observe. Brother, let us go to the church, like your father and Anastasia's. Anastasia is the most beautiful and innocent of girls; she shall unite us. Nobody has a prettier custom than we Greeks.'

"Anastasia blushed like a rose, and my mother kissed Aftanides.

"The little church lay about an hour's walk from our hut, and a silver lamp was burning brightly within.

"We entered the deserted church, while the evening sun shone on the burning lamp and the variegated pictures on the golden background. We knelt by the altar, and Anastasia placed herself in front of us, being dressed in a long white garment which hung loose around her lovely limbs. Round her neck she had a necklace of old silver coins, and her face was radiant with joy and her eyes as bright as two stars.

"We all three said our prayers in silence, and then she said, 'Will you be friends through life and death?' We answered, 'Yes.'

"'Will each of you remember, whatever may happen, that my brother is part of myself, that his secret is mine, and that I will do for him what I would do for myself?' And we answered, 'Yes.'

"Then she laid our hands in each other's, kissed us on the brow, and we said our prayers. Then the priest stepped before the altar and blessed us, to the most delicious music.

"The eternal Bond of Friendship was made. When I looked to the door, I saw my mother standing there weeping.

"What hours of happiness in our hut by the foot of the Parnassus!

The evening before Aftanides' departure we sat thoughtful on the mountain slope, his arm encircling my waist and mine his. We spoke of the distressed Hellas and the men who should free her. We understood each other fully. Then I seized his hand and said, 'One thing more you ought to know, — what is only known to God and myself, — my soul is filled with love, a love stronger than my love for my mother and you.'

"'And whom do you love?' asked Aftanides, pale as death.

"'I love Anastasia,' was my reply; and his hand trembled in mine.



"WILL YOU BE FRIENDS THROUGH LIFE AND DEATH?"

"Now I saw all, and my hand trembled too, and I embraced him, whispering, 'I have never told her I do; perhaps she does not love me. Brother, remember I have seen her daily, that she has grown up by my side, grown into my soul!'

"'And yours she shall be,' he replied. 'I cannot tell you an untruth. I too love her. But to-morrow I depart, and will not return for a year. In the mean time you will get married, I hope. I have a little money; it is yours. You must and shall take it.'

"In silence we wandered across the mountain, and it was late before we reached the hut.

"When we entered, Anastasia held the lamp up to us, and looked with sadness at Aftanides.

"'To-morrow you will leave us,' she said; 'I am sad at heart.'

"'*You* are sad,' he said; and there was sorrow in his voice. I could not utter a word. Then he took her hand and said, 'Our brother here loves you. Do you return his love? In his silence lies his love.' And Anastasia trembled and burst into tears. I could restrain myself no longer; putting my arm round her waist, I said, 'I love you.' She



"AND KISSING US ALL, DEPARTED."

clasped me round the neck and her lips pressed mine; but the lamp fell to the ground, and it became dark around us — as dark as in poor Aftanides' heart.

"At daybreak he was up, and kissing us all, departed.

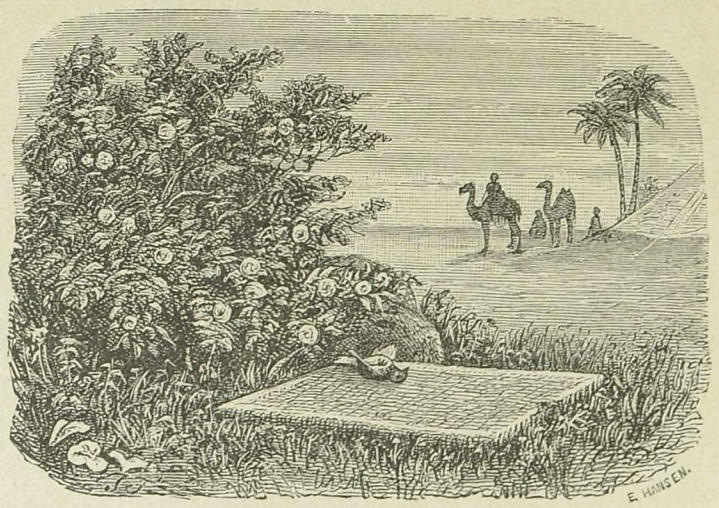
"He had left all his money with my mother for our use. Anastasia was my betrothed, and became a few days after my wife."

XVIII.

A ROSE FROM HOMER'S GRAVE.

THROUGH all the songs of the East runs the love of the nightingale for the rose. In the silence of the starlit night the winged songster brings the fragrant flower its serenade.

Not far from Smyrna, under the lofty palms, where the merchants drive their camels over a sacred soil, I saw a rosebush in bloom, while wood-pigeons circled above, their wings glittering like mother-of-pearl in the sun's rays.



"AND THE NIGHTINGALE SANG TILL ITS HEART BROKE."

On the rosebush was a flower lovelier than the others, for which a nightingale pleaded its love; but the flower was silent, and not a single drop of dew lay on its petals as tears of response thereto.

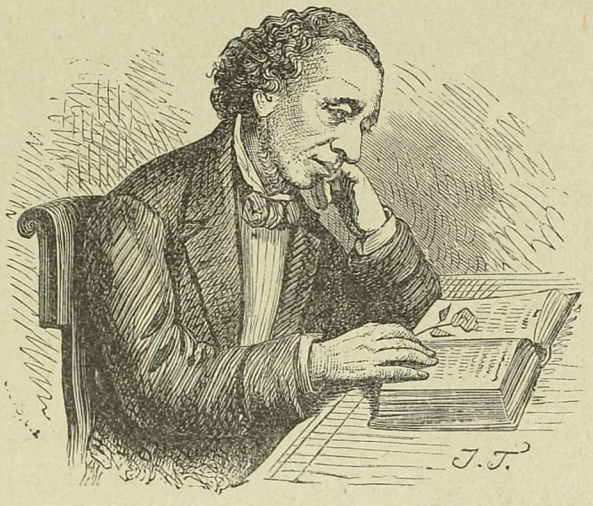
The boughs of the bush spread over a large stone, and the rose said, "Here lies the world's greatest songster. Over his grave my scent shall waft, and on the slab I will strew my petals when the wind tears them off. The songster of the Iliad became earth whence I sprang.

I, a rose on Homer's grave, am too sacred to bloom for the poor nightingale." And the nightingale sang till its heart broke.

The camel-driver passed with his loaded animals and black slaves, and his little boy found the dead bird and buried the little songster in the grave of the great bard, which made the rose tremble in the wind.

Evening came, and the rose, folding its petals, dreamt.

It dreamt that it was a fine, sunny day, when a number of men from the West came to visit Homer's grave, and among them was a songster from the far North — from the land of mist and the Northern Lights. And he plucked the rose, and pressing it between the leaves of a book, carried it with him to his far-away country. And the rose withered from grief, and lay in the dark prison till the stranger opened it in his home, saying, "Here is a rose from Homer's grave!"



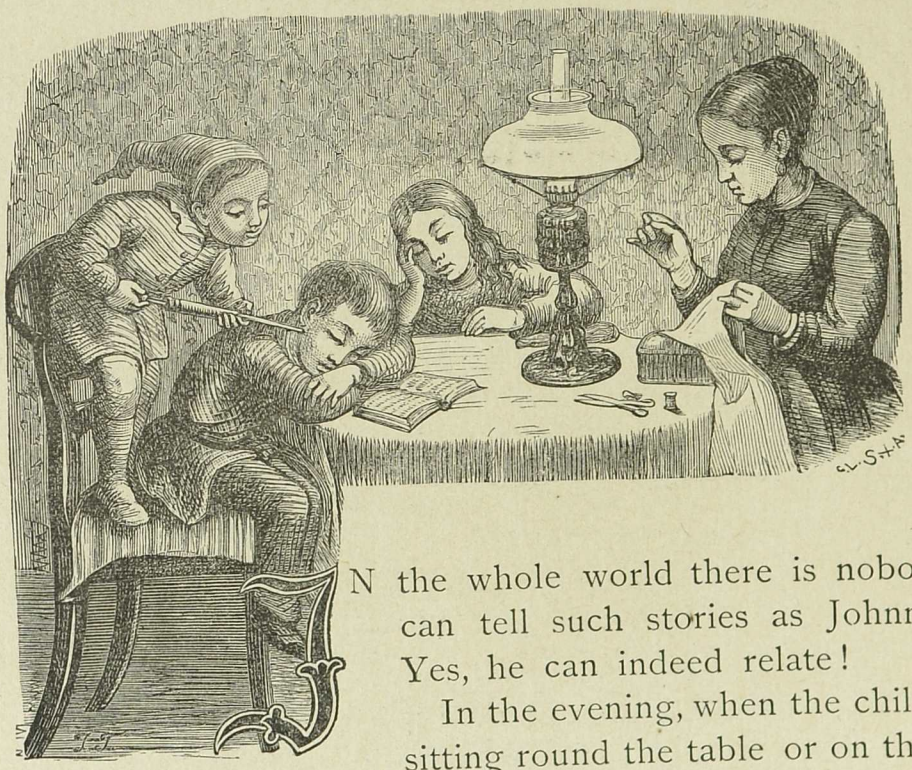
"HERE IS A ROSE FROM HOMER'S GRAVE!"

So dreamt the rose. It awoke trembling in the wind, and drops of dew fell from it on the grave of the great songster as the sun rose. The day became hot, and the rose glowed in the sun prettier than before, for it was in its warm native land. Then steps were heard approaching, and a number of men from the West appeared, just as the rose had dreamt in its dream, and among them was a songster from the far North. He plucked the rose and kissed it, and carried it away to the land of mist and the Northern Lights.

As a mummy the rose now lies in his Iliad, and just as in its dream the flower hears him open the book and say, "Here is a rose from Homer's grave!"

XIX.

JOHNNY NAP.



IN the whole world there is nobody who can tell such stories as Johnny Nap. Yes, he can indeed relate!

In the evening, when the children are sitting round the table or on their little stools, he steals softly up the stairs,—for he walks in his socks, —opens the door without the least noise, and swish! he squirts sweet milk into the eyes of the children — so very, very little, but enough to make them close their eyes so that they cannot see him. Then he steals behind them, breathes in their neck, which makes their heads heavy; but it does not hurt — oh, dear, no! for Johnny is fond of children; he only wishes them to be quiet and go to bed, when he will tell them stories.

And when the child is asleep Johnny seats himself on the bed. He is well dressed, his coat being of fine silk, but it is impossible to tell the color, for it is green, red, or blue, according to the way he turns. He carries two umbrellas under his arm, one of which is lined with the most beautiful pictures, and that he holds over the heads of the good

children, and then they dream all the night the prettiest stories. The other, on which there is nothing, he holds over the naughty children, who then sleep heavily; and when they awake of a morning they have dreamt nothing at all.

Now we shall hear how Johnny came every night during a whole week to a good little boy whose name was Ned, and what he told him. The stories are exactly seven, as we know there are seven days in the week.

MONDAY.

"Now, look here," said Johnny, on Monday night, when he had got Ned comfortably into bed; "we will smarten the place up a bit." And as he spoke, all the little plants in the flower-pots by the window became big trees, which stretched their long branches along the roof and walls, making the room seem like the finest summer-house, and all the branches were full of flowers, which smelt as delicious as roses and tasted better than the sweetest preserves, when eaten. The fruit shone like gold, and there were tarts and cakes, too, so full of jam that they nearly burst. Oh, it was indeed delicious!

Then there was a sudden moaning in the drawer where Ned's schoolbooks were kept.

"What does that mean?" said Johnny Nap, going to the drawer and opening it. It was his slate which made this terrible noise, for a wrong figure had crept into the sum, in consequence of which it was nearly breaking to pieces. The slate-pencil, tied with a string, hopped and jumped like a chained dog, wishing to correct the mistake, but he could not. Next, Ned's copy-book began to wail and sigh, so that it was quite terrible to hear. At the beginning of every line, all down the leaves, a capital letter was written by the schoolmaster, and alongside them a number of others, written by Ned, who thought they looked quite as grand as the others; but they were all falling over the lines on which they were intended to stand.

"Look, this is the way to hold yourselves!" said the Copies. "Look here! thus; with a graceful bend to one side."

"Oh, we wish so much we could!" said Ned's letters; "but we cannot, we are so ill."

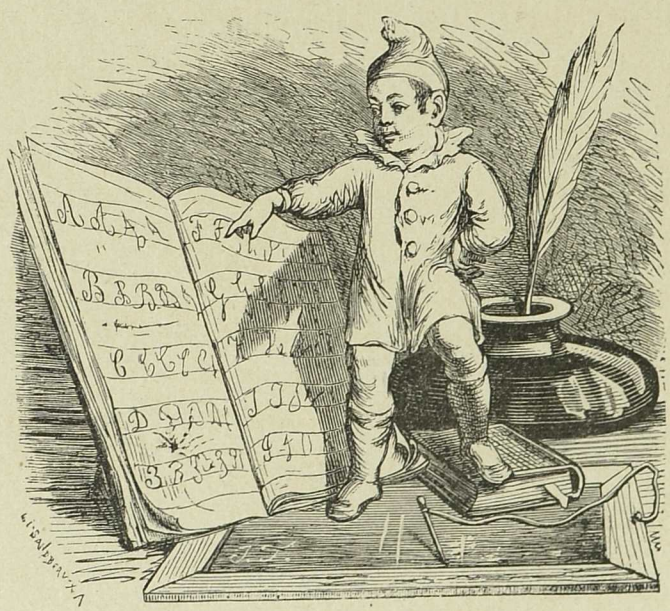
"Then you must have a pill," said Johnny Nap.

"No, no," they cried; and they then stood so straight it was a pleasure to look at them.

"Well, now, we cannot listen to any stories," said Johnny; "now I must drill you. One, two! one, two!" And he drilled the letters till they stood as upright as any written by the best writing-master. But when Johnny had left, and Ned looked at them in the morning, they were just as poor as before.

TUESDAY.

As soon as Ned was in bed, Johnny Nap touched the furniture with his little magic squirt, and all at once they began to talk about themselves, with the exception of the coal-scuttle, which was silent, being



"NOW I MUST DRILL YOU."

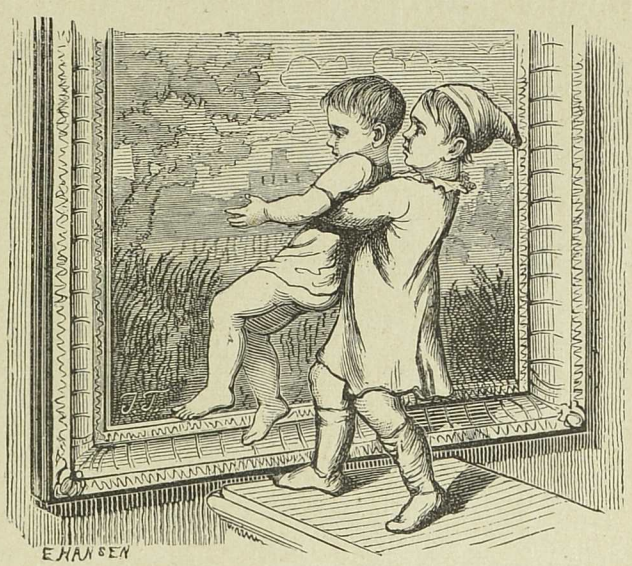
angry at their vanity of only talking about themselves. Over the chest of drawers hung a great painting in a gilt frame. It was a landscape with tall, old trees, flowers in the grass, and a great lake and river, flowing behind the forest, past many castles, into the foaming ocean.

Johnny Nap touched the picture with his magic squirt, and all at once the birds in it began to sing, the leaves of the trees to move, as well as the clouds, the shadows of which could be seen flitting across the landscape.

Then Johnny lifted little Ned up to the frame, and he put his feet through the canvas and stood in the high grass. The sun shone through the boughs of the trees down upon him, and he ran to the

water and entered a little boat lying there, which was painted red and white, the sails glittering like silver, while six swans, with golden crowns on their heads and a bright blue star on their breasts, drew the boat past the green woods where the trees told stories of brigands and witches, and the flowers fairy-tales about the dear little elves, and what the butterflies had told them.

The loveliest fishes with scales like silver and gold swam behind the boat, now and then jumping out of the water with a splash; while large and small birds, red and blue, flew behind it in two long rows, and the gnats danced in the air and the great cockchafers hummed, "Buzz! Buzz!" They all wanted to tell Ned stories, and every one had something to relate.



"THEN JOHNNY LIFTED LITTLE NED UP TO THE FRAME."

That was something like a sail! Now the woods were dark and close, then the finest parks with sunshine and flowers, in which stood palaces of glass and marble, while on the balconies princesses rested, who were all little girls with whom Ned had played before. They held out their hands, each one holding the most delicious sugar-horse sold at any sweet-shop, and Ned seized one end as he floated past and the princess held on to the other, so that they each had a piece, — she the smallest and Ned the biggest. At every castle little princes stood guard, who saluted with gold swords, and threw raisins and tin soldiers to him, — so of course they were real princes.

Sometimes Ned floated through forests, and at others through great halls, and even through the town where his old nurse lived, who had carried him in her arms and loved him so much. She nodded to him and sang a song she had herself composed and sent to Ned: —

"I think of you, so oft, so oft,
My own, my dearest, darling Ned!
Your lips I have kissed, so soft, so soft,
Your forehead, and your cheeks so red.

I heard you utter your first word,
When I had to say farewell to you ;
But ever, ever may the Lord
Protect my Ned, whatever you may do ! "

And all the birds sang too, the flowers swayed with delight on their stalks, and the old trees nodded as if Johnny Nap had told them stories too.

WEDNESDAY.

How it rained! Ned could even hear it in his sleep, and when Johnny Nap opened a window the water was right up to the window-sill. There was quite a lake there, and a splendid ship lay moored to the house.



"AND NED, DRESSED IN HIS BEST SUIT, STEPPED ON BOARD THE SHIP."

"Will you have a sail?" asked Johnny. "I will take you to foreign parts, and still you can be back here to-morrow."

And Ned, dressed in his best suit, stepped on board the ship. They sailed through the streets, the weather having now become very fine, and round the church. They sailed till they saw land no more, and met a flock of storks from home, on the way to warmer lands. One flew behind the other, and they had already flown such a distance that one of them was hardly able to continue the journey. It was the last

in the flock, and it began to sink slowly, till at last it touched the vessel and finally stood on the deck.

It was at once seized by the ship's-boy, who put it into the fowl-house, among fowls, ducks, and turkeys. The poor stork stood quite crestfallen among them.

"Look at that thing!" cried the fowls.

And the turkey-cock blew himself out to his utmost size and asked him who he was, while the ducks waddled backward, hacked at each other, and said, "Quack! quack! quack!" meaning, in their tongue, "Move on! move on! move on!"

Then the stork began to tell about the hot Africa, about the pyramids, and the ostrich which ran across the desert like a wild horse. But the ducks did not understand him; so they hacked at each other and said, "Let us agree he is stupid."

"Of course he is stupid," rejoined the turkey-cock, and began to cluck. Then the stork became silent, and thought of his warm home.

"What pretty, thin legs you have!" said the turkey-cock; "may I ask what the price is a yard?"

"Quack! quack! quack!" laughed all the ducks; but the stork did not seem to hear what was said.

"Why don't you laugh too?" said the turkey-cock. "It was wittily said; but perhaps it was n't good enough for you. Ah, well! he does n't seem to have too much brains, poor fellow! Let us amuse ourselves." And the fowls cackled and the ducks quacked. "Cick, cack! cick, cack!" it seemed so very funny to them.

Then Ned went up to the fowl-house and let the stork out, which was now quite refreshed, and it hopped out on the deck and nodded to him as if to thank him. Then it spread out its large wings and flew to its warm home. But that made the fowls cackle and the ducks quack ten times more, and the turkey-cock became quite red in the head with rage.

"To-morrow we will cook you," said Ned; and then he awoke, lying in his little bed.

It was a funny journey Johnny Nap had made him take that night.

THURSDAY.

"Now, look here," said Johnny, "don't be afraid, but here is a little mouse;" and he held out his hand with the pretty little animal on it.

"She has come to invite you to a wedding, for two little mice are going to be married to-night. They live under your mother's larder, and that is a very nice place."

"But how am I to get through the little mouse-hole in the corner?" said Ned.

"Leave that to me," said Johnny; "I will make you small." And he touched Ned with his magic squirt, who at once became smaller and smaller, till at last he was only a few inches high.

"You had better borrow the clothes of the tin soldier," said Johnny; "for at a party it looks well to be in uniform."

"Yes, certainly," said Ned; and he was at once dressed as the neatest tin soldier.



"AND SO THEY SET OUT FOR THE MOUSE WEDDING."

"If you will place yourself in your mother's thimble," said the mouse, "it will give me great pleasure to drag you."

"Oh, I am quite ashamed of giving you the trouble, miss!" said Ned. And so they set out for the mouse wedding.

First they entered a long passage under the floor, which was not higher than just to allow of their passing, and the whole of it was illuminated with touch-wood.

"Does n't it smell nicely here?" asked the mouse. "The whole passage has been smeared with bacon-rind," she added. "Nothing could be finer."

They now entered the wedding chamber, where all the little lady mice stood on the right side, giggling and whispering as if making fun of each other, while on the left stood all the gentlemen mice, stroking their

mustachios with their tails. The bridal couple stood in the middle of the floor, in a hollow bit of cheese, and kissed each other before everybody; for of course they were engaged, and about to be married.

More and more guests arrived, till one mouse nearly trampled another to death, and the bridal couple stood in the doorway so that nobody could get either in or out. The whole room was smeared with bacon-rind, like the passage, and at dessert a pea was shown in which a member of the mouse family had nibbled the names or rather the initials of the bridal couple. It was something very marvellous.

All the mice said it was a capital wedding, and that the conversation had been most refined and entertaining. And then Ned drove home as he came. Of course he had been in grand company, and therefore it was only natural he should have condescended to shrink to the size of a tin soldier, and put his uniform on too.

FRIDAY.

"Nobody would believe," said Johnny, "how many elderly people would like to catch me, particularly those who have done something wrong. 'Dear little Johnny,' they say, 'we cannot close an eye;' and so they lie all the night, seeing all their wicked deeds, which sit like horrible imps on the edge of the bed, squirting boiling water over them. 'Won't you drive them away, so that we may have a good sleep?' And then they sigh so heavily and say, 'We will gladly pay you well for your trouble. Good-night, Johnny, the money lies on the window-sill.' But I don't do that for money," added Johnny.

"What are we going to do to-night?" said Ned.

"I don't know whether you would like to go to another wedding to-night," Johnny replied; "it is of a different kind from yesterday's, though. Your sister's big doll, who looks like a man, and is called Fred, is going to be married to the doll Daisy; it is her birthday, besides, and there will be many presents."

"Oh, yes, I know that!" said Ned. "Whenever my sister wants new clothes for her dolls it is either their birthdays or weddings. This is the hundredth time, I am sure."

"All right," said Johnny, "but to-night is the hundred and first, and therefore it will be very fine; just look!"

And as Ned looked at the table, he saw that there was light in every window of the cardboard house, and that all the tin soldiers were drawn

up outside. The bridal couple sat on the floor, leaning thoughtfully against the leg of the table, — for which there might be good reason. And then Johnny Nap, dressed as a parson, in Ned's grandmother's black apron, married them; and when the ceremony was over, all the furniture sang the following pretty song, composed by the pencil and sung to a martial air: —

"Our song be wafted on the wind
To the bridal couple here within;
Both are as spruce as a pin,
And both are made of the softest skin.
Hurrah! hurrah! for pin and skin;
We sing our song for them and the wind!"

And then they received presents; but they had asked not to be given any eatables, for their love was enough for them.



"AND THEN JOHNNY NAP MARRIED THEM."

"Now shall we go into the country, or abroad?" asked the bridegroom; and they consulted the swallow, and the old hen in the back-yard, which had had chickens five times. The swallow told them about the warm countries where the grapes are big and heavy, and where the air is so balmy and the mountains so grand.

"But they have n't got our green cabbage," said the hen. "I was in the country one summer with all my chicks, where there was a sand-pit for us to scratch in, and we had besides *entrée* to a cabbage-field. Oh, how lovely green it was! I cannot imagine anything more pretty."

"But one cabbage is like another," said the swallow; "and then the weather is so bad here."

"Well, one gets accustomed to that," responded the hen.

"But it is so cold here," urged the swallow.

"Oh, that is just good for the cabbage," answered the hen. "However, it is hot enough sometimes. Why, five years ago it was so hot here for five weeks one could hardly breathe. And then, we have no nasty snakes and robbers, as they have abroad. He must be a wretch indeed who does n't acknowledge that our country is the best in the world; he certainly ought to be turned out." And the hen began to cry. "I too have travelled," she said; "I once travelled ten miles in a cart, and there was no fun in that, I think."

"The hen is a wise creature," said the doll Daisy; "and I don't care to travel in mountains, for it is only up hill and down dale. No; we will travel to the sand-pit, and take walks among the cabbages." And so they did.

SATURDAY.

"Are you going to tell me stories to-night?" asked little Ned as soon as Johnny had got him to bed.

"We have no time for that to-night," said Johnny, and opened his beautiful umbrella over him. "Now, just look at these Chinese!" And suddenly the whole umbrella looked like a Chinese willow-plate, with blue trees, and bridges with Chinese men and women on them, who stood nodding their heads. "We must furbish up the whole world for to-morrow," said Johnny, "for it is Sunday. I have to run up into the church steeples, to see that the little goblins polish the bells so that they ring prettily; then I have to run into the fields to see that the wind dusts the leaves of trees and grass; and finally, what is the most troublesome task, to take down the stars to polish them. I take them in my apron; but first I have to number them and their places, so that they shall not come out of order, for otherwise they would not remain there, and we should have many shooting-stars."

"Look here, Master Nap," said an old portrait hanging on the wall, "I am Ned's great-grandfather. I am much obliged to you for telling the boy such nice stories, — very much indeed, — but I must request you not to fill his head with such stupid ideas. The stars cannot be taken down and polished. They are bodies like our earth, and that is just their merit."

"I am much obliged to you, old great-grandfather," responded Johnny, tartly; "I am much obliged, I am sure. You are the head of the family, but I am older than you. I am an old pagan; the Greeks and the Romans called me Morpheus. I have been into the finest houses, and



"AND OPENED HIS BEAUTIFUL UMBRELLA OVER HIM."

go there now, and I know how to behave to old and young, let me inform you. Now *you* may tell him stories," said Johnny, and walked off.

"One is not allowed to have an opinion of one's own now-a-days, I suppose," said the great-grandfather; and just then Ned awoke.

SUNDAY.

"Good-evening!" said Johnny; and Ned nodded to him, just as he ran up to the portrait of the great-grandfather and turned it to the wall so that he should not begin to chatter as he had done the night before.

"Now you must tell me about the five green peas who lived in a pea-shell, of the cock's leg who proposed to the hen's leg, and about the darning-needle who was so stuck up she believed herself a sewing-needle."

"One may have too much of a good thing," said Johnny. "I prefer

to show you something, you know. I will tell you about my brother, who is also called Johnny Nap; but he comes only once in your life, and then he takes you with him on his horse and tells you stories. He knows only two, one of which is so beautiful that nobody in the whole world has heard anything like it, and the other so horrible that it cannot be described." And as he spoke he lifted little Ned up into the window and said, "There, you see my brother; he is called Death. You see he is not so frightful as in the picture-books, where he is only bones and knuckles. He has silver embroidery on his coat, and wears the hand-



"HE IS CALLED DEATH."

somest hussar uniform. A mantle of black velvet flutters behind him. See how he gallops!"

And Ned saw how this Johnny Nap rode along, taking both old and young on to his saddle, some before and some behind him; but he always asked first, "What character does your book show you to bear?"

"Good," they all answered.

"I must see for myself," he responded; and they had to show it to him. And those who bore the character "very good" and "exceedingly good" were placed in front of him, and were told the beautiful story; but those who had "middling" and "bad" were placed behind,

and were told the horrible story. The latter trembled and wept, and wanted to jump from the horse; but they could not, having grown to it.

"But Death is the most beautiful Johnny Nap!" exclaimed Ned; "I am not afraid of him."

"Neither do you need to be," said Johnny; "only take care that you have a good character."

"Now, that is really instructive," muttered the portrait of the great-grandfather. "It was of some use speaking one's mind, after all;" and he was very pleased.

Well, this is the story of Johnny Nap, and to-night he may perhaps tell you something himself.

XX.

THE ROSE-ELF.

In the middle of a splendid garden grew a rose-tree covered with flowers, and in the loveliest of them all dwelt an elf. He was so small that no human eye could see him, and every leaf formed a bedroom for him. He was as handsome and well-made as any child could be, and had wings reaching from the shoulders to the feet. Ah! what a scent pervaded his dwelling, and how light and delicate the walls were! They were the soft little rose-leaves.

All the day long he amused himself with flying from rose to rose in the warm sunshine, dancing on the wings of butterflies, and measuring how many steps he had to take when walking along the veins of a lime-leaf. They were endless roads and paths to him, and the sun set before he had finished.

It became very cold, the dew fell, and the wind rose. He returned home as fast as he could, but the rose was closed, and he could not get in. Not a single rose remained open. Oh, how frightened he was! He had never been out at night before; it would certainly be his death.

Then he remembered that there was a summer-house at the other end of the garden, covered with beautiful honeysuckle, the flowers of which looked like great painted horns; and he decided to rest in one of them till the morning.

He flew thither. Hush! there were two persons there, — a young, handsome man and a lovely girl. They sat close to each other, and wished they never had to part; for they loved each other so dearly, far more than the best child loves its parents.

"We must part," said the young man. "Your brother objects to our love, and therefore he sends me on business far away over land and sea. Good-by, my sweet bride, for that you are to me."

And they kissed each other; and the girl wept, and gave him a rose. But before she did so, she kissed it passionately, whereby the rose opened, and the elf at once flew into it, leaning his head against the soft, fragrant walls. He could hear them saying "good-by" to each other, and felt that the rose was placed near the young man's heart. Oh, how his heart beat! The little elf could not sleep, because of the noise.

The rose did not remain long on the young man's breast, for as he wandered through the woods he took it out, and kissed it so passionately that the little elf was nearly squeezed to death. He could feel the young man's lips burn through the leaves, and the rose opened as before the noonday sun.



"THE GIRL WEPT, AND GAVE HIM A ROSE."

Then another man appeared, dark and wicked of aspect. It was the lovely girl's bad brother. He took from his breast a sharp-pointed dagger, and as the young man kissed the rose, buried the dagger in his heart. Then he cut his head off, and hid the body beneath a lime-tree.

"Now he is gone," thought the wicked brother. "He will never return. He had to make a long journey over land and sea. It is easy to lose one's life there, as he has. He will never return, and my sister does not dare to ask me concerning him."

He covered the grave with withered leaves, and returned home in the dark night, as he thought, alone; but he was not alone, for the little elf sat in a withered leaf, which had fallen into his hair as he dug the grave. Now his hat covered it, and it was so dark in there that the little elf trembled with fear and anger at the horrible deed.

In the morning the wicked man reached his home. He took his hat off and went into his sister's bedroom, where the lovely girl lay dreaming of him she loved so much and who she thought was now far away. The wicked brother bent over her, and laughed as only the Devil laughs, when the withered leaf fell from his hair down on the coverlet; but he did not notice it, and went to sleep a little.

But the elf crept out of the leaf and into the ear of the sleeping girl, and told her as if in a dream about the terrible murder, described the spot where her beloved was buried, and finally said, "So that you shall not think this a dream only, you will find a withered leaf on the coverlet;" and so she did when she awoke.

Oh, how bitterly she wept! And she had nobody to confide her sorrow to. The window remained open all the day, and the elf could easily have flown into the garden to the roses, but he would not forsake the distressed girl. In the window stood a tree with roses in bloom, and into one of these he crept, looking at the poor girl. Her brother came several times to see her, and was very gay, but she dared not say a word to him about her great grief.

As soon as it was dark she stole out of the house, and went into the woods where the lime stood, dug at its roots, and found the body of him she loved so much and who had been cruelly murdered. Oh, how she wept! asking God that she too might die.

How she wished she could have carried the body home with her, but that, of course, she could not. She therefore took the head with the closed eyelids, kissed the cold mouth, and shook the mould from the lovely hair. "I will keep that," she said; and having covered the body with mould and leaves, she took the head with her, together with a branch of the jessamine-tree blooming where he had been murdered.

As soon as she was in her room again, she took the largest flower-pot she could find, and having placed the head of her dead lover therein, covered it with mould, and planted the sprig of jessamine in it.

"Good-by, good-by!" whispered the elf, for he could no longer bear to see her grief, and he flew out to his rose in the garden; but it had withered, and only a few leaves remained.

"Oh, how short-lived is all that is good and pretty!" sighed the elf. But he found another rose, behind whose tender leaves he made a home.

Every morning he flew to the window of the poor girl, and she stood always by the flower-pot weeping. Her bitter tears fell on the leaves of the jessamine, and every day she grew paler and paler, and the plant became more and more fresh and green. Sprig followed upon sprig, and at last buds appeared, which she kissed; but her wicked brother became very angry, and asked her if she had gone mad, to be always crying over the flower-pot. He knew not, of course, what eyes were closed therein and what lips had become mould there; and she leaned her head against

it, where the elf found her sleeping. Then he crept into her ear, and whispered to her about the evening in the summer-house, about the scent of the rose and the love of the elves. She dreamt so happily, and while she dreamt her soul fled. She was in heaven with him whom she loved so dearly.



"AND SHE STOOD ALWAYS BY THE FLOWER-POT, WEEPING."

And the jessamine flowers opened their big white bells, and smelt so deliciously,—for they could not weep over the dead girl in any other manner.

But her wicked brother, seeing the pretty tree, took it into his room, because it looked so handsome and smelt so deliciously.

Then the little elf flew from flower to flower, and in each one dwelt an elf to whom he told the story of the murdered man whose head was now mould, and about the wicked brother and the poor sister.

"We know it, we know it!" said every elf in the flowers, "for we have grown from the eyes and lips of the murdered man. We know it, we know it!" and they nodded their heads so strangely.

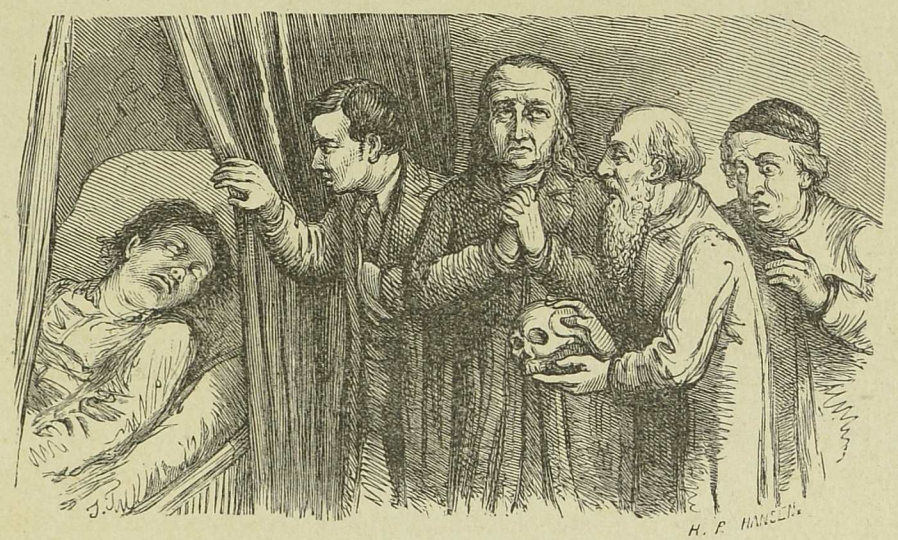
The rose-elf could not understand them taking it so quietly, and he flew out to the bees and told them the story, and they told it to their queen, who ordered them to kill the murderer the next day.

But the same night,—the night after the death of the lovely girl,—when her brother slept in his bed close to the jessamine-tree, every flower opened, and invisible spirits came forth with poisonous daggers, who first seated themselves in his ears and told him horrible dreams, and then flew to his mouth and stung his tongue with the poisonous daggers. "Now we have avenged the murdered," they said, and flew back into the flowers.

When it became morning, the windows of the room were suddenly torn open, and the rose-elf with the queen-bee and her bees buzzed into the room to kill the murderer. But he was already dead, and several persons stood round the bed, and they said, "The scent of the jessamine has poisoned him."

The rose-elf understood, however, the revenge of the flowers, and told the queen-bee so; and she began to buzz round the flower-pot with

all her bees, and could not be driven away. Then a man took the flower-pot in order to carry it away; but one of the bees stung his hand so that he let it fall and it broke into fragments. The white skull of the



"AND THEY ALL KNEW THAT THE DEAD MAN IN BED WAS A MURDERER."

murdered man was disclosed, and they all knew that the dead man in bed was a MURDERER.

And the queen-bee buzzed in the air, and sang about the revenge of the flowers and the rose-elf; for behind the smallest leaf there is somebody who sees a wicked deed, and also that the evil-doer is punished.

XXI.

THE SWINE-HERD.

THERE was once a poor Prince who had a kingdom which certainly was very small, but still large enough to get married on, and married he wanted to be.

It was indeed bold of him to say to the Emperor's daughter, "Will you marry me?" But he dared to do so, for he was known far and wide, and there were hundreds of princesses who would have jumped at the offer. But don't think *she* did.

Well, now we shall hear.

On the grave of the Prince's father grew a rose-tree; oh, such a lovely rose-tree! but it only bloomed once in five years, and then it bore only one flower. That flower smelt, however, so sweet that anybody who smelt it forgot at once all his troubles. He had also a nightingale which could sing the most beautiful airs, and the rose and the bird were presented to the Princess in two big silver cases.

The Emperor had them carried into a room where the Princess was playing with her ladies-in-waiting at giving "at homes," for they had nothing else to do; and when she saw the big cases with the presents, she clapped her hands with delight.

"Oh, I wish it were a little kitten," she said; but then the lovely rose was brought out.

"Ah, how beautifully it is made!" exclaimed the court ladies.

"It is more than that," said the Emperor; "it is neat."

But the Princess touched it and almost began to cry.

"Fie, pa!" she exclaimed; "it is not artificial, it is *natural!*"

"Fie!" cried all her ladies in chorus; "it is *natural!*"

"Well, let us see what is in the other case before we lose our temper," said the Emperor; and the nightingale was brought out. It sang so beautifully that it was impossible to say anything against it at first.

"*Superb! charmante!*" ejaculated the ladies; for of course they all spoke French, one worse than another.

"How the bird reminds me of the deeply lamented Empress's musical box," said an old courtier. "Ay, it is the same tone, the same execution."

"It is, it is indeed," said the old Emperor, with tears in his eyes.

"I believe it is not natural," said the Princess.

"Oh, yes, it is," replied those who had brought it.

"Well, let it fly," said the Princess; and she would have nothing whatever to do with the Prince.

But he was not disheartened. He rubbed his face with dirt, put on old clothes, pressed his hat over his eyes, and went to the palace of the Emperor.

"How do you do, Emperor?" he said. "Can I get some situation here?"

"Well," replied the Emperor, "we have many applicants here; but all the same I want somebody to look after the pigs, for I have a good many of them."

And so the Prince was made Imperial Swine-herd. He was given a wretched little room close to the pigsty, where he had to live. But he sat working the whole day, and in the evening he had made a little saucepan, with bells all around the brim, and when it boiled, the bells began to play the well-known old song, —

"Oh, my little darling,
I love you!"

But the strangest part of it was that anybody putting his finger into it could smell the dinner that was being cooked in every kitchen in the whole town; so that was really something better than the rose.

Then the Princess came along with her ladies, and when she heard the song she stopped, being much pleased, for she too could play "Oh, my little darling." It was the only thing she knew; and that she could only play with one finger.

"Why, it is the song *I* play," she said. "He must be an educated swine-herd. Look here! Just go and ask him what the instrument costs."

And one of the ladies had to go into the mire; but she put pattens over her shoes.

"What do you want for that saucepan?" she asked.

"I want ten kisses from the Princess," answered the Swine-herd.

"Lor!" exclaimed the lady.

"Well, I won't take less," said the Swine-herd.

"What does he ask?" inquired the Princess.

"I don't dare to say it," said the lady; "it is so awful."

"Well, you can *whisper* it to me," replied the Princess; and so the lady whispered.

"He must be mad," exclaimed the Princess, and walked quickly away.



"'WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR THAT SAUCEPAN?' SHE ASKED."

But when she had gone a little distance the bells began again to play, —

"Oh, my little darling,
I love you!"

"Look here," said the Princess, "ask him if he won't take ten kisses from my ladies."

"No, thank you," replied the Swine-herd; "ten kisses from the Princess, or I keep my saucepan."

"How very annoying!" exclaimed the Princess. "Well, you will have to stand around me, so that nobody shall see it."

And the ladies placed themselves around her, and the Swine-herd received the ten kisses, and the Princess the saucepan.

Oh, what joy there was now! Night and day the saucepan had to boil; and in the whole town there was n't a kitchen in which they did not know what was being cooked, from the courtiers down to the lowest.

"We know who is going to have tripe and onions," they exclaimed, "and who is going to have mutton cutlets. Oh, how interesting!"

"Very interesting indeed," rejoined the old mistress of the ceremonies.

"But take care you hold your tongues," said the Princess; "for remember, I am the Emperor's daughter."

"Oh, dear, yes!" exclaimed the court ladies.

The Swine-herd, that is, the Prince, — but of course they did not know he was anything but a common Swine-herd, — spent the day in making a rattle, which, when it was turned, played all the waltzes, galops, and polkas composed since the world was created.

"It is really *superb*," said the Princess, as she passed. "I never heard a prettier composition. Look here! go and ask him what he wants for the instrument; but I will not be kissed."

"He wants a hundred kisses from the Princess," replied the lady who had inquired.

"He must be mad," said the Princess, walking away.

But when she had gone some distance she paused and said, "I must encourage art; I am the Emperor's daughter. Tell him he shall have the same number as yesterday; the rest he can take from my ladies."

"But we don't care about it," they answered.

"Nonsense!" said the Princess; "if I kiss him, you can. Remember, I pay and feed you." And the lady had to proceed to the Swine-herd again.

"A hundred kisses, or each keeps his own," was the reply.

"Stand around me," said the Princess; and so the kissing began.

"What does that crowd down by the pigsty mean?" said the Emperor to himself, standing on the balcony; and he rubbed his eyes and put on his spectacles. "I am sure it is the ladies-in-waiting who are up to some joke; I must go and see what it is;" and he drew his slippers up at the heels, for they were trodden down.

How fast he ran!

As soon as he got into the yard he walked very quietly, and the ladies had so much to do with counting the kisses that they did not notice him. He raised himself on tiptoe.

"What in the world is this?" he exclaimed, when he saw the kissing; and in the next moment he struck the Swine-herd on the head with his slipper, just as he was receiving the eighty-sixth kiss.

"Out with you both!" he exclaimed, for he was very angry. And so the Princess and Swine-herd were turned out of the empire.



"HE STRUCK THE SWINE-HERD ON THE HEAD WITH HIS SLIPPER."

There she now stood, crying; and then it began to rain.

"Oh, poor wretch that I am!" exclaimed the Princess; "if I had only taken the handsome Prince! I am so unhappy!"



"THE PRINCESS WAS LEFT OUTSIDE."

Then the Swine-herd went behind a tree, washed the dirt off his face, threw away his shabby clothes, and went before her in his princely garments, looking very handsome.

"I have learned to despise you," he said. "You refused an honest Prince, and you did not appreciate the rose and the nightingale, but the common Swine-herd you kissed for a plaything. Now you must lie on the bed you have made for yourself."

And then he went into his kingdom and locked the gate, while the Princess was left outside with her saucepan and rattle.

XXII.

THE BUCKWHEAT.

VERY often when, after a thunder-storm, you pass a field where buckwheat grows, you will see that the corn has become black and singed, as if a flame of fire had passed over it; and when the Danish peasant sees it he says, "The lightning has done that." But why?

I will relate what the sparrows told me about it; and the sparrows had it from an old willow-tree which stood close to a buckwheat field, and stands there still. It is a most venerable old willow-tree, but very old and greatly furrowed. It is split in two, and grass and creepers grow in the cleft, while the tree leans forward so that its boughs reach to the ground, as if they were long green hair.

In all the fields around grew corn, wheat, rye, oats, — ay, the pretty oats, which when ripe look like a number of little canaries on a green stem. The corn was ripe, and the heavier it was the more it bowed down in humility. There was also a field of buckwheat just in front of the willow-tree; and the buckwheat did not bow down like the rest of the corn, but stood proud and stiff.

"We are just as rich as the others," they said, "and besides, much handsomer; our flowers are as pretty as the apple-tree's. It is a pleasure to look at us. Do you know anybody so handsome, old willow-tree?"

And the old tree nodded its head and said, "Yes, I do;" while the buckwheat in exulting vanity said, "Stupid old tree! it is so old that grass grows in its stomach."

Then a terrible storm arose, and all the flowers of the field folded their leaves and bowed their heads in humility while the storm swept over them; but the buckwheat held its head erect with pride.

"Bow your head in humility like us," said the flowers.

"There is no occasion at all for me to do so," retorted the buckwheat.

"Bow your head in humility like us," said the oats. "The storm angel is approaching. He has wings which reach from the clouds to the earth, and he hews you down before you have time to cry for mercy."

"But I will not humble myself," said the buckwheat.

"Close your flowers and bow your head in humility," said the old willow-tree. "Do not look at the lightning when the cloud breaks. Even man durst not do it, for through it you can see right into heaven. But that is a sight which would blind even him; how far more would not we humble plants suffer, who are so inferior!"

"So inferior!" repeated the buckwheat. "Now I will just look into heaven." And so it did, in exultation and arrogance. Then there was a terrible clap of thunder, and the lightning seemed to have set heaven and earth on fire.



"'BUT I WILL NOT HUMBLE MYSELF,' SAID THE BUCKWHEAT."

When the storm had passed, the flowers and the corn stood refreshed in the calm pure air from the rain; but the buckwheat stood scorched by the lightning and was dead and useless.

And the old willow-tree shook its boughs in the wind, and great drops of water fell from its green leaves as if it wept, and the sparrows asked, "Why do you cry? Just see how lovely the sun shines and the clouds float above, and how deliciously the flowers and shrubs smell. Why do you cry, old willow-tree?"

And the willow-tree told them of the exultation and arrogance of the buckwheat, and of the punishment which always follows thereon.

I have related what the sparrows told me one evening when I asked them for a story.

XXIII.

THE ANGEL.

WHENEVER a good child dies, an angel descends from heaven, takes the dead child in its arms, spreads out its great white wings, and flies to all the places which were dear to the child, where it gathers a handful of flowers, which are carried up to God and planted. The merciful Father presses all the flowers to his heart; but the flower he likes best he kisses, and then it obtains a voice and can join in the song of the blessed.

That was what an Angel told a dead child whom it was carrying up to heaven; and the child listened as if in a dream, while they visited the places where the child had played, and floated through gardens full of lovely flowers.

"Which shall we take with us to be planted in heaven?" said the child.

There stood a pretty rose-tree there, which an evil hand had broken, so that the boughs, full of great, half-opened buds, hung down withered.

"Poor tree!" exclaimed the child. "Let us take it with us, so that it may bloom in heaven."

And the Angel took it, kissing the child for its thought, whereby it opened its eyes.

They gathered some gorgeous flowers, but also some simple ones, as, for instance, the common daisy and the wild pansy.

"Now we have flowers," said the child; and the Angel nodded, but still they did not fly up to heaven.

It was night, and everything was silent. They were still in the great city, floating through one of the narrowest streets, where there lay bundles of straw, bits of crockery, rags, and an old hat; for the people had moved that day.

And the Angel pointed among all these remains to the fragments of an old flower-pot and a little lump of mould which had fallen out of it, but was still held together by the roots of a common field-flower. It was of no value, and had therefore been thrown into the street.



"TAKES THE DEAD CHILD IN ITS ARMS."

"We will take this with us," said the Angel. "I will tell you stories while we fly."

So they flew, and the Angel told this story: —

"Down in that narrow street, in the low cellar, lived a poor boy who was ill. He had been in bed since he was quite a baby, and when he

was at his best could only crawl about in the little room on crutches; that was all. For a few days during the summer the rays of the sun fell for half an hour into the porch of the cellar, and when the little boy sat there in the sun, looking at the red blood in his emaciated hands, which he held before the sun, it was said, 'To-day he has been out.' He knew the woods in their lovely greenness only through the first branch of the beech-tree brought him in the spring by the son of a neighbor; and this he fastened over his bed, and then dreamt that he was under the trees where the sun shone and the birds sang. One spring day his friend brought him some field-flowers, among which was one with a root, and he placed it in a flower-pot in the window, close to his bed. It became the loveliest garden to the child, — his only treasure on earth. He watered and tended it, and took every care that it should have every ray of the sun, to the very last, in the window. And the flower grew in his dreams, for it bloomed for him and gladdened his eye; towards it he turned when God called him to his heavenly rest.

"For a year he has been with God, and for a year the flower has stood in the window, unheeded and forgotten, till it has been cast into the street as useless. And this is the poor, withered flower in our bouquet, for it has afforded more happiness and delight than the most gorgeous in the garden of the Queen."

"But how do you know all this?" said the child whom the Angel was carrying up to heaven.

"I know it," said the Angel, "for I myself was that suffering little boy on crutches. I have not forgotten my flower."

And the child opened its eyes wide and looked into the lovely and happy face of the Angel; and in the same moment they floated into heaven, where joy and gladness reign. And the God-Father pressed the little child to his heart, when it obtained wings like the other Angel, and flew about with it hand-in-hand. Then the Lord pressed the flowers to his heart; but the poor common field-flower he kissed, and it had a voice, and could sing with the other angels who floated about the Lord, — some quite near, others behind them, and some far, far away; but they were all equally happy. And they all sang, great and small, the good child and the poor field-flower, which had lain withered in the dust among the rubbish in the dark, narrow street.

XXIV.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

In China, as you know, the Emperor is a Chinese, and all those about him Chinese. It is now many years ago, but that is just the reason why the story is worth hearing before it is lost. The Emperor's palace was the most magnificent in the world, entirely made of the finest porcelain, and it was so delicate that one had really to be careful when touching it. In the park were rarest flowers, and to the most gorgeous, silver bells were attached, which rang, so that nobody should pass without noting them. Everything was carefully arranged in the Emperor's park, and it was so great that the gardener did not know how far it extended; for if one continued to walk in it one entered the most beautiful forest, with tall trees and deep lakes. The forest reached right down to the deep and blue sea, and great ships could float close into it. Here in the woods lived a Nightingale which sang so beautifully that even the poor fisherman, who had his work to attend to, lay listening at night. "Oh, how sweetly it sings!" he exclaimed.

From all the countries in the world people came to the Emperor's city, who admired the same, the palace and the park; but when they heard the Nightingale they all said, "That is the most wonderful."

And when the travellers came home, many a book was written about the city, the palace, and the park, and nobody forgot the Nightingale. It was praised the most; and those who could write sonnets wrote the most beautiful in its honor.

The books went all over the world, and some at last reached the Emperor. He was sitting in a chair of gold, reading and reading, and every moment he nodded his head; for he liked to read the flattering accounts of the city, the palace, and the park. "But the Nightingale is the most wonderful of all," it said.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. "The Nightingale! I don't know it. Does such a bird exist in my empire, and that in my own park

too? I never heard of it before. It is the sort of thing one learns by reading."

And he called one of his courtiers, who was so noble that when anybody who was below him in rank ventured to speak to him, he only answered by putting his tongue out.

"It is stated to be a most remarkable bird, here called a Nightingale," said the Emperor. "It is said to be the most wonderful thing in my whole empire. Why has n't somebody told me about it before?"

"I never heard of the thing," replied the courtier; "it has never been presented at Court."

"I desire it to come and sing for me to-night;" said the Emperor; "the whole world seems to know what I possess, except myself."

"I have never heard of the Nightingale," repeated the courtier; "but I will find him, most certainly."

But where? The courtier ran up and down stairs, and through all the chambers and passages of the palace, but nobody whom he met had heard of the Nightingale, and said that no doubt it was all fiction, what was written about it.

"I beg your Imperial Majesty not to believe what the book says; it is all fiction, if not sorcery."

"But the book in which I have read it has been sent to me by the great Emperor of Japan, therefore it must be true. I command the Nightingale to be here to-night. If not, the whole Court will be drummed on their stomachs after supper."

"Tsing-pa!" exclaimed the courtier, and ran up and down stairs, and through all the chambers and passages of the palace again, followed by half the Court, for they did not like being drummed on their stomachs. There was an incessant inquiry for the wonderful Nightingale, which all the world knew, but nobody at Court.

At last they found a little girl in the kitchen who said, "Dear me, my lord, the Nightingale! I know it, and how lovely it sings! I am allowed to carry some remnants from the table every night to my mother, who lives by the sea, and when I return, and being tired rest in the forest, I hear it singing. My eyes become filled with tears thereby; I feel as if my mother kisses me."

"Little kitchen-maid," said the courtier, "I will get you a situation as under-cook, and let you see the Emperor eat, if you will show us the Nightingale, for it has been ordered to Court to-night."

And so they all set out for the forest where the Nightingale used to sing. After a little while they heard the lowing of a cow.

"Ah," said the courtier, "here it is! There is, indeed, great strength in such a small animal. I am sure I have heard it before."

"No, my lord, that is a cow lowing," said the kitchen-maid. "We are still far from the place."

Then they heard the croaking of frogs.

"Magnificent," said the Court chaplain; "I hear it. It is like church-bells."

"No, that is the frogs," said the girl; "but now we shall soon hear him."

Now the Nightingale began to sing.



"'AND THERE IT SITS,' SHE ADDED."

"That's it," said the kitchen-maid. "Listen! And there it sits," she added, pointing to a little bird on a bough.

"Is it possible?" said the courtier. "I never thought he was like that. How common it looks! Surely it must have lost all its color at the sight of so many grand people."

"Little Nightingale," cried the kitchen-maid, "our gracious Emperor wishes so much that you should sing before him."

"I will do so with great pleasure," replied the Nightingale; and it sang so sweetly that everybody was charmed.

"It is like glass bells," said the courtier. "Just look how the little throat works; it is remarkable that we have never heard of it before. It is sure to be a success at Court."

"Shall I sing once more for the Emperor?" asked the Nightingale, believing that the Emperor was present.

"Charming little Nightingale!" said the courtier, "I have the pleasure of informing you that the Emperor commands your presence at Court to-night, in order to delight him with your lovely voice."

"It sounds best in the woods," said the Nightingale; but still it followed them, as the Emperor wished it.

The palace was like a fairy castle. Walls and roofs, which were all of porcelain, sparkled in the light of thousands of golden lamps, while the choicest flowers which could sing were ranged in the corridors.

In the middle of the great hall, where the Emperor sat, a tree of gold was raised, on which the Nightingale was to sit. The whole Court was present, and the little kitchen-maid was allowed to stand behind the door, as she was now promoted. Everybody was in Court dress, and everybody looked at the little gray bird to which the Emperor was nodding. Then the Nightingale sang so charmingly that tears rose to the eyes of the Emperor and even rolled down his cheeks. And the Nightingale sang sweeter still, so lovely that the Emperor's heart was touched; which made him so delighted that he offered it his gold slipper to wear round its neck; but the Nightingale declined the offer with thanks, for it was already more than satisfied.

"I have seen tears in the eyes of the Emperor," it said; "that is enough for me. An Emperor's tear is worth the finest gem. I am fully repaid;" and it sang again more beautifully than before.

"It is the dearest flirtation I have known," said the ladies; and they took water in their mouths to cluck when anybody spoke to them, and tried to think that they too were nightingales. Ay, even the servants deigned to remark that they were pleased; and that was the greatest compliment, for they are the most difficult to please. Yes, the Nightingale was indeed a success.

The bird had to remain at Court, had its own cage, and could walk out twice a day and once a night. It had twelve attendants, who all held a silk ribbon attached to its legs, so there was n't much enjoyment in the walks.

The whole town talked about the wonderful bird; and when two persons met each other, one said, "Nightin," and the other only, "gale;" and so they understood each other. Ay, eleven little boys were even named after it, though not a single one of them could sing a note.

One day the Emperor received a big parcel, outside which was written, "Nightingale."

"Here is a new book about our bird," said the Emperor. But it was no book. It was a work of art in a box; namely, an artificial nightingale, which was like the real one, only it was covered with precious stones. As soon as it was wound up it sang one of the melodies of the real bird, while its tail bobbed up and down glittering with silver and gold. Round its neck hung a ribbon, on which was written, "The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is poor compared with the Emperor of China's."

"It is *charmante*," they all cried; and he who had brought the artificial bird was at once created Imperial Grand Master of the Nightingale.

"Now they must sing together," said the Emperor; but it did not go well, for the real Nightingale sang in its natural way, and the artificial one could not keep time.

Then the artificial bird sang alone, which it did as well as the real one; and in addition it glittered like bracelets and rings, which, of course, was more delightful to look at.

Thirty-three times it sang the same song without being tired, and some wanted it to sing it again; but the Emperor thought that now the real Nightingale ought to sing. But where was it? Nobody had noticed it flying away through the open window to its green woods.

"What does that mean?" said the Emperor. And the courtiers thought it was very ungrateful of the bird. "But we have the best left," they said; and so the artificial Nightingale had to sing again, and everybody praised it far more than the real one.

"You see, your Majesty," said a courtier, "with the real bird one never knows what is to come, but here everything is arranged. That comes and nothing else. It can be explained; we may even rip it open and show how one waltz follows another."

"That is just my opinion, too," cried the rest of the Court. Then the Emperor ordered the bird to sing before the people on the Sunday following, and they were as delighted as if they had taken too much tea, for that is really Chinese; and they all held up one finger, nodded their heads, and said "Ah!" But the poor fishermen who had heard the real Nightingale said that the artificial one sang well in its way, but that it lacked something, they could not say what.

The real Nightingale was next banished from the empire.

The artificial Nightingale was placed on a silk cushion by the

Emperor's bed, and around were laid all its presents of precious stones. It was given the title of "Imperial Bedroom Songster," with the rank of Number One on the left side; for the Emperor considered that side the most aristocratic, because it was the side of the heart, — for the heart is on the left side even with an Emperor.

The Court Composer wrote five-and-twenty volumes about the bird, so lengthy and so learned, with the most difficult Chinese words. And those who read them said it was all very clear; for if they had not, they would of course have been declared fools and been drummed on the stomach.

Thus a year passed. The Emperor, the Court, and all the people knew every note in the artificial Nightingale's song; but that was just why they liked it, for then they could all sing as well. The boys in the street sang, "Zizi-zi! clunck! clunck! clunck!" as well as the Emperor himself. Ay, it was quite charming!

But one night as the Emperor was lying in bed listening to the bird's song, something went "Bang!" inside it; there was a crack and whir-r-r-r! all the wheels spun round — and all was silent.

The Emperor at once jumped out of bed and called his body-physician; but what could he do? Then a watchmaker was called, and after much talking and examining he succeeded in repairing it somehow; but it had to be used carefully, as the springs were worn out and could not be replaced, if it should sing at all. There was great grief everywhere, and only once a-year the bird was allowed to sing; and that was quite enough. The Court Composer made a speech with all the strange words in it, saying that it was as good as before; and so everybody said the same.

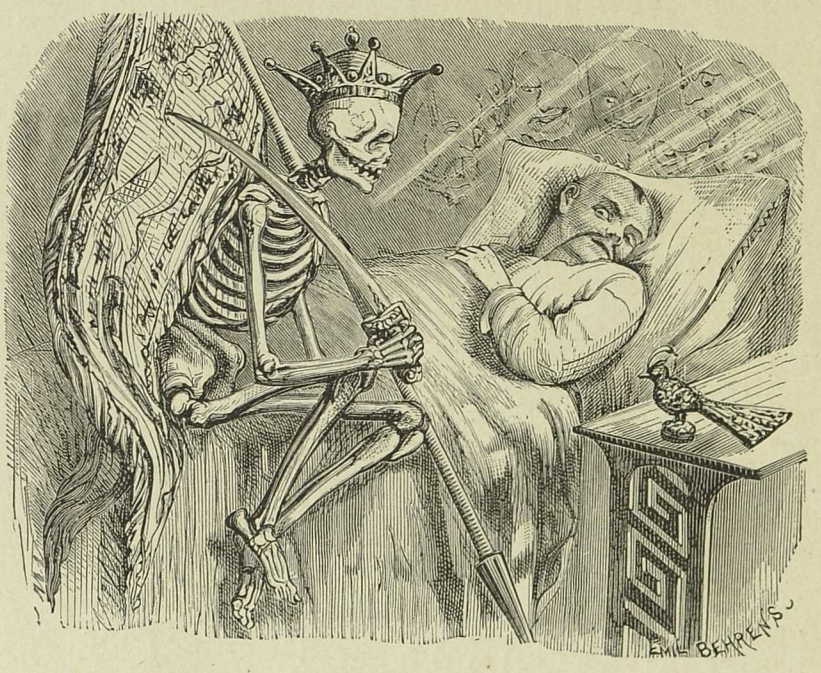
Five years had elapsed, when there was a great grief in the country; for the Emperor was ill and could not live, and he was much beloved by his subjects. A new Emperor had already been proclaimed, and people stood outside the palace asking the courtiers how the Emperor was.

"T! T!" they said, and shook their heads.

The Emperor lay cold and pale in his great splendid bed, and the Court, believing him dead, hurried out to do homage to the new Emperor. The attendants ran out to talk about the matter, and the ladies-in-waiting had a great tea-party. In every room and corridor carpets had been laid down, and therefore not a single sound was heard anywhere. But the Emperor was not yet dead. Calm and pale he lay in

his magnificent bed with long silk curtains and heavy gold tassels, while the moon shone upon him from a window high up on the wall, as well as on the artificial Nightingale.

The poor Emperor could hardly breathe; he felt as if somebody was sitting on his chest; and opening his eyes he beheld Death sitting on the bed, with the Emperor's crown on his head, his sword in his hand, and the imperial standard over his shoulder. And all around strange heads peeped through the folds of the bed-curtains, some of whom



"AND DEATH CONTINUED TO STARE AT THE EMPEROR."

were horrible to look at, and others pleasant. They were the Emperor's good and bad deeds who looked at him, while Death weighed on his chest.

"Do you remember me?" said one. "Do you remember me?" added another. And they told him of his bad deeds till a cold perspiration gathered on his forehead.

"I don't know anything about it!" cried the Emperor. "For heaven's sake, music, music! — the great Chinese drum! only stifle what they are saying!"

But they continued, and Death nodded his head at what they were relating, like a true Chinese.

"Music! music!" cried the Emperor again in agony. "Dear little gold-bird, sing! only sing! I have given you gold and precious stones;

I have with my own hands hung my gold slipper round your neck. Sing, only sing!"

But the bird remained silent; there was nobody to wind it up, and otherwise it could not sing. And Death continued to stare at the Emperor with his hollow eyes, while the silence around was quite terrible.

In that moment a lovely song was heard close to the window; it was the little living Nightingale sitting without. It had heard about the Emperor's illness, and had come to comfort and encourage him. And as it sang, the horrible phantom became fainter and fainter, while the blood in the Emperor's body coursed quicker and quicker, and even Death listened, and said encouragingly, "Go on, little Nightingale! go on!"

"I will if you will give me the golden sword, if you will give me that standard, if you will give me the Emperor's crown," responded the bird.

And Death gave every one for a song; while the Nightingale sang about the peaceful graveyard, where the white roses bloom, where the honeysuckle scents the air, and where the green grass is moistened by the tears of mourners, so that Death began to long so much for his garden that he swept out of the window like a cold white mist.

"Thank you, thank you, little divine bird!" cried the Emperor; "I know you. Although I banished you from my domains, you have driven the horrible phantoms from my bed and Death from my heart. How can I repay you?"

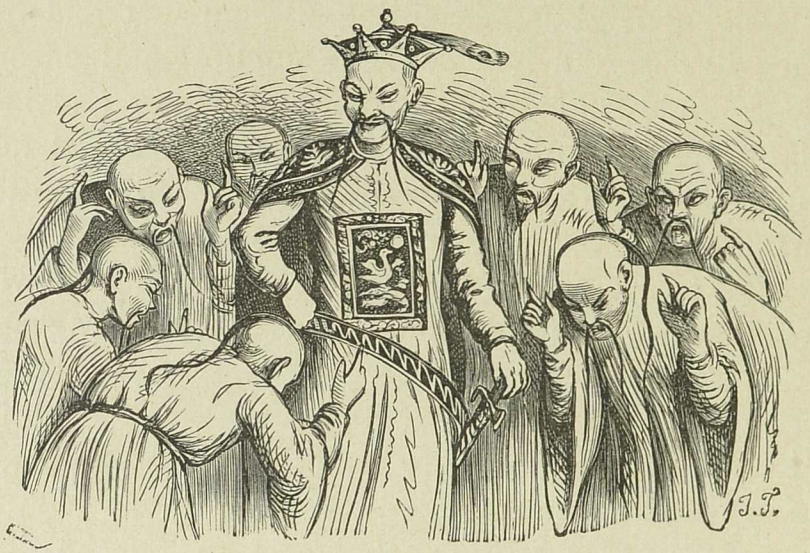
"I am fully rewarded," replied the Nightingale; "I drew tears from your eyes the first time I sang to you; that I shall never forget. Those are jewels which the heart of a songster prizes above all others; but now you must sleep, and become well and strong. In the mean time I will sing to you."

When the morning sun shone in on him through the window, the Emperor awoke quite restored; but none of his attendants had as yet returned, for they believed he was dead; and the Nightingale was still singing.

"You must always remain with me," said the Emperor; "you shall only sing when you like, and the artificial Nightingale I will destroy."

"No, don't do that," answered the Nightingale. "It did what it could do; keep it. I cannot live at the palace, but let me come when I like. I will come at night, and sit outside your window and sing to you, so that you may be delighted as well as reflective. I will sing of those

who are happy and those who are suffering, of the good and bad hidden around you. The little songster flies far and wide, to the poor fisherman and the honest peasant. I will come and tell you all; but I love your heart better than your crown, though the crown has a halo around it. But you must promise me one thing — "



"AND THE EMPEROR SAID, 'GOOD-MORNING.'"

"Everything!" cried the Emperor, as he stood in his imperial robes in which he had dressed himself, holding the heavy gold sword to his heart.

"You must promise me never to tell anybody that a little songster tells you everything."

And so the Nightingale flew away.

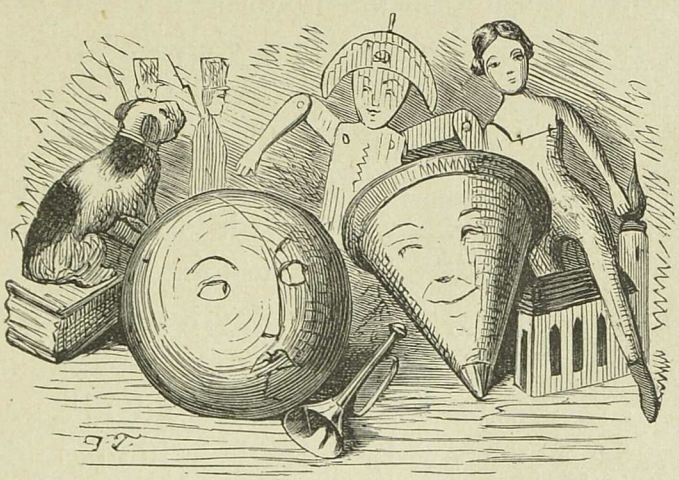
Then the attendants entered to look at their deceased Emperor. Yes, there they stood amazed; and the Emperor said, "Good-morning."

XXV.

THE SWEETHEARTS.

A Top and a Ball lay together in a box with other playthings. Said the Top to the Ball, "Shall we not be sweethearts, as we lie in the same box?" But the Ball, being made of kid, was as haughty as any lady, and would not listen to such a thing.

The next day the little boy to whom the playthings belonged, painted the Top red and yellow and hammered a brass nail into it. The Top looked quite grand when it turned round.



"SHALL WE NOT BE SWEETHEARTS?"

"Look at me," he said to the Ball. "What do you think now? Shall we not be sweethearts? We are made for each other; you jump and I dance. Happier than we nobody could be."

"Do you think so?" said the Ball, pertly. "I imagine you don't know that my father and mother were the finest pair of lady's kid shoes, and that I have a cork inside me?"

"But I am of mahogany," retorted the Top. "The Lord Mayor has turned me himself, for he is very fond of his lathe."

"Can I believe you?" said the Ball.

"Well, if I don't speak the truth, may I never spin round again!"

"You speak well for yourself," replied the Ball; "but I regret that I cannot accept you, because I am as good as engaged to a swallow, which every time I go up in the air puts his head out of the nest and says, 'Will you, will you?' I have decided to accept him, and that is as good as an engagement; but I promise I will never forget you."

"That is a consolation indeed," said the Top. And so they spoke no more.

The next day the Ball was brought out, and the Top saw how it flew into the air like a bird, and every time it came down it made a jump, which was caused by inward longing, or from having a cork inside. The ninth time the Ball disappeared, and however much the boy searched, it could not be found.

"I know where she is," sighed the Top. "She is in the swallow's nest, and married to the swallow."

The more the Top thought of it the more he loved the Ball, just because he was disappointed in his love. That she had taken another, was just what was the annoying part of it all. And the Top spun round and round, always thinking of the Ball. Thus many years passed by, and at last it was an old love, and the Top was no longer young.



"HALLOO! HERE IS THE GOLD TOP!"

One day it was gilded. It had never looked better, for it was a real gold Top, and spun round like a wheel. Suddenly it made a jump, and — was lost.

The little boy searched and searched, even down in the cellar, but it could not be found.

Where was it then?

It had jumped into the dust-barrel, in which lay cabbage-stocks and rubbish.

"Now I *am* in a nice place!" said the Top. "Here the gilt will soon go off me; and what a rabble I am among!"

And the Top looked sideways at a long cabbage-stock and something round like an apple. But it was no apple; it was the old Ball.

"Heaven be praised! here is somebody to talk to who is one's equal," said the Ball, looking at the gilt Top. "I am really made of kid by ladies' hands, and have a cork inside me, though nobody would believe it. I nearly married a swallow, but fell into this barrel, where I have lain for five years. It is a long time for a lady."

But the Top said nothing, thinking of its old love; and the more it thought, the more it was sure it was its old love.

Then the girl came to empty the barrel. "Halloo! here is the gold Top!"

And the Top went back to honor and respect; but of the Ball nothing more was heard, and the Top never mentioned its old love.

Love evaporates when the sweetheart has lain five years in a dust-barrel; ay, one does not even recognize her.

XXVI.

THE UGLY DUCKLING.

THE country was so lovely: it was summer. The corn was ripe and yellow, the oats green, and the hay piled on ricks in the green fields, where the stork strutted about on his long red legs, chattering Egyptian; for that language his mother had taught him. Round the fields and meadows were great forests with deep lakes; ay, it was lovely in the country. In the middle of the sunshine stood an old manor-house with deep moats around it; and from its walls down to the water grew great burdock-plants, so high that little children might stand upright under them. It was as wild there as in the thickest forests, and here a duck lay on her eggs. She had to hatch her young; but now she was nearly tired of it, for it had lasted so long, and she received few visitors. The other ducks preferred to swim about in the moat to sitting under the burdock-leaves chatting with her.

At last one egg after another cracked, saying, "Peep! peep!" and the little ducklings put forth their heads.

"Quack! quack!" said the mother; and the little ones ran about under the green leaves. "Green is good for the eyes," said the mother.

"How great the world is!" said the little ducklings; for now they had more room than in the eggs.

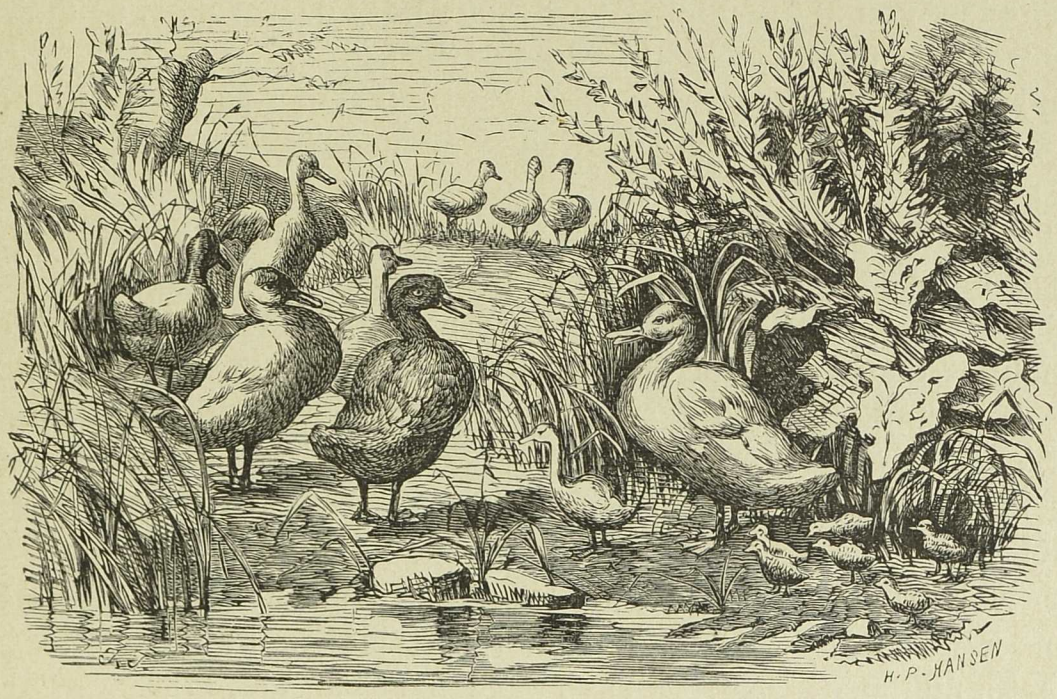
"Do you think this is the whole world?" asked the mother. "It reaches right away on the other side of the garden into the fields of the parson, but there I have never been. Are you all here? No, the biggest egg is still there. How long is it going to last? I am really tired of it." And she sat down again.

"Well, how are you getting on?" inquired an old duck who came to pay a visit.

"This egg takes such an awful long time," replied the duck. "It won't crack. But now you shall see the others; they are the prettiest

little things *I* ever saw. They are all like their father; the wretch! he does n't come to see me."

"Let me see the egg which won't crack," said the old duck. "You may be sure it is a turkey's egg. I was tricked in that way once, and I had grief enough with the young ones, for they are afraid of water. I could n't get them into it; I quacked and quacked, but it was no use. Let me see it. I thought so — it is a turkey's egg. You leave it, and teach the others to swim."



"AND THE DUCK-MOTHER WALKED DOWN TO THE MOAT WITH HER WHOLE FAMILY."

"I may as well sit a little longer," said the duck. "Now I have sat so long, I may as well do the rest."

"Please yourself," responded the old duck, tartly, and went away.

At last the big egg cracked. "Peep! peep!" said the youngster, and wobbled out. He was so big and ugly that the duck stared at him.

"What an awful size!" she exclaimed. "None of the others looks like him. He cannot be a duckling. Well, we shall soon see. Into the water he goes, if I have to kick him in."[1]

The next day was very fine, the sun shining warmly on the burdock-leaves, and the duck-mother walked down to the moat with her whole

[1] Has since become a well-known Scandinavian proverb. — TR.

family. Splash! she went into the water, saying, "Quack! quack!" and one duckling after another jumped in. The water went over their heads; but they soon came up again, and floated so beautifully. Their legs worked of themselves, and all were in the water, even the ugly gray one.

"He is no turkey," said the duck-mother to herself. "Only see how well he uses his legs, and how straight he keeps himself! He is my own darling; really, when one looks closely at him he is quite handsome. Quack! quack! Now, follow me, and I will take you into the world and present you in the poultry-yard; but keep close to me, so that nobody tramples upon you, and beware of the cat."

And so they entered the poultry-yard. There was an awful noise there, for two families were fighting over an eel's head, which the cat took after all.

"That's the way of the world," said the duck-mother, smacking her tongue, for she too would have liked the head. "Move your legs," she continued. "Make haste and bow your heads to that old duck. She is the noblest of us all; she is Spanish, which accounts for her being so stout, and she has a red rag round her leg; it is something exceedingly pretty, and the greatest distinction a duck can attain; it is given so that both men and animals shall recognize her. Now make haste! Legs apart! Every well-regulated duckling keeps its legs well apart, like its father and mother. That's right; bow your heads and say 'Quack!'"

And so they did; but the other ducks looked at them and said, "What a nuisance! Now we shall have that gang too, as if we were not enough before! But just look at that ugly fellow! We won't tolerate *him!*" And at once a duck ran up and bit him in the neck.

"Leave him alone!" cried the mother. "He does n't do anybody any harm."

"But he is too big and awkward," said the duck who had bitten him, "therefore he shall be pecked."

"Your children are pretty children, mother," remarked the duck with the red rag round her leg. "They are all very pretty except that one. It is a failure. I wish you could mend it."

"It is impossible, your Grace," replied the duck-mother. "He is not handsome, but is a good child, and he swims, if possible, better than the others. I hope he may grow prettier. He has been too long in the egg, therefore he has not the right shape." And then she plucked him in the neck and smartened him up. "He is, besides,

a duck-peasant," muttered the duck-mother, "so it is no matter. He is strong enough, and will make his way in the world, I am sure."

"The other children are very pretty," repeated the old duck. "Now, make yourselves at home, and if you find an eel's head you may bring it to me."

And so they began to feel at home.

But the poor Duckling who was so ugly was bitten, kicked, and pinched by the ducks as well as the hens. "He is too big," they all said; and the turkey-cock, who was born with spurs, and therefore believed he was an emperor, blew himself up, and advanced against the terrified Duckling like a ship with all sail set, and clucked till he was red in the head. The poor little Duckling did not know where to turn or twist; he was so sad at being so ugly, and the cause of fun for the whole poultry-yard.

Thus the first day passed, and every day things became worse and worse. The poor Duckling was chased everywhere; even his own brothers and sisters were very unkind to him, and said, "If only the cat would take you!" And his mother said, "I wish you were anywhere else but here." And so the ducks kicked him, and the hens pinched him, and even the girl who fed them struck him.

At last he flew in despair over the palings of the yard, and the little birds in the woods without flew up in terror. "That is because I am so ugly," he said, closing his eyes, but still kept on running. At night he reached the brood where the wild ducks lived, and here he lay all the night tired and sorrowful at heart.

In the morning the ducks flew up, and saw their new companion. "Who are you?" they asked; and the Ugly Duckling turned and twisted, nodding to everybody as well as he was able.

"You are awfully ugly," they said; "but it does n't matter to us, as long as you don't marry any one of our family."

Poor Duckling! he thought but little of marriage. He only asked to be left in peace, and to be allowed to lie in the reeds and sip muddy water.

There he lay two whole days, when two wild geese arrived, or rather ganders, which being very young, were very cocky.

"Look here, comrade," they said. "You are so ugly that it is quite a treat to look at you. Will you come with us and become migratory? Close by is another brood, where there are a lot of fine geese, all maidens, who say 'Quack!' You have a chance of being successful there, being so ugly."

Bang! bang! a gun then sounded overhead, and at the same moment both the wild geese fell dead in the reeds, and the water was colored red. Bang! bang! it sounded again, and a lot more geese flew up. Shot followed upon shot; there was a great party of sportsmen lying around the lake, some even sitting in trees firing. The blue smoke from the guns hung like clouds between the dark trees and over the water, while the dogs came right into the mud, — splash! splash! swaying the reeds on all sides. The poor Duckling was greatly terrified, and turned his head to get it under his wing, just as a big dog came upon him. Its tongue hung out of its mouth, and its eyes shone savagely. It reached its mouth close down to the Duckling and showed its sharp teeth — and went away.

"Thank Heaven!" said the Duckling, "I am too ugly to be bitten even by a dog."

And he lay very quiet while shot followed upon shot.

It was late in the day when all became still, and for many hours afterwards the Duckling did not stir. At last he hurried away as fast as his legs would carry him, across fields and meadows, while the wind blew so fiercely as nearly to arrest him.

Towards evening he reached a little poor peasant's hut so wretched that it did not know to what side to fall, and therefore it remained standing. The wind blew so fiercely that the poor Duckling had to sit down on his tail in order not to be carried away, and the storm grew worse and worse. Just then he discovered that the latch was off the door, and that he could creep into the room; and so he did.

An old woman lived here with a cat and a hen; and the cat, which was called Tommy, could arch his back, purr, and even sparkle when his back was stroked. The hen had little short legs, and was therefore called Chicken Short Leg. She laid her eggs regularly, and the woman loved her like her own child.

In the morning the Duckling was discovered, and the cat began to purr and the hen to cackle.

"What is that?" said the old woman; but not seeing well, she believed that the Duckling was a fine fat duck which had strayed. "That's a good catch!" she exclaimed; "now I may get duck's eggs. I only hope it is not a gander; but we will try that."

And so the Duckling was tried for three weeks, but no eggs came. The cat was master in the house, and the hen mistress, and they always said, "We and the world;" for they thought they formed the best part

of it. The Duckling thought there might be a difference of opinion, and *that* the hen could not bear.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked.

"No," was the reply.

"Well, then, hold your tongue, I think."

And the cat said, "Can you arch your back and spin?"

"No, I cannot," was the reply.

"Well, then, you ought not to have an opinion when sensible people talk," retorted the cat.



"SHE BELIEVED THAT THE DUCKLING WAS A FAT DUCK."

And the Duckling sat in a corner and was very sad. Then he began to think of the fresh air and the warm sunshine, and a strange longing came over him to float on the water, and at last he could not help telling the hen.

"What is the matter with you?" said the hen. "You have nothing to do; that's why you have such strange ideas. Lay eggs or spin, and they will soon pass off."

"But it is so lovely to float on the water," remonstrated the Duckling; "it's so lovely to have your head under water and dive!"

"No doubt it is very nice!" said the hen. "You must be mad, I think. Just ask the cat — for he is the cleverest *I* know — whether he likes floating on the water and diving. Just ask our mistress herself;

she is the most learned in the world. Do you think she desires to float on the water, and put her head under?"

"You don't understand me," said the Duckling, quietly.

"Well, if we don't, who is to? You don't think you know better than the cat and the old woman, leaving me out of consideration, do you? Don't give yourself airs, my child, and thank Providence you have been treated so well. Are n't you in a warm room, and in company from which you might learn something? But you are a fool, and I tell you so. You may believe me, because I tell you the truth, though unpleasant; that is the way to tell your true friends. Now, try to learn to lay eggs, spin, and sparkle; that's my advice."

"I believe I will go into the world," said the Duckling after a while.

"Yes, do!" replied the hen.

And the Duckling went, floated on the water, and dived; but every animal despised him because he was so ugly.

Then autumn came, the leaves turned yellow and brown, and the wind whirled them into the air, which seemed clear and cold. The clouds were heavy with snow and hail, and on the fences the raven sat crying, "Aj! aj!" with cold. One might shudder at the thought of the cold, and the poor little Duckling suffered terribly.

One evening, just as the sun set so beautifully, a flock of great lovely birds came out of the underwood. The Duckling had never before seen such splendid birds, for they were snow-white, with long slender necks. They were swans. They emitted a peculiar sound, spread out their great wings, and flew away from the cold land to the warm regions. They rose so high, so high, that the little Duckling felt a strange sensation at the heart; and he wheeled round in the water, stretched his neck into the air, and emitted a plaintive cry so loud and so strange that he was quite frightened himself. Oh, how he thought of the lovely birds, the happy birds! and when he was no longer able to see them he dived to the bottom, and when he arose he was almost frantic. He did not know either the name of the birds or whither they flew; but still he loved them better than any he had seen before. He did not envy them, however. How could it occur to *him* to wish for such beauty, — he who would have been contented with being allowed to remain among the ducks, the poor, ugly animal!

And the winter was very, very cold; so cold that the Duckling had to keep on moving in the water to keep it from closing; but every night the hole became smaller. The water froze so that the ice crackled, and

the Duckling had to keep on moving its legs; at last he was too exhausted to do so any longer, and he lay quiet till he froze fast in the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant came along, who, seeing the Duckling, went out and broke the ice with his wooden shoe, and carried it home to his wife, where it revived.

The children wanted to play with the Duckling; but believing they were going to hurt him, he flew in terror right into a pail of milk and upset it on the floor; when the woman, crying and striking her hands, terrified him so that he next flew into a barrel of fat and then into a barrel of flour. What a sight he now presented! The woman cried, and ran after him with a pair of tongs; while the children, laughing and yelling, upset each other in their attempt to catch him. It was lucky the door was open, so the Duckling flew out through it and into the underwood in the new snow, where he lay as dead.

It would be too heart-rending to relate what the poor Duckling suffered during that long winter. Suffice it to say that when spring came, and the larks began again to sing, he lay in the fen, in the warm sunshine.

Then, all of a sudden, he lifted his wings; they were stronger than before, and whirred loudly, and before he quite knew it he was in a park where the apple-trees stood in bloom, the lilacs scented the air, and where green trees bordered a lake. Oh, how lovely and spring-like it was there! And then three beautiful, snow-white swans came out of the grass and went into the water. They floated so lightly; and the Duckling knew they were the same he had seen before, and he felt a strange sadness at heart.

"I will fly up to those royal birds," thought the Duckling, "and if they should kill me because I am so ugly, so much the better. Rather die through them than to be pinched by the ducks, hacked by the hens, kicked by the poultry-girl, and freeze in the winter." And so he flew into the water and swam towards the birds, which on seeing him puffed out their feathers and approached him.

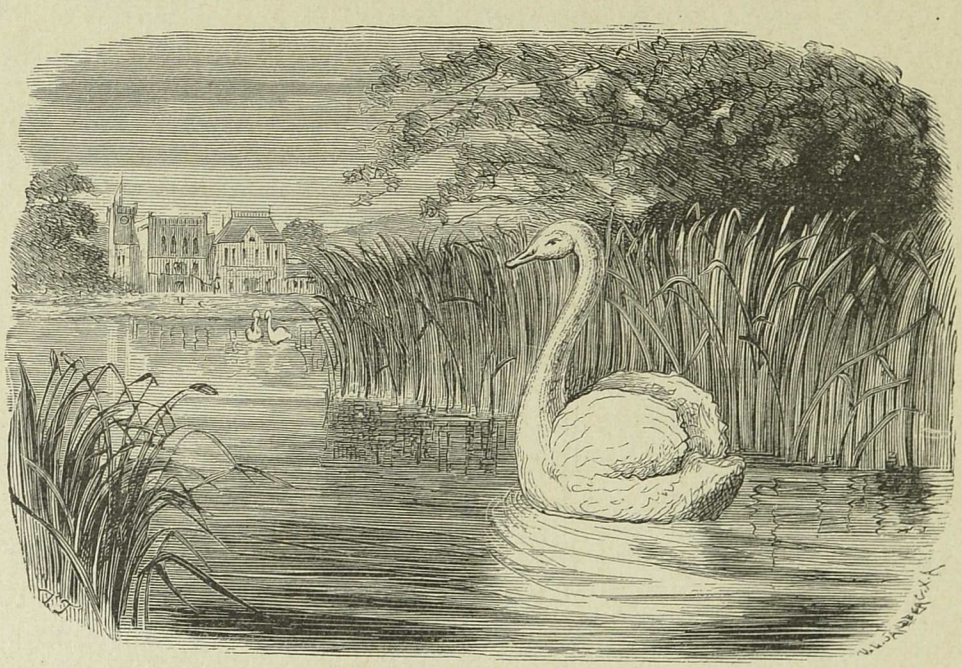
"I ask only to die," said the poor bird, bowing its head to the water and expecting death. But what did he behold in the crystal liquid? He saw himself; but he was no longer a lanky gray bird, the Ugly Duckling, but — a magnificent, snow-white swan!

It makes no difference being hatched among ducks when one only is a swan by birth.

Now he was quite pleased at the suffering he had endured, because for the first time he could value his present happiness.

And the other swans swam about him, stroking him with their beaks.

Then some little children entered the park and threw bread to the swans, and the youngest cried, "There is a new one!" And the other children shouted with delight, "Yes, there is a new one!" They clapped their hands, and called their parents, who threw cake to the new swan; and they all cried, "The new one is the loveliest!" It



"AND THEY ALL CRIED, 'THE NEW ONE IS THE LOVELIEST!'"

was so young and handsome that the other swans bowed their heads before him.

Then the Swan felt so bashful that he put his head under his wing. He was happy, but not proud; for a good heart is never proud. He thought of how he had been persecuted and ridiculed, and now everybody was saying how handsome he was, — the handsomest of all. And the lilacs stretched their fragrant blossoms towards him, and the sun shone so beautifully that the bird puffed out his feathers, bowed his slender neck, and from his heart broke in rapturous delight the exclamation, "So much happiness I never dreamt of while I was the Ugly Duckling!"

XXVII.

THE GALOCHES OF FORTUNE.

I. — A BEGINNING.

In one of the houses in East Street, Copenhagen, not far from King's New-market, a very numerous company had been invited, in order, as is frequently done, to secure an invitation in return. One half were already seated at the card-tables, while the other half were awaiting the result of the stereotype introductory speech of the lady of the house, — "Well, now we must really begin to think of what can be found for our amusement this evening." So far the conversation had advanced, when it began to flag. Among other things, the conversation turned upon the Mediæval Ages, which some praised as more interesting and poetical than the present. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Knap, supported this opinion so warmly that the hostess attached herself to that party; and there was a rivalry of eloquence between the two, the Minister of Justice declaring the times of King John to be the finest and happiest.

While this discussion was going on, only momentarily interrupted by the arrival of the evening paper, we will step into the hall, where the overcoats, cloaks, sticks, and galoches of the company were kept. Here two females were seated, one young and the other old.

At first sight they might have been taken for servants who had come to accompany their mistresses home; but if examined more attentively, they would scarcely appear to be common servants, for their figures were too noble, and their complexion too delicate; besides, there was something superior in their dress. They were two fairies, — the younger, not exactly Dame Fortune herself, but one of her lady's-maids, who distribute the inferior gifts of fortune; while the elder, who looked particularly sombre, was Care. This fairy always attends to her business herself, for then she is sure that it is properly done.

They told each other how they had been occupied during the day. Fortune's maid had only executed some few unimportant commissions, such as saving a new hat from a shower of rain, and procuring for an honest man a nod from a noble nobody, and such like; but what still remained for her to do was something quite out of the common.

"I must tell you," she said, "that to-day is my birthday, and in honor of that a pair of galoches have been intrusted to me for presentation to the human race. These galoches possess the peculiarity, that whoever has them on is immediately transported to the time or place in which



"THE ELDER, WHO LOOKED PARTICULARLY SOMBRE, WAS CARE."

he would like to be. Every wish in respect of place, time, or being, is fulfilled on the instant, and the man made happy for once in his life."

"Do you believe so?" said Care. "On the contrary, he will be very unhappy, and will bless the moment when he is rid of the fatal galoches again."

"Nonsense!" the other said. "Now I place them here by the door; some one will make a mistake, and be happy."

This was their conversation.

II. — WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

It was late when the Minister Knap, buried in the times of King John, thought of going home; and fate brought it about that his feet

slipped into the galoches of Fortune instead of his own. Thus he stepped out of the house into East Street, and was, through the magic power of the galoches, transported back to the times of King John, and his feet sank deep into mud and puddles; for in those times the streets were not paved.

"Why, this is abominable!" he said. "How dirty it is here! and the lamps have all gone out." The moon had not yet risen, and the air was, besides, not very clear, so that all was a dark chaos. At the first corner hung an old-fashioned lamp in front of the image of the Virgin,



"'IT IS, NO DOUBT, SOME WAX CABINET,' HE THOUGHT."

but the light it gave was next to nothing. Indeed, he only noticed it when standing immediately under it; when his eye was attracted by the painting representing the Holy Virgin with the infant Christ. "It is, no doubt," he thought, "some wax cabinet, and they have forgotten to take in the sign-board."

A couple of people in the costume of the time of King John passed him.

"What strange people! They must come from some fancy ball."

Suddenly there was a loud sound of drums and fifes, and a bright red light of torches. The Minister of Justice stopped, and a most extraordinary procession passed. In front were about a dozen drummers, who played by no means badly, followed by soldiers carrying cross-

bows. Seeing that the principal person was clerical, the Minister of Justice asked, in astonishment, what this mummery meant, and who that person was.

"It is the Bishop of Seeland," was the answer.

"Good gracious! what is the matter with the Bishop?" the Minister of Justice said, shaking his head. "It cannot possibly be the Bishop," he thought. Meditating on all this, without looking to the right or left, the Minister walked along East Street, and crossed Höibro Place. The bridge leading to Castle Place was nowhere to be found. But he discovered a little river, and two men in a boat.

"Does the gentleman wish to cross over to the Holme?"[1] they asked.

"Cross over to the Holme?" the Minister of Justice repeated, not having the slightest knowledge to what age he had for the time been transported. "No, I wish to go to Christianshaven, to Little Market Street."

The men stared at him in surprise.

"Just tell me, if you please, where the bridge is?" he begged. "It is really disgraceful that the lamps are not lighted here; and as for the mud, it is exactly as if one were wading through a bog."

The longer he talked to the boatmen the less he understood them, and at length he turned his back upon them, out of temper. The bridge he could not find, nor was there a railing of any sort. "It is most scandalous what a state the whole place is in!" he grumbled; and never had he been so dissatisfied with the age he lived in, much as he railed at it. "I think I'll take a coach," he said; but where were the coaches? Not one was to be seen.

"I suppose I must go back to the King's New-market,[2] where it is to be hoped there will still be coaches, or I shall never reach Christianshaven."

So he returned along East Street, and had nearly reached the end of it, when the moon burst forth.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, as he saw the East Gate, which in those times stood at the end of East Street; "what scaffolding and wood-work have they been raising here?"

He, however, found a little side-door open, and through this he stepped out into what is now New-market. It was a large waste com-

[1] An island, part of Copenhagen. — Tr.

[2] The principal square in Copenhagen. — Tr.

mon, with here and there a stunted, miserable bush, and right across the common ran a broad canal or stream. On the opposite bank lay scattered a few box-like booths for the foreign sailors.

"Either I see a *Fata Morgana*, or I am certainly tipsy," said the Minister of Justice, despondingly. "What can all this mean?"

He turned back again, in the firm belief that he was really ill. The street, formerly so familiar to him, was all strange now, for when he examined the houses, he saw that they were for the most part built of wood, and many had only thatched roofs.

"I do not feel well at all," he sighed, "and yet I only drank one glass of punch; but then it never did agree with me. It was very wrong, too, to give us punch and hot salmon. I will speak to the lady about it on the very first opportunity. Shall I go back now and tell them I am ill? No, that would look too foolish; besides, who knows whether they are still up?"

He looked for the house, however, but it had entirely disappeared.

"This is really dreadful!" he said, now seriously alarmed. "I no longer recognize East Street! There is not a decent shop remaining; nothing but the most miserable shanties, as if it were the lowest part of the town. Oh! I am indeed ill, and must go back to the house; but where is the house? It ought to stand on this very spot! There must be some one up somewhere, though!"

He found a door ajar, and saw a faint light within. It was one of the taverns of those times, a sort of beer-shop; and on entering a room he saw a numerous company, consisting of sailors, Copenhagen tradesmen, and a couple of men who seemed to belong to some learned profession, all so engaged in deep conversation over their tankards that the stranger's entrance was scarcely noticed.

"May I ask you," said the Minister of Justice to the landlady, "kindly to procure me a coach to go to Christianshaven, for I have suddenly been taken very ill?"

The woman stared at him in astonishment, shaking her head, and then addressed him in German. The Minister of Justice, thinking that she did not understand the Danish language, repeated his request in German, and this added to his costume confirmed her in the belief that he was a foreigner. Perceiving, however, that he was unwell, she brought him a jug of water, which tasted rather salt, though it had been fetched from the pump outside.

The Minister of Justice rested his head on both hands, and, drawing a

deep breath, meditated on all the strange events that had occurred, and on all he saw around him.

"Is that the evening paper?" he asked mechanically, seeing the landlady push a sheet of paper on one side.

The meaning of his question was, of course, utterly unintelligible to her, and instead of answering she handed him the paper, which turned out to be a coarse woodcut, representing an extraordinary phenomenon in the air, seen in the town of Cologne, a description of which was printed below.

"That is very old," said the Minister, considerably cheered by coming across this piece of antiquity. "May I ask how you became possessed of this curious print? It is highly interesting, though it is nothing more than a fable. Such appearances are explained as being the Northern Lights, caused, no doubt, by electricity."

Those who were sitting near, and heard what he said, now looked at him in astonishment; and one of them rising, respectfully took off his hat, and said, in a grave voice, "*Monsieur*, you are, no doubt, a very learned man."

"Oh, no," the Minister of Justice answered; "I can talk a little on general topics, as one is obliged to in the present age."

"*Modestia* is a becoming virtue," the gentleman resumed; "but I must say to your address, *mihi secus videtur*, though I will not here offer my *judicium*."

"May I ask with whom I have the honor to speak?" said the Minister of Justice.

"I am a *Baccalaureus* of Theology," the other answered.

This answer was highly satisfactory, for the title suited the costume, and the Minister of Justice thought, "He is, no doubt, some old village schoolmaster, an old original, such as may still be found in Jutland."

"It is true there is no *locus docendi*," the reverend gentleman continued, "but still I beg you will deem us worthy of your instruction. You are, *sine dubio*, deeply read in the ancients."

"Oh, I am very fond of useful old writings, but I do not on that account despise the more modern," the Minister of Justice replied. "It is only the miserable every-day stories that I cannot bear."

"'Every-day stories?'" asked the Baccalaureus.

"I mean those stupid novels, which are now thrust upon the public."

"Oh," the theologian said, smiling, "but there is a good deal of wit in them though, and they are much read at Court. The King is

particularly fond of the story of Iffven and Gaudian, which relates about King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. He has joked about it with his courtiers."

"I have not yet read that novel," said the Minister of Justice. "It must be quite a new one, published by Heiberg."

"No," the reverend gentleman answered, "the book is printed by Godfried von Gehmen."

"Oh, that is a very old name," the Minister of Justice said. "If I recollect rightly, he was the first printer in Denmark."

"Yes, he *is* our first printer," the reverend gentleman replied.

So far all went well, and then one of the company spoke about the dreadful plague, which had raged in the neighborhood a few years back, meaning that which occurred in the year 1484; but the Minister of Justice supposed he meant the cholera, of which there had been so much talk, and the conversation passed off well. The war in 1490 was so recent that it was naturally touched upon, all agreeing that the English privateers had acted shamefully; and the Minister of Justice, who held very strong opinions respecting the war of 1801, joined in most heartily against the English. The rest of the conversation, however, did not go on so smoothly, for the worthy Baccalaureus was too ignorant, and the simplest observations of the Minister of Justice appeared to him bold and fantastic. They looked at each other, and when it got too bad, the Baccalaureus spoke in Latin, in the hope of making himself better understood, but that was of no use.

"How are you now?" asked the landlady, pulling the Minister of Justice gently by the sleeve; and this brought him back to his senses, for in the heat of conversation he had forgotten all that had happened.

"Merciful heaven! where am I?" he exclaimed, in utter despair; and at the thought a giddiness came over him.

"Let us have some claret and Bremen ale," cried one of the company, "and you shall drink with us."

Two girls in very strange costumes now entered, and with a most familiar smile and nod filled the glasses. A cold perspiration trickled down the Minister of Justice's back, and he sighed, "What will happen next, and what will become of me?" In spite of all his resistance he was obliged to drink with them; and when he heard it said on all sides that he was drunk, he did not in the least doubt the truth of this observation, but begged somebody would be good enough to procure him a coach. What he said, however, was no more intelligible to them than Hebrew.

"I have never before been in such rough company," he thought; "one would think that the heathenish times have come back again. This is the most dreadful moment of my life." It then suddenly occurred to him that he might get under the table unobserved, and so creep to the door. He did so, but just at the moment he reached the entrance the others saw what his intention was, and they seized him by his legs. The fatal galoches now fortunately fell off, and the spell was broken.

The Minister of Justice saw a bright lamp burning quite plainly before him, and behind this there stood a beautiful large house. All seemed in proper order, as of old; it was East Street exactly as we know it to-day. He was lying with his feet on a doorstep, and just opposite to him sat the Watchman asleep.

"Can it be possible," he exclaimed, "that I have been lying here dreaming? Yes, it is East Street, and how beautifully light and clean! It is most extraordinary that one single glass of punch should have had such an effect upon me!"

Two minutes later he was seated in a coach, being driven towards Christianshaven; and as he thought of his past anxiety and distress, he felt heartily thankful for the happy reality of the present time, as with all its imperfections how infinitely better it was than that to which he had just been transported!

III. — THE WATCHMAN'S ADVENTURES.

"WHY, there are a pair of galoches!" said the Watchman, waking up from a sound sleep. "They belong, no doubt, to the Captain, who lives up there, for they are lying close to his door."

The honest man first thought of ringing and restoring them, for there was still a light in the room; but on consideration he did not do so, for fear of waking the other inmates of the house.

"It must be warm and comfortable to have such things as those on," he said. "Oh, how elastic and soft they are!" They fitted him as if they had been made for him. "How curiously this world jogs on!" he philosophized. "Now, there's the Captain, who might have been snug in bed long ago, and yet there he is tramping up and down his room. He is a happy man, for he has neither a wife nor a host of hungry children. Every night he goes to parties. Oh, were I but he, how happy I should be!"

As he uttered the wish the magic power of the galoches began to operate, and the Watchman was transformed into the Captain. There he stood in the handsomely furnished room, and held between his fingers a sheet of pink note-paper, on which a poem was written, the officer himself being the author; for who has not, at least once in his life, had a moment of lyric inspiration? And if one then writes down one's thoughts, that is poetry.

Such poetry a man may write when he is in love, but a man of sense will not let it be printed. A captain, love, and poverty fit very well together; but who would not feel it even more distressing than appropriate? This the Captain felt most keenly, and therefore he leaned his head against the frame of the window and sighed deeply.

"The poor Watchman outside in the street is far happier than I, for he does not know the feeling of want. He has a home, a wife and children who cry over his sorrows and rejoice in his happiness. Oh, I should be much happier if I could change places with him."

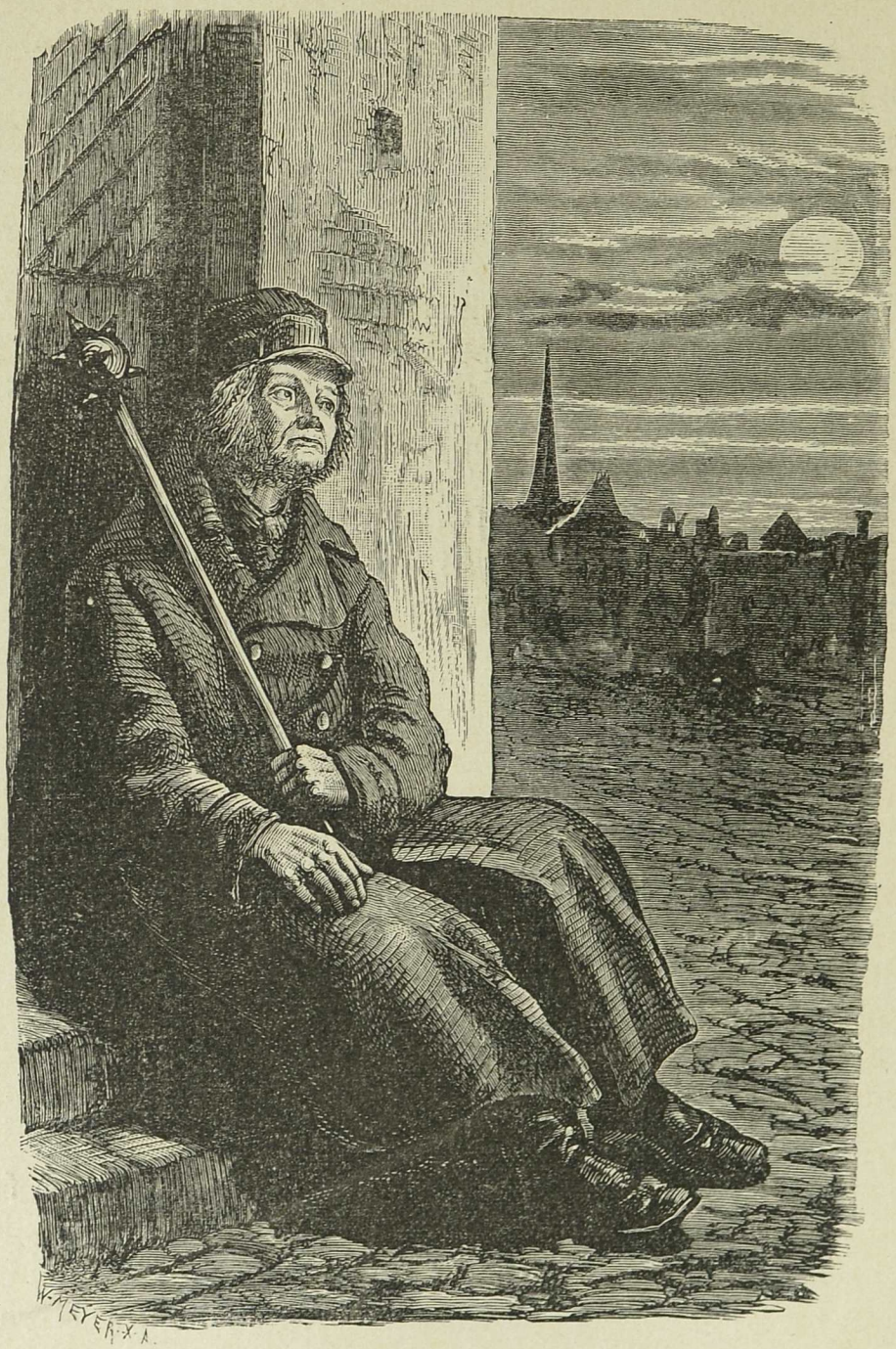
The Watchman was, all of a sudden, again a watchman. Through the agency of the galoches of Fortune, unbeknown to himself, his identity had passed over into that of the Captain; but, as we have just seen, he then felt much less contented, and preferred the state he had just before bewailed.

"That was an ugly dream," he said, "though funny enough, too. It seemed to me as if I were the Captain up there, and yet somehow I did not quite like it. I missed my good wife, and my dear little ones, who, from sheer love, almost smother me with kisses."

He could not get the dream out of his head; and he sat staring before him, up in the darkness, when he saw a shooting-star. "There, another star has fallen," he said; "but what does that matter, for there are plenty of them left? I should like to examine those sparkling little things nearer; but more particularly the moon, which is more tangible. The student for whom my wife used to wash, said that when we die we fly from one star to another. Now, of course, that is all nonsense; but it would be very funny for once to jump up there, and my body remain here on the doorstep."

There are certain things in this world to which one should only give utterance after the most mature consideration; and one must be doubly careful when one has Fortune's galoches on. You shall hear what happened to the Watchman.

As regards ourselves, we know what speed has been obtained by



"THE WATCHMAN WAS, ALL OF A SUDDEN, AGAIN A WATCHMAN."

means of steam, — we have had experience of it, either on the railway or on board a steamship; but this is like a snail's progress compared to the swiftness with which light travels. It flies twelve million times quicker than the fastest race-horse, and yet electricity is still swifter. Death is an electric shock received in the heart; and on the wings of

electricity the soul takes its flight. The light of the sun requires eight minutes and a few seconds to travel a distance of ninety-five millions of miles, and the soul travelling by electricity would accomplish the same distance in a few minutes less. The distance between the different heavenly bodies is, therefore, no greater to the soul than is to us the distance between the houses of our friends in the same town. However, after the electric shock in the heart just mentioned, the soul has done with the body here on earth for once and all, unless, like the Watchman, we have on the galoches of Fortune.

In a few seconds the Watchman had accomplished the two hundred and forty thousand miles to the moon, which, as we all know, is of a much lighter material than our earth, or as we should say, like newly fallen snow. He found himself on one of the innumerable mountain-ridges, which we are acquainted with from maps of the moon. In the inside it went down perpendicularly, like the inside of a caldron, to the depth of two or three miles; and at the bottom there stood a city, which we can only imperfectly imagine if we beat up the white of an egg in a glass of water. The material was quite as soft, and formed just such towers and domes, transparent and wavering in the thin air. Our earth hung above his head like a large fiery ball.

He discovered a multitude of beings, which were, no doubt, what we call human beings, though they looked very different from what we do. They also had a language; but no one can expect that the Watchman's soul should have understood it.

And yet the Watchman's soul understood the language of the inhabitants of the moon pretty well. The Moonites were disputing about our earth, and doubted that it could be inhabited; for certainly, they said, the air must be too thick there to allow a rational being to breathe at all. They considered the moon alone to be inhabited, and that it was the heart of the whole planetary system. But let us return to East Street, to see what happened to the Watchman's body.

Lifeless it sat upon the step; the Watchman's staff had fallen out of its hands, and its eyes were fixed upon the moon, looking after its soul up there.

"What is the time, Watchman?" asked a passer-by; and not receiving any answer he pulled its arm, which made the Watchman's body lose its equilibrium and roll on the ground. Surprise and terror seized upon the man, for it was evident the Watchman was dead; and it being reported to the police, the body was carried to the hospital in the morning.

It might be now rather puzzling for the soul if it returned and looked in vain for its body in the street where it had left it; but, as the soul is brighter when independent of the body, it would, no doubt, run at once to the police office, then to the office for missing articles, and finally to the hospital.

Here, as already said, the body had been carried; and as the first thing to be done was to undress it, the galoches were naturally taken off first, whereupon the soul, which had only gone out on an adventure, had to return as quick as lightning to its worldly habitation, and in a few seconds life returned to the man. He stated that it had been the most dreadful night he had ever passed, and that he would not again experience those indescribable feelings for five shillings, but now he was all right again.

He was discharged that same day from the hospital as cured; but the galoches remained there.

IV. — A CRITICAL MOMENT. — A MOST EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY.

EVERY inhabitant of Copenhagen knows what the entrance to King Frederick's Hospital is like; but as possibly some strangers to the city may also read this story, we must give a short description of it.

The hospital is separated from the street by a rather high railing, the thick iron bars of which stand so far apart that, as is said, very thin students have managed to squeeze themselves between them, and pay their private visits at night. The part of the body most difficult to get through is the head; so here, as often in the world, small heads are most favored. This will be sufficient for an introduction.

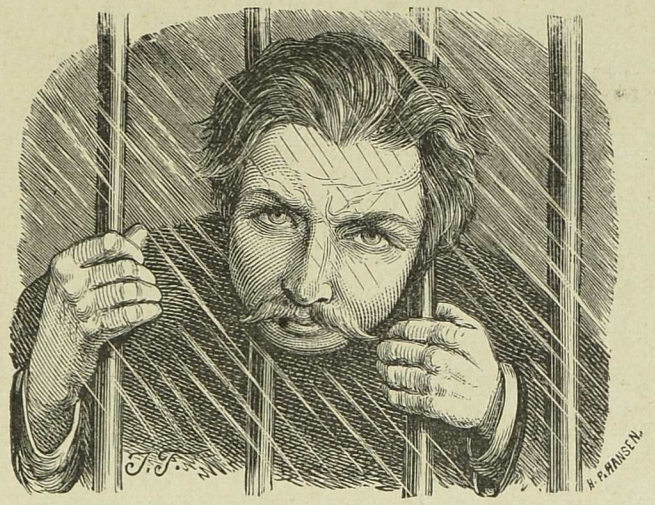
One of the young students, of whom it might be said that he had a large, thick head, happened to be on duty there that evening. The rain poured down in torrents, but in spite of that he wanted to go out for a quarter of an hour, and he thought it quite unnecessary to let the porter know anything about it, if he could but slip through the bars. There lay the galoches, which the Watchman had left behind him, and having no notion that they were those of Fortune, he thought that in such weather they were most desirable; so he put them on; and now the only question was, whether he could squeeze between the railings, for he had never yet tried.

As he stood there, he said, "Would to goodness my head were only

through!" and on the instant, big and thick as it was, it slipped through without the slightest difficulty. That was the galoches' doing; but now the body was to follow.

"Oh, dear!" he exclaimed, "I am too stout. I thought the greatest difficulty would be with the head. I shall never get through."

He now tried to draw his head back, but it would not do. He could move his neck easily enough, but that was all. His first feeling was vexation and anger; the second was one of great depression of spirits. The galoches of Fortune had brought him into this dreadful fix; and, unfortunately, it never entered his head to wish it back again. He could not move from the spot. The rain came down in torrents, and not a



"HE NOW TRIED TO DRAW HIS HEAD BACK."

human being was to be seen in the streets. He could not reach the bell, so he foresaw that he might have to remain there till the morning, when a smith would have to be sent for to file the bars through. But all that would take time, and the whole school of boys, just opposite, would be on their legs; the whole quarter would be alive, — a nice concourse to see him in the stocks, as it were! "All the blood will rush to my head, and I shall lose my senses; yes, I shall go mad. Oh, were I but free again, it would pass over!"

He should have said that sooner; for the instant the wish was uttered his head was free, and he rushed to his room, quite bewildered by the fright Fortune's galoches had caused him.

We must not think that with this all was over; no, there is worse to follow.

The night passed, and the following day, too, but the galoches were not sent for.

That evening there was to be a recital in a little theatre close by. The house was crammed, and among the audience was our medical student from the hospital, who seemed to have forgotten his adventure of the night before; and as it was dirty in the streets, he had put on the galoches, which had not been claimed. A new poem entitled "My Grandmother's Spectacles" was recited, the spectacles enabling the wearer to see into people's hearts as well as into the future. They were spectacles of no ordinary description, for to any one who had them on in company the people appeared as cards, from which all that would happen to them in the coming year could be foretold.

The thought occupied him very much, and he wished he had such a pair of spectacles; for if properly used, one might be able to see right into people's hearts, which, it seemed to him, would be far more interesting than merely seeing what their fortunes would be the next year, for that one would know anyhow when the time came, but the other never. "I can imagine now the whole row of ladies and gentlemen on the stalls there; if I could see into their hearts, it would be like so many shops; and how I should examine them! That lady's shop there, for instance, would be a milliner's, and the shop of this one would be empty; but still I think it would not hurt to have it cleaned out a little. Some of the shops, however, would be well filled with useful articles. I know such a one now; but there is already a shopman in it, and he is the only fault in the whole shop. From this and that one it would sound, 'Walk in! please walk in!' Yes; could I but enter as a thought, and wander at will through the hearts!"

Well, this was sufficient for the galoches; the Student shrank up into nothing, and began a journey right through the hearts of the audience in the first row. The first heart through which he passed was that of a lady, but his impression was that he had entered the Orthopœdic Institute, and was in the room where the casts of the various deformed limbs hang against the wall; though there was this difference, that in the Institute the casts are taken on the entry of the patient, whereas here, in the heart, they were taken at the time the good people went out. They were casts of the various deformities, both bodily and mental, of different female friends that were here preserved.

His next visit was to another female heart, and this seemed a large solemn church. The white dove of innocence fluttered above the altar.

How gladly would he have fallen upon his knees! but he was obliged to move on into the next heart, though he still heard the notes of the organ, and he felt as if he were a new and better man, and not unworthy to enter the next sanctuary, which showed him a sick mother in a poor garret. The warm sun shone through the open window, beautiful roses nodded from the little wooden box on the roof outside, and two lovely birds sang of the joys of childhood, while the sick mother prayed for a blessing on her daughter.

He now crept on hands and feet through an overstocked butcher's shop; here was meat, and nothing but meat. This, however, was the heart of a rich, highly respectable man, whose name is, no doubt, in the directory.

Then he passed into the heart of this man's wife, which was an old tumble-down pigeon-house; her husband's portrait served as weather-cock, and was in connection with the doors, so that these opened and shut as the man turned.

After this he entered a pin-case, full of sharp pointed pins, and imagined that must surely be the heart of an old maid; but this was not the case, for it belonged to quite a young officer with several distinctions, of whom it was said, He is a man of heart and talent.

Quite bewildered, the poor Student left the heart of the last person in the row, and could not bring his thoughts into anything like order, but settled in his own mind that he must have been carried away by sheer imagination.

"Good heavens!" he sighed, "I certainly must be going mad. It is also abominably hot here, so that the blood rushes to my head." He then remembered his adventure of the night before, how his head had got fixed between the iron bars of the hospital. "That must be the cause of all this," he said, "and I must see to it in time. A vapor-bath would be the thing. Oh, were I in one now!"

And there he lay in the vapor-bath, but with his clothes, boots, and galoches on, the drops of hot water falling down from the ceiling on to his face.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, and rushed to the door. The attendant uttered an exclamation too, when he saw a man in that state fully dressed; but the Student had the presence of mind to say, "It is a bet."

The first thing he did when he reached his own room was to put a blister at the back of his neck, to draw out the madness.

The next morning he had a red sore back, and that was all *he* gained by Fortune's galoches.

V.—THE CLERK'S TRANSFORMATION.

THE Watchman, who is, no doubt, not yet forgotten, thought of the galoches he had found, so he fetched them from the hospital; but as neither the Captain nor any one else in the street owned them, he delivered them over to the police.

"They are exactly like my galoches," one of the clerks at the Lost Property office said, as he placed them by the side of his own. "Even a shoemaker could scarcely distinguish one pair from the other."

At that moment a servant came in with some papers.

The Clerk turned round to speak to the man, but when he afterwards looked at the galoches, he was puzzled to tell whether those to the right or the left were his own.

"It must be those that are wet," he thought, but he just thought wrong; and why should not even the police be wrong sometimes? He therefore put on Fortune's galoches instead of his own, and taking some papers under his arm, which he intended to read through and copy at home, he left the office. But as the weather was very fine he thought a walk into the country would do him good, so he took the road for it, safely depositing his papers in his pocket.

No one could be more quiet and steady than this young man, and we will therefore not begrudge him this little walk, which, after so much sitting, will be most beneficial to him. At first he walked along, as it were, in a state of vegetation, so the galoches had no opportunity of exercising their magic power.

When he had got a little way out of the town he met an acquaintance, a young Poet, who told him that on the following day he was going to start on his holidays.

"What, going off again!" the Clerk exclaimed. "You are a lucky fellow. You can fly where you like, whereas we others have a chain round the leg."

"But the chain is fastened to the Tree of Existence," answered the Poet. "You need have no anxiety for the morrow, and when you get old you will receive a pension."

"Still you are the better off," continued the Clerk. "Why, there is pleasure in sitting and composing. Every one has something agreeable to say to you, and then you are your own master. You should just try it, for once, to sit shut up in an office over dry, uninteresting work."

The Poet shook his head, the Clerk shook his head too, and they parted, each holding his own opinion.

"Strange people, these poets!" exclaimed the Clerk. "I should like to enter into their feelings, and be a poet myself. I am quite sure that I should not write such trash as many do. Now, this is a delightful day for a poet; the air is unusually clear, the clouds so beautiful, and there is such a sweet scent from all the vegetation. For many years I have not felt it was so delightful to live as at this moment."

We perceive already that he had become a poet. This remark would in most cases be a folly; for it is nonsense to suppose that poets are different from other men, there being among ordinary men occasionally far more poetical natures than many among the authors of acknowledged talent. The only difference is that the poet has a better spiritual memory, that he can retain the idea and the feeling till they are clearly and intelligibly embodied in words, which others cannot. But the transition from a commonplace to a gifted nature remains a transition, and can therefore not fail to be noticed in the Clerk.

"What delicious perfume!" he said. "How it reminds me of the violets at my aunt's! That was when I was still a little boy. Good gracious, how long it is since I have thought of that! The good old lady she lived out there behind the Exchange. She always had a twig or a couple of green cuttings in water, though the winter was ever so severe. Violets scented the room when I placed the red-hot halfpence against the frozen windows to make peep-holes. It was pretty to see the ships lying frozen in, in the canal below, deserted by their crews, a screeching raven being the only one on board. Then later, the spring breezes brought life everywhere. Amid singing and hurrahing the ice was sawed, the ships were tarred and rigged, preparatory to sailing off to foreign countries. But I have remained here, and must still remain; and, seated at my desk, see others fetch passports for their journeys. Such is my fate. Oh, yes!" he sighed, then suddenly stopped. "Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "what can be the matter with me? Never before had I such thoughts or feelings; the spring air must be the cause, and there is as much anxiety as pleasure in the feeling." He took his papers out of his pocket, saying as he did so, "These will give me something else to think of." He ran his eyes over the first leaf, and read, "'Dame Sigbrith, an Original Tragedy in Five Acts.' What is this? And it is my writing too. Can I really have written this tragedy? 'The Intrigue in the Park, or the Day of Repentance, a Farce.' Where can I

possibly have got these? Some one must have put them into my pocket. But here is a letter." It was, indeed, a letter from the director of the royal theatre, rejecting the pieces, and it was by no means polite. "Hem! hem!" the Clerk mumbled, and seated himself upon a bench. His thoughts were so elastic, and his heart so soft, and unintentionally he laid hold of one of the flowers nearest to him, which happened to be an ordinary little daisy. In one minute it related what botanists would only teach us in several lectures; it told of its birth, of the power of the sun's light, which expands the little leaves, and forces them to exhale their fragrance. Air and light are the flower's lovers; but light is the favored one, for towards the light it turns, and when this disappears it folds up its leaves and sleeps. "It is the light that gives me beauty," the flower said. "But the air gives you breath," the Poet's voice whispered.

Close by stood a boy splashing the muddy water in a ditch with a stick, so that the drops flew high up into the air; and the Clerk thought of the millions of invisible insects thus hurled aloft, as high for them, according to their size, as it would be for us to be sent whirling above the clouds. As the Clerk thought so, and of the change that had taken place in himself, he could not help smiling, and said, "It is evident I am asleep and dreaming; how strange it is that a dream should seem so natural, and that one should know at the same time that it is only a dream! Could I but remember it all when I awake to-morrow morning! I seem to be particularly bright now, and to take a clear view of all things; and yet I am quite sure that if I recollect anything of it to-morrow, it will be all nonsense, for that has happened to me before. All that is clever and to the purpose which one hears and says in a dream is like the gifts of the fairies, which are all pure gold when one receives them, but when looked at by daylight, only stones or dry leaves." As he now watched the birds hopping joyously from branch to branch, he sighed and said quite plaintively, "They are better off than I, for to be able to fly is a delightful thing, and happy must the being be that is born with wings! Now, if I could change my being, it should be for a lark."

That very instant his arms and coat-tails became wings, his clothes turned into feathers, and the galoches into claws. He saw it well enough, and laughed inwardly. "There can be no doubt whatever now that I am dreaming, but it is exactly like reality;" and he flew up among the green leaves, and began to sing; but there was no poetry in

his song, for he had ceased to be a poet, as the galoches could do only one thing at a time. He had wished to become a poet, and was one; then he wished to be a little bird, and on becoming that had given up his former nature.

"This is charming!" he said. "The whole day I am at the police office engaged in the steadiest possible work, and at night dream that I am a lark flying about the park here. Really, a farce might be written about it."

He then flew down into the grass, turned his head first to one side and then to the other, pecking at the blades of grass, which, in comparison with his present size, seemed to him like the palm-trees of North Africa.

This only lasted for a minute, and then it all at once became pitch-dark, it seeming to him as if some enormous object had been thrown over him. This was a large cap, and immediately a boy's hand was thrust under it, which caught the Clerk round the back and wings, and in his fright he exclaimed, "You impudent fellow! I am a clerk at the police office;" but to the boy that only sounded like the "peep, peep," of a bird, so he gave it a tap on its beak and went on.

In a few minutes he met two school-boys of the upper class, that is as to birth, for as to place at school they were in the very lowest. They bought the bird for sixpence, and the Clerk was carried to Copenhagen to a house in Gother Street.

"It is well that I am only dreaming," the Clerk said, "or I should really be in a rage; for at first I was a poet, and now I am a lark. I suppose it must be the poet's fancy has changed me into this little creature. It is a miserable story, particularly the falling into a boy's clutches. I wonder how it will all end!"

The boys took him into a very elegant room, where they were received by a fat, smiling lady; but she was not at all pleased to see the common field-bird, as she called the lark, brought there. However, for that day she would allow it, and it was put into an empty cage that stood at the window. "It may amuse our Poll," she said, nodding smilingly to a large green Parrot, which was proudly swinging itself in its ring in a splendid brass cage. "It is Poll's birthday," she added, with stupid simplicity, "and the little field-bird has come to wish him many happy returns."

Polly did not answer a single word, but went on swinging himself backwards and forwards. But a beautiful Canary, which had been

brought from its warm, balmy country the previous summer, began to sing with all its might.

"Screecher!" cried the lady, and threw a white pocket handkerchief over the cage.

"Pèpèp!" he sighed, "what a dreadful snow-storm!" and with this he was silent.

The Clerk, or field-bird, as the lady called him, was placed close by the side of the Canary, in a small cage, and not far from the Parrot. The only words Polly could chatter, and which often sounded oddly enough, were "Come, come; let us be civilized!" The rest of his talk was quite as incomprehensible as the twittering of the Canary; but not



"THEY BOUGHT THE BIRD FOR SIXPENCE."

to the Clerk, as he was now a bird himself, and could understand his companions well enough.

"I flew under the green palm-trees, and the blooming almond-trees," sang the Canary. "I flew with my brothers and sisters over the beautiful flowers and the clear lake, the bottom of which was covered with plants. And I saw many beautiful parrots, who told the funniest stories — so many, and such long ones!"

"Those were *wild* birds," the Parrot put in, "and had no sort of education. Come, come; let us be civilized! Why do you not laugh? As the lady and all her friends laugh, you might do worse. It is a great misfortune not to be able to enjoy what is funny."

"Oh, do you remember the beautiful girls that used to dance under

the tents? Do you not remember the sweet fruits, and the cooling juice of the wild-growing plants?"

"Oh, yes!" answered the Parrot; "but I am much better off here, for I get good food, and am treated with equality; I know that I am clever, and with that I am satisfied. Come, come; let us be civilized. You have a poetical turn, as it is called, whereas I have solid sense and wit. You have genius, but no prudence, and thus you take your high flights of fancy and get covered up. They do not treat me in that way. No, I have cost them too much; and then I can make myself respected with my beak. Come, come; let us be civilized."

"Oh, my warm, beautiful country!" the Canary sang; "I will sing of your dark green trees and calm bays, where the drooping branches kiss the clear water; I will sing of the joys of my glittering brothers and sisters."

"Have done with your doleful strains!" the Parrot said. "Tell us something to make us laugh. Laughter is a sign of the highest mental powers. See whether a dog or a horse can laugh, — no, they can cry; but laughter is only given to human beings. Ha, ha, ha!" the Parrot laughed, adding his piece of wit, "Come, come; let us be civilized."

"You little brown Danish bird," the Canary said, "you, too, have been taken prisoner. No doubt, it is cold in your forests; but there is freedom at any rate. They have forgotten to shut your cage, and the upper part of the window is open, so fly away. Fly away while you can."

Instinctively the Clerk did as he was told; but at the very moment he left the cage the door leading into another room creaked, and with green, flashing eyes the cat came stealthily in to catch him. The Canary fluttered in its cage, and the Parrot flapped its wings. The Clerk was almost dead with fright, and flew out of the open window, away over the houses and streets, till at last he was obliged to rest.

He reached a house which had something familiar in its appearance; the window was open, so he flew in. It was his own room, and he alighted on the table.

"'Come, come; let us be civilized!'" he said, quite unintentionally, imitating the Parrot; and that instant he was the Clerk again, but was sitting on the table. "Good gracious!" he exclaimed, "how did I get up here and fall asleep? That was a nasty, uncomfortable dream. What nonsense it all was!"

VI. — THE BEST THAT THE GALOCHES BROUGHT.

THE next day, early in the morning, while the Clerk was still in bed, there was a knock at his door. It was a neighbor living on the same floor, a young Clergyman, who entered.

"Lend me your galoches," he said, "for it is dreadfully wet in the garden; but the sun shines so beautifully that I should like to go and smoke a pipe down there."

He put on the galoches, and was soon below in the garden, which contained one plum and one apple tree; but a garden, as small even as that, is considered a great treat in Copenhagen.



"HE WAS IN A STAGE-COACH IN SWITZERLAND."

The Clergyman wandered up and down the walk. It was just six o'clock, and a stage-coach horn sounded from the street.

"Oh, travelling, travelling!" he cried. "That is the greatest happiness in the world, and the fondest of my wishes. It would cure this restlessness that I feel, but it must be far. I should like to see delightful Switzerland, and to travel through Italy, and —"

It was well that the galoches acted at once, or he would have gone too far, as well for himself as for us. He did travel. He was in a stage-coach in Switzerland, but with eight others, packed together. His head ached, he had a pain in the back, and the blood had run down into his feet, which were swollen in consequence, and his boots hurt him. He was in a state between sleeping and waking. In his right-hand pocket he had a letter of credit, in the left his passport, and in the breast-pocket a little leather purse full of gold. Each dream he had announced the

loss of one or the other of these treasures, so that he was constantly starting up in feverish excitement, and the first movement of his hand was in a triangle, from the right to the left, and then to the breast, to find out whether he had his property still. Umbrellas, sticks, and hats dangled from the top in the net, considerably hiding the view, which was very imposing.

Grand, solemn, and dark was the face of Nature all around. The pine-forests looked only like heather on the high rocks, the tops of which were lost in the clouds: and now it began to snow, a cold wind blowing.

"Oh, were we but on the other side of the Alps!" he said, "for then it would be summer, and I should have got money on my letter of credit, the anxiety respecting which destroys all my enjoyment of Switzerland. Oh, were I but on the other side!"

And there he was on the other side, right in Italy, between Florence and Rome. Lake Thrasymene lay there in the light of the setting sun, like burnished gold, between the dark blue mountains. Here, where Hannibal vanquished Flaminius, the vines hold each other in a friendly embrace. Lovely, half-naked children were tending a herd of coal-black pigs under a group of sweet laurel-trees by the roadside. Could we but do justice to this charming scene, every one would exclaim, "Delightful Italy!" but our young Clergyman did not say this by any means, nor a single one of his travelling companions in the vetturino.

Poisonous flies and gnats came flying by thousands into the carriage, and in vain they tried to beat them off with myrtle-twigs. The flies stung them in spite of all, and there was not a being in the carriage whose face was not swelled with the bites of these venomous insects. The poor horses were literally covered with them, and it was only a momentary relief when the coachman got down and scraped them off. The sun now went down, and an icy coldness, though of short duration, followed like the cold air from a tomb on a hot summer's day; but all around the mountains and the clouds assumed that peculiar green tint which we see in some old paintings, and which we think unnatural, if we have not witnessed the changes of color in southern climes. It was a delightful sight; but the stomach was empty, the body fatigued, and the longing of the heart was fixed upon comfortable night quarters. But where were such to be found? The eye sought this much more anxiously than the beauties of Nature.

The road led through an olive-grove, something like our knotty willow-trees, and here stood a solitary inn. A dozen crippled beggars were collected before the door, the most brisk of whom, to use an expression of Marryat's, looked like "the eldest son of Hunger, who had just come of age," and the others were either blind or had paralyzed legs, and crawled on their hands, or had withered arms with fingerless hands. That was, indeed, misery in rags. "Eccellenza, miserabili!" they groaned, stretching forth their diseased limbs. The hostess, with bare feet, uncombed hair, and covered only with a dirty blouse, received the guests herself. The doors were fastened with string, and the flooring of the rooms was broken plaster and rough stones; bats were flying about, and the smell was dreadful.

"For goodness' sake, let the cloth be laid below in the stable!" one of the travellers said, "for there, at least, we shall know what we breathe." The windows were opened to let in a little fresh air, but quicker than this in came the withered arms and the perpetual wailing, "Miserabili, Eccellenza." On the walls were numbers of inscriptions, more than half being anything but in praise of la bella Italia.

Supper was brought up, consisting of water-soup, seasoned with pepper and bad oil, the latter of which played the principal *rôle* in the salad. Bad eggs and roasted cocks'-combs were the delicacies of the repast: even the wine had a strange taste; it was a most decided mixture.

At night all the trunks were heaped up against the door, and one of the travellers was to keep watch while the others slept. The watching fell to our young Clergyman: oh, how oppressively hot and suffocating it was! the gnats whirred and stung, and the *miserabili* outside groaned in their sleep.

"Travelling would be all very well," the young Clergyman said, "if one had no body. It would be delightful if that could remain at rest while the spirit took its flight. I always find some want that oppresses my heart, a longing after something better than the present affords. Something better — yes, the best; but where and what is it? It is a final and happy resting-place I wish for."

As soon as the wish was expressed he was at home. The long, white curtains hung before the windows, and in the middle of the room stood the black coffin in which his body had found a resting-place. His wish was fulfilled, his body was at rest, and his spirit had taken its flight. "No one is happy before he is in his grave," were the words of Solomon; and they were now verified.

Two figures were present in the room; we know them both; the one was Care, and the other Fortune's envoy. They bent down over the dead body.

"Now you see," said Care, "what happiness your galoches have brought mankind."

"To him, at least, who slumbers here they have brought a lasting good," the other answered.

"Oh, no!" Care continued, "he went of his own accord; he was not called, and has not accomplished what was set him in this world. I will do him a favor." She took the galoches off his feet: the sleep of death was ended, and he arose. Care disappeared, and with her the galoches, which she, no doubt, looked upon as her property.

XXVIII.

THE FIR-TREE.

FAR out in the forest stood a pretty little Fir-tree. It stood in a favored spot, had plenty of air and sun, and around it grew a number of tall comrades, firs as well as pines. But the little Fir-tree was so anxious to grow that it did not take any notice of the sun and the air, or of the little peasant children gathering berries. Often they came with



"HOW SMALL AND PRETTY IT IS!"

their baskets and seated themselves by the Tree, saying, "How small and pretty it is!" That was what the Tree could not endure to hear.

The following year it had grown a bit higher, and the next a good deal more, but the little Tree sighed, "Oh, if I were only as tall as the others! Then I could spread out my branches, and with the top see far into the world. The birds might build in my crown, and when it blew, I could nod as haughtily as other trees."

It had no enjoyment from the sunshine, the birds, and the red clouds sailing above.

In the winter, and when the snow lay all around glistening white, a hare would often come running, and jump right across the Fir-tree. Oh, how annoyed it was then!

But two winters passed, and then the hare had to go round the Tree. "Oh! to grow, to grow! that is the only thing worth living for in this world," sighed the Tree.

In the autumn some wood-cutters came and felled some of the biggest trees. The same took place every year, and the young Fir-tree trembled thereat, for the big trees fell crashing to the earth. The branches were hewn off, and they looked quite bare and naked, being almost unrecognizable. Then they were put on carts, and drawn out of the forest. "Whither do they go? What is their fate?" thought the Fir-tree.

In the spring when the swallow and the stork arrived, the Fir-tree said to them, "Can you tell me whither they go? Have you seen them?"

The swallow knew nothing, but the stork, looking wise and shaking his head, replied: —

"I think I do. When I left Egypt, I saw many new ships with fine masts. I think it must have been them, for they smelt of fir. I can greet you from them; they rose high into the air."

"Oh, if I were only tall enough to travel across the sea!" thought the Fir-tree. "But what is the sea like?"

"That is too difficult to explain," said the stork, and went away.

"Be happy in your youth," said the sun's rays; "be happy with your fresh growth, and your young life within you!"

And the wind kissed the Fir-tree, and the dew wept over it; but it did not understand it.

When Christmas came, a lot of young trees were cut down, some being not even so tall as the Fir-tree, which was so anxious to get away. These young trees, which were always the prettiest, kept their branches, and were carted away.

"Whither do they go?" asked the Fir-tree. "They are not taller than I am, — one is even smaller; and why do they retain their branches?"

"That we know; that we know!" chirped the Sparrows. "In town we have peeped in through the windows, and there these trees become the object of the greatest magnificence possible. We have peeped in through the windows, and seen them planted in a warm room, and covered with the loveliest things, — gilt apples, gingerbread, playthings, and hundreds of colored candles."

"And then?" — asked the Fir-tree trembling in all its branches. "And what occurs then?"

"Well, more we have not seen," they answered.

"I wonder whether I am destined for such splendor!" thought the Fir-tree. "That is better than to journey across the sea. Oh, how I long for it! If it were only Christmas! Now I am as tall as the others which were carried away last year. Oh, if I only were on the cart! — in the warm room with all that splendor! And then — ? Then comes something better, something finer still; why would they otherwise decorate me so? There must follow something better, something much grander; but what? Oh, how I suffer and long for it! I do not feel myself!"

"Be happy with us," said the Air and the Sunshine; "be happy with your youth, in God's free Nature!"

But the Fir-tree was not happy. It grew and grew. It was green both winter and summer; people looked at it, and said, "It is a pretty tree," and at Christmas it was the first to fall. The axe went through the marrow, and it fell with a sigh. It felt a pain, a fainting sensation, so that it could not think of any happiness. It was sad at having to leave its home, the spot where it had grown up, for it knew it would never again see the dear old comrades, — the little bushes, and the flowers around, yes, perhaps not even the birds. The departure was far from being a pleasant one.

It did not recover till it was taken off the cart, when it heard a man say, "This is a very pretty one; it will do."

Then two servants in livery came, and carried it into a splendid room, on the walls of which hung portraits, while on the great marble mantelpiece stood Chinese vases. There were lovely chairs and sofas, and books and playthings, all which had cost hundreds of pounds, — at least, so the children said.

And the Fir-tree was raised in a barrel of sand; but nobody could see what it was, for the barrel was covered with green cloth, and stood on a fine mat. Oh, how the Tree trembled! What was going to happen? Servants and ladies went about decorating it. Nets cut from colored paper were filled with all kinds of sweets, and hung on the branches, and gilt apples and walnuts were attached like real ones, together with a number of little red, blue, and white candles. Dolls, looking like human, — the Tree had never seen such things, — were hung on the branches, and right at the top a great, golden star was fixed.

"To-night," they all said, — "to-night it shall glitter."

"Oh," thought the Tree, "were it only night! Were only the candles lighted! And what next? Perhaps the trees and the sparrows from the forest will come to look at me. Perhaps I shall grow fast here, and be decorated both winter and summer."

Yes, the Fir-tree was so sure of it, that it quite had the "bark-ache" from longing; and that is for a tree as unpleasant as headache is to us.

Then the candles were lighted. Oh, what a splendor! The Tree trembled so thereat that a branch caught fire and quite blazed.

"Oh, dear!" cried the ladies, and put it out.



"THE LITTLE ONES STOOD PERFECTLY QUIET."

The Fir-tree did not dare to tremble any more; it was so terrified; it was so afraid to lose any of its splendor; it was quite dazzled by its own magnificence.

Just then the folding-doors opened, and a number of children rushed in, nearly upsetting the Tree, while some older people followed behind. The little ones stood perfectly quiet for a while; then they shouted with joy, danced round the Tree, and one present after another was stripped from it.

"What *are* they doing?" thought the Tree. "What *is* going to happen now?" And the candles burnt right down to the branches,

and as they did so they were put out, and at last the children were allowed to plunder the Tree. Oh, how they fell on to it! indeed, if it had not been fastened to the ceiling at the top it would have tumbled over.

The children romped about with their presents, and nobody paid any attention to the Tree but the old nurse, who looked about for a forgotten apple or nut.

"A story! a story!" cried the children, drawing a little stout man under the Tree. And he took his seat right under it; "for then we are in the woods," he said, "and it will do the Tree good to hear it. But I am only going to tell *one* story; so which do you want, — the one about Daddy Longlegs, or Jack the Giant-killer who won the Princess?"

"Daddy Longlegs!" cried some. "Jack the Giant-killer!" shouted others. They cried and shouted; the Fir-tree alone remained silent; but it thought, "Am I not to do something?" But of course it had performed its share.

And the little stout man told the story of Jack the Giant-killer, and the children clapped their hands and cried, "Another! another!" They also wanted to hear the one about Daddy Longlegs. The Fir-tree was listening, quite overcome; never had the birds in the forest told such stories. "Jack the Giant-killer won the Princess in spite of all," it thought. "Yes, that is the way of the world. Who knows? even I may rise to something great." And the Tree looked forward to the next day, thinking it would again be dressed with candles, fruit, and playthings.

"To-morrow I shall not tremble," it thought. "I will just enjoy all my splendor then. To-morrow I shall hear more stories." And the Tree stood quiet and thoughtful all the night.

In the morning a boy and a girl came into the room. "Now they will begin again," thought the Tree. But they dragged it up the stairs to a loft, where it was thrown into a dark corner.

"What does this mean?" thought the Tree. "What am I to do here? What shall I hear here?" And it leaned against the wall in deep thought.

And the Fir-tree had plenty of time for that, for days and nights went by without anybody coming. The Tree was quite broken down by being thus forgotten.

"Now it is winter out there," it thought. "The ground is frozen hard, and covered with snow. They cannot plant me now; that is the reason why I am placed here till the spring. How kind and considerate

they are! If it only was n't so frightfully dull here! Not even a little hare! After all, it was indeed pleasant out there in the forest when snow lay on the ground and the hare ran by, — even when he jumped across me. But I did not think so then. Here it is so terribly quiet."

"Peep! peep!" cried in the same moment a little mouse running out on the floor, followed by another. They smelt the Fir-tree, and ran between the branches.

"It is very cold," they said; "otherwise it is pleasant here. Don't you think so too, old Fir-tree?"

"I am not *old*," replied the Fir-tree; "there are others much older than I am."

"Whence do you come, and what can you tell us?" they asked; for they were very curious. "Tell us about the best place in the world. Have you been there? Have you been in the larder, where the cheese lie in rows and the hams hang under the ceiling; where one dances on tallow candles, and goes in lean and comes out fat?"

"I do not know that place," replied the Fir-tree, "but I know the forest, where the sun shines and the birds sing." And so it told all about its youth; and the little mice, which had never heard anything like it, were delighted, and exclaimed, "Oh, how much you have seen; how happy you must be!"

"*I?*" repeated the Tree, ruminating on its own story. "Yes, when I now consider, it *was* a pleasant time." And then it related about Christmas-eve, and how it had been dressed.

"Oh," said the mice; "how lucky you have been, old Fir-tree!"

"I am not at all *old*," retorted the Tree. "I only came from the forest this winter. I am in my best years."

"How nicely you relate!" said the mice; and next night they brought four more to hear the Tree relate; and the more it told, the more vividly it remembered it all, and it thought, "That *was* really a happy time. But it may return; it may return. Jack the Giant-killer won the Princess," it thought. "So may I do too;" and the Tree thought of a lovely little birch-tree out in the woods. It was a real Princess to the Fir-tree.

"Who is Jack the Giant-killer?" asked the mice. And so the Fir-tree told them the whole story, for it knew every word of it, and the little mice were ready to jump into the Tree with sheer delight.

The next night came several more mice, and on Sunday even two big rats; but they said that they did not think much of the story, and that grieved the mice very much, and they too now thought less of it.

"Do you know only that one?" they asked the Fir-tree.

"Yes, only that one," responded the Tree. "I heard it the happiest night of my life; but then I did not know how happy I was."

"It is a very poor story," remarked the rats, — "very poor indeed. Don't you know any about tallow candles or bacon, — no larder-stories?"

"No, I don't," confessed the Fir-tree.

"Well, then, we are much obliged," said the rats; and away they went.

At last even the little mice came no more, and the Fir-tree sighed and said, "When they sat around me it was still something. Now, that too is over. But I will make up for it when I am taken out again."

But when was that?

It was early one morning that some persons entered the loft and began to move some boxes and rubbish, and the Fir-tree was also dragged out. Certainly it was treated rather roughly, but still it was dragged to the staircase and saw daylight.

"Now life begins again," thought the Tree, seeing the sun and feeling the fresh air — and then it lay in the courtyard. Everything happened so quickly that the Fir-tree quite forgot to look at itself, for there was so much to look at. The house lay close to a garden where roses bloomed, scenting the air with their fragrance, and swallows wheeled around, chirping gayly, "Quee — wee — whit! Quee — wee — whit!"

"Now I shall live again!" exclaimed the Fir-tree, stretching out its branches. Alas! they were withered and yellow! It lay in a heap of weeds and thistles, and the golden paper star was still at its top glittering in the sunshine.

"Just see what still remains on that nasty old Christmas-tree!" cried one of the boys who had danced gayly round it; and trampling on it, he tore away the star.

And the Fir-tree looked at the loveliness around, and then at itself, and it wished it had been allowed to remain in the loft. It thought of its budding youth in the forest, of the happy Christmas-eve, of the little mice, and of Jack the Giant-killer.

"It is all over," said the Tree to itself, — "all over. If I had only enjoyed it while I was happy! It is all over now."

Then a man came and cut the Tree into pieces, which were thrown into the kitchen fire. They burnt very prettily, but each one sighed so heavily that it sounded like a pistol-shot; therefore the children ran to the fires and cried each time, "Piff! paff!" But with every heavy sigh the

Fir-tree thought of the hot summer's day or the cold winter's night in the forest, of the bright stars, and of the only story it knew. And so the Fir-tree was burnt to ashes.

The boys played in the yard, and the smallest wore the golden star which the Fir-tree had carried on its happiest night on his breast. Now that was over, the Fir-tree's life over, and the story too. Over! over! and that is the end of all stories.



XXIX.

THE SNOW-QUEEN.

A STORY IN SEVEN PARTS.

First Part, — which deals with the Looking-glass and its Fragments.

WELL, now we are going to begin, and when we have got to the end of the story we shall know more than we do now, for it is of a wicked demon, — one of the very worst.

One day he was in high spirits, for he had made a looking-glass which possessed this peculiarity, — that everything good or beautiful reflected in it dwindled down to almost nothing, but whatever was worthless and unsightly stood out boldly and became still worse. The most beautiful landscapes when seen in it looked only like cooked spinach, and even handsome people became repulsive, or stood on their heads and looked ridiculous. The faces were so distorted that they could not be recognized; and if any one had a freckle, never mind how small, it was sure to spread over nose and mouth. That was highly amusing, the demon said. When anything good or innocent entered a man's head there was a grin on the face of the looking-glass, and the demon laughed heartily at his ingenious invention. All who attended his school of sorcery related everywhere that a miracle had happened, and that now, for the first time, one could see what man and the world

really were like. They ran about everywhere with the looking-glass, till at last there was no man and no country that had not been distorted by it. Not satisfied with this, they flew up to Heaven with it to scoff at the angels; but the looking-glass shook so violently with its own grinning that it slipped out of their hands, and having fallen to the earth broke into hundreds of millions of billions of pieces, ay, even more, — and these caused greatest mischief, for some of the pieces were not larger than dust, and whoever got them in his eyes as they were flying about in the air saw the whole human race distorted; for each particle, however small, retained the peculiarity of the looking-glass when whole. Some men even got a small piece of the glass in their hearts; and that was dreadful, for the heart became like a lump of ice. Some of the pieces were so large that they were used for window-panes, but it would not do to look at one's friends through them. Other pieces were made into spectacles, and then indeed all went wrong, particularly when people put them on in order to see right and to be just.

And some of the dust of the broken glass is still flying about in the air. But now we shall hear.

Second Part. — A Little Boy and a Little Girl.

In a large city, where there were so many people and houses that there was not room enough for all to have even a little garden, and where they were mostly, therefore, obliged to be satisfied with flowers in flower-pots, there lived two poor children who had a garden a little larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister, but were as fond of each other as if they had been so. Their parents lived exactly opposite each other, in two attics; and where the roof of the one house would have joined the other they were separated by a gutter running between them; but in each house there was a small window, so that one had but to step across the gutter to reach from the one attic to the other.

Outside each window was a large wooden box, in which grew some kitchen-herbs and a rose-tree, flourishing equally well in both. It occurred to the parents to place the boxes crossways over the gutter, so that they reached nearly from one window to the other, looking like two walls covered with flowers. For peas hung down over the sides of

the boxes, and the branches of the rose-trees bent forward towards each other, so that it looked almost like a triumphal arch of leaves and flowers. As the boxes were very high, and the children not allowed to climb upon them, they often received permission to get out of the windows, where, seated on their little stools under the rose-trees, they used to play together.

In winter there was an end to this amusement, for the windows were often quite covered with ice; but then the children warmed halfpence on the stove, and laying the warm coin against the frozen glass made a beautiful peep-hole, so round! and behind each there shone a bright, sparkling eye, — that of the little girl and the little boy. His name was Kay, and hers Gerda. In summer they could be together with one jump; but in winter they had to run down all the stairs of the one house and up those of the other, while the snow was falling without.

"Those are the white bees swarming," the old Grandmother used to say.

"Have they a queen too?" asked the little boy, for he knew there was such a one among the real bees.

"Yes, they have," said the Grandmother. "She is flying there, where they are swarming thickest; she is the largest of them all, and she never rests quiet on the ground, but flies up again into the black clouds. Often during the winter night she flies through the streets of the town and looks in through the windows, which are then covered with frost in such strange forms as if they were so many flowers."

"Yes, that I have seen," said both children; and now they knew that it was true.

"Can the Snow-queen enter here?" asked the little girl.

"Let her come," said the boy, "and I will put her on the stove; then she will melt."

But the Grandmother smoothed his hair and told them other stories.

That evening, when little Kay was at home and half undressed, he climbed into a chair by the side of the window and looked through the hole. Some flakes of snow were falling, and one among them, the very largest, remained lying on the rim of the flower-box. It increased more and more, till at last it became a lady dressed in the finest white gauze, as if formed by millions of star-like flakes. She was so beautiful, but of ice, — dazzling, glistening ice; and yet she was alive. Her eyes sparkled like two bright stars, but they were restless and unsteady. She nodded towards the window and beckoned with her finger, which

frightened the little boy so much that he jumped down from the chair; and just then it seemed as if a large bird flew past the window.

The next day there was a clear frost. Then spring came; the sun shone, the trees began to bud, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the little children again sat in their tiny garden, high up on the roof in the gutter.

The roses bloomed more beautifully than ever this summer; and the little girl having learned a hymn in which there was mention of roses, it reminded her of her own, and she sang the hymn to the little boy, who joined in it, —

"Though the bloom of the rose will fade away,
We shall meet the dear Christ-child some day."

The little ones held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, and looked into the bright sunshine, as if beholding the Christ-child.

What delightful summer days those were, and how pleasant it was to be out of doors near the fresh rose-trees, which seemed as if they would never have done blooming!

Kay and Gerda were seated, looking over a picture-book of animals and birds, when, just as the church-bells struck five, Kay exclaimed, "Oh, something sharp has run into my heart, and now something has flown into my eyes!"



"KAY AND GERDA WERE SEATED TOGETHER."

The little girl took him round the neck and looked in his eyes; but no, there was nothing to be seen.

"I think it is gone again," he said; but it was not gone. It was just one of the pieces of the magic glass, which, we recollect, fell and was broken, — the hateful glass that made everything great and good reflected in it appear small and contemptible; but what was bad and mean was made most of, and the faults in anything became very prominent. Poor Kay had got one of these pieces into his heart too, and soon that would become a lump of ice. It did not hurt him any longer, but still it was there.

"Why are you crying?" he asked. "It makes you look so ugly,

and there is nothing whatever the matter with me." Then all at once he exclaimed, "Look, how nasty that rose is! it is all worm-eaten; and this one is quite out of shape. They are ugly flowers, like the box in which they grow;" and he kicked the box, and tore off some of the roses.

"What are you doing, Kay?" cried the little girl; and as he saw her fright he tore off another rose and clambered in through his window, away from the dear little Gerda.

When she afterwards came with the picture-book he said it was only fit for babies; and when the old Grandmother told stories, he would constantly interrupt her with a "but;" and when he could manage it, he got behind her, and putting a pair of spectacles on his nose, imitated her so exactly that all who saw him laughed. Soon he could mimic the inhabitants of the whole street, imitating their peculiarities and weaknesses, so that people said, "That boy has a wonderful head;" but it was only the glass that had got into his eyes, the glass that was in his heart; and that was the reason why he teased even little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart.

His play was now quite different from what it used to be, it was so sensible. One winter's day, when it was snowing, he brought a large magnifying-glass, and holding out a corner of his blue coat, let the snow-flakes fall upon it.

"Look through the glass, Gerda," he said; and the snow-flakes appeared much larger, looking like beautiful flowers or ten-cornered stars; they were quite beautiful to look at. "Now, are not these more interesting than the real flowers?" Kay said. "See, there is not a single fault in them, they are all perfect; if they could but remain without melting!"

Soon after, Kay appeared with large gloves on, carrying his little sliding-sledge on his back; and he shouted in Gerda's ear, "I have got leave to go to the great square, where the other boys play;" and he was gone.

There, in the square, the boldest of the boys fastened their sledges behind the farmers' carts, and went a good way with them. All was life; and when they were at the height of their play there came a large long sledge, painted entirely white, and in it sat a figure muffled up in white fur, with a white fur cap on. The sledge drove round the square ten times, and Kay quickly fastened his little sledge to it. It ran faster and faster, and then turned into one of the streets that

run out of the square. The person driving turned round and nodded so friendly to Kay, just as if they knew each other; and each time he was on the point of unfastening his sledge the person nodded to him again, so that he remained where he was, and they drove out through the city gates. The snow began to fall so thickly that the little boy could not see his hand, and then he undid the string with which he had fastened himself to the large sledge; but that was of no use, for his little sledge remained attached to the other, and on they flew as fast as the wind. He called out as loud as he could, but no one heard him, and the sledge seemed to drive over hedges and ditches; then he grew quite frightened, and tried to say his prayers, but could think of nothing but his multiplication-table.

The snow-flakes grew larger and larger, till at last they appeared like white chickens, when of a sudden they turned aside and the large sledge stopped. The person driving it stood up, and Kay now saw that it was a lady, tall, slim, and dazzlingly white. It was the Snow-queen.

"We have had a good drive," she said; "but you are cold? Come, creep under my bear-skin." And she seated him by her side in the sledge, covering him up with the skin; but he felt as if he were sinking into a snow-drift.

"Are you still cold?" she asked, kissing him on the forehead. Oh! that was colder than ice, and seemed to penetrate to his very heart, which was already almost a lump of ice. He felt as if he were going to die, but only for a moment, after which he was comfortable, and did not in the least feel the cold.

"My sledge! do not forget my sledge!" he cried. Of that he thought first; and it was fastened to one of the white chickens, which followed with it on its back. The Snow-queen kissed Kay again, and then he forgot little Gerda, Grandmother, and all at home.

"You must have no more kisses," she said, "or else I shall kiss you to death."

Kay looked at her; she was so beautiful, and a more intelligent, lovely face he could not imagine. She no longer seemed of ice, as when she sat outside on the window-sill and beckoned to him. In his eyes she was perfection, and he had no fear; he told her that he could reckon in his head, and knew the number of square miles the country contained, as well as the number of its inhabitants, and she smiled at all he said. It then seemed to him as if he did not yet know enough, and

he looked up into the vast expanse of air. She flew up with him, higher and higher, on to the black clouds; and the storm whistled and howled, but it sounded like old songs. They flew over forests and lakes, over seas and continents. Beneath them the cold wind whistled, the wolves howled, the snow sparkled; but high above them the moon shone brightly, and on this Kay's eyes were fixed the whole long winter's night. During the day he slept at the feet of the Snow-queen.

Third Part. — The Flower-garden of the Sorceress.

BUT how did little Gerda get on when Kay did not return? What could have become of him? No one knew, no one could give any information. The boys could only tell that they had seen him fasten his sledge to a magnificent large one, which had driven along the street and out of the city gates. No one could tell where he was. Many tears were shed, and little Gerda cried more than all. Then it was said he was dead, that he had fallen into the river which flowed past the town. Oh, what long, dreary winter days those were!

Now spring came and warm sunshine.

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

"I do not think so," said the Sunshine in reply.

"Kay is dead and gone!" she said to the Swallows.

"We do not think so," they answered; and at last little Gerda did not think so either.

"I will put on my new red shoes," she said one morning, — "those which Kay has never seen, — and I will go down to the River and ask it about him."

It was still early. She kissed her old Grandmother, who was not awake yet, and having put on the red shoes, went all alone out of the city gates and down to the River.

"Is it true that you have taken my little playfellow?" she said. "I will give you my red shoes if you will restore him to me."

It seemed to her as if the waves nodded in a peculiar way, and she then took her red shoes — the things she liked best of all she had — and threw them both into the river; but they fell near the shore and were washed on land again. It was exactly as if the River would not take what was so dear to her, for it had not little Kay to give in return; but she thought she had not thrown the shoes out far enough, so she got

into a boat, which lay among the rushes, and going to the farthest end of it she threw the shoes into the water again. But the boat was not fastened, and the motion she caused in it set it off from land. She noticed it and hastened to get back, but it was already more than a yard from land, and now drifted fast out into the river.

Then little Gerda became very frightened, and began to cry; but no one heard her excepting the Sparrows, and they could not carry her on to land, but they flew along the banks singing, as if to console her, "Here we are! here we are!" The boat glided down the stream, and little Gerda sat there quite quiet, in her stockings, while her little red shoes floated after; but they could not overtake the boat.



"THEN LITTLE GERDA BEGAN TO CRY."

It was very pretty on both sides; there were beautiful flowers, old trees, and meadows with sheep and cows, but not a human being was to be seen.

"Perhaps the River will carry me to little Kay," she thought, and then she grew more cheerful; she stood up, and for hours she admired the beautiful green banks. At length she came to a large orchard full of cherry-trees, in which there stood a little house with strange red and blue windows. It had a straw roof, and in front stood two wooden soldiers, who presented arms as Gerda passed.

She called to them, thinking they were alive, but they returned no answer, as was quite natural.

Gerda cried still louder; and then there came an old, a very old woman out of the house, supporting herself with a hooked stick. She

wore a large straw hat painted all over with the most beautiful flowers.

"You poor little child!" said the old woman, "how did you get on to the great rushing river, and be thus carried out into the world?" And she walked right into the river, caught hold of the boat with the hook of her stick, and having drawn it to land, lifted little Gerda out.

Gerda was delighted to feel herself on dry land again, though a little bit frightened at the strange old woman.

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

And Gerda told her. The old woman shook her head, mumbling, "Hem! hem!" and when Gerda asked her whether she had seen little Kay, she said that he had not passed yet, but that he would be sure to come, and that therefore she must not be sad, but had better taste her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were more beautiful than any picture-book, and that each could tell a story. She then took Gerda by the hand, and having led her into the house, locked the door.

The windows were very high up, and the panes of glass red, blue, and yellow, so that the light came in in various colors, which looked very strange. On the table were the most delicious cherries, of which Gerda ate as many as she felt inclined, for she had permission to do so. While she was eating, the old woman combed her hair with a golden comb, and her beautiful yellow hair shone so bright, and curled round her pretty, cheerful little face, which was as round and blooming as a rose.

"I have always longed to have a dear little girl like you," said the old woman, "and you shall see how well we will get on together." As she combed Gerda's hair, the little girl forgot more and more her playfellow Kay, for the old woman was a sorceress; but she was not a wicked witch, and only conjured a little, just for her own amusement, and she wished to keep Gerda with her. Therefore she went into the garden, and touching all the rose-trees with her stick, they sank down into the black earth, so that there was no trace left of where they had stood. The old woman was afraid that when Gerda saw the rose-trees she might think of her own, and remembering little Kay, run away.

She then took Gerda into the flower-garden. Oh, what a scent, and what splendor! There were all imaginable flowers of every season of the year, so that no picture-book could be finer or prettier. Gerda danced with delight, and played till the sun went down behind

the high cherry-trees, when she had a beautiful bed with red silk pillows stuffed with violets, and she slept and dreamed as delightfully as any queen on her wedding-day.

The next day she again played with the flowers in the warm sunshine; and thus many days passed by. Gerda knew every flower; but as many as there were, it seemed to her as if one were wanting, though she did not know which. Now, one day she was sitting, looking at the old woman's painted hat, and just the most beautiful of the flowers was a rose. The old woman had forgotten to blot that out when she banished the others into the earth; but so it is when one has not one's thoughts about one. "What!" Gerda cried, "are there no roses here?" She looked in all the beds, but none was to be found; and then she sat down and cried, when it so happened that her tears fell on the spot where a rose-tree was buried, and as the warm tears fell on the ground the tree sprang up in full bloom and with blossoms as beautiful as they had ever been. Gerda threw her arms round the tree, kissed the roses, and thought of her own rose-tree at home, as well as of little Kay.

"Oh, how I have been delayed!" said the little girl. "I came to look for Kay. Do you know where he is?" she asked the flowers. "Do you think he is dead?"

"He is not dead," said the Roses, "for we have been in the earth, where all the dead are, and Kay was not there."

"Thank you very much," said Gerda; and she went to the other flowers, looked into their calyxes, and asked, "Cannot *you* tell me where little Kay is?"

But each flower stood there in the sunshine, dreaming its own fairy-tale, which Gerda had to listen to; but of Kay they knew nothing.

And what did the Tiger-lily say?

"Do you hear the drum? Drum! drum! — only two notes, always the same, — drum! drum! Listen to the funeral dirge of the women and the chant of the priests! The Hindoo woman stands in her long red mantle on the funeral pile; the flames flicker around her and her dead husband; but the Hindoo woman thinks of a living one there in the crowd, of him from whose eyes the fire burns hotter, and troubles her heart more than the flames which will soon burn her body to ashes. Will the flame of the heart be consumed in the flame of the funeral pile?"

"I don't understand a word of all that," said little Gerda.

"That is my story," answered the Tiger-lily.

What does the Convolvulus say?

"At the end of a mountain path rises an old castle. The ivy climbs up the old red walls, thickly covering the balcony, and there stands a beautiful girl. She leans over the balustrade, looking eagerly down the path. No rose is fresher than she; no apple-blossom carried from the tree by the wind moves more gracefully. Now her magnificent satin garment rustles. Is he not coming yet?"

"Do you mean Kay?" asked little Gerda.

"I am speaking only of my story, my dream," the Convolvulus answered.

What says the Snowdrop?

"A board hangs on a rope fastened between two trees. That is a swing; and two pretty little girls, with dresses as white as snow, and long green ribbons fluttering from their hats, are seated in it, swinging. Their brother, who is bigger than they, is standing in the swing, with one arm round the rope to keep himself up, for in one hand he holds a cup and in the other a clay pipe; he is blowing soap-bubbles. The swing is moving, and the bubbles fly with beautiful, constantly changing colors; the last still hangs to the pipe and is trembling in the wind. A little black dog is standing on its hind legs, wanting to get into the swing too. The bubble floats away, the dog falls and barks, for it is teased. The dog is angry and the bubble bursts. A swinging-board and a bursting bubble are my song."

"I dare say your story is very pretty, but you tell it in such a melancholy way, and there is not a word in it about little Kay."

What do the Hyacinths say?

"There were three sisters so lovely and fragile. The dress of one was red, of another blue, and that of the third entirely white. Hand in hand they danced by the side of a lake in the bright moonshine. They were not fairies, but human beings. There was a sweet scent, and the girls disappeared in the forest. The scent became stronger, and three coffins, in which lay the three beautiful girls, glided out of the forest and floated across the lake, glow-worms flying around them. Are the girls asleep, or are they dead? The scent from the flowers says they are dead, and the vesper bell tolls for their funeral."

"You make me quite sad," said Gerda. "You have such a strong scent that I cannot help thinking of the dead girls. Can it be that Kay is really dead? The Roses have been buried, and they say 'No.'"

"Ding, dong!" sounded the Hyacinth bells. "We do not toll for little Kay, — we do not know him; we only sing our song, the only one we know."

Gerda went to the Buttercup, which shone from among its glittering green leaves, and said, "You are a little bright sun. Tell me if you know whether I shall find my playfellow."

The Buttercup shone so beautifully, and looked at Gerda, but its song was not of Kay either.

"In a small yard the sun shone so warmly the first day of spring; the rays were reflected from the white walls of the house, and close by stood the first yellow flower, shining like gold in the sun. The old grandmother was sitting out of doors in her chair, and her granddaughter, a poor but beautiful servant-girl, was parting from her after a short visit. She kissed her grandmother. In that kiss there was a blessing. Well, that is my little story."

"My poor old Grandmother!" Gerda sighed; "she is no doubt longing for me, and is sad about me as she was about Kay. But I will soon be back home, and bring Kay with me. It is of no use my asking the flowers, for they only know their own song, and can give me no information." She then tucked up her dress, in order to be able to run faster; but as she jumped over a Narcissus, it struck her across the legs. So she stopped, looked at the long white flower, and said, "Perhaps you have something to tell me;" and she bent down her ear to the flower. Now, what did the Narcissus say?

"I see myself! I see myself!" it said. "Oh, how beautiful I am! Up above, in a small attic, stands a little dancer half-dressed. She stands first on one leg and then on both. She is nothing but a vision. She is pouring water out of the teapot upon a piece of stuff; that is her stays. Cleanliness is next to godliness. And the white dress which hangs upon the nail has also been washed in the teapot and dried on the roof. She puts it on, and tying a yellow handkerchief round her neck, makes the dress look whiter still. With one leg out, look! she is standing on a stalk. I see myself! I see myself!"

"I care little about that," said Gerda. "You need not tell me that;" and she ran off to the end of the garden.

The door was locked; but she pressed heavily against the rusty lock and it sprang open, when out she ran on her bare feet, out into the wide world. She looked back three times, but there was no one following her. When she could run no longer, she seated herself upon a large

stone, and looking round her, saw that the summer was gone; it was late in the autumn; but that could not be seen in the beautiful garden, where the sun was always shining, and where there were flowers of all seasons.

"Oh, goodness! how long I have been delayed!" little Gerda said. "Why, it has grown autumn, and now there is no time to rest!" So she got up again to go on.

Oh, dear! how sore and tired her little feet were! and all around her it looked cold and cheerless. The long leaves of the willow were quite yellow, and the dew dripped from them. One leaf after another fell, and only the sloe-thorn bore fruit, but it was so sour that it made her make faces. How bleak and depressing it was in the wide world!

Fourth Part.—The Prince and the Princess.

GERDA was obliged to rest again; and just opposite the spot where she was sitting a large Raven was hopping about on the snow. It had been watching her for some time, shaking its head, and now it cried, "Caw! caw! how do?" It could not express itself better, but meant well with the little girl, and asked where she was going all alone into the wide world. Gerda felt how much there lay in that one word "alone;" and then she told her whole story, asking whether it had seen Kay.



"NOW IT CRIED, 'CAW! CAW! HOW DO?'"

The Raven nodded quite knowingly, and said, "It may be! it may be!"

"What! you think you have seen him!" the little girl cried, and hugged the Raven so that she nearly squeezed it to death.

"Gently, gently!" said the Raven. "I think I know; I think it may have been little Kay; but, for certain, by now the Princess has driven *you* out of his thoughts."

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

"I understand what you say," replied the Raven, "but I find it difficult to express myself in your language. If you understand the Raven's tongue it will go better."

"No, I never learned that," said Gerda; "but my Grandmother knew it. Oh, had I but learned it!"

"It does not matter," said the Raven; "I will tell you the story as well as I can, though it will be done badly;" and then it related all it knew.

"In the kingdom in which we are now sitting lives a Princess, who is awfully clever; but then, she has read all the newspapers in the world,—read and forgotten them again, so clever is she. Lately she was sitting on her throne, which is said not to be over-pleasant, when she began to sing; and the theme of her song was, 'Why should I not marry?' 'Well, there is something in that,' she said, and so she determined to get married; but she must have a husband who knew how to answer when spoken to, not one who could only stand and look grand, for that is so stupid. Then she had all her court ladies drummed together, and when they heard what her intention was they were much delighted. 'That's what I like,' one said; and, 'I have been thinking of that too,' said another. You may believe every word of what I tell you," said the Raven, "for I have a tame sweetheart who wanders at liberty all over the palace, and it is she who has told me all."

The sweetheart was, as a matter of course, a raven too.

"The newspapers appeared with a border of hearts and the Princess's monogram. Therein might be read that every good-looking young man was at liberty to go to the palace and converse with the Princess, and that she would marry him who spoke the best and who appeared to feel at home there. Yes, yes!" said the Raven, "you may believe what I say, for it is as true as I am sitting here. There was a great concourse of people, crowding and pushing; but nobody succeeded, either the first or second day. They could all speak well enough out in the street; but when they got into the palace and saw the guards in silver and the stairs lined with footmen in gold, and saw the splendid rooms, they became quite bewildered; so that when they stood before the throne on which the Princess sat, they could do nothing but repeat the last word she had uttered, and that she did not particularly care about hearing repeated. It was exactly as if the good people had swallowed snuff and fallen asleep, till they were in the street again, when they could talk fast enough. There was a string of people all the way from the city

gates up to the palace, and I was there myself to see them," said the Raven. "They grew hungry as well as thirsty; but in the palace they did not get as much as a glass of water. Some, it is true, had prudently taken some bread and butter with them, but did not share it with their neighbor, for they thought, 'Let him look hungry, and the Princess will certainly not have *him*.'"

"But Kay, little Kay!" asked Gerda; "when did he come? Was he among the crowd?"

"Patience! patience! for we are just coming to him. It was on the third day, there came a little person without horse or carriage, but walking merrily straight up to the palace. His eyes were bright like yours, and he had beautiful long hair, but he was poorly dressed."

"That was Kay!" shouted Gerda with delight. "At last I have found him!" and she clapped her little hands.

"He had a little knapsack on his back," continued the Raven.

"No, that must have been his sledge," Gerda said; "for he went away with his sledge on his back."

"That may be," replied the Raven, "for I did not pay particular attention to it; but this I know from my sweetheart, that when he got inside the palace and saw the body-guard in silver, and the footmen in gold on the stairs, he was not in the least abashed, but nodded, and said to them, 'It must be tedious work to stand there on the stairs, so I will go in at once.' The rooms were splendidly lighted, and there were lords and gentlemen walking about barefooted, with gold salvers. It was all quite solemn, though his boots creaked awfully; but he was not in the least concerned."

"That was certainly Kay," Gerda said. "I know he had new boots on, for I heard them creak."

"Yes, creak they did," continued the Raven; "but merrily he walked straight up to the Princess, who was sitting on a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel; and all the court ladies with their maids and their maids' maids, and the courtiers with their servants and their servants' servants, who kept a boy in turn, were standing around, and the nearer they stood to the door the prouder they looked. The servants' servants' boy, who always wears slippers, stands so proudly in the door that one dare scarcely look at him."

"That must be horrible," said little Gerda; "but Kay has gained the Princess for all that."

"If I had not been a Raven I would have had her myself, though I

am engaged," said the Raven. "My tame sweetheart says that he spoke as well as I speak when I am talking our language. He was gay and well behaved, but had not come at all to pay court to the Princess, but only to hear how clever she was. He had every reason to be satisfied with her, and she no less so with him."

"Oh for certain that was Kay," Gerda said, "for he was always so clever; he knew reckoning. Will you not introduce me into the palace?"

"Well, that is easily said," answered the Raven, "but how are we to manage it? I must talk it over with my tame sweetheart, and she will no doubt be able to advise us; for I must tell you that a little girl like you will never obtain permission to enter in the ordinary way."

"Oh, yes, I shall," said Gerda, "for as soon as Kay hears that I am there he will come out directly and fetch me."

"Wait for me there at the stile," said the Raven, and wagging its head, it flew off.

The Raven did not return till late in the evening, when it said: "She sends you all sorts of kind messages, and here is a small loaf for you which she took from the kitchen, where there is plenty of them; for no doubt you are hungry. It is impossible for you to be admitted into the palace, as you are barefooted. The guards in silver and the footmen in gold would never allow it; but do not cry, for you shall go in. My sweetheart knows a little back staircase which leads up to the bedroom, and she knows where to find the key."

So they went into the garden, into the great avenue, where one leaf was falling off after the other; and when the lights in the palace were put out, the Raven led Gerda to a back door, which stood ajar.

Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with fear and anxiety! She felt exactly as if she were going to do something wrong; and yet she only wanted to know whether little Kay was there, and there he must be. So vividly she called to mind his clear eyes and long hair, and it seemed as if she saw him smiling as he used to do when at home they sat together under the roses. He would surely be pleased to see her, and to hear what a long way she had come for his sake, as also to know how they had all fretted at home at his not returning. Oh, what fear, and at the same time what delight!

They were now on the stairs, where a small lamp was burning, and on the floor stood the tame Raven, turning her head first on one side and then on the other, looking at Gerda, who courtesied, as her Grandmother had taught her to do.

"My future husband has said so much to me in your praise, and your story too is very touching," said the tame Raven. "If you, my little lady, will take the lamp, please, I will lead the way. We are going straight there, and we shall not meet any one."

"It seems to me as if some one is coming just behind us," said Gerda; and then there was a rustling past them. It was like shadows on the wall, — horses with flowing manes and slender legs, huntsmen, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

"Those are only dreams," said the Raven, "and come to carry the ladies' and gentlemen's thoughts off to the chase; which is well, for we can then examine them better in bed. But I hope that when you have risen to honor and dignity you will show a grateful heart."

"It is quite unnecessary to talk about that," said the Raven from the forest.

They now entered the first room, the walls of which were hung with rose-colored silk and artificial flowers. Here the dreams rushed past them again, but went so fast that Gerda could not catch a sight of them. One room was more splendid than another, — it was almost enough to make one giddy; and now they reached the bedroom. The ceiling here was like large palm-leaves, made of the most beautiful glass, and from the centre were suspended, by a golden branch, two beds in the form of lilies. The one was white, and in that lay the Princess; while the other was red, and in that Gerda was to look for little Kay. She bent one of the red leaves on one side and saw a brown neck. Oh, that was Kay! She called his name out aloud, holding the lamp over him. The dreams rushed past again; he awoke and turned his head: it was not little Kay!

The Prince's neck only was like Kay's; but he was young and handsome. At the same time the Princess's face appeared from among the white lily leaves, and she asked what was the matter. Little Gerda then cried and told her whole story, and all that the Ravens had done for her.

"Poor child!" said the Prince and Princess, praising the Ravens for what they had done, and saying they were not at all angry, but that they must not repeat it. And a reward was promised them.

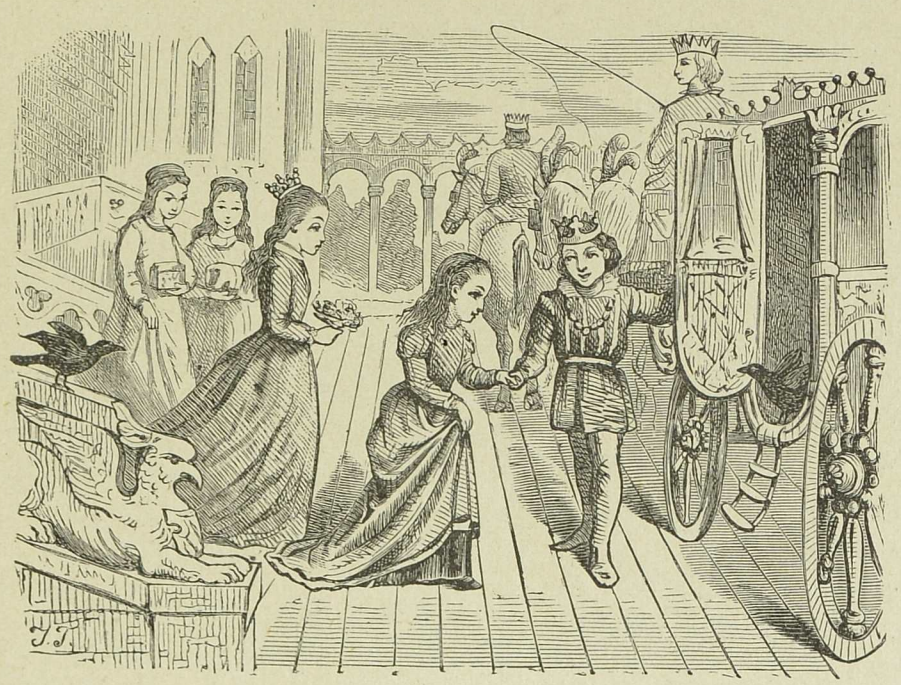
"Will you be free," asked the Princess, "or will you have a settled appointment as court Ravens, with all the kitchen remains?"

The two Ravens made their bows, and begged they might have a

settled appointment, for they thought of their old age, saying, "It is nice to have something when one gets old."

The Prince then got out of his bed and let Gerda sleep in it; more he could not do. She folded her little hands, and thought, "How good men and animals are!" and then, closing her eyes, she slept soundly. The dreams came flying back, and they looked like angels drawing a sledge, on which sat Kay and nodded. But the whole was only a dream, and was therefore all gone as soon as she awoke.

The next day she was clothed from head to foot in silk and velvet, and she received the offer to remain at the palace and enjoy herself; but she



"THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS THEMSELVES HELPED HER INTO THE CARRIAGE."

only begged for a little carriage with a horse, and for a pair of boots, when she would go out again into the wide world and look for Kay.

And she got not only the boots, but a muff; and when she wished to leave, a new coach of pure gold drew up at the door, with the Prince's and Princess's coat-of-arms upon it, like shining stars. The coachman, footman, and outriders — for there were outriders too — wore golden crowns. The Prince and Princess themselves helped her into the carriage and wished her success. The Raven of the forest, who was now married, accompanied her the first ten miles, sitting by her side, — for riding backwards disagreed with him, — while the other Raven stood at the door flapping her wings. She could not go with them, as she suffered

from headache since she had a settled appointment at the palace and got too much to eat. The inside of the carriage was lined with cakes and sweets, and in the seat were fruits and gingerbread nuts.

"Farewell! farewell!" said the Prince and Princess, while little Gerda wept, and the Raven wept too. They went on for ten miles, and then the Raven had to say good-by, which was the saddest parting of all. He flew up into a tree and flapped his black wings as long as he could see the carriage, which shone like the sun.

Fifth Part. — The Little Robber-girl.

THEY drove through the dark forest, but the carriage gave a light like a torch, which affected the robbers' eyes so that they could not bear it.

"That is gold! that is gold!" they cried, and rushing forward, seized the horses, killed the little jockeys, coachman, and servants, and then dragged little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is nice, she is fat, she has been fed upon nuts!" said the old Robber-woman, who had a long bristly beard, and eyebrows which hung down over her eyes.

"Why, she is as good as a fat lamb! how nice she will taste!" and she drew out her long knife, which shone so that it was horrible to look at.

"Au!" the woman cried at the same moment, for she was bitten in the ear by her own daughter, who was hanging at her back, and who was so wild and wicked that nothing could be done with her. "You nasty imp!" cried the mother, and now she had no time to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me," said the little Robber-girl. "She shall give me her muff and her beautiful dress, and shall sleep with me in my bed;" and she then bit her mother again, so that the woman jumped about, and the robbers laughed, shouting, "See how she dances with her cub!"

"I will get into the carriage," said the Robber-girl; and she would have her own way, for she was so obstinate and spoilt; so she and Gerda entered it, and were driven over stones and through ditches deeper into the forest. The little Robber-girl was no taller than Gerda, but stronger, with broader shoulders and darker skin. Her eyes were black, and had rather a melancholy expression. She laid hold of Gerda

round the waist and said, "They shall not kill you as long as I am not angry with you! You are a princess, I suppose?"

"No," said Gerda, and told all she had undergone, and how much she loved little Kay.

The Robber-girl looked at her quite seriously, nodded her head slightly, and said, "They shall not kill you, even if I am angry with you; for I'll do it myself then." She dried Gerda's eyes, and then put both her hands in the beautiful muff which was so soft and warm.

Now the carriage stopped, and they were in the courtyard of a Robber's castle. It was all in ruins, and the ravens and crows flew out



"AND SHE DREW OUT HER LONG KNIFE."

of the holes, and large bull-dogs, of which each looked as if it could devour a man, sprang towards them; but they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

In the large old smoke-colored hall, in the middle of the stone floor, a huge fire was burning, and the smoke, rising to the roof, had to find itself an outlet. Soup was boiling in a caldron, and hares and rabbits were roasting on spits.

"To-night you shall sleep with me, with all my animals," the Robber-girl said; and after they had had something to eat and drink, they went into a corner, where there was straw and a piece of carpet. More than a hundred pigeons sat above upon laths and sticks, and they all

seemed to be asleep, though they did turn round a little at the approach of the two little girls.

"They all belong to me," said the Robber-girl; and catching hold of one of the nearest by the feet, she shook it until it flapped its wings.

"Kiss her," she cried, touching Gerda in the face with it. "Yonder, behind those bars, there are two wood-pigeons that would fly away directly if they were not properly secured; and here stands my dear old Boo!" As she said this she pulled the horns of a Reindeer, which was fastened by a bright copper ring round its neck. "We have to keep him a prisoner too, or he would be off. Every evening I tickle his throat with my sharp knife, which frightens him dreadfully." The little girl drew a long knife out of a crack in the wall, and let it glide across the Reindeer's throat, which made the poor beast tremble and kick; and the little Robber-girl, laughing, drew Gerda into the bed with her.

"Are you going to keep that knife in bed with you?" Gerda asked, and looked rather frightened at it.

"I always sleep with a knife," said the Robber-girl; "one can never tell what may happen; but let me again hear what you said about little Kay, and why you came out into the wide world." And Gerda told all again, from beginning to end; and the wood-pigeons cooed in their cage, but the others slept. The little Robber-girl put one arm round Gerda's neck, and holding the knife in the other, soon fell asleep; but Gerda could not close her eyes: she did not know whether she was to live, or whether death awaited her. The robbers sat round the fire, drinking and singing, while the Robber-woman turned summersaults. It was quite horrible for the little girl to watch them.

The Wood-pigeons said, "Kourrou! kourrou! we have seen little Kay. A white chicken carried his sledge, and he sat in the Snow-queen's carriage, which drove close over the forest as we lay in our nest. She blew upon us young ones, and all excepting us two died. Kourrou! kourrou!"

"What are you saying up there?" Gerda asked. "Where was the Snow-queen going to? Do you know anything about it?"

"She was most likely going to Lapland, for it is always snow and ice there. Ask the Reindeer that is tied up there."

"It is ice and snow, and it is delightful and healthy there," said the Reindeer. "There one can jump and run about. There the Snow-queen has her summer tent; but her palace is up towards the North Pole, on the island called Spitzbergen."

"Oh, Kay! dear little Kay!" Gerda said.

"Now you must lie quiet," said the Robber-girl, "or I will run the knife into you."

Next morning Gerda told her all that the Wood-pigeons had said, and the little Robber-girl looked quite serious, but nodding her head said, "It does n't matter! it does n't matter! Do you know where Lapland is?" she asked the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" answered the animal, its eyes sparkling. "I was born and bred there, and there I have run about on the snow-field."

"Listen!" said the Robber-girl to Gerda. "You see that all the men are gone; my mother, however, is still here, and she will remain; but about midday she drinks out of a great flask, and then sleeps a little. I will then do something for you." Then she jumped out of bed, rushed to her mother, and pulling her beard, said, "My own beloved goat, good-morning!" Her mother in return boxed her ears so that they became red and blue; but that was from sheer love.

As soon as her mother was asleep, after having drunk out of the flask, the Robber-girl went to the Reindeer and said: "I might still have a good deal of fun, tickling you with the sharp knife, for then you are very amusing; but that does n't matter. I will unfasten you and let you out, so that you may run back to Lapland; but you must make good use of your legs, and carry this little girl to the Snow-queen's palace, where her playfellow is. You heard what she said, for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening." The Reindeer jumped high into the air with delight. The Robber-girl lifted little Gerda on its back, having taken the precaution to tie her fast, and even to give her a little cushion to sit upon. "It does n't matter," she said. "There are your fur boots, for it will be cold; but the muff I shall keep, for it is so pretty. You shall not freeze, however, for you shall have my mother's large, warm gloves, which will reach up to your elbow. There, put them on. Now, as to your hands, you look exactly like my ugly mother."

Gerda cried with joy.

"I won't have you blubbering," said the little Robber-girl; "now you ought to look particularly happy. Here are two loaves and a ham, so you will not die of hunger." Both were fastened behind her; and the little Robber-girl opened the door, having chained up all the big dogs, cut the rope with her sharp knife, and said to the Reindeer, "Now run, but take great care of the little girl."

Gerda stretched out her hands, with the large gloves on, towards the Robber-girl, and cried "Good-by!" and the Reindeer flew as fast as possible through the great forest, and over heath and marsh. The wolves howled, and the birds of prey screamed, "Atsche! atsche!" which sounded exactly like sneezing from the sky.



"'THOSE ARE MY OLD NORTHERN LIGHTS,' SAID THE REINDEER."

"Those are my old Northern Lights," said the Reindeer; "see how they shine!" and it ran even faster than before. It ran day and night. The loaves were eaten, and the ham also, and then they were in Lapland.

Sixth Part. — The Lapp Woman and the Finn Woman.

THEY stopped at a small house, and a miserable place it was. The roof reached down to the ground, and the door was so low that the inmates had to crawl on their stomachs when they wanted to go in or out. There was no one at home excepting an old Lapp Woman, who was cooking fish by the light of a train-oil lamp, and to her the Reindeer told Gerda's whole story; but his own first, for that appeared to him by far the more important, and the cold had nipped Gerda so that she could not speak.

"Oh, you poor creatures!" said the old Lapp Woman; "you have far to run still. You must go more than a hundred miles into Lapland, for

there the Snow-queen lives. I will write a few words on a dried stock-fish, for I have no paper, and that I will give you for the Finn Woman up there, for she can give you more accurate information than I."

Now as soon as Gerda was warm, and had got something to eat and drink, the old Woman wrote a few words on a dried codfish, begged Gerda to take great care of it, and having tied her on the Reindeer again, off it started. "Atsche! atsche!" it sounded from above, in the air, and the whole night long the Northern Lights shone most beautifully. They arrived in Finmarken, and knocked at the Finn Woman's chimney, for she had no door at all.



"I WILL WRITE A FEW WORDS ON A DRIED STOCKFISH."

It was so hot inside that the Finn Woman was nearly naked. She was small of figure, and very dirty. She immediately undid Gerda's things, taking off her gloves and boots, for it would otherwise have been too hot for her; laid a lump of ice on the Reindeer's head, and then read what was written on the fish. She read it three times, when she knew it by heart; so she put the fish in the soup-pot, for it was good to eat, and she never wasted anything.

Then the Reindeer told its own story and next Gerda's; and the Finn Woman blinked with her clever eyes, but said nothing.

"You are so clever," said the Reindeer; "I know that you can tie all the winds of the world together with one piece of string, so that

when the sailor unfastens the first knot, he has a fair wind; if he unties the second, it blows freshly; but if the third and fourth be untied, the wind rages so that the trees of the forest fall. Won't you prepare the little girl a drink, to give her the strength of twelve men, so that she may vanquish the Snow-queen?"

"The strength of twelve men!" said the Finn Woman. "That would not help her much;" and then she went to a cupboard, from which she took a large rolled-up skin. As she unrolled it there appeared strange letters written upon it, and she read till the water dripped down from her forehead.

But the Reindeer begged again so hard for Gerda, and she looked at the Finn Woman with such beseeching eyes, full of tears, that she again began to blink her eyes, and drawing the Reindeer into a corner, whispered to him, while she put fresh ice upon his head: "Little Kay is still with the Snow-queen, and finds everything there to his taste, so that he thinks it the best place in the world; but this is caused by his having a piece of broken glass in his heart and another piece in his eyes. They must come out, or he will never be a man, and the Snow-queen will retain her full power over him."

"But can you not give little Gerda something, so that she may obtain power over all?"

"I cannot give her greater power than she already possesses; and do you not see how great that is? Do you not see that men and beasts must serve her; and how, barefooted as she is, she has got on so well in the world? She cannot receive her power from us; that is in her own heart, and consists in her being a good, innocent child. If she cannot herself get into the Snow-queen's palace and free little Kay from the glass, we cannot help her. Ten miles from here the Snow-queen's garden begins, and there you must carry the little girl. Set her down at the large bush which stands there in the snow covered with red berries; and do not waste many words, but make haste back here." Then the Finn Woman placed Gerda upon the Reindeer, which ran off as fast as it could. "Oh, I have not got my boots! I have not got my gloves!" little Gerda cried out, for this she noticed in the piercing cold; but the Reindeer did not venture to stop, and it ran on till it came to the bush with the red berries. There it put her down, kissed her, and large bright tears ran down the animal's cheeks when it started off back again. There stood poor Gerda, without boots and without gloves, in the middle of that fearfully cold Lapland!

She ran forward as fast as possible, and was soon met by a whole regiment of snow-flakes, which did not fall from heaven, for the sky was quite clear; but they ran straight along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they grew. Gerda remembered how large and beautiful those looked which she saw through the magnifying glass; but these were much larger, and far different: they were living, and dreadful to look at; they were the Snow-queen's guards. They had the strangest shapes, some looking like frightful porcupines, others like knots of living snakes stretching out their heads, and others like fat little bears with



"BUT SHE SAID HER EVENING PRAYER."

bristly hair; but all were a glittering white, — they were all living snow-flakes.

Then little Gerda prayed, and the cold was so great that she could see her own breath coming like smoke out of her mouth. The breath became denser and denser, at length assumed the forms of little angels, which grew larger and larger as they touched the ground. They all wore helmets on their heads, and held spears and shields in their hands, and their number was constantly increasing, so that by the time Gerda had finished her prayer she was surrounded by a whole legion. They thrust their spears into the frightful snow-flakes, breaking them into hundreds of pieces, and Gerda went on joyously and in safety. The

angels kissed her hands and feet, so that she felt less how extremely cold it was; and quickly she hastened on to the Snow-queen's palace.

But now let us first see what Kay was doing. He was certainly not thinking of little Gerda, and, least of all, that she was then standing outside the palace.

Seventh Part.—Of the Snow-queen's Palace, and what happened in it.

THE palace walls were of driven snow, and the doors and windows of the cutting winds. There were more than a hundred rooms, as the snow had formed them, the largest extending several miles, and all were lighted by the bright Northern Lights. They were all so large, so empty, and so icy-cold and shining! There was never any amusement there, not even a bears' ball, — for which the storm could have provided music, and the polar bears could have shown off their antics, walking on their hind legs. There were never any card-parties either, with tea and gossip, but empty, cold, and vast were the rooms of the Snow-queen's palace.

In the middle of the empty, immense snow-room there was a frozen lake, cracked into a thousand pieces, but each piece was so like the others that it seemed a masterly work of art; and in the middle of this sat the Snow-queen when she was at home. She used to say that she then sat on the Mirror of Reason, and that it was the only one in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue with cold, — indeed, almost black; but he did not know it, for she had kissed away the frost-shiver, and his heart was like a lump of ice. He was dragging some sharp-edged, flat pieces of ice about, and these he fitted together in all possible ways, just as we do small pieces of wood which we call the Chinese puzzle. Kay was also forming figures of the most wonderful description; and that was the Ice-Game of Reason. In his eyes the figures were perfect, and of the highest importance, for the piece of broken glass which was in his eye made him think so. He formed whole words, but he could never succeed in the one word he wished to have, — the word Eternity; for the Snow-queen had said to him, "If you can succeed in forming that one word you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world, together with a pair of new skates." But he could not.

"I am now going to pay a visit to the warmer countries," said the

Snow-Queen, "and intend giving a peep into the black caldrons," — she meant the volcanoes of Etna and Vesuvius. "I will cover them with white, which will also do good to the orange-trees and vines." Then the Snow-queen flew away, and Kay was left alone in those vast, empty rooms, staring at the pieces of ice, and thinking and thinking till his brain ached. He sat there so stiff and still that he looked as if he were frozen.

Just then little Gerda came into the palace through the large gate. Here were cutting winds; but she said her evening prayer, and the



"SHE PRESSED HIM CLOSELY TO HER."

winds were lulled as if they wanted to go to sleep, and she entered the large, empty, cold room. She then saw Kay, recognized him at once, and running up to him pressed him closely to her, and cried, "Kay! dear little Kay! so I have found you at last!"

But he sat quite still, stiff, and cold, and little Gerda cried bitter, burning tears, which fell upon his breast, and penetrating to his heart thawed the lump of ice and dissolved the piece of broken glass. He looked at her, and she sang the hymn, —

"Though the bloom of the rose will fade away,
We shall meet the dear Christ-child some day.

Then Kay burst into tears, and cried till the pieces of glass were washed out of his eyes, — when he recognized her, and exclaimed in

delight, "Gerda! dear little Gerda! where have you been all this time, and where have I been?" He looked all around, and continued, "How cold it is here, and how vast and empty!" He pressed closely to her, and she laughed and cried in turns. There was such joy that even the pieces of ice danced; and when they were tired and lay down again they formed the letters of the word which, when discovered, the Snow-queen said he should be his own master, and she would give him the whole world, besides a pair of new skates.

Gerda kissed his cheeks, and the color came back into them; she kissed his eyes, and they were as bright as her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was himself again. The Snow-queen might now return, for his discharge was there written in sparkling ice.

They took each other by the hand and wandered out of the palace. They spoke of their grandmother, and of the rose-trees upon the roof, and wherever they went the winds were lulled and the sun burst forth; and when they got to the bush with the red berries they found the Reindeer waiting for them, and another with it. These carried them first to the Finn Woman, in whose hot room they warmed themselves and obtained information about their homeward journey; and then to the old Lapp Woman, who had made new clothes for them and got a sledge ready.

The two reindeer took them quickly to the borders of the country, and there the first green was springing up. Here they parted from the Reindeer and the old Lapp Woman, and all cried, "Good-by!" The little birds began to twitter, the buds were green on the trees in the woods, and out of it came riding a young girl on a beautiful horse which Gerda knew, for it was the one that had been harnessed to the golden carriage. This was the Robber-girl, with a red cap on her head and pistols in her belt. She had had enough of home, and was now travelling towards the North, to take another course later if that did not please her.

She and Gerda immediately recognized each other, and there was great rejoicing.

"You are a pretty fellow!" she said to little Kay; "I should like to know whether you deserve that one should run to the end of the world after you?"

But Gerda tapped her on the cheek and asked after the Prince and Princess.

"They have gone to a foreign country," said the Robber-girl.

"And the Ravens?" asked Gerda.

"The Raven is dead," she answered, "and his wife, now a widow, goes about with a piece of black cotton round her leg, and laments dreadfully; but that is nothing but talk. But now tell me how it fared with you, and how you managed to catch him."

And Gerda and Kay told her all.

The Robber-girl took them both by the hand, and promised that if ever she should pass through their town she would come up to visit them; and then she rode on into the wide world.



"THE GRANDMOTHER SAT IN THE CLEAR SUNSHINE AND READ ALOUD FROM THE BIBLE."

Gerda and Kay continued their way hand in hand. It was delightful spring, with green leaves and beautiful flowers; the church-bells rang merrily, and they recognized the high steeples and the large city; it was that in which they lived. So they entered it and went to their grandmother's house, up the stairs, and into the room, where everything was just as it used to be, the clock going "tick, tick!" and the hands moving; but then they noticed that they were no longer children. The roses in the roof-gutter, in full bloom, crept in through the open window; and there stood the two children's stools, and Gerda seated herself on hers, and Kay took his, holding each other still by the hand. The cold, empty splendor of the Snow-queen's palace was forgotten like a disagreeable dream. The grandmother sat in the clear sunshine and

read aloud from the Bible, "Except ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter Heaven."

Kay and Gerda looked at each other, and both thought of the old hymn, —

"Though the bloom of the rose will fade away,
We shall meet the dear Christ-child some day."

There they sat, grown up, and yet children; for in their hearts they were children. And it was summer, — warm, delightful summer within and without.

XXX.

MOTHER ELDER.

THERE was once a little boy who had caught a cold through having got his feet wet, but nobody could tell how, as the weather was perfectly dry. Then his mother undressed him, and putting him to bed, had the tea things brought in to make him a good cup of elder tea, for it warms so beautifully.

At the same moment an elderly, pleasant man entered, who lived up at the top of the house quite alone, as he had neither wife nor children; but, nevertheless, he loved all children so dearly, and could tell the prettiest fairy tales and stories.

"Now drink your tea," said the mother, "and you will perhaps hear a story."

"Well, if I only knew a fresh one," replied the old man, nodding his head kindly; "but how did the little one get his feet wet?"

"Yes, how?" repeated the mother. "Nobody can understand it."

"Will you tell me a story?" asked the boy.

"I will, if you first tell me how deep the gutter is in the street where you go to school," replied the old man.

"Exactly half-way up to my top-boots, where the deep hole is," cried the boy.

"Ah! so therefrom hail the wet feet," said the old man. "Now I ought certainly to tell you a story; but I don't know any more."

"But cannot you make up one?" inquired the boy, disappointedly. "Mamma says that you can make a story of everything you see or touch," he added.

"Oh, those stories are no good," responded the old man. "No, the real ones are those which come and knock on my forehead and say, 'Here I am!'"

"Does n't one knock now?" asked the boy after a short silence. And his mother laughed and made the tea.

"Do tell — oh, do!" cried the little boy.

"I would gladly," replied the old man, "if a story would come uninvited; but those creatures are so proud they only come when they feel inclined. But, stop!" he cried quickly. "Here is one! Look out, there it is in the teapot."

And the little boy looked at the teapot, and, lo! the lid opened slowly, displaying fresh and white elder-blossoms beneath it. Then long boughs shot into the air, even from the spout, extending on all sides; till there stood quite a lovely elder-tree, the boughs growing right into the bed and parting the curtains. Oh, what a delicious scent! And in the middle of the tree sat an old woman clad in a



"IT WAS A VERY, VERY OLD SAILOR AND HIS VERY, VERY OLD WIFE."

strange dress, it being quite green like the elder-leaves, and bordered with large white elder-blossoms. It was impossible to tell whether it was cloth, or real leaves and blossoms.

"What is the name of that old woman?" asked the little boy.

"The old Greeks and Romans called her a Dryad," replied the old man; "but that *we* don't understand. We have a more homely name for her; we call her Mother Elder. It is her and the pretty tree you shall now look at.

"In a poor part of Copenhagen I know so well, just such a fine elder-tree grows in a little back garden, below which one afternoon, in the brightest sunshine, two old people were seated. It was a very, very old sailor and his very, very old wife. They had great-grandchildren, and

were soon to celebrate their golden wedding; but they could not remember the date exactly, and Mother Elder sat in the tree looking just as pleasant as now.

"'I know the day of your golden wedding,' she said; but they did not hear her, as they were talking about old times.

"'Do you remember,' said the old sailor, 'when we were quite little ones running about playing? It was in this very back garden where we are now sitting, and we put sprigs into the ground and watered them, making a little park.'

"'Yes,' responded the old woman, 'I remember it quite well, and one of them was an elder-sprig, which struck root and has grown to the big tree we two old people are sitting under.'

"'Exactly so,' rejoined the old sailor, 'and in yon corner stood a water-butt, in which I sailed a ship I had made myself. How it sailed! but I soon went away for a different kind of sail.'

"'Yes, you did,' said the woman; 'but first we went to school and learned something, and then were confirmed. We both cried, and in the afternoon we went hand in hand up into the Round Tower and looked at Copenhagen and the sea; after that we went out to the Royal Castle of Frederiksberg, where we saw the King and Queen sail about on the water in splendid boats.'

"'But I soon went away for a different kind of sail,' repeated the old sailor, 'and many a year I was away in foreign parts.'

"'How I cried for your sake!' said the old woman; 'I thought you were dead long ago. Many a night I got up looking to see if the weathercock turned;[1] and though it did, you never came. I recollect so well how it rained in torrents one day, when I went down to the door where I was in service, to speak to the dustman, and the postman handed me a letter. It was from you. How far and wide you had been! I tore it open and read it. Oh, how I laughed and cried! I was so happy. You said you were in a warm country where the coffee grew; it was such a lovely country. You told such a lot, and I saw it all; and I read and read in spite of the rain and the dustman. Just then I felt somebody taking me round the waist —'

"'And you gave him a sound box on the ear,' interrupted the old sailor.

"'Of course I did not know it was you,' added the old woman, 'for you had come as quickly as the letter. And how handsome you

[1] A Danish superstition. — Tr.

looked! And so you do still. You had a fine yellow silk handkerchief in your breast-pocket, and a shining man-of-war's hat on your head. How well you were dressed! But, Heavens, what weather it was!'

"'Then, you remember, we were married,' continued the old sailor. 'And you remember our first boy, — and Mary, John, Charlie, and Christian, following?'

"'I remember it all,' replied the old woman, joyfully; 'and now they are all grown-up and respected people.'

"'And their children again have little ones,' continued the old sailor. 'Yes, they are great-grandchildren with stuff in them.'

"'It was just this time of the year we were married,' said the old woman.

"'To-day is your golden wedding-day,' said Mother Elder, putting her head between the two old persons, who thought she was a neighbor nodding to them.

"They looked at each other and clasped each other's hands, and shortly after came grandchildren and great-grandchildren to congratulate them, for they all knew it was the old people's golden wedding-day; and the old elder-tree smelt so deliciously, while the sun, which was just setting, shone in their faces and made them look quite young, and the youngest child danced round her great-grandparents, crying that there would be a party there at night, to which Mother Elder nodded and shouted 'Hurrah!' too."

"But that was no story," said the little boy who had listened to it.

"Don't you think it was?" replied the man who had told it. "Well, let us ask Mother Elder."

"It was no fairy tale," replied Mother Elder, "but now it comes. The loveliest fairy tales spring from reality, otherwise my pretty elder-bush could not have grown from the teapot;" and she took the little boy out of bed into her arms, and the boughs covered with flowers closed around them. Mother Elder had suddenly become a pretty little girl, though her dress remained the same. She had a real elder-blossom in her breast, while others encircled her golden hair, and her eyes were blue and lovely to behold. The boy and the girl kissed each other, and they were of the same age and the same mind.

Hand in hand they walked into a lovely garden, where the little boy's father's stick lay, and it was to them as if there were life in it. As soon as they had seated themselves upon it the knob was transformed into a splendid horse's head with a fluttering black mane, while four



"'NOW LET US RIDE FAR AWAY!' CRIED THE BOY."

strong legs shot from it. The animal was strong and fiery, and at a gallop it went round the lawn.

"Now let us ride far away!" cried the boy; "we will ride to the house in the country where we were last year." And they rode round and round the lawn, the little girl, who, we know, was Mother Elder,

shouting, "Now we are in the country! Do you see the hut with the great baking-stove, looking like a great egg in the wall? The elder-tree spreads its branches over it, and the cock struts about with the hens; see how proud he is! Now we are by the church lying high up on the hill between the great oaks, of which half are dead. Now we are by the smithy where the forge roars and half-naked men hammer the iron till the sparks fly about. Away, away to the stately country mansion!" And all that the little girl mentioned they passed. The boy saw it too; and still they only rode round the lawn.

Then they began to play in one of the paths by making a little garden, and she took the elder-blossom from her hair and planted it there, and it grew as well as the elder-tree in the back garden for the old people when they were young. They walked hand in hand as the old people had done, but not up into the Round Tower or to Frederiksberg. No, for the little girl took the boy round the waist, and they flew all round Denmark. And spring came and summer followed, then autumn and winter, and a thousand scenes were reflected in the eyes and heart of the little boy, while the little girl continued to sing to him, "You will never forget this." The elder-tree smelt so sweetly during the flight; and though the boy scented the roses and the beeches, the fragrance of the elder-tree was the most delicious, for the blossoms hung by the little girl's heart, and towards that he leaned during their flight.

"Here it is lovely in the Spring!" exclaimed the little girl as they stood in the virgin beech-woods, where the green musk scented the air and the pink anemones ornamented the green turf. "Oh, if it were only always Spring!"

"Here it is lovely in the Summer!" exclaimed the little girl, as they flew past the ancient mansions of the Middle Ages, where red-brick walls and gables were reflected in the silvery moats, and where swans swam about. In the fields the corn swayed to and fro like a lake, while the ditches and the hedges were covered with red and yellow flowers, and at night the full moon rose and the hay emitted a delicious fragrance. That is never forgotten!

"Here it is lovely in the Autumn!" exclaimed the little girl. And the sky became twice as blue and deep, the woods assumed the most beautiful colors of red, yellow, and brown, and the hounds followed the fleet game. The sea was dark-blue, with white sails on it, and in the fields men, women, and children were busy gathering hops, while the young sang songs and the old gossiped, — and that was natural to both.

"Here it is lovely in the winter!" exclaimed the little girl, — all trees being draped in hoar-frost. They looked like white corals, and the snow creaked underfoot as if everybody had new boots on, while from heaven one star fell after another. Indoors the Christmas-tree was lighted with much merriment and presents given, and in the country the fiddle was heard in the cottages, and even the poorest urchin cried, "Here it is indeed lovely in the winter!"

Yes, it was indeed lovely; and the little girl showed the boy everything, and throughout the elder-tree scented the air, and the Danish flag, with the white cross on the red ground, fluttered in the wind. It was the same under which the old sailor had sailed.

Then the boy became a man, and had to go out into the world, far away to warm countries where the coffee grows, and on his leaving, the little girl gave him an elder-blossom from her breast, which he pressed in his prayer-book. And whenever he opened the book in foreign parts it was just in the place in which the flower lay; and the more he looked at the flower the fresher it seemed to become. It was like a breath from the dear woods at home, and he saw distinctly the head of the little girl with the clear blue eyes, whispering to him, "Here it is lovely in spring, summer, autumn, and winter!" And a thousand thoughts passed through his mind.

Thus many years went by, and now the boy was an old man sitting under an elder-tree with his aged wife, holding each other's hands as their great grandparents had done before, and they were speaking of old times and the golden wedding. The little girl with the blue eyes and the elder-blossoms in her hair sat in the tree nodding to them both and saying, "To-day is your golden wedding-day." Then she took two flowers from her wreath, and kissing them, placed them on their heads, when one became a crown of silver and the other a crown of gold. There they both sat like a king and a queen under the fragrant tree, which looked exactly like an elder-tree; and the old man told his aged wife the story of Mother Elder, just as it had been told him when a boy, and they both thought there was much in it resembling their own, and that part they liked best.

"It is perfectly true;" said the little girl, "some call me Mother Elder, others Dryad, but my real name is MEMORY. I am sitting in the tree as it grows and grows; I recollect everything, and can relate. Let me see, have you your flower still?"

Then the old man opened his prayer-book, and there lay the flower

as fresh as if it had just been gathered; and Memory nodded, while the old people sat with their crowns in the setting sun. They closed their eyes, and — and — that was the end of the story.

The little boy in bed did not know whether he had dreamt, or really heard it all. The teapot stood on the table, but the elder-tree was not there, while the old man was just on the point of going.

"What a beautiful story!" exclaimed the boy. "Mamma, I have been to the warm countries."

"I am sure you have," replied the mother; "for he who drinks two cups of elder tea is certain to do so." And she tucked him well up, so that he should not catch cold. "You have been sound asleep," she continued, "while our old friend and I have been disputing whether it was a story or a fairy tale."

"And where is Mother Elder?" inquired the boy.

"She is in the teapot," replied the mother; "and there she may remain."

XXXI.

THE DARNING-NEEDLE.

THERE was once a Darning-needle which was so sensitive and proud that she believed she was an embroidery needle.

"Now just look at what you are doing," said the Needle to the fingers which held her. "Do not drop me on any account. If I fall on the floor I am sure I shall never be found again, I am so fine."

"There is moderation in everything," said the fingers, squeezing her very hard.

The Darning-needle was being run right through the cook's slipper, the upper leather of which had split.

"You see I have a train," continued the Darning-needle, as she drew a long thread after her, which had, however, no knot to it.

"It is low work!" exclaimed the Needle. "I shall never get through. I break! I break!" And so she broke. "I told you so," said the Needle, angrily. "I am too fine."

"Now she is no good," thought the fingers; but still they had to hold on to her. Then the cook put a bit of sealing-wax at the top, and stuck it into her neckerchief.

"Now I am a scarf-pin," said the Darning-needle. "I knew I should rise in the world. That which is of noble birth remains noble;" and so the Needle laughed to herself, for it is impossible to tell by the outside of a needle that she laughs. Now, there she sat as proud as a duchess.

"May I take the liberty to ask whether you are of gold?" inquired the Needle of a pin near her. "You have a good appearance and your own head, though a small one, I must say. You must take care it grows bigger, for everybody cannot be sealing-waxed in the end." And the Darning-needle was so erect that she fell out of the scarf and into the gutter just as the kitchen-maid emptied out a pail.

"Now we are going to travel," said the Darning-needle. "I only hope I am not lost." But that she was.

"I am too refined for this world," she remarked, when in the gutter. "But I have a good conscience, and that is always something." And so the Darning-needle kept herself erect and did not lose courage.

"See how they float," continued the Needle, seeing straw, bits of wood, and paper passing overhead. "They don't know what sticks up beneath them. I do. I am here. Look, there goes a match; she thinks of nothing in the world but matches, and she is one herself. There comes a straw; see how she twists and capers. Don't think too much of yourself; you might hurt yourself against the curbstones. Here is a newspaper; though all in her is forgotten, she spreads herself out. I remain in my place; I know who and what I am, and that I always shall remember."



"I SHALL NEVER GET THROUGH."

One day she saw something glitter close to her, and the Darning-needle believed that it was a diamond; but it was only a bit of glass. As, however, it glittered, the Needle said, "You are a diamond, I presume?" And the bit of glass replied, "Something of that kind." Each believed that the other was something very grand, and so they talked about the proudness of the world.

"I used to live in the box of a lady," said the Needle. "She was a cook, and she had five fingers on each hand; but anything so conceited as the fingers I never came across, — and still they only existed to hold me, and to take me out of and put me into the box."

"Did they glitter?" inquired the bit of glass.

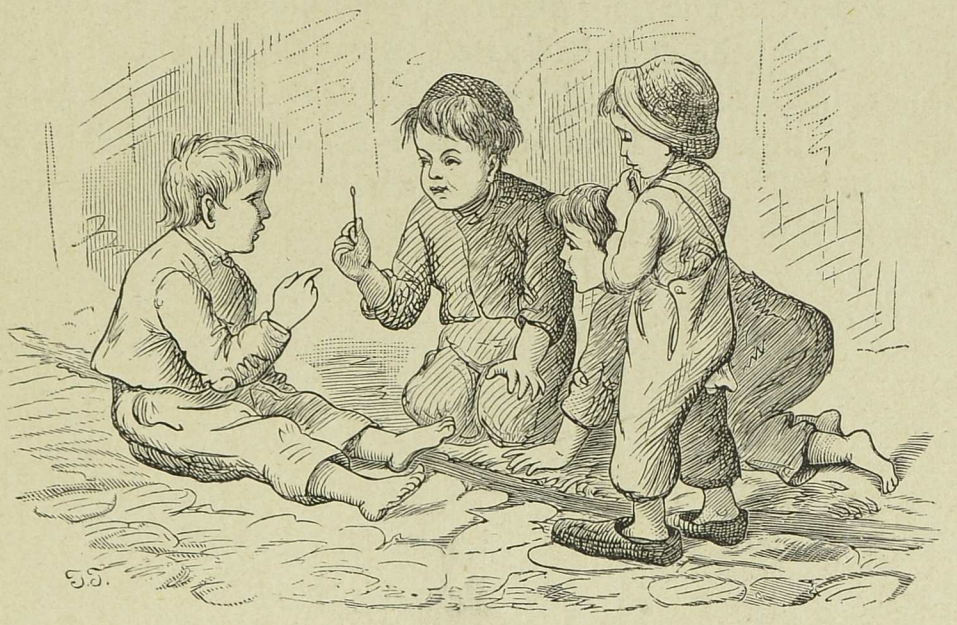
"No, they were too proud for that," replied the Needle. "They kept themselves close to each other, though differing in length. The thumb was short and thick, with only one joint in the back; but he said that if he was cut off, no man could serve as a soldier. Dainty-mouth went into pot and pan, pointed to the sun and moon, and squeezed when the rest wrote. Longman looked down upon the others, and Goldborder

had a gold ring round the waist, while little Playman did nothing, and of that he was proud. Proud they were, and proud they remained; and so I went into the gutter."

"And now we sit here and glitter," said the bit of glass.

At that moment more water rushed into the gutter and made it overflow, so that the bit of glass was carried away.

"So he is off," said the Needle; "but I remain; I am too fine. That is my pride, and my pride is honorable;" and proudly she sat and had many great thoughts.



"'I AM NOT A FELLOW; I AM A YOUNG LADY,' SAID THE NEEDLE."

"I could almost believe I was born a sunbeam," continued the Needle, "I am so fine. It seems as if the sunbeams are always seeking me under the water. I am so fine that even my mother cannot find me. If I had only my eye, I think I could cry. But no, I should not do that; it is not genteel to cry."

One day a couple of boys lay grubbing in the gutter, where they sometimes would find old nails, farthings, and such like. It was dirty work, but that was *their* pleasure.

"Oh!" cried one of the boys, being pricked by the Darning-needle; "that's a nice fellow!"

"I am not a fellow; I am a young lady," said the Needle. But nobody paid any attention, as the sealing-wax was gone and the Needle

was black. However, as black makes people look smaller, she thought she was finer than before.

"Here is an egg-shell coming along," cried the boys; and so they fixed the Darning-needle in the shell.

"White surroundings and in black myself; that is the right thing," thought the Darning-needle. "Now, everybody will notice me. I only trust I shall not be seasick, for then I shall break." But she was not ill, and she did not break.

"It is proof against seasickness to have a steel constitution, and always to remember that one is something more than human. Now, *my* illness is over. The finer one is, the more one can endure."

"Crack!" went the egg-shell as a cart passed over it.

"Oh, how it crushes one!" exclaimed the Darning-needle. "Now I am sure I shall be ill. I am breaking! I am breaking!"

But she did not break, although a cart passed over her, for she lay lengthways. And there she may lie.

XXXII.

THE BELL.

In a great city with many streets there was often heard at night, when the sun was setting and the clouds shone like burnished gold, a strange sound like the tolling of a church bell. But it was only heard for a moment, on account of the noise. "Now the evening Bell sounds," said people; "the sun is setting."

But those who went outside the town where the houses were scattered, with gardens and fields, saw a far lovelier sunset, and heard the sound of the Bell quite plainly. It sounded as if it came from a bell far in the deep, fragrant forest, and he who looked thither became at once solemn.

A long while after, one person said to another, "I wonder if there is a church in that forest? The Bell has a lovely sound; let us go out and see if we can find it."

And the rich drove and the poor walked; but the way was a very long one, so that when they reached a clump of willow-trees on the borders of the forest they sat down, looked up into the trees, and thought they were now really in the country.

A restaurant-keeper from the town raised a tent there, hanging a bell above it. It was, however, one without a clapper.

Then when people returned home they said that the trip had been very romantic, and that is much more than tea and bread-and-butter.

Three persons asserted that they had penetrated the forest to the other side, and they had all along heard the solemn sound, but to them it seemed to come from the town. One even wrote a poem about it, saying that it was like the call of a mother to her dearest child; no melody was more beautiful.

The emperor of the land was also attracted by the sound, and he promised that he who penetrated the forest, and ascertained whence

the sound came, should have the title of "The World's Bell-ringer,"[1] even if there was no bell.

Then many people journeyed to the forest, but only one returned with a kind of explanation. Nobody had been very far in, but still this person maintained that the sound proceeded from a great owl in a hollow tree. It was a kind of "bird-of-wisdom," which kept on knocking its head against the tree; but whether the sound came from its head or from the hollow trunk he could not tell. And so he was created "The



"A RESTAURANT-KEEPER FROM THE TOWN RAISED A TENT THERE."

World's Bell-ringer;" and he wrote every year a treatise about the owl, but still people knew but little.

It was just the day of confirmation and first communion,[2] and the parson had preached so beautifully to the young people that they were very agitated. It was an important day to them, for from that day they would be considered men and women, and the child's soul would enter a more serious sphere.

It was the most beautiful sunshine when the confirmed walked out of the town, and from the forest the strange sound of the mysterious Bell was heard. They all wished at once to see it, with the exception

[1] *Klokker* (bell-ringer) is in Danish also synonymous with a fool. — Tr.

[2] In Scandinavia, all children are confirmed about the age of eighteen, and are then considered ready to enter the world. — Tr.

of three. One of them wanted to go home and try on a ball-dress, — her first, — for that was to her the object of being confirmed. The second was a poor lad who had been obliged to borrow the clothes and boots for the great occasion from the son of his father's landlord, which he had to return at a fixed hour. The third said that he had always been a good son, and never went into a strange place unless his parents allowed him, and that he intended to remain so. That was not to be laughed at; but still the others laughed.

Thus, three did not go. The rest went, and the sun shone warmly, and the birds sang so that the young people joined in.

Soon, however, two of the youngest became tired and returned to the town, while two others sat down to bind wreaths, and the rest reached the willow-trees. Then they said to each other, "Now we are here, and the Bell does not exist. It is all people's imagination."

At the same moment the Bell sounded, so sonorous and solemn that five of them decided to go some little way into the forest. It was so close and leafy that they could hardly get along. Anemones and ferns grew yards high, while blooming convolvulus and creepers formed garlands from tree to tree, in which the nightingale sang and the sunbeams played. Oh, it was so lovely! But it was impossible for girls to get farther, as there were great blocks of stone in the way, covered with moss of all colors, between which the purest water bubbled with a clucking sound.

"Perhaps that is the Bell," said one, lying down to listen. "I will inquire into it;" and he was left behind.

They reached a house of bark and branches, with a big rose-tree outside, the branches of which reached over the gable, and under it hung a little bell. Was that it? To this they all agreed with the exception of one, who maintained that it was too small to be heard so far, and that the notes which touched the human heart were of quite a different nature. He that spoke was a prince; and so the rest said that for this reason he of course claimed to be wiser than anybody else.

Therefore they let him proceed alone, and as he did so his soul became more and more filled with the solitariness of the forest. And he could still hear the little bell with which the others were contented, and even now and then, when the wind blew that way, the gong at the tea-tent. But above all sounded the deep, solemn notes from *the* Bell, stronger and stronger, till it sounded like a grand organ; and the sound came from the left, — from the side where the heart is.

All of a sudden there was a rustle in the underwood, and a little lad in wooden shoes, and short jacket with sleeves far above his wrists, stood before the Prince.

They recognized each other at once. The Lad was he who could not follow because he had to return his borrowed clothes and boots. That he had done, and then wandered in search of the Bell in his heavy shoes and ragged clothes; for the Bell drew him with its grand, solemn notes.

"Let us join company!" exclaimed the Prince. But the poor Lad in the heavy shoes felt very bashful, and pulling at his sleeves, feared that he could not follow fast enough. He thought, however, that the Bell should be sought to the right, for that side was always given to what was great and renowned.

"Then we shall not meet," said the Prince, nodding to the poor Lad, who went into the darkest and closest part of the forest, where the thorns tore his ragged clothes and made his hands and face stream with blood.

The Prince, too, was much torn; but the sun shone on his path, and him we will follow, for he was a plucky fellow.

"I will find the Bell," he said to himself, "if I have to go to the end of the world."

Nasty monkeys sat in the trees, saying to each other, "Shall we scratch him? Shall we scratch him? He is a Prince."

But he wandered on unmolested into the deepest part of the forest, where the rarest flowers bloomed. There were white narcissuses with red stems, azure tulips which shone in the breeze, and apple-trees, the fruit of which was like great glittering soap-bubbles. Only fancy how they must have sparkled in the sunshine! Around the loveliest meadows, where stags and does played in the grass, grew splendid oaks and beeches, in the fissures of which flourished long green grass, and around were calm lakes in which white swans were swimming.

The Prince halted often to listen, and often he believed that the sound of the Bell came from one of the lakes; but he soon discovered that it came from a deeper part of the forest.

Then the sunset and the sky became as red as fire, and it was so silent in the forest that the Prince fell on his knees and said his evening prayer, adding, "I never find what I seek! Now the sun is setting. Night is approaching. Once more I wish to behold the golden orb. I will ascend the cliffs yonder, high as the tallest tree."

And he seized the roots and the creepers, and climbed up the moist

rocks, where serpents wallowed and toads slipped under his foot; but he reached the summit before the sun sank, and oh, what a splendor he beheld!

The ocean, the great magnificent ocean, rolling its long waves toward the shore, lay before him, and far out, where heaven and sea met, the sun stood like a great golden altar. Everything was blended together in the most gorgeous colors, and the sea and the forest sang, in which his heart joined. All Nature was one vast sacred temple, in which the



"AND THE PRINCE LAID HIS ARM ROUND THE POOR LAD'S SHOULDER."

trees and the clouds were the pillars, flowers and grass the woven cloth, and the heaven the great cupola.

Up above, the red colors faded away as the sun disappeared; but then millions of stars were lighted, shining like diamonds, and the Prince held out his arms towards sea and heaven. At that moment the poor Lad with the ragged clothes and the heavy shoes approached him. He had reached the goal at the same time, — reached it by *his* road, — and the Prince laid his arm round the poor Lad's shoulder.

Thus the two wanderers, who had met at last, though by different roads, stood in the great TEMPLE OF POETRY, and above them sounded the invisible sacred Bell, while angels floated around it singing "Hallelujah!"

XXXIII.

GRANDMOTHER.

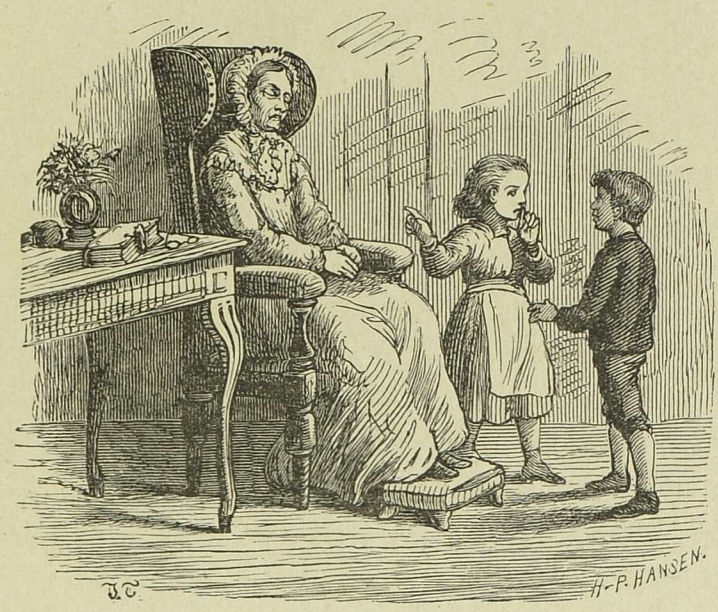
GRANDMOTHER is very old, and she has so many wrinkles in her face, and quite white hair, but her eyes shine like two stars. Indeed, they are much prettier, for they are so bright and soft to look into. And she can tell the loveliest stories, and she has a dress with great flowers all over it, made of silk so thick that it crackles. Grandmother knows so much; for she lived long before father and mother, — that is quite certain. Grandmother has a hymn-book with thick silver clasps, in which she often reads, in the middle of which lies a rose; but it is quite flat and dry, and not so lovely as those before her in the glass on the table. And still she smiles more pleasantly at this than the others; yes, at times even tears come into her eyes.

Why is it that she looks so much at the faded flower in the book? Do you know it? Every time Grandmother's tears fall on the flower its color becomes brighter, and the rose swells and fills the whole room with its fragrance. The walls sink like shadows, and all round lie the lovely green woods, where the sun shines between the leaves, and Grandmother — why, she is young, a lovely girl with golden hair and round, rosy cheeks! No rose is more beautiful; but the eyes, the lovely soft eyes, they are still hers. By her side sits a man so young and handsome; he gives her the rose and she smiles; Grandmother cannot smile thus now. Yes, now she does! He is gone. Many thoughts and many forms pass by. The handsome man is gone; the rose lies in the hymn-book; and Grandmother, — yes, Grandmother is again the old lady, sitting there and looking at the faded rose in the book.

Now Grandmother is dead! She was sitting in the arm-chair, telling such a long, splendid story. "And now it is finished," she said, "and I am very tired; so let me sleep a little while." Then she leaned back and drew her breath. She slept.

But she became more and more quiet, and peace and happiness overspread her face like a sunbeam; and so they said she was dead.

She was laid in a black coffin and swathed in her white garment; she looked as beautiful as before, though her eyes were closed. But all the wrinkles were gone, and she had a smile round her mouth, and her hair was so white and venerable. Neither did we feel afraid at looking at the dead, for had she not been our dear, kind Grandmother? And the hymn-book was laid under her head, — and so they buried Grandmother.



"BUT SHE BECAME MORE AND MORE QUIET."

On the grave, close to the wall, a rose-tree was planted, and it was full of flowers. The nightingale sang over it, and inside the church the loveliest hymns in the book of Grandmother were being played. And the moon shone right down upon the grave, but the deceased was not there. Every child might, without fear, at night pluck a rose. One dead person knows more than all the living put together. The dead know what terror they would create if they appeared among us, but they are better than we, therefore they do not come. There is dust within, dust above the coffin. The hymn-book with all its leaves, and the rose with all its memories, are dust; but above them new roses bloom, the nightingale sings, and the organ plays. We remember the old Grandmother with the mild, ever-youthful eyes. *Eyes cannot die!* Ours shall once more behold her, young and lovely as when she first kissed the fresh red rose which is now dust in the grave.

XXXIV.

THE ELF-HILL.

SOME Lizards were running in and out of the fissures in an old tree. They understood each other quite well, for they could speak the lizard's tongue.

"Listen what a stir and bustle there is in the old Elf-hill," said one of them. "I have not closed eye on account of it for two nights. I might as well have the toothache, for then I cannot sleep either."

"There is something up, in there," responded another, "for they let the Elf-hill remain on four red pillars till cock-crow, and the Elf-maidens are learning new dances. There is something up."

"I have spoken with an Earth-worm of my acquaintance," said a third. "He had just come up from the Elf-hill, where he had been digging day and night. He had heard a great deal. See, of course, he could n't, miserable creature! but to feel and listen he understands. They are expecting visitors in the Elf-hill, — highly distinguished visitors, — but whom, the Worm would n't say; perhaps he did n't know. All the Will-o'-the-wisps have had notice to attend in a torchlight procession, as it is called, and silver and gold plate, of which there is much in the hill, has been polished in the moonlight."

"Who can the guests possibly be?" asked all the Lizards. "What is up, in there? Listen to the stir and bustle!"

At the same moment the Elf-hill opened and an elderly Elf-maiden tripped out. She was hollow along the back,[1] but otherwise properly dressed. It was the Elf-king's housekeeper, and being distantly related to him she wore a heart of amber on the forehead. Her feet went so fast — trip, trip, trip! How she could run, — and that right down to Night-jar by the marsh!

[1] Elf-maidens are credited with being fair in front and hollow at the back. — TR.

"You will be asked to the Elf-hill this very night," she said. "But will you first do us the kindness to take round our invitations? You can do something, as you have no household of your own. We shall have some very distinguished guests, trolls,[1] who really are something, and therefore the old King wishes everything done in style."

"Who's to be asked?" inquired the Night-jar.

"To the balls the whole world may come, even human beings if they can only do something we do, or talk in their sleep. But to *the* great *fête* the selection will be very strict. We will only have the *crême de la crême*. I have had an argument about it with the Elf-king, as I think we ought not to include ghosts. The Sea-king and his daughters must be asked first. They don't like much, I know, to come on dry land, but they shall each have a wet stone to sit on, or something better, so I don't think they will 'decline with thanks' this time. All the old noble trolls of the first class and with a tail, the Water-sprite,[2] and the Brownie we must have; neither can we pass over the Grave-pig[3] and the Death-horse.[4] The latter belong certainly to the clergy, whom we don't care much about; but they have their function, so it cannot be helped, as they are of our people and visit us."

"Very good!" shrieked the Night-jar; and away it flew.

The Elf-maidens danced already on the hill, in long veils woven of mist and moonbeams, — and that looks well to those who like it. In the middle of the Elf-hill the great hall was splendidly arranged. The floor had been polished with moonlight and the walls with witches' butter, so that they shone in the light. The kitchen was full of toads roasting on spits, snake-skins filled with babies' fingers, and salads of mushroom spawn, wet rat-snouts, and thistles, beer brewed by the Old Woman of the Marsh,[5] foaming saltpetre wine, — everything of the best, rusty nails and crushed church-window panes forming the dessert.

The old Elf-king had his gold crown polished with the dust of Princesses' slate-pencils, and those he had great trouble in getting. In the windows new curtains were hung up and fastened with snake-slime. Yes, there was a noise and bustle!

[1] Supernatural beings, believed by the Scandinavians to inhabit their mountains. — Tr.

[2] *Nökken*, a supernatural being believed by the Scandinavians to dwell in streams, and who plays the most fantastic and captivating melodies on a violin or harp. — Tr.

[3] It was once the custom in Denmark to bury a pig under the churches. — Tr.

[4] The spirit of a horse on three legs haunting the graveyard at night, auguring death to him who sees him. — Tr.

[5] Another Scandinavian supernatural being. — Tr.

"Now we have only to make the place smell sweet with burnt tallow-candles and pigs' bristles, and I have done what *I* can," said the old Elf-maiden.

"Papa, dear," said the youngest daughter, "do tell me now who the great people are who are coming."

"Well," the Elf-king replied, "I suppose I must. Two of my daughters must be ready for marriage; they are sure to go off. The old Troll from Norway up yonder, who lives in the Dovre Mountains, and who has many a mountain castle besides, as well as a silver-mine, is coming with his two lads to find a wife. The old Troll is such a true, honest old Norse veteran, merry and straightforward. I know him of old, and we have drunk brotherhood.[1] He came down here to get a wife,—she is dead now. She was the daughter of the King of the Möen Chalk-cliffs.[2] He 'chalked her up,' as one might say. How I long to see the dear old fellow! The boys, I am told, are unruly and spoilt; but one may wrong them, and they will improve with age. I will have an eye on them."

"And when do they come?" asked another daughter.

"That depends on wind and weather," replied the Elf-king; "they travel economically; they come by water. I wanted him to come across Sweden, but he did not care about that. He does n't advance with the times, and that I don't like."

At the same moment two Will-o'-the-wisps came running up, one faster than the other, so he arrived first.

"They are coming! they are coming!" they shouted.

"Give me my crown, and I will stand in the moonlight," said the Elf-king.

His daughters lifted their veils and bowed right down to the ground.

There stood the old Troll from Norway, with a crown of icicles and polished fir-cones; besides this, he wore a bear-skin coat and great furry boots; but the sons went with bare necks, for they wanted to be thought athletes.

"Is this a hill?" they asked. "In Norway, we call it a hole."

"Boys," said the old Troll, "holes go inwards, hills upwards. Have n't you got eyes?"

The only thing which seemed to surprise them was that they understood the language so well.[3]

[1] A Scandinavian custom. — Tr. [2] A mythical Danish monarch. — Tr.

[3] The Norwegian and Danish languages are almost identical. — Tr.

"Now, don't give yourselves airs," said the old man; "one might suppose you were not brought up properly."

And so they went into the Elf-hill, where there was really fine company and everything arranged in proper style. The people from the sea sat at table in water-butts, saying it was just like being at home. And every one had good manners except the two little Norwegian trolls, who put their feet on the table, believing it was the right thing.



"'GIVE ME MY CROWN, AND I WILL STAND IN THE MOONLIGHT,' SAID THE ELF-KING."

"The feet out of the dish!"[1] shouted the old Troll; and so they obeyed.

They tickled the ladies next to them with fir-cones brought with them in their pockets, and then they drew off their boots to be comfortable, and put them in the laps of their partners. But the father, the old Dovre Troll, behaved quite differently. He told stories about the grand Norwegian mountains, about the waterfalls which sounded like thunder and organs, and about the salmon jumping the waterfall to the accompaniment of the gold harp of the Water-sprite. He told them about the lovely winter nights when the bells of the sleigh-horses sound merrily, and the young people run swiftly across the ice with

[1] Scandinavian saying. — TR.

torches, starting the fishes beneath. Yes, he could narrate so that everybody saw all! It was like hearing the penetrating whine of the saw-mills, and seeing the boys and girls dance the *Halling* dance.[1] Heigh-ho! All of a sudden the old Troll gave the old Elf-maiden a hearty kiss. It was something like a kiss, and still they were not related.

Then the Elf-maidens had to dance both waltz and mazurka, and they looked very handsome in both. How they could use their legs! And they whirled round so quickly that the Death-horse and Grave-pig had to leave the room.

"Whoa! whoa!" cried the old Troll. "They know how to use their legs; but what can they do besides that?"

"You shall know," said the Elf-king, calling his youngest daughter. She was as slender and bright as a moonbeam, and was the handsomest of the sisters. She took a white bit of wood in her mouth and disappeared. That was her accomplishment.

But the Troll said that was an accomplishment he did not like, and he did not think his boys did either.

The next could walk by her own side as if she had a shadow, and that the troll-people have not.

The third was of quite a different nature. She had been taught in the brewery of the Old Woman of the Marsh, and knew how to lard old trunks of trees with glow-worms.

"She will make a good wife," said the old Troll, and winked her good health with his eyes, for he did not wish to drink too much.

Then came the fourth Elf-maid carrying a gold harp, and when she struck the first chord everybody had to lift up the left leg, all troll-people being left-legged; and when she struck the next, they all had to do as she bid.

"That's a dangerous woman," said the old Troll; "but what can the next do?"

She replied, "I have learned to like the Norwegians; I don't marry if I cannot go to Norway."

But her youngest sister whispered to the old Troll, "That is only because she has heard a Norwegian song in which it says that should even the world fall, the rocks of Norway will remain standing; and she is afraid of perishing."

"Ho! ho!" said the Troll, "is that it? But what can the seventh and last do?"

[1] A celebrated Norwegian kind of Highland fling.

"Six before seven," said the Elf-king, for he could reckon.

But the sixth was very reluctant to come forward.

"I can only tell people the truth," she said. "Nobody cares about me, and I have enough to do to sew my shroud."

Then came the seventh and last; and what could she do? Why, she could tell stories, and as many as you liked.

"Here are my five fingers," said the old Troll; "tell me one for each."

And the Elf-maiden took him by the wrist, and he laughed till it clucked within him; and when she came to the ring-finger, which had a ring on it as if it knew there was to be a wedding, the old Troll cried, "Hold on there, the hand is yours! I will have you for a wife myself."

But the Elf-maiden said that the stories about Ring-finger and Little Playman were still wanting.

"We 'll hear those in the winter," replied the Troll, "and we 'll also hear about the fir and the birch trees, and about the *Hulder*,[1] and the biting cold. You shall have an opportunity of relating, for that nobody can do properly up there. And we shall sit in the rocky castle lit by the flaming torches from the fir-tree, and drink mead from the golden horns of the old Viking Kings of Norway; the Water-sprite has given me two. And sometimes we shall have a visit from the Brownie, who will sing all the songs of the maidens of the mountain farms to you. That will be a merry life! And the salmon will jump the waterfall and strike the mountain wall, but he does not get in. Yes, believe me, we have a high old time of it in old Norway; but where are the boys?"

Yes, where were the boys? They were running about outside the Hill, blowing out the Will-o'-the-wisps, who had come in a torchlight procession.

"Is that showing good manners — running about like that?" shouted the old Troll. "I have taken a mother for you, now you can take two of the aunts!"

But the boys said they would rather make speeches and drink brotherhood than marry.

And so they made speeches and drank brotherhood with everybody, reversing their glasses to show there was nothing left. Then they took off their coats and laid down on the table to sleep, to show that they

[1] Norwegian supernatural being. A wood-maiden of lovely appearance, but with a cow's tail, who by her song entices men to her abode. — Tr.

were quite at ease; while the old veteran Troll danced round the room with his young bride, and at last exchanged boots with her; for that is far more fashionable than to exchange rings.



"BUT WHERE ARE THE BOYS?"

"There the cock crows!" cried the old Elf-maiden, who was housekeeper. "Close the shutters so that the sun does not burn us up."

And so the Elf-hill closed.

But outside the Lizards ran in and out, and one said to the other, "How I liked that old Norse Troll!"

"I prefer the lads," said the earth-worm. But of course he could not see, miserable creature!



XXXV.

THE RED SHOES.

THERE was once a little girl who was very pretty; but in the summer she had to go barefooted, for she was poor, and in the winter she wore heavy wooden shoes, which made her little feet so red that it was dreadful to see them.

In the middle of the village the old shoemaker's wife sat sewing a pair of small shoes, made as well as she could out of pieces of old red cloth. They were very clumsy, but it was well meant; and they were intended for the little girl. The little girl's name was Karen.

On the very day her mother was buried she received the red shoes and wore them for the first time, though they were certainly not suited for mourning; but she had no others, and in them without stockings she followed the miserable coffin.

Just then came a large old carriage in which sat a stout old lady, who, looking at the little girl, felt pity for her, and said to the clergyman, "Give me that little girl and I will adopt her."

Karen thought that certainly the red shoes were the cause of this; but the old lady thought them hideous, and they were burned. Karen was clothed neatly and cleanly, and people said she was pretty, but the looking-glass said, "You are more than pretty; you are beautiful."

Then the Queen passed through the land, having her little daughter with her, who was a Princess; and the people crowded to the palace, and Karen with them, where the little Princess, stood on a balcony in fine white clothes and let herself be stared at. She had neither train nor crown, but wore magnificent red satin shoes, which were much more beautiful than those the old shoemaker's wife had made for Karen. Certainly nothing in the world can be compared with red shoes.

Karen had now grown old enough to be confirmed, for which occasion she had new clothes, and was to have new shoes too. The rich shoemaker in the town took her measure in his own shop, where there were glass cases full of pretty shoes and shining boots. They looked very pretty; but the old lady could not see well, nor did she take much pleasure in looking at them. Now, among the shoes was a red pair, exactly like those the Princess had worn; and the shoemaker said they had been made for an Earl's daughter, but did not fit her.

"I suppose they are made of patent leather, they are so shiny," said the old lady.

"Yes, they do shine," Karen answered, and as they fitted her, they were bought; but the old lady knew nothing about their being red, for she would never have allowed Karen to be confirmed in red shoes, which, however, she was.

Every one looked at her feet, and as she walked up the aisle to the altar it seemed to her as if even the portraits of the deceased bishops and their wives, on the walls, had their eyes fixed upon her shoes; and it was of these only she thought when the clergyman laid his hand upon her head and spoke of her christening, and that now, as a grown-up Christian, she took upon herself the covenant made with God. The organ was played so solemnly, while the pretty voices of the children sang, and the old clergyman sang too; but Karen thought only of her red shoes.

In the afternoon the old lady learned that the shoes were red, and she said that it was very wrong and unbecoming; and she told Karen that she must always wear black shoes when she went to church, even if they were old.

The next Sunday Karen was to receive the communion, and she looked first at her black shoes, then at the red ones; and looking at both again, she put on the red ones.

It was a beautiful sunny day, and the old lady and Karen walked along the footpath across a cornfield, where it was rather dusty.

At the door of the church stood an old soldier with a crutch, and a strange long beard which was rather red than white; and he bowed down to the ground, asking the old lady whether he should wipe the dust off her shoes. Karen stretched out her little foot as well, and the old soldier exclaimed, "See what beautiful dancing-shoes! They will keep on when you dance;" and he gave the sole a slap with his hand.

Then the old lady gave the soldier some money and went into the church with Karen. And all the people inside looked at Karen's red shoes, and all the pictures looked at them; and when she knelt before the altar and had the golden chalice at her lips, she thought only of her red shoes, and it seemed to her as if she saw them floating in the cup. She forgot to sing the hymns and forgot to say her prayers.

Then all the people left the church, and the old lady got into her carriage. Karen lifted up her foot to get in also, when the old soldier said, "See what beautiful dancing-shoes!" and Karen could not resist dancing a few steps; but now she had begun, her feet continued to dance: it was exactly as if the shoes had power over them. She danced round the churchyard wall and could not stop herself, so that the coachman had to run after her and lay hold of her, and he lifted her into the carriage; but her feet went on dancing so that she kicked the old lady, and her legs had no rest till the shoes were off.

When they reached home the shoes were put into a cupboard, but she could not resist looking at them constantly.

By and by the old lady was taken ill, and it was said she could not live. She had to be nursed and waited upon, and no one was more attentive than Karen; but there was a great ball in the town, to which Karen was invited. She looked at the old lady, who could not recover, and then at the red shoes, thinking there could be no sin in going; so she put them on, — and in that there was no harm, — and went to the ball and began to dance.

But when she wanted to turn to the right, the shoes turned to the left; and when she wanted to dance up the room, the shoes danced down, down the stairs, through the streets, and out at the city gates. She danced, and could not help dancing, across the fields and into the dark forest.

There was light between the trees, and she thought it was the moon, for there was a face; but it was the old soldier with the red beard, who nodded and said, "See what beautiful dancing-shoes!"

Then she became frightened, and wished to tear off the red shoes, but they stuck fast. She tore off her stockings, but the shoes seemed to have grown to her feet; and she danced across the fields and meadows, in rain and sunshine, by day and by night, — but the night was the most dreadful.

She danced into the churchyard, but the dead there did not dance; they had something better to do. For her, however, there was no rest; and when she danced up to the open church-door, she saw an angel in white garments, with wings reaching from the shoulders down to the ground. Its countenance was serious and severe, and in its hand it held a sword which was broad and shining.

"Thou shalt dance," said the angel, — "dance in thy red shoes till thou art pale and cold, till thou shrinkest away to a skeleton. Dance shalt thou from door to door; and where proud children dwell shalt thou knock, so that they may hear and fear thee. Thou shalt dance, dance — "

"Mercy!" cried Karen; but she did not hear the angel's answer, for the shoes carried her on across the fields and roads, and she had to dance incessantly.

One morning she danced past a door which she knew well. From within sounded the singing of hymns, and a coffin was being carried out covered with flowers. Then she knew that the old lady was dead, and felt that she was forsaken by all, and even condemned by the angel of Heaven.

She danced — for she could not help dancing. The shoes carried her through brambles and thorns till the blood ran down her lacerated limbs, and she danced across the heath towards a lonely little house. She knew that the executioner lived there, and knocking at the window with her knuckle she said, "Come out! come out! I cannot come in, for I am obliged to dance!"

And the executioner said, "I suppose you do not know who I am? I cut wicked people's heads off, and I now hear my axe ring."

"Do not cut my head off," Karen said, "for then I could not repent of my sin; but cut off my feet with the red shoes."

She then confessed her whole sin, and the executioner cut off her feet with the red shoes; but the shoes danced, with the little feet in them, across the fields far into the forest.

He made feet of wood for her, and a pair of crutches, teaching her the hymn which condemned criminals always sing; and she kissed

the hand which had wielded the axe, and went her way across the heath.

"I have now suffered enough for the red shoes," she said, "and I will go into the church that people may see me;" but when she got near the church the red shoes danced before her, and being frightened, she turned back.

The whole week she was sad, and shed many bitter tears; but when Sunday came she said, "Now, surely, I have striven and suffered enough, and I believe I am as good as many of those who sit in church



"BUT WHEN SHE GOT NEAR THE CHURCH THE RED SHOES DANCED BEFORE HER."

and think so much of themselves. I will go there too." But she got no farther than the churchyard, for there she saw the red shoes, and becoming frightened, turned back, earnestly repenting of her sins.

She then went to the clergyman's house, and begged that she might be taken into service, promising that she would be industrious and do all she could. Wages she did not care for, but she only sought a roof to cover her, and to be with good people. The clergyman's wife took pity on her and received her into her service, and she was steady and industrious. She sat perfectly still and listened when of an evening the

clergyman read the Bible aloud. And all the little children were very fond of her; but when they spoke of dress, show, or beauty, she shook her head.

The following Sunday all went to church, and they asked her whether she would not go with them; but sadly, and with tears in her eyes, she looked towards her crutches, and then the others went there to hear the Word of God. But she went all alone to her little room, which was only large enough for her bed and one chair, and there she seated herself with her Prayer-Book; and as she read in it with pious earnestness, the wind carried the notes of the organ across to her from the church, and raising her eyes filled with tears, she cried, "O Lord, have mercy upon me!"

Then the sun shone in so brightly; and immediately before her stood the angel she had seen at the church-door, not holding, as then, a sharp sword, but a green branch covered with roses, and he touched the ceiling with it, which was immediately raised, a golden star glittering where it had been touched. And it touched the walls, which spread themselves out, and she saw the organ, the old portraits in the church, and the whole congregation singing from their hymn-books; for the church had come to the poor girl into her little room, or she had been transported thither. She sat among the congregation, who looked up when the hymn was ended, and nodding to her, said, "It was right of you to come, Karen."

"It is an act of mercy," she said.

The notes of the organ vibrated through the church, and the voices of the children sounded so soft and beautiful. The clear bright sunshine streamed in through the window upon Karen, and her heart was so filled with sunshine, peace, and joy that it broke. Her soul took its flight up to Heaven, and there no one asked after the red shoes.

XXXVI.

THE JUMPERS.

THE Flea, the Grasshopper, and the Leap-frog once wished to see which of them could jump the highest; so they invited the whole world, and all besides who would like to be present, to witness the glorious sight. And they were three really good jumpers that assembled in the room.

"I will give my daughter to the one that jumps the highest," said the King; "for it would be too great a shame that they should jump for nothing."

The Flea stepped forth first; and he had such excellent manners, making his bow all around, for he had the blood of a noble young lady in his veins, and was accustomed only to mix with the human race, — and there is a great deal in that.

Next the Grasshopper came, who was certainly considerably heavier, but he was well made, and wore a green uniform, in which he had been born; and he asserted, besides, that his family was of great antiquity in the land of Egypt, where it was held in high esteem. He had come direct from the fields, and had been put into a house made of cards. It was a house three stories high, made entirely of picture-cards, with the pictures inside; and there were windows, as well as a door, which were cut right through the body of the Queen of Hearts. "I sing so beautifully," he said, "that sixteen born crickets, who have chirped from their earliest youth, and have yet never had a house of cards made for them, grew still thinner than they were before, with sheer vexation, when they heard me."

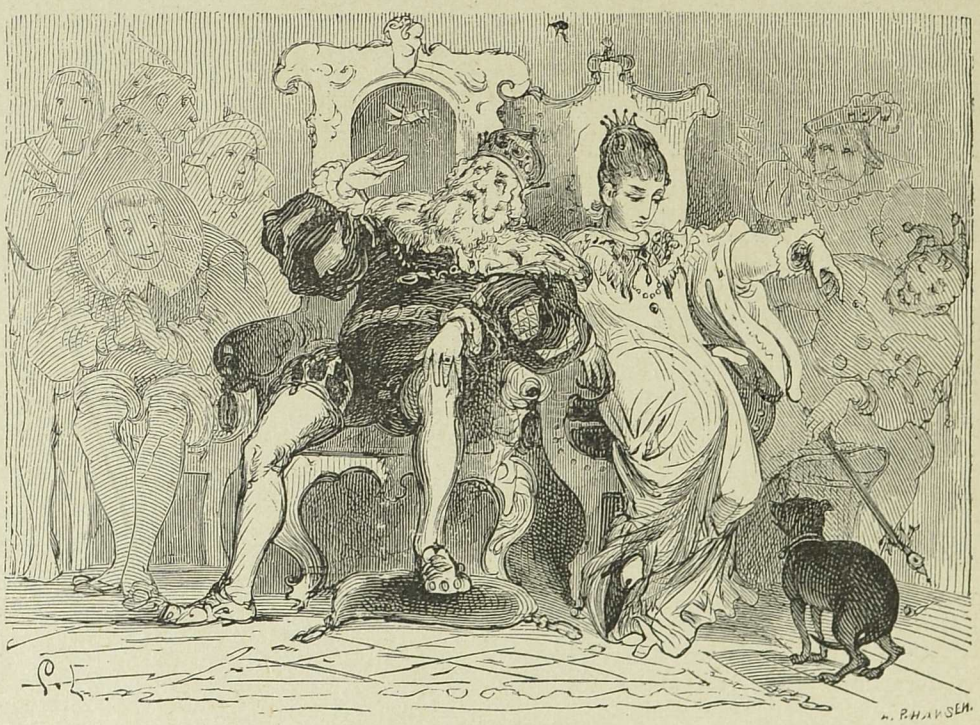
Both of them — the Flea, as well as the Grasshopper — announced who they were, and that they thought themselves worthy of marrying a Princess.

The Leap-frog said nothing, but it was said of him that he thought all the more; and the Court-dog, as soon as he had sniffed at him,

answered for his being of good family. The old Councillor, who had received three orders for his silence, assured them that the Leap-frog was gifted with the power of prophecy; as it could be told by his back whether there was to be a mild or severe winter, which was more than could be told by the back of those who write the Almanacs.

"Well, I say nothing, but I have my own opinion," observed the old King.

Now the jumping was to begin. The Flea jumped so high that no one could see it, and they therefore asserted that it had not jumped at all, which was very unkind.



"IT JUMPED RIGHT INTO THE KING'S FACE."

The Grasshopper did not jump half so high, but it jumped right into the King's face, which he did not think in the least nice.

The Leap-frog stood still for a long time considering, so that at last it was thought he could not jump at all.

"I hope he has not been taken ill," the Dog said, and sniffed at him, when all at once he gave a little one-sided jump into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting upon a golden stool.

Then the King said, "To jump up to my daughter is certainly the highest of all jumps; but it requires head to think of that, and the Leap-frog has shown that he has one."

And he got the Princess.

"I jumped the highest, for all that," the Flea said; "but it does n't matter; let her have the goose's back with the stick and the lump of pitch."



"THE GRASSHOPPER TOOK UP HIS ABODE IN THE NEAREST FIELD."

After this the Flea went into foreign service, where, it is said, he was killed.

The Grasshopper took up his abode in the nearest field, and ruminating on how matters are managed in this world, sang his own melancholy song, from which we learned the story, — which may be untrue, although it is printed.

XXXVII.

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SWEEP.

HAVE you ever seen a very old wooden cabinet, quite black with age, and carved all over with leaves and fretwork? Such a one stood in a sitting-room, and had been in the family from the great-grandmother's time. It was covered from top to bottom with carved roses and tulips, among which there were the most extraordinary circles, and from these sprang the antlered heads of stags, while on the top, in the middle, stood a whole figure. He was ridiculous enough to look at, with goat's legs, short horns on his head, and a long beard; besides which he was constantly grinning, — for it could not be called a laugh. The children christened him the Goatsleg-high-adjutant-general-military-commandant, for that was a difficult name to pronounce, and a title not conferred upon many. To carve him cannot have been easy work; but there he stood, constantly looking at the table under the looking-glass, for there was the loveliest little china Shepherdess. Her shoes were gilt, and her dress neatly fastened up with a red rose; and then she had a gilt hat and a shepherdess's crook. She was, indeed, lovely. Close to her stood a Sweep, as black as any coal; but he too was entirely made of china; he was quite as neat and clean as any one else, for he was only representing a sweep, of course. The porcelain-manufacturer might just as well have made a prince of him.

There he stood, with his face red and white, just like a girl, and that was a mistake, for it ought to have been blackened a little. He was close to the Shepherdess, both having been placed where they stood; and this being the case, they were naturally engaged to each other; and well suited they were, for they were made of the same china, and were both fragile.

Not far from them there was another figure, but three times as big, — a Chinese who could nod his head. He was also made of china, and claimed to be the Shepherdess's grandfather; but that he could not

prove. Still he claimed authority over her, and had promised her to the Goatsleg-high-adjutant-general-military-commandant.

"There you will have a husband," said the old Chinese, "who I almost believe is made of mahogany; and he has a whole cabinet full of plate, besides the valuables in the hidden drawers."

"I will not go into the dark cabinet," said the little Shepherdess, "for I have heard that he has eleven china wives in there."

"Then you will make the twelfth," said the old Chinese; "for this very night your marriage shall take place." He then nodded his head and fell asleep.



"'YOUR WILL IS MY LAW,' SAID THE LITTLE SWEEP."

The little Shepherdess cried and looked at her dearly-beloved china Sweep.

"I must ask you," she said, "to go with me out into the wide world, for here we cannot stay."

"Your will is my law," said the little Sweep. "Let us go at once; and I have no doubt that by my calling I shall gain sufficient to keep you."

"I wish we were safely off the table," she said; "for I shall never be happy till we are out in the wide world."

The Sweep consoled her, and showed her how to put her little feet on the projections and ornaments round the legs, and by the aid of his ladder they got safely on to the floor; but when they looked towards the old cabinet all was confusion there. The stags stretched their heads farther out, raising their antlers, and turned their necks from side to side. The Goatsleg-high-adjutant-general-military-commandant jumped high up into the air, and cried as loud as he could to the old Chinese, "They are running away! They are running away!"

At this they became frightened, and jumped into the cupboard under the window-seat.

Here lay three or four packs of cards, which were not complete, and a little doll's theatre, in which a play was being acted; and the Queens of Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, and Spades, sat in the front row fanning themselves with tulips, while behind them stood the Knaves. The plot of the play was the difficulties thrown in the way of two persons who wished to marry each other; and the little Shepherdess cried, for it was her own life.

"I cannot bear this," she said; "I must get out of the cupboard." But when they were out and looked up at the table, they saw that the old Chinese was awake and his whole body rocking.

"Now the old Chinese is coming," cried the little Shepherdess, falling down upon her china knees; for she was in such a fright.

"I have an idea," said the Sweep. "Let us get into the jar standing there in the corner, where we can lie on rose-leaves and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he comes."

"That would not do," she said; "besides, I know that the old Chinese and the jar were once engaged to each other, and there always remains some sort of tie between people who have had such a connection. No, there is nothing left for us but to go out into the wide world."

"Have you really courage to go out with me into the wide world?" asked the Sweep. "Have you considered how large it is, and that we can never come back here?"

"Yes, I have," she answered.

The Sweep looked at her intently, and then said: "My way lies up the chimney, and that way I know well enough; and if you really have courage to go with me, we shall soon mount up so high that they will never be able to reach us."

And he led her to the grate.

"How black it looks up there!" she said; but still she went with him, and they had not gone far when he exclaimed, "See, what a beautiful star is shining there above!"

It was a real star in the heavens, shining down upon them as if to show them the way. They crept on and climbed, and a dreadful way it was, — so high, so high! But he held on and lifted her, and showed her where to place her little china feet, till at last they reached the edge of the chimney, where they seated themselves; for they were very tired, as well they might be.



"SHE LAID HER LITTLE HEAD ON THE SWEEP'S SHOULDER."

The sky with all its stars was above them, and lower there were all the roofs of the city, and they could see so far around, so far out into the world. The poor Shepherdess had never imagined anything like it. She laid her little head on the Sweep's shoulder, and cried so that the gold was washed off her girdle.

"That is too much," she sobbed. "That I can never bear. The world is too large; oh, were I but back again on the table under the looking-glass! I shall never know happiness until I am back there. I have followed you into the world, and if you care for me you must go back with me."

The Sweep spoke most reasonably and sensibly to her, — spoke of the old Chinese and of the Goatsleg-high-adjutant-general-military-commandant; but she sobbed so violently that he was obliged to do as she wished, though it was foolish.

They therefore climbed down again with much trouble and difficulty, and when they got near the bottom they stopped to listen; but all being quiet they stepped into the room. There lay the old Chinese on the floor; he had fallen off the table when he attempted to follow them, and there he lay broken into three pieces. His whole back had come off in one piece, and his head had rolled far off into a corner of the room.

"That is horrible!" said the little Shepherdess; "my old grandfather is broken to pieces, and it is our fault. Oh, I shall never survive it!" and she wrung her little hands.

"He can be riveted," said the Sweep. "He can very well be riveted. Do not you give way so, for if they put a good strong rivet in his back and neck, he will be as good as new again, and will be able to say many unpleasant things to us yet."

"Do you think so?" she said; and they then got on to the table again, where they had always stood.

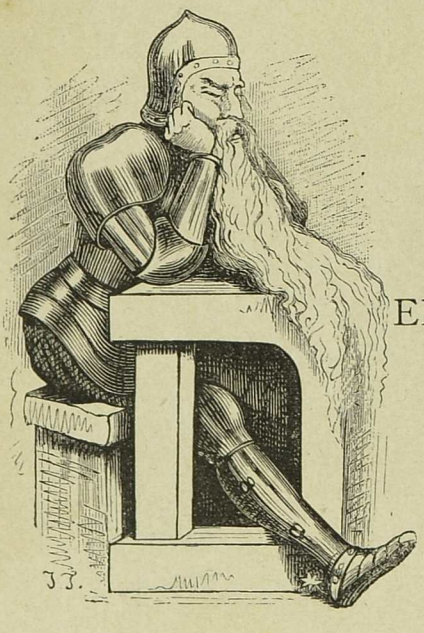
"It was not of much use going all the way we did," said the Sweep; "we might just as well have saved ourselves that trouble."

"Oh, if my poor old grandfather were but riveted!" said the Shepherdess. "Will it cost very much?"

The family had him riveted, and he was in every way as good as new again, excepting that, owing to the rivet in his neck, he could no longer nod his head.

"You have grown proud since you were broken to pieces," said the Goatsleg-high-adjutant-general-military-commandant, "but I do not see any reason for that. Now, am I to have her, or am I not?"

The Sweep and the little Shepherdess looked so beseechingly at the old Chinese, fearing that he would nod; but he could not. He did not choose to tell a stranger that he had a rivet in the back of his neck, so he was quiet; and the Shepherdess and Sweep remained together, loving each other till they were broken.



XXXVIII.

HOLGER DANSKE.

DENMARK possesses among her castles a very remarkable one called Kronborg. It lies close by the Sound, where thousands of ships pass every day, — English, Russian, and German; and they all salute the old fortress with their guns: "Boom! Boom!" And the fortress answers: "Boom! Boom!" for that is the manner in which they say "How do you do?" and answer, "Very well, thank you!"

In the winter no ships pass, as then the ice stretches right across to the Swedish coast like a great highroad. Swedish and Danish flags line the route, and the Swedes and the Danes say to each other, "How do you do?" and answer, "Very well, thank you!" not with guns, however, but with hearty shakes of the hands, while one purchases cakes and bread from the other; for strange fare tastes best.

But the grandest of all is the old castle of Kronborg; and beneath this it is that Holger Danske sits in the deep dark vaults where nobody goes. He is clad in steel armor, and rests his head on his strong arms, while his long beard flows across the marble table and has grown to it. He sleeps and dreams, but still he sees all that passes in Denmark.

And every Christmas Eve comes an angel who tells him that it was all true, and that he may continue to sleep, for there is no real danger to the country. But should Denmark once be in such danger, then old Holger Danske will rise from the table so violently that it will split when he withdraws his beard; and he will go forward to fight, so that it shall be heard in all the countries in the world.

All this an old grandfather was telling his little grandson, and the little boy knew that what grandfather told was true. And while the old

man related, he was carving a figure representing Holger Danske for the stem of a ship, for he was a carver of figure-heads for vessels, as they were named; and now he had carved Holger Danske, who stood there so proudly with his long beard, holding the broad battle-sword in one hand, and leaning with the other on the Danish coat-of arms.[1]



"ALL THIS AN OLD GRANDFATHER WAS TELLING HIS LITTLE GRANDSON."

And the old grandfather told the boy so much about Danish men and women, that at last the boy believed he knew more than Holger Danske himself, who only dreamt it all; and when the little fellow was in bed, he thought so much of it that he pressed his chin against the pillow, fancying he had a long beard grown fast to it.

But the old man remained at his work, in order to finish the last part of it,— the Danish coat-of-arms. Now he had finished, and put the whole aside; and he began to think of all he had told his little grand-

[1] Three springing lions, among nine blue hearts, on azure ground. — TR.

son, while he looked at the figure. He nodded his head and dried his spectacles, put them on again, and said, "In my time probably Holger Danske will not come; but the boy there in bed may see him and be with him in the hour of need." And the old man nodded again; and the more he looked at Holger Danske the more he thought it was a fine figure he had carved. It seemed to him to assume colors, and the armor to glitter like steel, the hearts in the coat-of-arms to become purple, and the springing lions, with their golden crowns, to be alive.

"That is the loveliest coat-of-arms in the world," he said to himself. "The lions are the symbol of strength, and the hearts that of love." And he looked at the uppermost lion and thought of KING CANUTE, who conquered proud England; and he looked at the middle one and thought of Waldemar, who united Denmark and subjugated the Saxons; and at last he looked at the lowest and thought of Margaret, who united Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. But when he looked at the red hearts they became flames of fire, and his thoughts followed each one.

The first led them into a dark prison in which sat a beautiful woman, ELEONORA ULFELDT,[1] daughter of Christian IV.; and the flame fixed itself like a rose on her bosom and swelled with her heart, — the noblest and truest possessed by any Danish woman.

"Yes, that is a heart in the Danish coat-of-arms!" said the old man.

Then his thoughts followed the second flame, which led him out to sea, where the guns thundered and the ships lay enveloped in smoke; and the flame fixed itself on the breast of HUITFELDT as he blew himself and his ship into the air in order to save the rest of the fleet.[2]

The third flame led him to the wretched hut of Greenland where the missionary, HANS EGEDE, stood preaching with love in word and action.[3] The flame was a star on his breast, — a heart in the Danish coat-of-arms.

Next the thoughts of the old grandfather went before the flickering flame, for he knew whither it was going. In the humble room of the peasant's cottage stood FREDERICK VI., writing his name with chalk on

[1] This gifted princess was the wife of Count Ulfeldt, who, though a traitor to his king, Frederick III., was first amnestied but afterwards exiled. His wife was treacherously made captive in England and held in severe prison for twenty-three years by her persecutor, Queen Sophia Amelia. — TR.

[2] In the naval battle in Kjöge Bay between the Danes and the Swedes, in 1710, Huitfeldt's ship, the "Dannebrog," caught fire. To save the rest of the Danish fleet, on which his ship was drifting helplessly, he blew it with all on board into the air. — TR.

[3] Hans Egede went to Greenland as a missionary in 1721, and labored there for fifteen years, under frightful privations and hardships, spreading Christianity. — TR.

the beam.[1] The flame trembled on his breast, trembled in his heart. In the peasant's cottage his heart became a heart in Denmark's coat-of-arms. And the old grandfather dried his eyes, for he had known and lived for King Frederick with the silvery hair and honest blue eyes; and he folded his hands, looking straight before him. Then his daughter-in-law and son entered, saying that it was late, and that the old man ought to rest as soon as supper was over.

"But what a handsome figure you have carved, grandfather!" she said. "Holger Danske and the old Danish coat-of-arms! It seems to me I have seen that face before."

"No, I don't think you have," replied the old grandfather. "But *I* have, and I have tried to carve it in wood just as I saw it. It was when the English were in the harbor, the 2d of April, when we showed that we were true old Danes.[2] On board the 'Danmark,' of Steen Bille's squadron, where I fought, there was a man whom the bullets seemed to avoid. Merrily he sang old songs, and fought as if he were more than human. I recollect his face well; but whence he came and whither he went I don't know, nor anybody else. I often thought that it was old Holger Danske himself, who had come down from Kronberg to assist us in the hour of need. That was my belief, and there he stands."

And the figure threw a shadow right up the wall, even on to the ceiling; and it looked as if it were really Holger Danske himself who stood there, for the shadow moved; but that might have been caused by the flickering light. The woman kissed the old man's forehead, and led him to the great arm-chair by the table, where she and her husband, father to the little boy in bed, sat down to their evening meal. And the old grandfather talked about the Danish lions and the Danish hearts, about strength and gentleness, saying that there was another strength than that of the sword; and he pointed to the shelf on which lay HOLBERG'S[3] comedies, those he had read so often, and which were so amusing; one seemed almost to know every character.

"He, too, knew how to strike," said the old man. "He cut the

[1] Frederick VI. was greatly beloved by the peasantry. Once, on a journey in Jutland, he visited an old woman and wrote his name on a beam in her cottage as a remembrance. The peasantry begged to be allowed to carry his coffin to its last resting-place. — TR.

[2] Parker and Nelson's attack on Copenhagen, April 2, 1801.

[3] The greatest satirist Denmark has produced. His comedies were similar in style to Sheridan's (1684–1754).

foolish parts of people." And he nodded towards the looking-glass, where there hung an almanac with the Round Tower[1] on it.

"TYCHO BRAHE,[2] too, was a man who used the sword, though not to cut into flesh and bone, but to cut a great road among the stars of heaven."

"And then *he*,"[3] the old man continued, — "he whose father belonged to my calling, the son of the old figure-head carver, he whom I have seen myself, with the silvery locks and the broad shoulders, whose name is famous in all countries in the world, — *he* could chisel, while *I* can only carve. Yes, Holger Danske may come in many forms, and all will make Denmark's strength known in every part of the world. Let us drink Bertel's health."

But the little boy in bed saw distinctly the old castle of Kronborg by the Sound, and the real Holger Danske, who sat down in the deep vaults with his beard grown to the marble table, dreaming everything which took place up above. And Holger Danske, too, dreamt of the poor cottage where the wood-carver sat, and heard all there was said there; and he nodded in his dream, saying, "Yes, do not forget me, you Danish people. Remember me. I shall be with you in the hour of need."

And outside Kronborg there was broad daylight, and the wind carried the sound of the hunting-horn from land. The ships sailed past and saluted, "Boom! Boom!" and Kronborg answered, "Boom! Boom!" But Holger Danske did not stir, however hard they fired, for it only meant, "How do you do?" and "Very well, thank you!" There must be another kind of firing before he awakes; but awake he will some day, for there is grit in Holger Danske.

[1] The Copenhagen observatory. [2] The celebrated astronomer (1546–1601).
[3] The famous sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844). — TR.

XXXIX.

THE LITTLE MATCH-GIRL.

Oh, how cold it was! It snowed and blew so just as it was getting dark, and it was the last day of the year. It was New Year's Eve.

In the cold and darkness a poor little girl was wandering in the streets with bare head and feet. She had had on slippers when she left home, but what good were they? They were very large, — her mother had worn them last, so big they were, — and the little girl had lost them as she hurried across the street to escape two rapidly driven vans. One of the slippers was not to be found, and the other a boy ran away with, saying he would use it for a cradle when he got children.

There wandered the little girl on her tiny naked feet, which were red and blue with the cold. She had a lot of wooden matches in an old apron, and she carried one bundle in her hand. Nobody had bought anything of her the whole day, and nobody had given her a copper. She was hungry and cold, and looked so wretched, poor little mite! The snow-flakes fell on her long yellow hair, which clustered so prettily round her neck; yet she thought but little of that ornament. From all windows light shone, and in the streets it smelled so deliciously of roast goose, for it was New Year's Eve.[1]

She sat down in a corner between two houses, one of which projected a little more than the other, and drew up her little feet, but she froze all the more. And she did not dare to go home, for as she had not sold any matches, and nobody had given her anything, her father would beat her; and it was cold at home, too. They lived right under the roof, where the wind whistled through holes filled with straw and rags. Her little hands were quite benumbed with cold. Oh, how nice a match would be! If she only dared to draw one from the bundle and strike it against the wall and warm her hands! She drew one out. *R-r-atch!* how it sputtered and burnt! When she held her hand around

[1] Roast goose is very commonly eaten in Scandinavia on New Year's Eve. — Tr.

it, it was a warm, bright flame like a little candle. It was such a wonderful light! The little girl fancied she was sitting in front of a great fire with shining fire-irons, it burnt so splendidly and warmed so much. What was that? The little girl already stretched out her feet to warm them — and the match went out. The stove was gone; she was sitting with a little bit of burnt wood in her hand.

Another one was lighted. It burnt and shone, and where the light fell on the wall it became as transparent as gauze, and she could look



"SHE CARRIED ONE BUNDLE IN HER HAND."

right into the room. A table was laid with a snow-white cloth and fine china, and splendid stuffed goose steamed on the table. And what was most glorious was that the goose jumped from the dish and waddled along the floor, with a knife and fork in the back, right up to the poor girl, when — the match went out, leaving her only the black wall to stare at.

She lit a new one. Now she was sitting under the loveliest Christmas-tree, far bigger and more decorated than that she had seen through the door at the rich merchant's last Christmas. Thousands of candles burnt on the green branches, and variegated pictures like those she had seen in the shop-windows looked down upon her. The little one stretched both her hands upwards, when — the match went out! But the thousands of lights rose higher and higher, and she saw that they had become bright stars. One fell, leaving a long bright trail in the sky.

"Now somebody has just died!" said the little girl; for her old grandmother, who was the only one who had been kind to her, and who was dead, had told her that when a star falls a soul ascends to Heaven.

She struck one match more, and it shone around her; and lo! in the light stood her grandmother, looking so bright, kind, and good.

"Grandmother!" cried the child; "take me with you. I know you will disappear with the light, like the warm stove, the splendid goose, and the great Christmas-tree." And she struck quickly all her matches



"SHE HAD FROZEN TO DEATH ON THE LAST NIGHT OF THE OLD YEAR."

in the bundle, for she wished to retain her grandmother. And the matches shone with a brightness clearer than daylight. Grandmother had never looked so handsome and so tall. She lifted the little girl in her arms, and they flew in glory and joyousness so high, so high! but there was no hunger, no care, no cold, for they were with God.

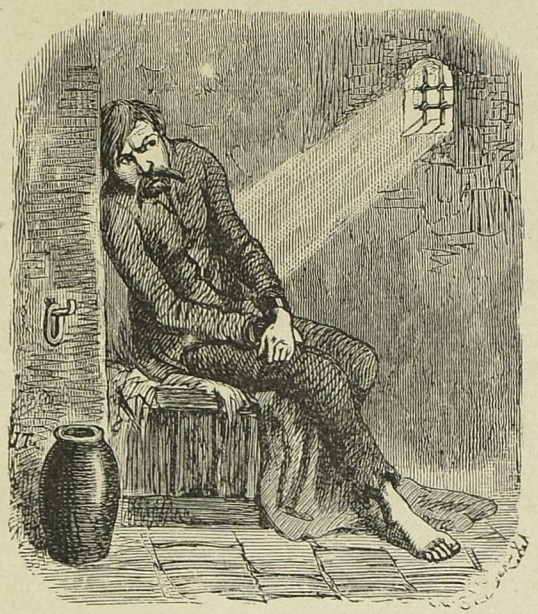
But the little girl sat in the corner frozen to death; still a happy smile played round her mouth and her cheeks were red. She had frozen to death on the last night of the old year.

New Year's morning rose upon the little corpse, which still held the bundle of matches, most of which were burnt. "She has tried to warm herself," people said. But nobody knew what a lovely sight she had beheld, and in what glory she had gone with her old grandmother into New Year's joys.

XL.

A VIEW FROM THE FORTRESS RAMPARTS.

It is autumn. We are standing on the fortress ramparts at Copenhagen, looking out over the sea on the many ships, and at the Swedish coast on the other side of the Sound, which rises high in the glow of the setting sun. Behind us the rampart slopes abruptly; there stand splendid trees, and the yellow leaves are falling from the branches.



"THE DARK FEROCIOUS PRISONER LOOKS ANGRILY AT THE COLD SUNBEAM."

Below lie sombre buildings surrounded by palisades, behind which the sentry walks. It is dark and gloomy there, but darker still behind the grated loop-hole, where the worst criminals are sitting.

A ray of the setting sun falls into the bare cell, for the sun shines on good and bad alike. The dark ferocious prisoner looks angrily at the

cold[1] sunbeam. A little bird flies against the grating. The bird sings for good and bad alike. It sings a short "Qwi-wit!" but remains, flutters its wings, plucks out a feather from it, strokes the feathers round its throat — and the wicked man in irons looks at it. A softer expression steals across the hardened face; a thought, which he cannot interpret, trembles in his heart: it is related to the sunbeam between the bars, and to the violets which grow in such profusion without.

Now the strains of the band sound so vividly and clear. The bird flies away from the prisoner's grated window, the sunbeam disappears, and it is again dark in the cell. And dark it is too in the heart of the wicked man; but the sunbeam has penetrated thither, and also the song of the bird.

Sound on, ye charming horns! The evening is balmy, and the sea smooth and transparent.

[1] As in the original. — Tr.

XLI.

FROM A WINDOW IN VARTOU.

OUT by the green wall which encircles Copenhagen stands a great red house with numerous windows, in which many a flower grows in pots. The place looks poor, and poor people live there too. It is Vartou.[1]

Look yonder! An old maid leans against the window-frame, and plucks a withered leaf from the jessamine in the pot, and looks on to the green wall where a number of children are playing merrily. What is she thinking of? A life's drama passes before her vision.



"AN OLD MAID LEANS AGAINST THE WINDOW-FRAME."

The poor little ones, how gayly they play! What red cheeks and bright eyes! But they have neither shoes nor stockings on, and they dance on the green wall, of which the story goes that many years ago, when the earth sank there, an innocent child was buried alive in a grave, with playthings and flowers, while she played in it. Ever since the wall has remained firm; and it soon bore a fine greensward. The little ones did not know the story, otherwise they would have heard the child cry below in the earth, and the dew would have appeared to them to be burning tears. They did not know the story of Denmark's King, who, riding along this wall when the enemy were outside, said he would "die in his nest." Then came men and women who poured boiling water on the white-clad soldiers who attempted to scale the wall.[2]

[1] An asylum for poor old people. —TR.

[2] The attempt of the Swedes under Charles X. to storm Copenhagen at night, defeated by Frederick III. (1658). Snow covering the ground the Swedes put on white shirts so as not to be visible, but they were discovered and repulsed. — TR.

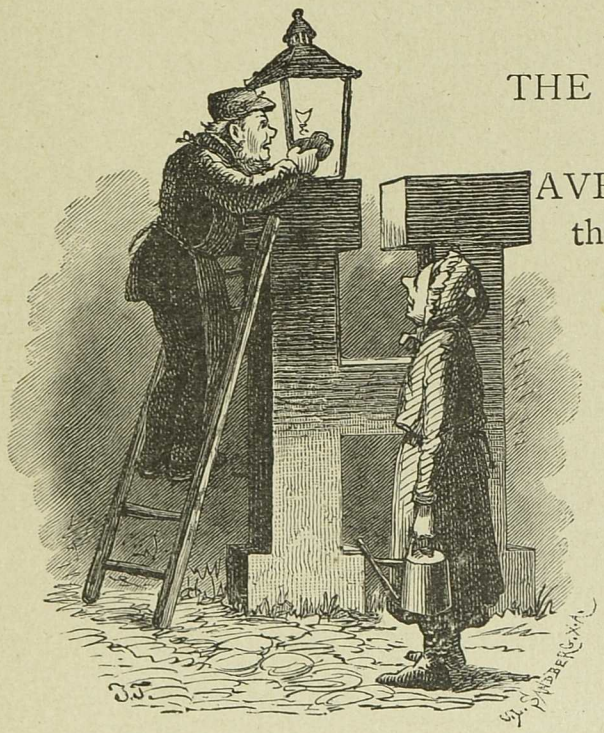
Play merrily, you poor little ones!

Play on, you little maiden, for soon the years come — blessed years! You have just been confirmed. You are dressed in white. The dress has cost your mother much, and still it has been made from an old and bigger one. You have a red shawl on, but it is far too large; it hangs down to your heels. You think of your finery and your merciful God. Lovely is the walk on the wall! And years pass with many a sorrowful day; but sustained by a youthful heart you obtain a friend — you do not know! You meet. You wander on the wall in the budding spring while the bells ring for Easter. There are no violets as yet, but out by the palace of Rosenborg stands a tree with the first green shoots. Here you halt. Every year the tree shoots green shoots afresh; but not so the human heart. Through that glide more dark clouds than across the sky of the North. Poor child! Your lover's bridal chamber becomes his coffin, and you an old maid. From Vartou, from behind the jessamine, you look on the merry children; you see your own history repeated.

That is the life's drama which passes before the vision of the old maid who stands there looking out on the wall, where the sun shines, and where the poor little children with red cheeks, and without shoes or stockings, play and sing as merrily as the birds of heaven.

XLII.

THE OLD STREET-LAMP.



HAVE you ever heard the story of the old Street-lamp? It is not so wonderfully amusing, but it will very well bear to be heard for once. It was a good old Lamp, which had served for many, many years, but was about to be replaced by a new one. The last night had come when it was to sit on its post and light the street, and it felt exactly like an old ballet-dancer who dances for the last time, knowing that on the morrow she will be forgotten. The Lamp had great fear of the next day, as it knew that it would then be carried for the first time to the Town Hall, and there be examined by the Council, whether fit for further service or not. Then it would be settled if it were to be sent to one of the bridges, to give light there, or to a manufactory in the country, or perhaps to an iron foundry. True, there was no knowing what might not be made of it then; but it grieved that it did not know whether it would then be able to remember that it had been a Street-lamp. Whatever might happen, it would anyhow be separated from the lamplighter and his wife, whom it looked upon as relations. It had become a Lamp when he was appointed lighter. His wife was then very proud, and only at night, when she passed the Lamp, did she deign to look at it, but never in the daytime; but now that all three — the lamplighter, his wife, and the Lamp — had grown old, she would occasionally trim it. They were a thoroughly

honest couple, and had never cheated the Lamp out of a single drop of oil. This was the last night, and on the following day it was to go to the Town Hall. These were two sombre thoughts; so one can imagine how it burned.

But other thoughts occupied it as well: it had seen so much, and had diffused so much light, perhaps as much as the "town-council" itself; but that it did not say, for it was a worthy old Lamp, and would not hurt any one's feelings, more particularly those of its masters. Many recollections crowded upon it, and the flame burnt up as an inward feeling said, "I shall be remembered too. There was that handsome young man, — well, that is a good many years ago, — he came with a letter written on such pretty pink, gilt-edged paper; it was a lady's handwriting. He read it twice, kissed it, and looking up to me said, 'I am the happiest of men!' Only he and I knew what his love's first letter contained. I remember two other eyes as well. It is extraordinary how thoughts can travel. There was a splendid funeral procession here in the street; a young and beautiful woman lay in her coffin, covered with rich velvet and strewn with wreaths and flowers. The whole street was filled with people, and there were so many torches burning that I was quite eclipsed; but when the procession had passed and the torches disappeared, I saw a man who stood here at my post crying. Oh, I shall never forget his sorrowful look!"

Many thoughts crowded upon the old Street-lamp this last night of its duty. The sentry who is relieved knows who follows, and can exchange a word with him; but the Lamp did not know its successor, — when, too, there was many a hint it could have given him about the rain and snow, of how far the moon shone into the street, and which way the wind mostly blew.

Close by stood three candidates for the office about to become vacant, for they thought the appointment was in the gift of the Lamp. One of these was a Herring's head, for that shines in the dark, and it pleaded the saving of oil there would be if it were placed on the lamp-post. The second was a piece of Touchwood, which also gives out light, and, as it said itself, more than a fish's head; besides, it was the last piece of a once mighty tree in the forest. The third was a Glow-worm. The Lamp could not imagine where it came from. However, there the worm was, and gave light too; but the Touchwood and the Herring's head maintained that it only shone at certain times, and could therefore not be taken into consideration.

The old Lamp said that neither of them gave light enough, which, however, they would not believe; and when they heard that the appointment was not in the gift of the Lamp, they said that was very fortunate, as it was evidently too old and feeble to be able to choose at all.

Just then the Wind came round the corner of the street, and blowing down the old Lamp's chimney, said: "What is this I hear — that you are going to-morrow? Is this really the last night I shall find you here? If this is the case, I must make you a present. I will brighten your understanding, so that you shall not only recollect clearly and distinctly what you have seen and heard, but when anything is said or read in your presence you shall actually see as well as hear it."

"My best thanks," said the Lamp, "for your great kindness. I only hope that I shall not be melted down."

"That will not happen yet," said the Wind. "But now I must sharpen your memory; and if you receive many more such presents, yours will be a pleasant old age."

"But I hope I shall not be melted down; or can you perhaps even then guarantee me my memory?" asked the Lamp.

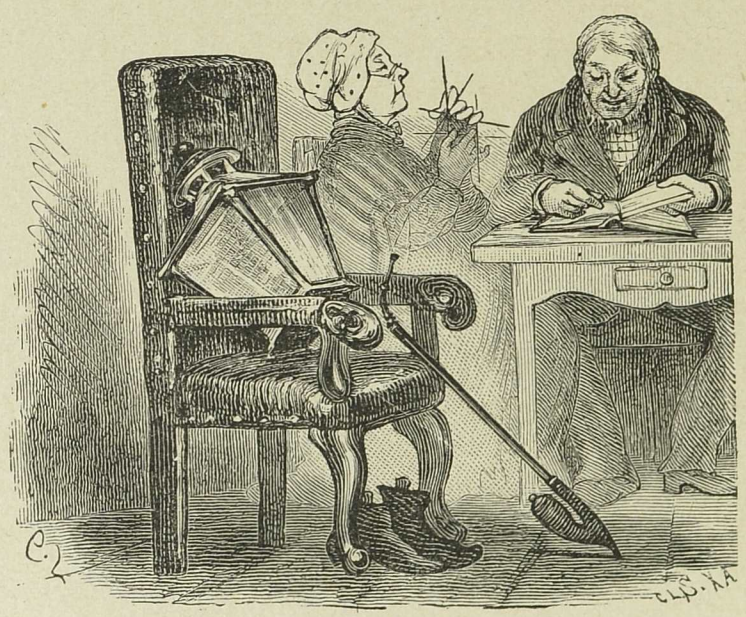
"Old Lamp," answered the Wind, "be reasonable." And as the Moon just then appeared, it continued, "And what will you give?"

"I shall not give anything," answered the Moon. "I am on the decrease; and besides, the lamps have never helped me to give light, but I have helped them;" and the Moon disappeared behind a cloud again, so that it might not be asked any more questions. Then a Drop of Water fell upon the Lamp's chimney, as if it had come from the roof; but it said it came straight from the gray clouds as a present, and perhaps the best of all. "I will penetrate through you, so that you will have the power, whenever you wish it, to turn into rust in one night and crumble into dust." But the Lamp thought that a bad present, and so thought the Wind too. "Is there nothing better? is there nothing better?" he blew as loud as he could; and just then a Star fell, leaving a long streak of light behind it.

"What was that?" the Herring's head exclaimed; "did not a Star fall? and I think it went straight into the Lamp. Well, if the office is sought by such high people we may retire;" which it did, and the others as well; but the old Lamp gave a brighter light than ever. "That was a splendid gift!" it said. "The bright Stars, which have always been my delight, and which shine so brightly that I have never

been able to equal them, though it has been my constant aim, have honored me by sending me a present, which consists in the power of making those whom I love see all that I see and remember. That is a delightful present; for there is only half pleasure in that which cannot be shared with others."

"That sentiment does you honor!" said the Wind; "but you do not know that a wax-candle is necessary to render the gift of any use; for unless a wax-candle is burning in you no one will be able to see anything. The Stars did not think of that, for they imagine that everything that shines has at least one wax-candle within it. But now I am tired, so I will rest a little."



"THE LAMP LAY IN AN ARM-CHAIR."

The next day, — well, the next day we will pass over, — but the next night the Lamp lay in an arm-chair. And where? At the old Lamplighter's! As a reward for his long and faithful services he had begged to be allowed to keep the old Lamp. The honorable council had laughed at him, but had given him the Lamp, and now it lay in an arm-chair by the side of the warm stove. The old couple were sitting at their supper, and would gladly have made room at the table for the old Lamp, at which they cast friendly glances. They lived in a cellar, it is true, two yards under ground; but still it was warm there, for they had the door well listed. It was neat and clean in their room, with curtains round the bed and at the small window, where, on the high window-

ledge, stood two very peculiar flower-pots. Their sailor-boy Christian had brought them home with him from the East or West Indies; they were two elephants of earthenware with hollow backs filled up with mould, and out of one grew the finest garlic, — that being the old people's kitchen-garden, — while out of the other, which was their flower-garden, grew a beautiful geranium. On the wall hung a large colored print of the Congress of Vienna; so they had there all the emperors and kings. A wooden clock, with its heavy leaden weights, went "Tick! tick!" and always too fast; but that was better, the old couple thought, than going too slow. They were eating their supper, and the old Lamp lay, as already stated, in the arm-chair, close by the side of the warm stove. It appeared to the Lamp as if the whole world were turned upside down; but when the Lamplighter looked at it and spoke of all they had experienced together in rain and snow, in the short summer nights and in the cold nights of winter, when it was a treat to get back into his cellar, then all seemed restored to proper order, and it was as if the past were present again. The Wind had, indeed, refreshed its memory.

The old couple were so active and industrious; not a single hour was idled away. On Sunday afternoons some book or another was brought forth, — generally a book of travels, — and the old man read aloud about Africa, of the vast forests, and of the elephants which ran about wild, when the old woman would give a side-glance at the earthenware elephants, which were flower-pots. "I can almost imagine it all," she said; and then the Lamp wished most anxiously that it had a lighted wax-candle inside, so that the old woman might see all as clearly as it did then, — the lofty trees with the closely-entwined branches, the naked men on horseback, and whole herds of elephants crushing the reeds and bushes beneath their broad feet.

"Of what use are all my capabilities without a wax-candle?" sighed the Lamp; "they have only oil and tallow candles, which are of no use."

One day the old man brought a whole quantity of wax-candle ends into the cellar, the largest pieces of which were burnt, and the smaller were used by the old woman to wax her thread when she sewed. Now there were wax-candles, but it never entered their heads to put a piece in the Lamp.

"Here I stand with my extraordinary talents," the Lamp said; "I have so much within me, but cannot share it with them. They do not

know that I can change the white walls into the most beautiful tapestry, into dark forests, or anything that they could wish to see. Oh, they do not know it!"

The Lamp stood, well scoured, in a corner, where it could not fail to be seen; for though every one said it was only an old piece of lumber, the old people did not care, as they loved it.

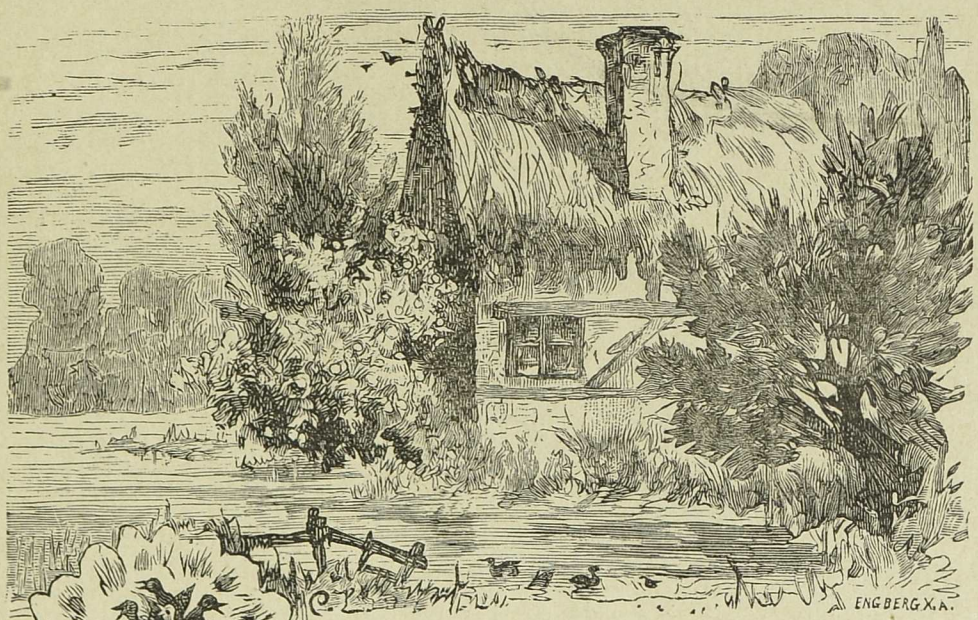
One day — it was the old man's birthday — the old woman went up to the Lamp and smilingly said, "There shall be an illumination for him;" and the old Lamp trembled with delight, for it thought, "They shall see what they little expect!" But only oil was put in; and though it burned the whole evening, the old Lamp was now convinced that the gift of the Stars would remain a useless treasure for life. Then it dreamed — and with such talents any one might dream — that it was taken to a foundry in order to be melted down; and it was as much frightened as when it was about to be judged by the town-council. But although it had the power of turning itself into rust and dust, yet it did not do so, but was melted down, and a beautiful candlestick was made of it, in which a wax-candle was stuck. It was cast in the form of an angel carrying a large nosegay, in the middle of which the candle was put; and the candlestick was placed upon a green writing-table in a poet's study. The room was so comfortable! There were many books and beautiful pictures, and all that the poet thought and wrote curled up the walls like smoke; and the room was turned into vast gloomy forests, into smiling meadows where the stork strutted about, and into the deck of a vessel on the swelling sea.

"What talents I have!" the old Lamp said when it awoke. "I could almost wish to be melted down; but no, that must not be so long as the old people live. They love me for my own sake; I am as a child to them, and they have scoured me and given me oil. I am as well off as the 'Congress,' and that is something very grand indeed!"

From that time the old Lamp enjoyed greater peace of mind; and that it deserved, — the honest old thing!

XLIII.

THE NEIGHBORING FAMILIES.



MOST people would have thought there was something up out in the duck-pond; but there was not. All the Ducks, some of whom were lying quietly on the water, and others standing on their heads, — for that they could do, — suddenly began to swim ashore, quacking so that they could be heard far and wide. The water, which had just been calm as a mirror, was set in violent motion. Before, every tree, every bush close by, the old farm-house with the holes in the roof, and the swallows' nest, and particularly the great rose-bush covered with flowers, hanging from the wall over the water, had been reflected in it, — though everything on its head, — when in an instant all was mixed up together and the whole picture obliterated. Two feathers the ducks had dropped in their flight bobbed up and down, and all at once floated away as if there were a

wind; but there was none, so they lay quiet. And the water became again so calm that the gable with the swallows' nest, and the Rose-bush could be seen in it. Every Rose was reflected, and they were so lovely; but they did not know it, for nobody told them that. The sun shone between the tender petals, which were full of fragrance, and each flower felt as we do when happy in contemplation.

"How delicious life is!" said each Flower. "There is only one thing I wish for; namely, to kiss the sun, because it is so warm and bright. I should also like to kiss the Roses in the water yonder, they are so like us, and the pretty little birds in the nest too. There are also some above us which put their heads out and squeak feebly; they have no feathers like their parents. We have nice neighbors both above and below us. How delicious life is!"

The little birds above and below — the latter were only reflected from the former — were Sparrows; their parents were Sparrows too; they had taken the empty swallows' nest from last year, in which they lay nice and warm.

"Are those little ducklings swimming yonder?" they asked, seeing the feathers on the water.

"Don't ask silly questions," said the mother. "Don't you see they are feathers, — real dress material such as you and I have, but much finer? I wish we had them here, for they are warm. I wonder what disturbed the ducks? It must have been something in the water; it could not have been me, though I cried 'Peep!' somewhat loudly to you. The thick-headed Roses ought to know, but they never do; they only look at themselves and smell. I am really tired of those neighbors."

"Listen to the little birds up there," said the Roses; "they are trying to sing too. They cannot yet, but it will come. What a pleasure that must be! It is nice to have such jolly neighbors."

At the same moment two horses came galloping up to be watered. A peasant lad rode one, and he had nothing on but a great broad hat. The lad whistled as if he were a bird, and rode into the deepest part of the pond. When he was close to the Rose-bush he tore a flower off and stuck it in his hat, and fancying that looked well he rode away. The remaining Roses looked after their sister and asked each other, "Whither is she journeying?" but they did not know.

"I too would like to go out into the world," said one; "but it is so lovely here. In the day the sun shines so warmly, and at night

the sky even more so, for we can see that through all the little holes in it."

They thought the stars were holes, for the Roses did not know any better.

"We make it lively about the house," said the Mother-Sparrow, "and swallows' nests are lucky, people say, so they are glad to have us; but such a Rose-bush as that climbing up the wall causes damp. I believe it will be taken away, so that the corn may grow in its place. Roses are only to look at or smell, or at most to stick in the hat. Every year, my mother has told me, they fall off, and the peasant-woman puts salt on them. Then they are given a French name which I don't know how to pronounce, nor do I care; and so they are put on the stove to smell nicely. Now, that is *their* life; they only exist for the eyes and the nose. Now you know that."

When it became dark, and the moths began to dance in the warm air, the Nightingale came to sing to the Roses that they were like the sunshine in the world, and that what is *beautiful* never dies, while above floated purple clouds. But the Roses thought that the Nightingale sang about himself, and that was very natural. It did not occur to them that they were the object of his song; but still they were delighted with it, and wondered whether all the little Sparrows could n't also become nightingales.

"We understood quite well what that bird sang," said the young Sparrows. "There was only one word we did n't understand. What does 'the beautiful' mean?"

"That's nothing," replied the mother. "It is only outside appearances. Up at the castle, where the Pigeons have their own house and are fed on peas every day in the courtyard, I have often eaten with them, and so you shall too; for tell me what company you keep, and I will tell you who you are. Up there they have two birds with green necks and a crest on the head, who can spread out their tails like a wheel, with so many colors that it makes the eyes ache. They are called peacocks, and they are 'beautiful;' but were they only plucked a little, they would not look a bit better than any of us. I would have plucked them if they had not been so big."

"I will pluck them," said the youngest Sparrow, who was still without feathers.

In the cottage lived a young couple who loved each other very much, and were industrious and thrifty; therefore their house was neat.

On Sunday morning the young wife came out, plucked a handful of the prettiest Roses, and put them in a tumbler on a chest of drawers.

"Now I know it is Sunday," said her husband, kissing his pretty little wife. Then they sat down hand in hand and read a part of the Scripture, while the sun shone in through the windows on the fresh Roses and the young couple.

"I am weary of looking at that spectacle," said the Mother-Sparrow, who had been looking into the room; and away it flew.

It did the same every Sunday, for every Sunday fresh Roses were placed in the glass, and still the Rose-bush bloomed as beautifully as before. The young Sparrows, who now had feathers, wished to follow their mother; but she said, "You remain here," and so they had to. She flew; but as she did so she was suddenly caught in a snare of horse-hair which some boys had fastened to a tree. The snare tightened round her leg, oh! so tight, so tight, as if it would cut it off. It was terribly painful. The boys came running up and seized the Sparrow, and they squeezed it so very hard. "Oh, it is only a Sparrow!" they cried; but still they did not let it fly. They took it home, and every time it squeaked they tapped it on the beak.

In the farm-yard was a man who knew how to make soap for shaving as well as washing, in balls as well as in cakes. He was such a jolly old fellow; and when he saw the Sparrow he said to the boys, "Let us make it 'beautiful.'" And that made the Mother-Sparrow tremble.

Then he took out of a box of colors some shining gold-leaf, and the boys had to run in and get an egg, from which he took the white, and having smeared the Sparrow all over, he stuck on the gold-leaf. So the Mother-Sparrow was gilded; but she did not think of that splendor, but trembled all over. Then the old man tore a bit of red rag from the lining of his jacket, cut it into a cock's comb, and plastered it on to the head of the bird.

"Now you shall see the gold-jacket fly," he said, letting the Sparrow fly; and it flew in sheer fright right into the sunshine. Oh, how it shone! All the Sparrows, and even a Rook, which was not young either, were quite frightened at the sight; but still they followed it, for they wished to know what strange bird this might be.

"Where do you come from? Where do you come from?" cried the Rook.

"Wait a bit! Wait a bit!" piped the Sparrows. But the Mother-Sparrow would not wait; she flew in terror homeward. She was nearly

sinking to the ground, and big and small birds continued to follow her and tried to peck her. "Look at it! Look at it!" they cried.

"Look at it! Look at it!" cried the young Sparrows when their mother reached the nest. "It must be a Peacock, for all its gaudy colors hurt the eye, as mother told us. Peep! that is 'the beautiful.'" And they pecked at the Mother-Sparrow with their little beaks so that she could not get into the nest; and she was so frightened she could not even say "Peep!" much less "I am your mother." Then the other birds began to peck at it, plucking off all its feathers, till at last the Mother-Sparrow fell bleeding into the Rose-bush.

"Poor creature!" said the Roses. "Come, we will shelter you; lean your little head against us."

Then the Mother-Sparrow spread out her wings, pressed them tightly together, and lay dead among her neighbors, the lovely fresh Roses.

"Peep!" cried the young ones in the nest. "Where can mother be? It cannot surely be a trick of hers to let us look after ourselves. She has left us the house; but who is to possess it when we have families of our own?"

"I cannot keep you here when I take a wife and have children," said the smallest.

"I shall have more wives and children than you!" cried the second.

"But I am the oldest," retorted the third. Now they all began to quarrel, flapping their wings and pecking at each other, and plump! one after another was thrust out of the nest. There they lay, very angry, holding their heads on one side, and blinking with one eye turned upwards; for that was *their* way of showing their displeasure.

They could fly a little, and soon learned more; and at last they agreed that in order to recognize each other in the world they should cry "Peep!" and scratch the ground three times with the left leg.

The young Sparrow which remained behind in the nest made himself as large as he could, for now he was master; but this did not last long. In the night red flames burst through the windows and caught the roof, setting fire to the dry straw, and the whole house was burned, as well as the Sparrow; but the young people escaped.

The next morning when the sun rose, and everything seemed so fresh after sleeping, there remained of the farm-house only some blackened beams leaning against the chimney. Thick smoke still rose from the remnants; but the Rose-bush was fresh and blooming, and every flower reflected in the calm and clear water.



"THERE REMAINED OF THE FARM-HOUSE ONLY SOME BLACKENED BEAMS LEANING AGAINST THE CHIMNEY."

"How beautifully those Roses look before the ruined house!" said a passer-by. "It is the loveliest little picture. I must possess that."

And the man brought out a little book with white leaves, and a pencil, for he was an artist. And he drew the smoking house, the charred

beams, and the toppling chimney; but right in front stood the Rose-bush. It was so very pretty, and was the sole cause of the whole being drawn.

Later in the day two of the Sparrows who had been born here flew past. "Where is the house?" they asked. "Where is the nest? Peep! All is burned, and our brother as well. That's because he kept the nest to himself. The Roses have escaped well; they have still red cheeks. They do not seem to grieve over their neighbor's misfortunes. I won't speak to them; and how ugly it is here! That's *our* opinion." And away they flew.

Late in the autumn there was a sunny day so lovely one might have fancied oneself in the middle of the summer. The courtyard in front of the castle was swept and dry, and here a number of Pigeons walked about, black, white, and violet, all shining in the sunshine, while the old Mother-Pigeons called to their young ones, "Stand in gr-r-oup! Stand in gr-r-oup!" — for that looked so much better.

"What are those little gray creatures running about between us?" asked an old Pigeon with red and green eyes. "Little gray ones! Little gray ones!" she cried.

"They are Sparrows, — well-behaved creatures," replied another. "We have always had the reputation of being kind, so we allow them to pick a little corn. They don't interrupt our conversation, and they scratch so neatly with their legs."

They scratched three times with the left leg, and said "Peep!" And so they recognized one another, being the three Sparrows from the burnt house.

"Here one feeds well," they said. And the Pigeons strutted about, puffing out their breasts; but they kept their thoughts to themselves.

"Look at that Pigeon, how she puffs herself out!" said one to the others. "See how she swallows the peas! She takes too many; she takes the best. Cur-r-oo! Cur-r-oo! Cur-r-oo! See how bald she is getting in the neck! Look at that dear wicked creature! Cur-r-oo! Cur-r-oo! Cur-r-oo!" And their eyes sparkled with spite. "Stand in gr-r-oups! Stand in gr-r-oups! Little gray ones! Little gray ones! Cur-r-oo! Cur-r-oo!" and so they went on continually, and will continue to do for a thousand years.

The Sparrows feasted well and listened attentively. They even tried to look important, but they did not succeed. When they were satisfied, they left the Pigeons, giving one another their opinions about them;

and the door of a room standing open, one hopped on to the threshold, and being overfed and consequently brave, it cried, "Peep! I dare to do that!"

"Peep!" said the second; "I dare to do that too, and even a little more." And so it hopped into the room. The third, seeing there was nobody there, flew in the middle of the room, crying, "Right in, or not at all! It is a curious place this. But what is that?"

Right in front of the Sparrows the Roses blossomed. They were reflected in the water, and the charred beams leaned against the toppling chimney. How had that got into the room?

And the three Sparrows attempted to fly across the Roses and the chimney, but they flew against a flat wall. It was a fine great picture which the artist had executed from the little drawing.

"Peep!" cried the Sparrows. "It is nothing; it is only something to look at. It is 'the beautiful.' Do you understand it? We don't." And so they flew away as somebody entered the room.

Many a day and year went by. The Pigeons had often cooed, not to say growled, — the spiteful creatures. The Sparrows had felt the cold in the winter, and lived well in the summer. They were all engaged or married, — whatever one likes to call it. They had young ones, and of course each thought his own the handsomest and the cleverest. One flew hither and one thither; but wherever they met they knew one another by their "Peep!" and the three scratchings of the ground with the left leg. The eldest, which had neither nest nor family, wanted so much to live in a great town; so she flew to Copenhagen.

There stood a great house in the town gayly painted, close to the Royal Palace and the Canal, where ships lay with apples and pottery. The windows were broader at the top than at the bottom; and when the Sparrows looked into the house, every room seemed like a tulip, with all kinds of colors, and in the middle of it stood white beings. Some were of marble, some of plaster; but that is the same in the eyes of Sparrows. On the roof stood a bronze chariot with bronze horses before it, which the Goddess of Victory, also of bronze, was driving. It was Thorvaldsen's Museum.

"How it glitters! How it glitters!" cried the maiden Sparrow. "That must be 'the beautiful.' Peep! It is larger than a peacock." She remembered what her mother thought was "the beautiful;" and she flew down into the courtyard, where splendid palms and branches were

painted on the wall, while in the middle stood a blooming Rose-bush, spreading its fragrant boughs over a grave. She flew thither, for there were several other Sparrows which said "Peep!" and scratched the ground three times with their left legs. She had made that salutation many times in the course of years, but nobody had understood her; for those who part do not meet every day. That salutation had become a habit; but to-day there were two old Sparrows and one young Sparrow who said "Peep!" and scratched with the left leg.

"How do you do? How do you do?" It was the three old Sparrows from the nest, and a little one belonging to the family. "Fancy that we should meet here!" they said. "This is a famous spot, but there is not much to eat here. It is 'the beautiful.' Peep!"

And many people came out of the adjoining chambers and approached the grave which contained the great master who had formed the marble statues; and they all stood with beaming eyes round Thorvaldsen's grave, some gathering the fallen rose-leaves and keeping them. They were natives of mighty England, Germany, and France; and the most beautiful of the ladies plucked one of the Roses and hid it in her bosom. Then the Sparrows thought that the Roses ruled here, and that the house was built for them; and that, they thought, was going a little too far. But as everybody made so much of them, the Sparrows would not be behindhand. "Peep!" they cried, sweeping the floor with their tails and looking with one eye at the Roses; and they had not looked long before they were sure they were their old neighbors. And that the Roses really were. For the artist who had painted the Rose-bush by the ruined house had later on been allowed to dig it up, and had given the Rose-bush to the architect, for the Roses were the loveliest to be found. He had planted the tree on Thorvaldsen's grave, where it bloomed as a symbol of what is lovely, and yielded its fragrant leaves to be carried as mementos to distant lands.

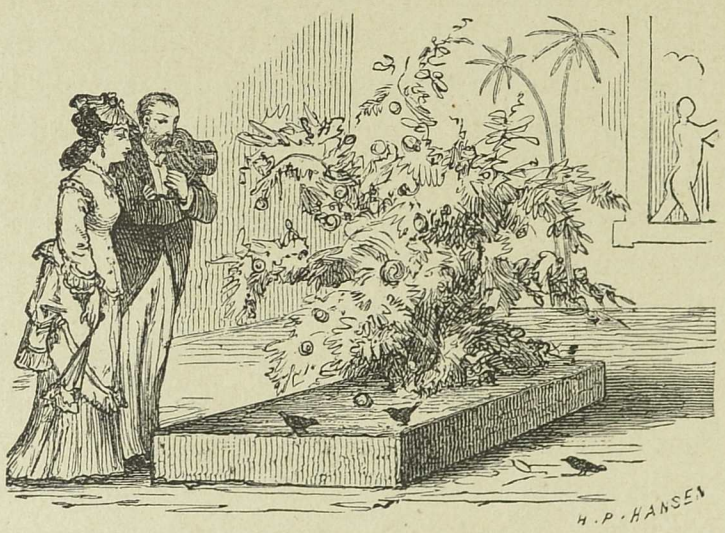
"Have you found a situation in this town?" inquired the Sparrows. And the Roses nodded, for they recognized their old neighbors, and were very pleased to see them.

"Oh, how lovely it is to live and bloom, to see old friends and beaming faces every day! It is like a great continuous festival."

"Peep!" cried the Sparrows. "Yes, they are our old neighbors. We remember them from the pond. Peep! how they have risen! However, some people do that while asleep. And what there can be

to admire about such red bits *we* don't understand. And there is a withered leaf, that is quite plain."

And so they pecked at the leaf till it fell off. But the Rose-bush stood greener and fresher than ever, and the Roses bloomed in the sunshine by Thorvaldsen's grave, encircling his immortal name with their beauty.



"AND THE ROSES BLOOMED IN THE SUNSHINE BY THORVALDSEN'S GRAVE."

XLIV.

LITTLE TUCK.

YES, that was little Tuck! His name was not really Tuck, but when he could not speak plainly he used to call himself Tuck. It was meant for Charley; and that is well to know. He had to look after his little sister Augusta, who was much smaller than himself, as well as to learn his lessons; but it was difficult to do both. The poor little fellow had his little sister on his lap, singing all the pretty songs he knew to her, while now and then his eyes stole to the geography open before him; for by the morrow he had to learn the names of all the towns in the island of Zeeland, and know about them all there was to be known.

Then his mother returned home, and she took charge of little Augusta, while Tuck ran to the window and began to read so that he nearly read his eyes out; for it was beginning to get dark, and his mother could not afford candles.

"There goes the old Laundress from the lane," said the mother, looking out of the window. "She is hardly able to carry herself, and now she has to carry the pails from the pump. Just run out, little Tuck, and be a good boy and help the poor old woman!" And Tuck at once ran out to help her; but when he again reached the room it was dark, and as there were no candles he had to go to bed. He lay in an old sofa-bedstead, and he thought of his lessons in geography, of Zeeland, and all that the schoolmaster had told him. He ought to have studied, but that, of course, he could not do now. However, he put the geography under his pillow, for he had heard that that would help to learn one's lesson; but it is not to be relied on.

There he lay, thinking and thinking, when all at once it seemed as if somebody kissed him on eyes and mouth; he was asleep, and still not asleep. It seemed as if the old Laundress was looking kindly at him and said, "It would be a great pity if you should not learn your lesson.

You helped me, and now I will help you; and the Lord will always do so."

And at the same moment the book began to crawl under Tuck's head.

"Kyckeliky! Kack! Kack!" It was a hen, which had come straight from Kjöge.[1] "I am a Kjöge hen!" she said, and told him about the fight which had taken place there, and how many inhabitants there were.

"R-r-atsch! R-r-atsch! Plump!" Something fell. It was the wooden bird, a parrot used at the shooting-matches at Præstö.[2] She said there



"AND TUCK AT ONCE RAN OUT TO HELP HER."

were just as many inhabitants as she had nails in her body, and she was not a little proud. "Thorvaldsen lived close to me. Plump! Here I lie very comfortably."

But little Tuck was not lying down any longer, but was on horseback galloping at top speed. He had a splendidly attired knight, in shining helmet and waving plumes, behind him, and they were riding through a forest to the old town of Vordingborg, which was then an important place, — lofty towers rising from the King's castle and lights shining

[1] A little town in Zeeland. To lift children up with both hands round their head is called to "show them Kjöge hens." A fight took place here, in 1807, with the English.

[2] Shooting-matches at a wooden parrot used to take place here. The place is a small village, close to which — at Nysö — Thorvaldsen used to live when in Denmark, and where he executed some of his most famous works of art. —Tr.

through the windows, inside which King Valdemar and the stately ladies of the court danced gayly.[1] Morning came, and just as the sun rose the town and the King's castle sank, one tower disappearing after another, till at last only one remained, and the town became small and poor. But the boys went to school with their books under their arms, saying, "Two thousand inhabitants." But that was not correct.

And again little Tuck lay in his bed fancying he was dreaming and still that he was not, but somebody was near him.

"Little Tuck! Little Tuck!" somebody cried. It was a sailor, — quite a little fellow, so small that he might have been taken for a midshipman; but that he was not. "I bring you greetings from Korsör,[2] a town which is rising. It is a lively place now; it has steamers and mail-coaches. Before it was always said to be ugly; but that is an old idea. 'I lie by the sea,' says Korsör. 'I have high-roads and a park, and I have given birth to a poet who was a merry fellow, and that they are not all of them. I had an idea of sending a vessel round the world, but did not do it, though I could have done it. But I smell so sweetly, for at my gates the loveliest roses bloom.'"

Little Tuck saw them, and it became red and green before his eyes; and when the colors had arranged themselves, he saw a woody ridge close to a clear bay, above which there lay an old splendid church with two pointed towers. From the slope of the ridge spouted great splashing springs, and close by sat an old King with a golden crown on his long hair. It was King Hroar by the spring; it was the town of Roskilde, as it is now called.[3] And up the slope walked all the Kings and Queens of Denmark side by side, with golden crowns on their heads, while the organs played and the springs bubbled. Little Tuck saw and heard everything. "Don't forget the Estates," said King Hroar.

Suddenly all had again disappeared. Whither did it go? It was like turning the leaf of a book. And now an old woman stood there, — a woman who weeds gardens. She came from Sorö, where the grass

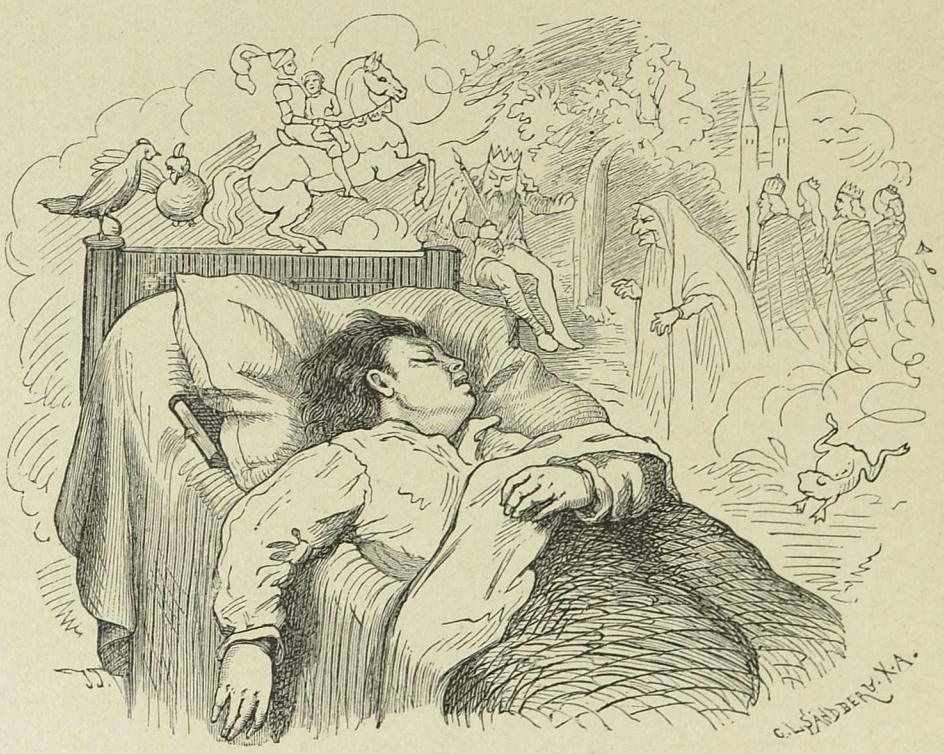
[1] Vordingborg was a considerable town in the time of King Valdemar Atterdag. At present only a tower and parts of a wall remain.

[2] Used to be called the most tiresome town in Denmark before the invention of steamers, as people had to wait here for smacks to put them across the Great Belt. The celebrated poet Baggesen was born here.

[3] The town, which was once the capital of Denmark, derives its name from a corruption of Hroar and *Kilde* (spring). In the splendid cathedral most of the Kings and Queens of Denmark are buried. At one time the Danish Estates used to assemble here. — Tr.

grows in the market-place. She had a coarse apron over her head and down her back. It was quite wet; it must have been raining.

"Yes, that it has," she said. And she knew many pretty things out of Holberg's plays, and about Valdemar and Absalon.[1] But suddenly she shrunk and wagged her head as if she were going to jump. "Koax!" she said; "it is wet; it is wet. There is a nice death-like silence in Sorö."[2] She was suddenly a frog, and again suddenly the



"LITTLE TUCK SAW AND HEARD EVERYTHING."

old woman. "One must dress according to the weather," she said. "It 's wet; it 's wet. My town is like a bottle; one enters by the neck, and must go out the same way. I once had the greatest fresh-water fish in the world, but now I have red-cheeked youths in the bottle. There they learn Greek and Hebrew. Koax!" It sounded like the croak of frogs, or a man walking in a bog in heavy boots. It was continually the same sound, and it was so monotonous that little Tuck fell into a sound sleep; and that did him good.

[1] Denmark's Richelieu.

[2] Sorö is a very quiet little town surrounded by lakes and woods. Holberg founded an academy here, which is one of the first in Denmark. The largest of European fresh-water fish were formerly found in Sorö Lake. — Tr.

But even in this sleep he had a dream, or whatever it was. His little sister Augusta, with the blue eyes and the curly golden hair, was suddenly a pretty, full-grown maiden, who, though having no wings, could fly over Zeeland and its green woods and blue lakes.

"Do you hear the cock crow, little Tuck? Kyckeliky! The hens are flying up from Kjöge town. You shall have a poultry-yard so large, so large, that you shall never suffer hunger or care. And you shall 'hit the bird,' as we say, and become rich and happy. Your house shall be as lofty as King Valdemar's, and it shall be ornamented with statues of marble, like those from the neighborhood of Præstö. You understand me. Your name shall travel on the wings of fame all round the world, like the ship which was to have sailed from Korsör."

"Don't forget the Estates," said King Hroar. "When there you will speak well and sensibly, little Tuck, and when at last in your grave you shall sleep peacefully."

"As if I were lying in Sorö," said Tuck; and so he awoke.

It was a bright morning. He could not remember anything of his dream; but that was right, for nobody ought to know what is coming.

He jumped out of bed, read his book, and knew at once his lessons. And the old laundress put her head in through the door, nodded to him, and said, "Thank you for your kindness yesterday, dear child. May the Lord let your most beautiful dream become true."

Little Tuck did not know at all what he had dreamt, but there was One above who knew.

XLV.

THE OLD HOUSE.

DOWN in yonder street stood an old, old house. It was nearly three hundred years old, which was shown on the beam where the year it was built was carved, together with tulips and trailing hops. There were carved whole verses, spelled as in olden times, while above every window a grinning head was cut in the beam. One story projected over the other, and close to the roof was a leaden gutter finishing in a dragon's head. The rain-water should have flowed out through its mouth; but it flowed instead out of the stomach, as there was a leak in it.

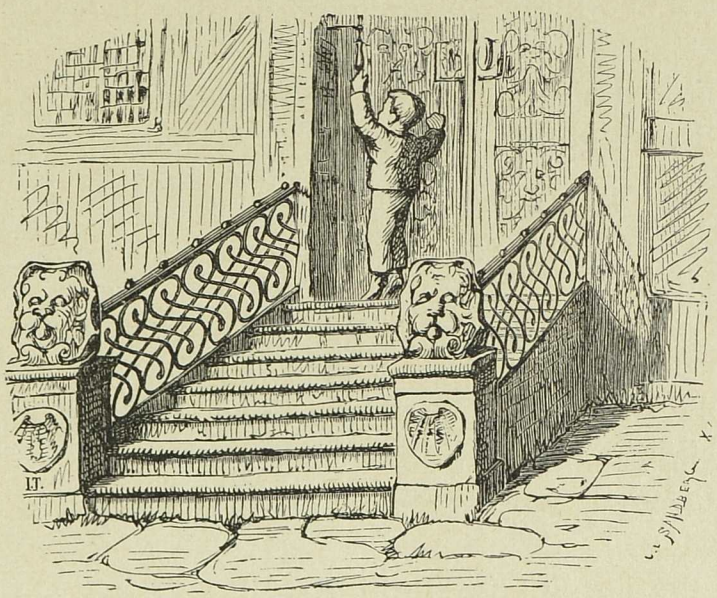
All the other houses in the street were new and neat, with plate-glass windows and polished walls; one could see they would not have anything to do with the old house. They thought, no doubt, "How long will that fright of a house stand there? And the first story projects so far that it is impossible from our windows to see what is going on on the other side. The steps are broad enough for a palace and long enough for a church. Why, the iron railing looks like the gate of an old family vault, and it has brass knobs too. It is really too bad!"

On the other side of the street were new and elegant houses also, which thought like the rest. But at a window here sat a little boy, with fresh red cheeks and bright eyes. He liked the old house best, in sunshine as well as in moonlight. And when he looked at the wall where the plaster had fallen off, he could sit and fancy the strangest pictures, — such as how the street must have looked when all the houses had such steps, projecting stories, and pointed gables; he could see the soldiers with halberds, and gutters in the shape of dragons and serpents. It was really a house worth looking at! And in it lived a man who wore knee-breeches, and a coat with great brass buttons, and a wig

which one could see was a real wig. Every morning an old man called to wait upon him; otherwise the old man in the knee-breeches was quite alone in the old house. Sometimes he would come to the window and look out, and then the little boy nodded to him, which greeting the old man returned, and so they became friends, though they had never spoken a word to each other; but that was of no consequence.

The little boy heard his parents say, "The old man over yonder is very comfortable, but he is awfully lonely."

The following Sunday the little boy wrapped something in a piece of paper and went down to the gate just as the old attendant was pass-



"HE WENT ACROSS."

ing, to whom he said, "Look here! Will you give this to the old man over yonder? I have two Tin Soldiers; this is one of them. He may have it, for I know that he is so very lonely."

And the old attendant was quite pleased, and nodding to the boy, carried the Tin Soldier into the old house. Later on a message was sent, asking if the little boy would like to come over himself; and his parents having given him permission he went across.

The brass knobs on the balustrade shone brighter than ever; one might think they had been polished for the occasion. And it seemed as if the Trumpeters, which were carved on the door among tulips, were blowing with all their might, their cheeks being rounder than before. Yes, they blew, "Ta-ta-ra-tra! The little boy is coming. Ta-tara-tra!"

And then the door was opened. The whole hall was hung with old portraits of Knights in armor and Dames in brocade gowns; and the armor clashed and the dresses rustled. Then there was a staircase, a long way upwards and next a little way downwards, and one entered a balcony which certainly was very rickety, with holes and cracks whence grew grass and creepers; for the whole wall outside was so covered with green that it looked like a garden, but still it was only a balcony. Here stood old flower-pots, with faces and asses' ears, but the flowers grew just as they chose. One pot was full of Pink stalks growing close upon each other, which all said quite plainly, "The air has caressed me, and the sun kissed me, and they have promised me a little flower next Sunday, — a little flower next Sunday."

Then they entered a room the walls of which were covered with Pigs' leather stamped with golden flowers.

"Golden flowers fade fast,
But pig's leather will them outlast,"

said the Walls. And there were Chairs with high backs, and carved elbows on both sides. "Sit down!" they said. "Sit down! Oh, how it cracks in me! I am sure I shall get the gout like the old Cabinet. Gout in the back, ugh!"

Then the little boy reached the room with the bay-window where the old man was sitting.

"Thanks for the Tin Soldier, little friend," said the old man. "And many thanks because you came to see me."

"Thanks! Thanks!" or "Crick! Crack!" said all the Furniture. There were so many that they almost prevented each other seeing the little boy.

On the wall hung a portrait of a handsome lady, so young and elegant, but dressed in the fashion of last century, with powdered hair and stiff gown. She said neither "Thanks" nor "Crick! Crack!" but looked with her soft eyes so kindly at the little boy that he at once asked the old man whence he had got it.

"From the second-hand shop," replied the old man. "There are so many portraits and nobody cares about them, for the originals are all dead; but I knew her in days gone by. She has been dead some fifty years."

And below the portrait hung a glass case with a bouquet of faded

flowers; they also looked fifty years old. And the pendulum of the old clock swung backwards and forwards, and the hands turned, and everything in the room became older; but they did not notice that.

"They say at home that you are so very lonely," said the little boy.

"Oh," replied the old man, "old thoughts and their associations come and pay me a visit; and now you have come. I am very comfortable."

Then he fetched down from the shelf a book full of pictures. There were long processions, the funniest carriages, — such are never seen now, — soldiers like knaves of clubs, and livery-men with waving banners. The tailors had a pair of scissors borne by two lions on their banner, and the bootmakers — not a pair of boots, as one might expect, but a double-headed eagle; for the bootmakers must always have something which "pairs." Yes, that was indeed a picture-book!

Then the old man fetched sweetmeats, nuts, and apples. How glorious it was in that old house!

"I can't stand it," said the Tin Soldier standing on the cabinet. "It is so lonely and dull here, I really cannot stand it. The day is long enough, but the night more so. Here it is not as with you, where your parents talked so pleasantly, and you and all your brothers and sisters were so merry. Oh, how lonely the old man is! Do you think anybody kisses him? Do you think anybody looks kindly at him or gives him a Christmas-tree? He will get nothing but a grave. I can't stand it."

"You must n't look upon it in that dark light," replied the little boy. "I think the place is very nice. Why, all the old thoughts and their attendants come and pay visits!"

"But I don't see them, nor do I know them," retorted the Tin Soldier. "I cannot stand it!"

"But you *must*," said the little boy.

Then the old man smilingly brought more delicious sweetmeats, nuts, and apples; and so the little boy forgot the Tin Soldier.

Happy and delighted, the little boy returned home, and days and weeks passed by in nodding to the old house and from the old house back; then the little boy went across again.

And again the carved Trumpeters blew, "Ta-tra-tra! Here is the little boy! Ta-tra-tra!" And again the swords and armor of the Knights clashed and the dresses of the Dames rustled, the Pig's leather spoke, and the old Chairs had gout in the back. Ay, ay! Everything was

exactly as on the first occasion; for in the old house every day and hour was like the other.

"I cannot stand it!" cried the Tin Soldier. "I have wept tin. Here is so gloomy. I would rather go to the war and lose arms and legs; that would be a change, at all events. I cannot stand it! Now I know what it is to be visited by one's old thoughts and what they bring with them. I have had a visit from mine, and I can tell you it is no pleasure in the long run; I was at last on the point of jumping down from the cabinet. I could see you all over there as plainly as if I were present. It was a Sunday morning, like those you know. You children stood by the table singing the hymns you sing every morning; you were standing reverently with folded hands, and your parents too, when the door opened and little sister Mary, who is not two years old yet, and always dances when she hears any kind of music, was led into the room, — where she ought not to have been, — and she began to dance, but could not keep time as the notes were so long. She stood first on one leg, then on the other, bending her head forward; but it would not do. You all remained serious, though that was difficult; but I laughed so heartily to myself that I fell off the table and received a bruise which I have still, for it was wrong of me to laugh. All that now passes through me again, and what else I have experienced; and that is the old thoughts with what they bring, I am sure. Tell me whether you still sing on a Sunday. Tell me about little Mary, and about my comrade the other Tin Soldier. Yes, he is indeed happy. I cannot stand this any longer!"

"But you have been given away," said the little boy. "You *must* remain where you are. Don't you see that?"

Then the old man brought a box full of playthings and some old gilt cards such as are never seen nowadays. Afterwards he opened the piano, which had a landscape inside the lid; and the old man played a song upon the squeaking instrument, singing to it in a tremulous voice.

"That she used to sing," he said, nodding to the portrait which he had bought at the second-hand shop; and his eyes shone so brightly.

"I will go to the war! I will go to the war!" cried the Tin Soldier as loud as he could, throwing himself down from the cabinet on to the floor.

What became of him? The old man searched and the little boy searched, but he was not to be found.

"I will find him," said the old man. But he never found him, for the

Tin Soldier had fallen through a fissure in the floor, and lay in an open grave.

And that day passed, and the little boy returned home. Weeks passed, and more after them.

Now the windows were quite covered with ice, so that the little boy had to make a hole by breathing on it in order to see the old house, where the snow had blown into every nook and corner, even lying right



"'THAT SHE USED TO SING,' HE SAID.'"

up the steps, as if nobody were at home. And neither *was* there anybody at home: the old man was dead.

At night there was a hearse outside, into which he was carried in his coffin, as he was to be buried in the country. Thither he now went, but nobody followed him, for all his friends were dead. But the little boy cast a hand-kiss after the coffin as it rolled away.

Some days later there was an auction in the old house, and the little boy saw from his window the old Knights and Dames, the Flower-pots with the long ears, the old Chairs, and the old Cabinet being carried

away. Some things went one way, others another. The portrait of her who had been bought at the second-hand shop went back thither again and remained there, for nobody knew her, or cared about the old portrait.

In the spring the house was razed to the ground, for it was a rookery, people said. From the street one could see right into the room, where the pig's leather tapestry was being torn from the wall; and the creepers round the balcony hung in wild confusion over the falling beams. And so everything was cleared.

"That's a mercy!" exclaimed the Neighboring House.



"SOME THINGS WENT ONE WAY, OTHERS ANOTHER."

A fine new house with great windows and white walls was built there; but on the spot where the old house had really stood, a garden was laid out, with a vine running up the wall. In front of it iron railings were placed, with an iron door in them. It looked very grand, and people stopped and looked in. And the sparrows clung in numbers to the vine, talking to each other; but it was not about the old house, for that they could not recollect.

So many years had now passed by that the little boy had grown to a man, and a fine man too, whom his parents were proud of; and he had just married and removed with his little wife into the house with the garden. And he stood by her side as she was planting a wild flower which she thought was so pretty. She planted it with her own little

hands, pressing the earth close round it with her fingers. "Oh! what was that?" She had pricked herself on something sharp in the soft mould. It was — only fancy! — it was the Tin Soldier which had been lost in the old man's room, and which after having been hidden among rubbish had lain in the earth many a year!

The young wife first wiped the Tin Soldier with a green leaf and next with her soft handkerchief. It smelt so deliciously that the Tin Soldier woke as from a trance.

"Let me look at him," said the young man, laughing. "Why," he exclaimed, "it cannot be he; but he reminds me of an incident with a Tin Soldier I had when a boy."

And so he told his wife about the old house and the old man, about the Tin Soldier he sent across to him because he was so very lonely, telling all so well that his young wife wept over the old house and the old man.

"Maybe it is the same Tin Soldier, after all," she said. "I will keep it, and remember what you have told me. But the old man's grave you must show me."

"I don't know where that is," replied her husband, "nor anybody else. For all his friends were dead, and nobody troubled about it, and I was only a boy."

"How frightfully lonely he must have been!" she said.

"Frightfully lonely!" added the Tin Soldier; "but it is pleasant not to be forgotten."

"Pleasant!" something cried close by. But nobody besides the Tin Soldier saw that it was a piece of the Pig's leather tapestry. All the gilt was gone; it looked like wet mould, but still it was of the opinion which it expressed thus: —

> "Golden flowers fade fast,
> But pig's leather will them outlast."

The Tin Soldier, however, was of a different opinion.

XLVI.

A DROP OF WATER.

I SUPPOSE you know a magnifying-glass, — a glass like a single eye-glass, but much larger, which increases the size of every object a hundred times. If you hold such a glass to the eye and look at a drop of water from the pond, you will see thousands of little animals which are not otherwise to be seen. But they are there, and that is certain. They look almost like a plate full of cracks; and they run about tearing the arms and legs off each other, and still they are happy in their way.

Now there was once an old man whom everybody called Crawler, — for that was his name, — who always wanted to take the best out of everything, and if he could not do it in any other way he would do it by sorcery.

One day he was sitting looking through a magnifying-glass at a drop of water taken from a ditch. How the little creatures crawled and scrambled! Thousands of them hopped and jumped, and were tearing and eating each other.

"But that is horrible!" said old Crawler. "Cannot it be possible to make them live in peace, and each one to attend to his own?" And he thought and thought, but he could not do it, so he had to resort to sorcery.

"I must give them a little color, so that they become visible," he said, dropping a little red liquid like wine into the water; but it was witch's blood of the choicest kind, at sixpence per drop. And all the little creatures became purple-colored, looking like a whole town full of naked savages.

"What have you got there?" asked another old Sorcerer who had no name, and that was just his distinction.

"Guess if you can," said old Crawler, "and I will give it to you; but it is not easy if you don't know it."

And the Sorcerer who had no name looked through the magnifying-glass. It looked just like a great town where everybody was running

about naked. That was frightful; but it was more frightful still to see one knocking another, and how they fought and bit each other. What



"ONE DAY HE WAS SITTING LOOKING THROUGH A MAGNIFYING-GLASS AT A DROP OF WATER."

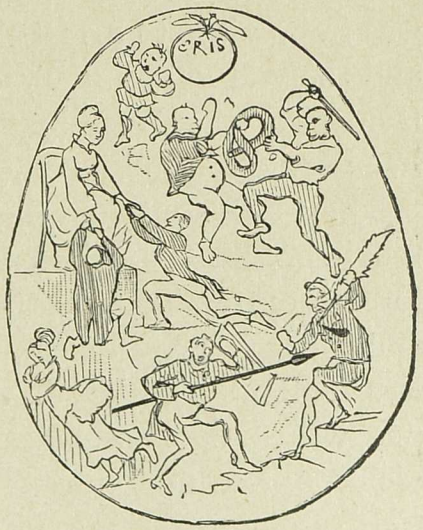
was uppermost should be lowest, and what was lowest uppermost. Look! look! His legs are longer than mine! Pooh! Away with them! There is one who has a little bump behind the ear, — such an innocent little bump, but it hurts, and therefore it shall hurt him still more. And they bit him, tore him, and eat him for the sake of the little bump. There was one sitting as quiet as a little maiden, only wishing to be left in peace; but she had to come forward, and they dragged her, tore her, and eat her.

"That 's very funny," said the Sorcerer.

"Yes; but what do you think it is? Can you guess it?" said Crawler.

"That is easy to see," said the other; "of course it is Copenhagen or some other great town, for they are all like each other. A big town it must be."

"It is ditch-water," said Crawler.



"'IT IS DITCH-WATER,' SAID CRAWLER."

XLVII.

THE HAPPY FAMILY.

THE biggest leaves in this country are doubtless the burdock leaves. If one puts one of them in front of the waist, it is just like an apron, and if one holds one over the head it is like an umbrella, for it is so very big. A burdock plant never grows alone. No; where one grows there are also many more. It is splendid to behold, and all of it is snail's food. The great white Snails, which people in former times used to stew and eat, saying, "H'm, how delicious!" for they thought them so; and the Snails lived upon burdock leaves, therefore they were grown.

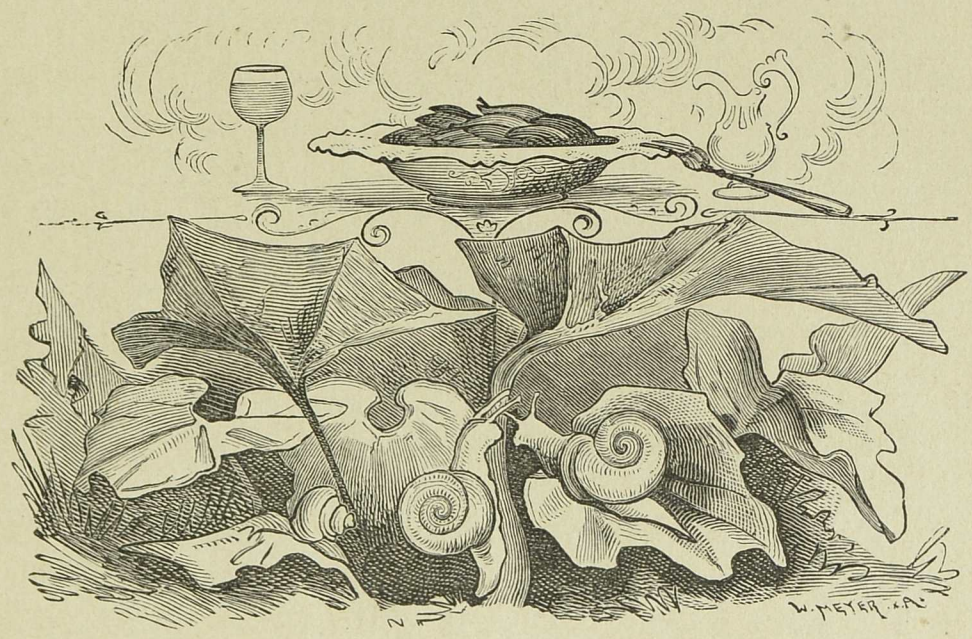
Now there was once an old castle in the country where Snails were no longer eaten. They were nearly all dead, but the burdock plants were not dead, for they grew and grew in all the walks and all the beds, till it was impossible to arrest them; there was quite a forest of them. Here and there stood an apple or plum tree; otherwise it did not look like a fruit-garden. Everything was burdock; and in that wilderness lived two very old Snails,— the last two.

They did not know how old they were themselves, but they could recollect that there had been many more of them, that they were of foreign extraction, and that the whole forest had been planted for them and theirs. They had never been outside it, but they knew that there was something besides in the world, which was called "the Castle," where one was boiled and became black, and then was laid upon a silver dish; but what followed they did not know. How it otherwise was to be boiled and lie upon a silver dish they did not know, but they believed it was a strange affair, and a very grand thing. Neither the cockchafer, the toad, nor the earthworm could give any information on the subject when questioned, for neither of them had been boiled or laid on a silver dish.

They were sure that the white old Snails were the grandest in the world, that the forest existed for their sake, and that the castle was there simply that they might be boiled and laid on a silver dish.

They lived very quietly and happily; and as they had no children of their own they had adopted a little common Snail which they brought up like their own child. But it would not grow, being only a common one; though the old ones — the Mother-Snail in particular — thought that they could see him grow. And she asked the Father-Snail to feel his shell so that he also might see it; and he felt it, and said that Mother was right.

One day it rained very heavily.



"THEN ONE WAS LAID UPON A SILVER DISH."

"Do you hear the drum-drum-drum on the burdock leaves?" said the Father-Snail.

"That's something like drops," said the Mother-Snail. "It is coming right down the stalks. You will see it will be wet here presently. I am glad we have our house, and that the little one has one too. It seems really that more has been done for us than for any other being; it is clear to any one that we are the aristocracy of the world. We have a house from our birth, and the burdock forest has been grown for our sake. I wonder how far it extends, and what is beyond?"

"There is nothing beyond," said the Father-Snail. "It cannot be better than with us. I wish for nothing."

"I do," said the Mother-Snail. "I wish to be taken to the castle, and be boiled and laid upon a silver dish. All our ancestors have gone that way; and, rely upon it, there is something grand in it."

"The castle is probably in ruins," said the Father-Snail, "or else the burdock forest has covered it so that the people cannot get out. On the other hand, there is no need to hurry; but you always do, and the little one begins too. For three days he has been creeping up that stalk. It gives me the headache to look up at him."

"You must n't scold him," said the Mother-Snail. "He creeps so carefully, I am sure he will afford us joy in life. But where shall we get a wife for him? Have you thought of that? Don't you think there is somebody of our kind away in the burdock forest?"

"There may be black Snails there," said the old Father-Snail, — "Snails without a house; but they are a common set, and they think such a lot of themselves. But we will ask the Ants to see about it for us. They run about as if they really had something to do. They are sure to know of somebody who would suit as a wife for our little Snail."

"I know one of the prettiest," said each of the Ants, "but I am afraid she will not do, for she is a Queen."

"That's no matter," said the two old Snails. "Has she got a house?"

"She has a castle," said the Ants, — "the loveliest ant's castle, with seven hundred passages."

"Many thanks," said the Mother-Snail, "but our child shall not go into an ant's hill. If you don't know anybody better, we will give the commission to the white Gnats. They fly far and wide, in rain and sunshine, and they know the burdock forest out and out."

"We have a wife for him," said the Gnats. "A hundred paces from here there sits a little Snail in a house on a gooseberry-bush. She is quite alone, and old enough to marry. It is only a hundred paces."

"Let her come," said the two old Snails. "He has a burdock forest, while she has only a bush."

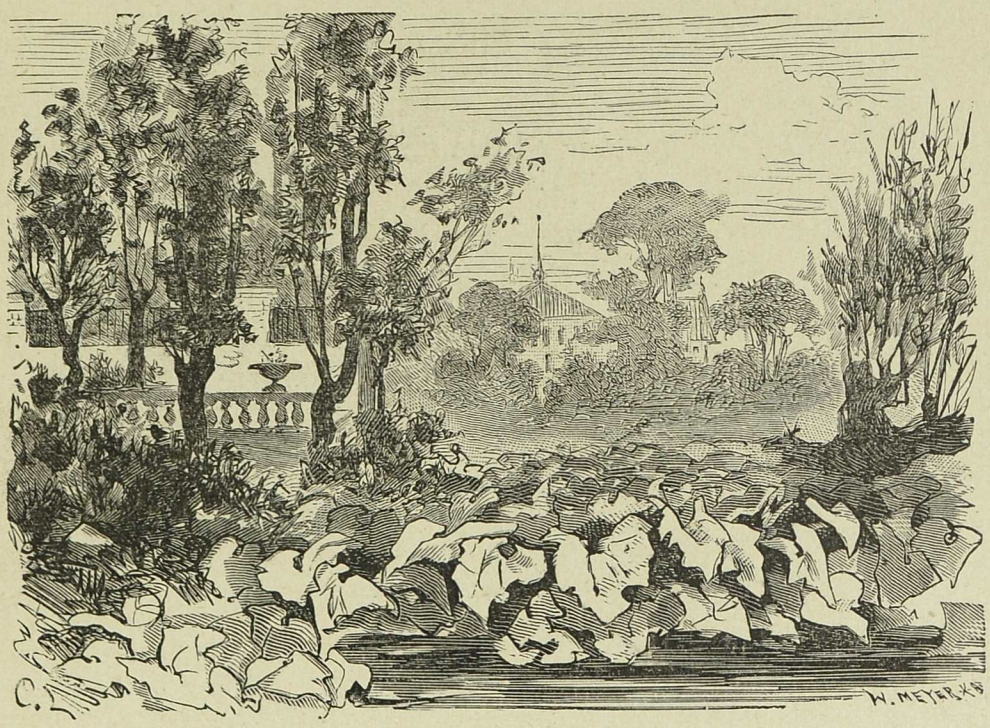
And so they fetched the little maiden Snail. It took her eight days to reach them, but that was just the proof of her being of the right sort.

And so the wedding took place. The glow-worms shone as much as they were able; otherwise all went off quietly, for the old people could not stand a noise and high merriment.

But the Mother-Snail made a pretty speech, as the father was too affected to do so, and they gave them the whole of the burdock forest,

saying what they had always said, that it was the finest in the world, and that if the young couple lived honestly and properly and multiplied, they and their children should some day be taken to the castle, and be boiled black and laid upon a silver dish.

And when that speech was finished, the old people crept into their houses and never came out again, for they slept.



"THE YOUNG SNAIL-COUPLE RULED IN THE FOREST AND HAD MANY CHILDREN."

The young Snail-couple ruled in the forest and had many children; but they were never boiled and put on a silver dish. From that they concluded that the castle had fallen into ruins, and that all the people in the world were dead; and as nobody contradicted them, that was of course true. And the rain drummed on the burdock leaves for their amusement, and the sun shone to give color to the burdock forest for their sake. And they were very happy; the whole family was happy, — that it was indeed!

XLVIII.

THE STORY OF A MOTHER.

A MOTHER was sitting by her little child. She was so sorrowful, for she feared it would die. It was so pale, its little eyes were closed, and it breathed so faintly, but sometimes so heavily, as if it sighed; and then the Mother looked at the little mite more sorrowful still.

Then there was a knock at the door, and an old man entered, wrapped in what seemed an old horse-cloth, for that is warm; and warm he required to be, it being mid-winter. Everything outside was hidden in ice and snow, and the wind cut to the bone.

And as the old man trembled with cold, and the little child was sleeping for a moment, the Mother put some ale in a little pot on the stove to warm it for him; and the old man sat rocking, and the Mother placed herself on a chair close to him, looking at her little sick child which breathed so heavily, and lifted its hand.

"Do you think I shall keep him?" she said. "The Lord will not take him away from me."

And the old man — it was Death himself — nodded so strangely that it might mean either "Yes" or "No." And the Mother looked into her lap, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. Her head became heavy, for she had not slept for three days and nights; and now she closed her eyes for a moment, but only for a moment, when she started up shivering. "What does this mean?" she exclaimed, looking around. But the old man was gone, and had taken her child with him. And in the corner the old clock was whirring and whirring; the heavy lead went right down to the floor, *bump!* — and the clock had stopped.

But the poor Mother ran out of the house calling for her child.

Out there in the snow sat a woman in long black garments, who said to her, "Death has been into your room; I saw him carrying away your little child. He goes faster than the wind, and never gives back what he has once seized."

"Only tell me which way he went!" exclaimed the Mother. "Tell me the way, and I will find him."

"I know it," said the woman in the black garments; "but before I tell you, you must sing all the songs you have sung for your child to me, for I like them. I have heard them before, for I am Night; and I have seen your tears while you sang them."

"I will sing them all, all, all!" cried the Mother; "but do not detain me, so that I may find my child!"



"IT WAS DEATH HIMSELF."

But Night sat dumb and motionless. Then the Mother wrung her hands, sang, and wept. And the songs were many, but there were still more tears. Then Night said: "Turn to the right, into the dark fir forest. Thither I saw Death proceed with your little child."

Far in the forest the roads crossed one another, and the Mother knew no longer whither to go. A Blackthorn Bush stood near, but it had neither leaves nor flowers; for it was cold winter, and the snow hung on the branches.

"Have you seen Death go by with my little child?" asked the Mother.

"Yes, I have," said the Bush; "but I will not tell you what way he went until you warm me by your heart. I am freezing to death; I am turning to ice."

And the Mother pressed the Blackthorn Bush to her breast so closely, so closely, that it might become quite warm. And the thorn entered her flesh, and her blood fell in large drops, but the Bush shot fresh green leaves, and bore flowers in the cold winter's night; for so warm is the heart of a sorrowing mother. Then the Blackthorn Bush told her the way to take.

Next she came to a great Lake where there was neither ferry nor boat; nor was the lake frozen sufficiently to allow of her crossing, or a shallow spot to walk across. Yet cross she must to reach her child. So she knelt down to drink out the Lake, though that of course was impossible for any human being; but the sorrowful Mother thought that a miracle might take place.

"That will never do," said the Lake. "Let us rather come to terms. I like to collect pearls, and your eyes are the loveliest I have seen. If you will cry them out to me, I will carry you across to the great hot-house where Death lives and tends his flowers and shrubs. Each one is a human life."

"Oh, what would I not give to reach my child!" cried the afflicted Mother. And she wept still more, till her eyes sank to the bottom of the Lake in the shape of two costly pearls. Then the Lake lifted her as if in a swing to the other side, where there stood a strange, mile-long house. One could not tell whether it was a mountain with forests and caves, or a timbered palace. But the poor Mother could not see anything, for she had cried her eyes out.

"Where can I find Death, who took away my child?" asked the Mother.

"He has not yet arrived here," said an Old Woman who went about looking after Death's great hot-house. "But how did you get here, and who helped you?"

"The Lord has helped me," replied the Mother. "He is merciful, and that you, too, ought to be. Where — where is my little child?"

"I don't know," said the Old Woman, "for many flowers have withered to-night. Death will soon come and replant them. I suppose you know that every human being has its tree or flower of life, according to how each is arranged. They look like other plants, but they have beating hearts. The hearts of children beat too; so follow

the beating and you may recognize your child. But what will you give me if I tell you what to do further?"

"I have nothing to give," said the sorrowing Mother; "but I will go to the end of the world for you."

"Well, I have nothing to do there," replied the Old Woman. "But you can give me your long black hair; you know that is pretty. I like it. You shall have my white instead; that's something."

"If you do not ask anything else, I will give you that gladly," responded the Mother. And she gave her her beautiful long black hair, receiving the Old Woman's instead.

And then they entered Death's great hot-house, where flowers and trees grew in strange confusion. There were fine hyacinths under glass bells, some fresh, others half dead. Water-snakes laid around them, and black toads clung to their stalks. There were also lovely palms, oaks, and plantains, parsley and blooming thyme. Each one had a name; each one was a human life, and the human beings were still alive in China, in Greenland, and all around the world. There were great trees in little pots, nearly bursting them; while there was many a little backward flower in rich mould, with moss around it, and cared for and spoiled. And the sorrowing Mother bent down over all the smallest plants and heard the human heart beat in each; and out of the millions she recognized that of her own child.

"That is it!" she cried, stretching out her hands over a blue crocus which hung down quite sickly.

"Do not touch the flower," cried the Old Woman; "but place yourself here when Death comes. I expect him every moment. Then do not let him pull up this plant, but threaten him that if he does you will do the same with the other flowers. That will frighten him; for he has to answer before the Lord for all of them, and none may be pulled up till He ordains."

Suddenly there went a cold wind through the hall, and the blind Mother felt that Death was coming.

"How did you get hither?" he asked. "How did you get here before me?"

"I am a Mother," she answered.

And Death stretched out his long hands towards the little delicate flower; but she kept her hands close round it, though afraid of touching the leaves. Then Death breathed on her hands, and she felt that it was colder than the icy wind; and her hands fell down powerless.

"You can do nothing against me," said Death.

"But the Lord can," she replied.

"I only do what He commands," said Death. "I am His gardener. I take all the flowers and trees, and plant them in the great Garden of Paradise, in the Unknown Land; but how they thrive there and what it is like I durst not tell you."

"Give me back my child!" said the Mother, in tears; and suddenly seizing hold of two lovely flowers close to her, she cried to Death, "I will pull up all your flowers, for I am in despair!"



"'I AM A MOTHER,' SHE ANSWERED."

"Do not touch them!" cried Death. "You say you are unhappy, and now you will make another Mother as unhappy."

"Another Mother?" repeated the poor woman, at once letting her hands fall.

"There are your eyes," said Death. "I fished them out of the Lake; they shone so brightly I did not know they were yours. Take them back; they are brighter than before. Now look into yonder deep well and I will tell you the names of both the flowers you were going to pull up, and you shall see their whole future life, — what you intended to destroy."

And she looked into the well, and it was a delight to see how one became a benefit to the world, and what happiness and pleasure he caused around him. Then she looked at the life of the other, and there was sorrow, misery, and poverty.

"Both are the will of God," said Death.

"Which is the flower of misfortune and which the flower of fortune?" she asked.

"That I cannot tell you," replied Death. "But this I will tell you: one of the flowers was that of your own child. It was the fate of your own child you saw."



"'DO NOT HEAR ME!'"

Then the Mother cried in terror, "Which was my own child? Tell me! Do tell me! Save the innocent; save my child from all that misery. Carry it rather into the Kingdom of God! Forget my tears, forget my prayers, and all I have said and done!"

"I do not understand you," said Death. "Will you have back your child, or shall I carry it into the Unknown Land?"

Then the mother wrung her hands, fell on her knees, and prayed to God: "Do not hear me when I pray against Thy will, which is at all times the best! Do not hear me! Do not hear me!"

And she bowed down her head in submission.

But Death carried her child into the Unknown Land.

XLIX.

THE SHIRT-COLLAR.

THERE was once a rich gentleman whose whole property consisted of a Boot-jack and a Hair-comb, but he had the finest Shirt-collar in the world, and it is about that we shall tell a story.

The Collar was now old enough to think of marrying, and so it happened that he was sent to the wash together with a Garter.

"My eye!" exclaimed the Shirt-collar; "I have never seen anybody so charming, delicate, and genteel. May I ask your name?"

"I shall not tell you," said the Garter.

"Where is your place of residence?" asked the Collar.

But the Garter was modest, and thought that was a question not to be answered.

"I presume you are a girdle," said the Collar, — "a sort of under girdle, I am sure. I can see that you are useful as well as ornamental, my little lady."

"Please do not speak to me," said the Garter. "I don't think I have given you any occasion to do so."

"Oh! when one is as lovely as you are there is occasion enough, I think," replied the Shirt-collar.

"Don't come so close to me," cried the Garter; "you seem so like a man!"

"Well, I am a young gentleman," replied the Collar. "I have a Boot-jack and a Hair-comb."

But that was not true, for these belonged to his master. However, he was swaggering.

"Don't come so close to me," cried the Garter; "I am not accustomed to it."

"Affectation!" said the Collar; and so he was taken out of the wash, starched, and hung in the sun. Then he was placed on the ironing-board; and now came the hot Iron.

"Madam," said the Shirt-collar, — "little Widow, I am getting quite hot. I am becoming somebody else. I am quite changing. You are burning a hole in me! Ugh! I propose to you!"

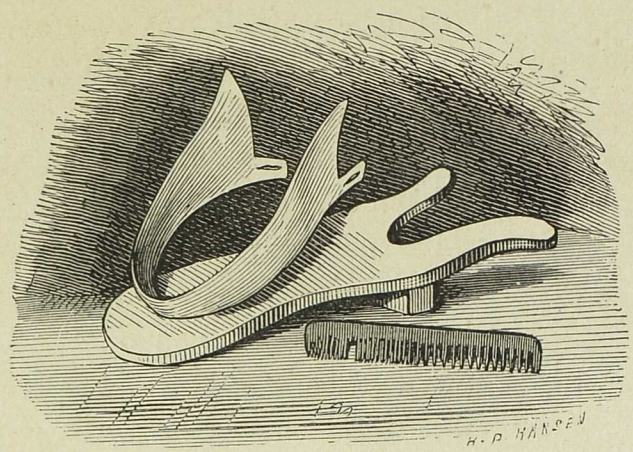
"Crush!" said the Iron, going proudly over the Collar, for it fancied itself a boiler that ought to be on the railway drawing cars.

"Crush!" it said.

The Shirt-collar became a little frayed at the edges, therefore the Scissors were brought out to smooth it.

"Ah!" said the Collar, "I am sure you must be a leading dancer. How you can use your legs! Your graceful action is the prettiest I have seen; nobody else can do that."

"I know that," said the Scissors.



"I HAVE A BOOT-JACK AND A HAIR-COMB."

"You ought to be a Countess," said the Collar. "All I have got is a fine young gentleman, a Boot-jack, and a Hair-comb. If I only had an earldom!"

"What! do you want to marry?" cried the Scissors, being so angry that a deep cut was made in the Collar so that it had to be thrown away.

"I shall have to propose to the Hair-comb," thought the Shirt-collar.

"What beautiful hair you have, my little lady! Have you never thought of marrying?"

"You may well ask that," said the Hair-comb, "for I am engaged to the Boot-jack."

"Engaged?" exclaimed the Shirt-collar.

Now there was nobody left to whom he could propose, so he despised love-making.

A long time passed by, and the Shirt-collar was thrown into a bundle at the paper-mills. There was a ragged company, but the fine rags were separated from the coarse ones, as they ought to be. They had all much to tell, but the Shirt-collar most of all. He was quite a Jack Brag.

"I have had such a lot of sweethearts," said the Collar. "They would not leave me alone. But then I was a fine young gentleman, too, with starch in me. I had a Boot-jack and a Hair-comb, which I never used. You should have seen me then, — seen me when I lay on one side. I shall never forget my first sweetheart. She was a Girdle, so delicate and charming, and she jumped into a wash-tub for my sake. There was even a Widow who became very warm, but I let her remain till she was quite black. Then there was the leading Dancer, who gave me this cut out of sheer spite. My own Hair-comb was in love with me too, and lost all her teeth from unrequited love. I have experienced much of that sort of thing; but I am sorry for the Garter, — I mean the Girdle, — who threw herself into the wash-tub. I have much on my conscience. It is time I was turned into white paper."



"BUT THEN I WAS A FINE YOUNG GENTLEMAN, TOO, WITH STARCH IN ME."

And that he was. All the rags were turned into white paper, and the Shirt-collar became just the piece of paper I am writing this story on; and that was because he bragged so of what he had never been. That we ought to take to heart, so that we do not do the same; for we cannot know whether we shall not be put in the rag-bag some day and manufactured into white paper, and have all our life-story — even the most secret — printed on it, so that we shall have to run about telling it ourselves, like the Shirt-collar.

L.

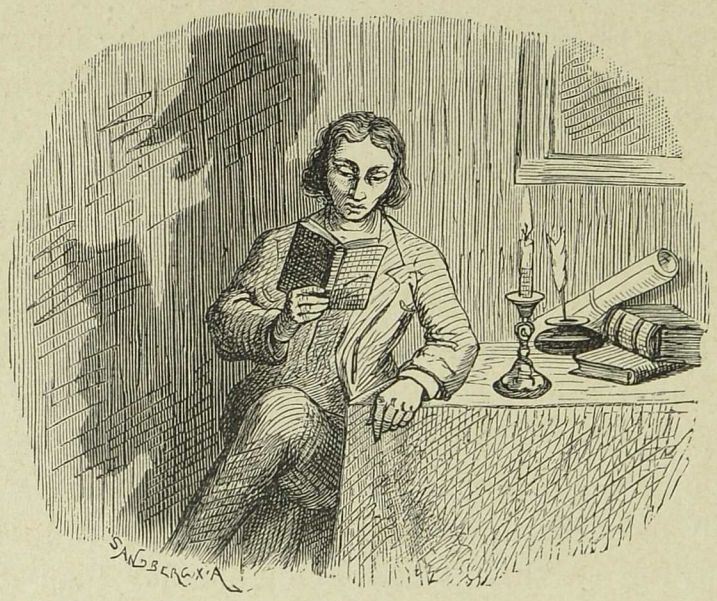
THE SHADOW.

In hot countries the sun burns so fiercely that the inhabitants become mahogany-colored, and in the very hottest they are burned quite black; but still it was to a hot country that the Learned Man of our story had come from a cold one. He thought that he could go about there just as he had done at home; but he very soon found out his mistake, and, like all sensible people, had to remain in the house with doors and shutters closed. The houses looked as if all the people were asleep or from home. The narrow street with the high houses in which he lived was so situated that the sun shone into it from morning till night, and it was really unbearable. The Learned Man from the cold country, who was a young man, felt as if he were sitting in a red-hot oven, which had such an effect upon him that he grew quite thin, and even his Shadow shrunk so that it was much smaller than it had been at home. It was only at night, after the sun had gone down, that the two began to live.

It was quite a treat when lights were brought into the room to see how the Shadow stretched itself up the wall; for it had to stretch itself in order to regain strength. The Learned Man went out into the balcony to stretch himself too; and when the stars appeared in the beauful clear sky he began to revive. On all the balconies in the street, — and in warm countries every window has a balcony, — people made their appearance; for one must have air even when one is accustomed to the mahogany-color. Above and below now all was life. Shoemakers and tailors, as well as all other people, crowded into the streets; tables and chairs were brought out, thousands of lights were burning, and the people began to talk and sing. Some walked, while others rode; and "klingelingeling" it sounded as the mules passed along, for

all had bells on their harnesses. The boys let off squibs and crackers, the dead were carried to their last homes, and the church-bells rang; yes, all was bustle in the street below.

In one house only, exactly opposite that in which the Learned Man lived, all was quiet; and yet some one lived there, for flowers stood on the balcony, growing so luxuriantly in the hot sun, which they could not do unless they were watered, and that must be done by some one; so it was evident some people lived there. The window, also, in the opposite house was opened towards evening, though it was dark within, — at least in the front room; but from the back came the sounds of



"AND EVEN HIS SHADOW SHRUNK."

music. The Learned Man thought it wonderfully beautiful; but that may have been only in his fancy, for he thought everything wonderful in the warm country, if there had but been no sun. The Stranger's landlord said he did not know who inhabited the opposite house, for no one was ever seen; and as for the music, that he thought most tedious. It seemed to him exactly as if some one were practising one piece over and over again, — always the same piece, and still could not succeed with it.

One night the learned Stranger awoke, and as he slept with his window open the curtain was blown aside a little by the wind, and it seemed to him as if a wonderful brightness filled the opposite room;

all the flowers shone like flames of the most beautiful colors, and in the midst of the flowers stood a tall, lovely girl, and it seemed as if she shone too. It quite dazzled his eyes, and with one jump he was out of bed. Quietly he stole behind the curtain; but the girl had gone and the brightness had disappeared. The flowers stood there as usual, without shining in the least; but from the open window sounded the most delightful music, which sunk into the soul and roused the sweetest feelings and thoughts. It was like magic. Who could be living there? Where was the entrance, even? for the ground-floor was entirely taken up with shops, and the people could not go backward and forward through those.

One evening the Stranger was sitting on his balcony, and as a light was burning behind him in the room, it was quite natural that his Shadow should fall upon the opposite wall. Yes, there it stood on the balcony among the flowers; and when the Stranger moved, it moved too, for that is the habit of shadows.



"IT WAS QUITE NATURAL THAT HIS SHADOW SHOULD FALL UPON THE OPPOSITE WALL."

"I firmly believe my Shadow is the only living thing opposite there!" said the Learned Man. "Just see how nicely it sits among the flowers! and now, if it had sense, as the window is open, it would just slip in, look about, and when it came back tell me what it had seen. You should make yourself useful," he said jokingly. "Pray have the kindness to go in there. Well, are you going?" He nodded to his Shadow, and the Shadow nodded also. "Go, then, but do not stay away altogether." Then the Stranger got up, and the Shadow on the opposite balcony did the same; the Stranger turned round and the Shadow turned round also; and if any one had paid particular attention he would have seen clearly that the Shadow went into the half-open window of the opposite house just as the Stranger stepped into his room and drew the curtain behind him.

The next morning the Learned Man went out to drink his coffee and

read the newspaper. "How is this?" he exclaimed when he got into the sun. "I have no Shadow! So it really did go away last night and has not returned! That is exceedingly unpleasant!"

He was considerably annoyed, — not so much that his Shadow was gone, but because there was a story of a man who had lost his shadow, which every one in his own country knew; so that if on his return he told his story, people would say he was only trying to palm off old wares as new, whereas there was but too much truth in it. He therefore made up his mind not to say a word about it, which was a very sensible determination.

At night he went on to the balcony again, having placed the light so that it would be exactly behind him, for he knew that every shadow wants its master to be between it and the light; but he could not entice his shadow out. He made himself small, he made himself big; but no shadow came. "Hem! hem!" he said; but that was of no use. Vexatious it certainly was; but in warm countries everything grows very fast, so that after a week's time he noticed, to his great joy, that a new shadow was sprouting out from the feet when he got into the sun, the roots of the old one having no doubt remained. In the course of three weeks he had a very respectable-sized shadow, which increased more and more on his way to the Northern countries, so that at last it grew so long and so big that half of it would have been quite enough. Well, the Learned Man reached home, and he wrote books about truth, goodness, and beauty; and thus many years passed by. He was sitting one evening in his room, when there was a gentle knock at the door.

"Come in!" he said; but no one came, so he opened the door himself, and there stood such a wonderfully thin man that quite a strange feeling crept over him.

"Whom have I the honor of addressing?" he asked.

"Ah, that is just what I expected!" said the thin man, — "that you would not know me. I have become so thoroughly flesh and blood, and covered with clothes too, and no doubt you never expected to see me so well off. Do you not know your old Shadow? You never thought that I should come back. Everything has prospered wonderfully with me since I was with you, and in every way I have become rich, so that if it is necessary I should purchase my freedom I can do it." As he said this he jingled a bunch of valuable seals which hung from his watch, and his fingers played with the massive gold chain he

wore round his neck. How all his fingers glittered with diamond rings, all of the purest water!

"What does this mean?" cried the Learned Man. "I cannot get over my surprise!"

"Well, this is no commonplace affair," said the Shadow; "but then you are something out of the common yourself, and you know that from your childhood I have always trodden in your footsteps. As soon as I found that I could make my way alone in the world I started on my own account, and I have gained a brilliant position; but then an irresistible longing came over me to see you once more before you die, for you know that die you must. I wanted to see this country again as well, for one must always love the land of one's birth. I know that you have another shadow, and if I have to pay it or you anything, pray have the goodness to tell me so."

"And is it really you?" said the Learned Man. "It is most extraordinary, and never would I have believed that an old shadow could return as a man."

"Tell me what I have to pay," the Shadow repeated, "for I do not like being in any one's debt."

"How can you talk like that!" said the Learned Man; "for there can be no question of any debt. You are as free as any one living, and I heartily rejoice at your good fortune. Take a seat, my old friend, and tell me how it all happened, and what you saw there in the opposite house."

"Yes, I will tell you everything," said the Shadow, seating himself; "but then you must promise me that you will never tell any one here in this town that I have been your Shadow. I intend getting married, for I have enough to support a family!"

"Make yourself quite easy," said the Learned Man; "I will not tell any one who you really are."

It was quite extraordinary how thoroughly human the Shadow was. He was dressed entirely in black, of the very finest cloth, had patent-leather boots and a crush hat; and then there were the seals, the chain, and the diamond rings, which we know of already. He was remarkably well dressed.

"I will now begin my story;" said the Shadow, placing his foot, with the patent-leather boot, as firmly as he possibly could on the arm of the Learned Man's new Shadow. This was done either out of pride and bravado, or perhaps in the hope that the Shadow would stick to his

foot; but the other Shadow remained perfectly quiet and all attention, for no doubt it wished to know the way to get off and make itself its own master.

"Do you know who lived in the house opposite?" said the Shadow. "It was POETRY! There I remained three weeks, which is about as efficacious as living three thousand years and reading everything that is written. That I maintain, and I am right. I have seen everything, and I know everything!"

"Poetry!" the Learned Man exclaimed. "Yes, yes; she is often a recluse in large cities. Poetry! ah, I saw her for a moment, but I was half asleep! She stood on the balcony, and shone as brightly as the Northern Lights. But go on! go on! you were on the balcony, and went in at the window, and then —"

"Then I found myself in the anteroom," the Shadow answered. "You could not see in there, because it was in darkness; but in a long row of rooms the opposite doors were open, and each room was lighted up. I should have been killed by the light if I had penetrated as far as the Goddess herself; but I was prudent and took my time, as every one should do."

"And what did you see then?" asked the Learned Man.

"Everything," answered the Shadow. "I saw everything, and knew everything."

"And how did it look in the rooms?" asked the Learned Man. "Was it as in a green wood? Was it as in a solemn church? Were the rooms like the sky, studded with stars?"

"All was there," said the Shadow, "but I did not go right in. I remained in the anteroom, in the dark; but I was very happy there; I saw everything, and I knew everything. I have been at the court and in the anteroom of the Goddess of Poetry!"

"But what did you see? Were all the gods of antiquity assembled? Did the old heroes fight there? Were lovely children playing there, and telling their dreams?"

"I tell you that I was there, and you can imagine that I saw everything that was to be seen. If you had come over, you would possibly not have remained a man; whereas I became one, and at the same time I learned to know my nature and relationship to Poetry. At the time when I was with you I did not think about it; but you know that always at the rising and setting of the sun I became so wonderfully big, and that by moonlight I was plainer than even you were yourself.

I did not then understand my nature, but in the anteroom all became clear to me. I became a man. I left it thoroughly formed, but you were no longer in the warm country. I was ashamed of my appearance, for I wanted boots and clothes, — all that makes the man. I sought shelter, — yes, I may tell you, for you will not put it down in a book, — I sought shelter under the cake-woman's petticoats. There I hid myself, and she little thought how much she concealed. Not till night did I venture forth, when I ran about the streets in the moonshine; I stretched myself along the wall, which tickles one's back so nicely; I ran up and down, and looked through the highest windows even; I saw what no one else could see, and what no one was intended to see. It is a bad world, and I would not be a man were it not that it is a position of accepted importance. I saw the most incredible things in women and in men, in parents and in children. I saw what no one was to know, but what every one wished to know, — his neighbors' faults. If I had written a book it would have been read eagerly; but I wrote to the people themselves, and there was consternation in every town to which I came. All were so afraid of me; but they loved me so dearly. The professors made me a professor, and the tailors gave me new clothes, so that I am well provided. I was overwhelmed with presents, and the women discovered that I was handsome. Thus I became the man that I am; and now I must say farewell. Here is my card. I live on the sunny side, and in rainy weather I am always at home." And herewith the Shadow went away.

"That is most remarkable!" said the Learned Man.

A year passed by, and the Shadow returned.

"How does the world treat you?" he asked.

"Oh," said the Learned Man, "I write about truth, goodness, and beauty, but no one cares to hear about them, and I am in despair, I take it to heart so."

"I do not take anything to heart," said the Shadow; "and I am growing fat, as one ought to be. You are not fit for the world. You will get really ill. You must travel. This summer I am going on a journey. Will you go with me? I should like a travelling companion. Will you go as *my* shadow? I shall be very happy to take you with me, and will pay your expenses."

"That is madness!" said the Learned Man.

"That depends entirely upon how one looks at it," said the Shadow. "Such is the world, and such it will remain;" and he went away.

The Learned Man was unfortunate; cares and troubles came upon him, and what he wrote about truth, goodness, and beauty was to most people what a rose would be to a cow. At last he grew really ill.

"You look exactly like a shadow," people said to him; and as he heard the words a shudder came over the Learned Man.

"You must go to the hot baths," said the Shadow, when he called: "nothing else will do you any good. For old acquaintanceship, I will take you. I will pay the expenses, and you can write the description of our journey, and can amuse me a little on the way. I want to go to the baths, for my beard does not grow as it should, which is an illness too; and one must have a beard. Now, be sensible, and accept my offer: we shall travel as friends."

So they started, — the Shadow as master, and the master as shadow. They drove together, they rode together, and they walked together, side by side, before and behind one another, according to the position of the sun. The Shadow chose his place and acted as master in everything; the Learned Man making no difficulty about it, for he was an easy, good-natured man.

Thus they reached the baths, where there were many strangers, and among these the beautiful daughter of a King, whose malady was that she saw too clearly, which was highly distressing.

She saw at once that the new arrival was quite a different man from others. "It is said that he is here for the growth of his beard; but I know the real reason, — he cannot cast a shadow."

Her curiosity was excited, and she therefore at once entered into conversation with the stranger. Being a King's daughter, she had not to stand upon much ceremony; so she said, "Your illness is, that you cannot cast a shadow."

"Your Royal Highness must have improved considerably in your health," said the Shadow. "I know that your illness was seeing too clearly, but that defect has evidently left you, and you are cured. I have not only a shadow, but a most extraordinary one. Other people have only a common shadow, but I do not like what is common. People give their servants finer clothes than they wear themselves, and I have made my shadow human. Do you not see the person who always accompanies me? He is my shadow; and you may observe that I have even given him a shadow of his own. I like what is out of the common way."

"Can that be possible," asked the Princess, — "that I am really cured? This is the most wonderful of all baths. Water certainly has, nowadays, most extraordinary power; but I shall not leave here, for now it is becoming interesting. The stranger pleases me, and I only hope his beard may not grow, else he will go away."

At night the Princess danced with the Shadow. She was light, but he was still lighter; such a partner she had never yet had. She told him what country she came from, and he knew it, for he had been there when she was from home. He had looked in at the upper as well as the lower windows, and had seen everything that went on there, so that he could refer to circumstances which quite astonished her. He must certainly be the wisest man living. She was inspired with great respect for him, and when they danced together again she fell in love with him. Again they danced together, and she was near telling him her passion; but she was prudent. She thought of her country, and of the many beings over whom she had to rule, and she said to herself, "He is a wise man, which is good, and he dances well, which is also good; but has he any solid information? That is quite as important, and he must be examined." She therefore asked him a most difficult question, which she could not have answered herself, and the Shadow looked puzzled.

"You cannot answer that!" said the Princess.

"Oh, that is nothing but school learning;" the Shadow answered, "and I have no doubt even my shadow there at the door can answer it."

"Your shadow!" exclaimed the Princess; "that would be remarkable!"

"I do not positively say that he can do so," said the Shadow, "but I fully expect he can; indeed, he has followed me so long and listened to me, that I have little doubt of it. But I must warn your Royal Highness that he is so proud of passing for a man, that he must in every way be treated as such if he is to be in good-humor, as he must be in order to answer well."

"That would amuse me," said the Princess.

And she went up to the Learned Man, and spoke with him about the sun and moon, and about man physically and morally, and he answered everything with great learning.

"What an extraordinary man that must be, to have so learned a shadow!" she thought. "It would be a real blessing for my subjects if I chose him for a husband. I will do so."

All was soon arranged between them, but no one was to know anything about it till she got back to her own country.

"No one, not even my shadow!" the Shadow said; and he formed projects of his own.

Then they went to the country where the Princess ruled when she was at home.

"Now, attend to me, my good friend," said the Shadow to the Learned Man. "I am now very happy, and have become as powerful as any one can be, so that now I intend to do something extraordinary for you. You shall always live with me in the palace, and drive with me in my state-carriage, and have ten thousand pounds a year; but then you must allow yourself to be called shadow by every one, and not say that you have ever been a man; besides which, once a year, when I sit on the balcony and show myself to the people, you must lie at my feet, as it becomes a shadow to do. I will now tell you that I am going to marry the Princess. This evening the wedding takes place."

"That is too great a piece of madness," cried the Learned Man; "I cannot and will not do it; that would be deceiving the whole country, as well as the Princess. I will tell all, — that I am a man, and that you are only a shadow dressed up!"

"No one will believe you!" said the Shadow. "Be sensible, or I will call the guard."

"I will go straight to the Princess!" said the Learned Man.

"But I will go first," said the Shadow, "and you shall be placed under arrest!" And so it was; for the guards obeyed him, knowing he was to marry the Princess.

"You are trembling," said the Princess, when the Shadow appeared before her; "what has happened? You must not be taken ill just when we are going to be married!"

"Oh, the most dreadful occurrence has taken place!" said the Shadow. "Only imagine — oh, that poor shadow's brain cannot bear much! just imagine! — my shadow has gone mad! He fancies he is a man, and that I — just imagine! — that I am his shadow!"

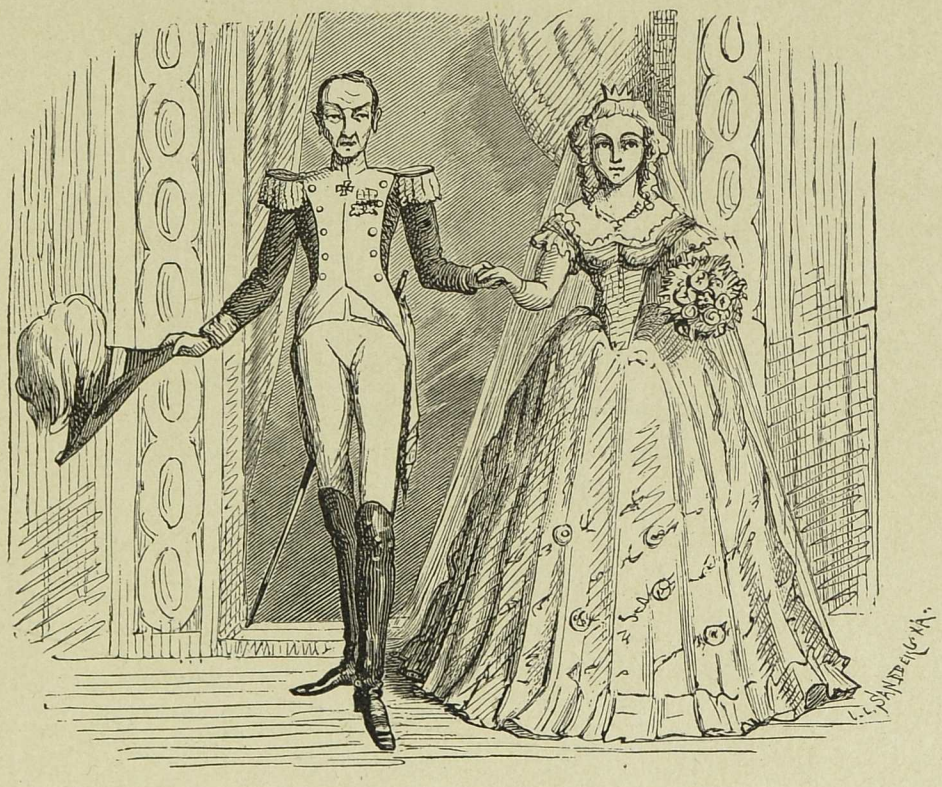
"That is dreadful!" said the Princess. "I hope he is in confinement?"

"Yes, he is; and I fear he will never recover!"

"Poor Shadow!" said the Princess. "He is very unhappy, and it would be a real blessing to release him from his sufferings, and I think it will be necessary to get rid of him secretly."

"That is really hard," said the Shadow, "for he has been a faithful servant;" and he pretended to sigh.

"You are a noble character!" cried the Princess.



"THE PRINCESS AND THE SHADOW WENT ON TO THE BALCONY TO SHOW THEMSELVES TO THE PEOPLE."

That night the whole town was illuminated and the cannon were fired, — *Boom!* — and the soldiers presented arms. That was a wedding! The Princess and the Shadow went on to the balcony to show themselves to the people and to receive one more hurrah.

The Learned Man heard nothing of all that, for he had been put to death.

LI.

THE FLAX.

THE Flax stood in bloom. It had pretty blue flowers as soft as the wings of a moth, or even more so. The sun shone on it and the rain watered it, and that was as good for the Flax as it is for little children to be washed and kissed by their mother. That makes them much prettier; and this was the case with the Flax too.

"People say I stand very well," said the Flax; "that I grow long and fine, and that a nice piece of linen will be made from me. Oh, how happy I am! I am sure I am the happiest of all. I feel so well, and something will be made of me. How the sunshine gladdens and the rain refreshes me! I am so happy! I am the happiest of all."

"Well, well," said the Hedge-stakes, "you don't know the world, but we do. It is knotty to us;" and they creaked so mournfully: —

"Snip-snap-snurre,
Basselurre!
And that is the whole song."

"No, that is not all," said the Flax. "To-morrow the sun will shine again, and the rain refresh. I feel I am growing. I feel I am in bloom. I am the happiest of all."

But one day people came and pulled up the Flax by the root. That certainly hurt. Then it was laid in water, as if it were going to be drowned, and next put on the fire, as if it were going to be roasted. It was awful!

"But one cannot always have good times," said the Flax; "one must endure something, and thus gain experience."

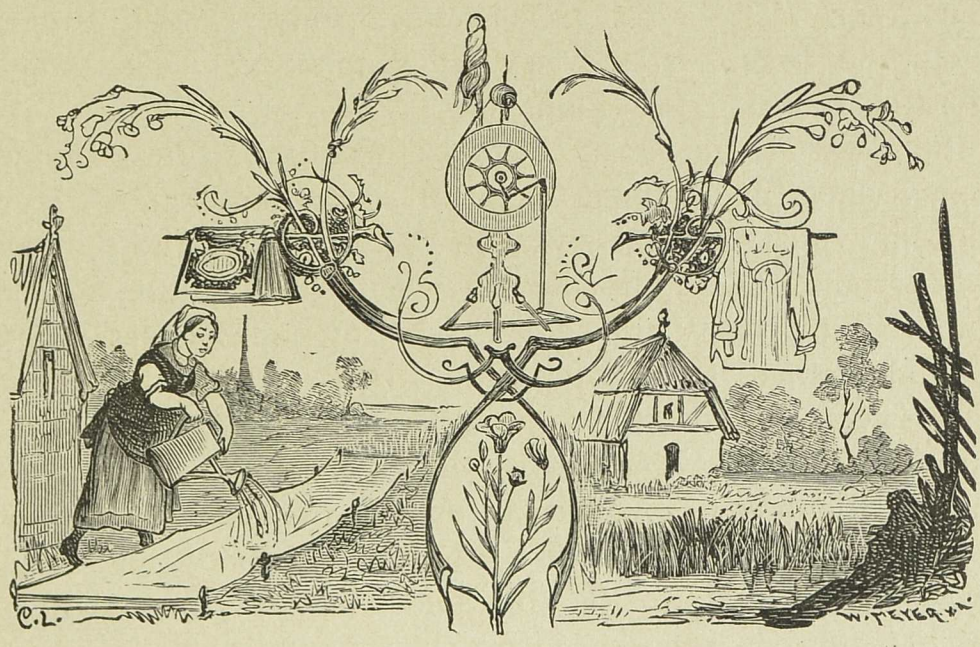
But things became really bad. The Flax was broken, crushed, and hackled; but it did not know the names of the operations. It was put on the spinning-wheel, — *whir! whir! whir!* It was impossible to collect one's thoughts there.

"However, I have been very happy," it thought in all its sufferings. "One ought to be contented with the good one has enjoyed. Happy! Ay, happy!" And that was what it said even on the loom; and so it became a fine piece of linen. All the Flax, to the last stalk, was used for that one piece.

"This is quite wonderful! I have never dreamed of this. Oh, how lucky I am! The Hedge-stakes were indeed well informed when they said: —

'Snip-snap-snurre,
Basselurre!'

Why, the song has not begun yet! It is wonderful! I have suffered a little, but therefore I have also become something. I am the



"I AM THE HAPPIEST OF ALL."

happiest of all. I am strong and fine, long and white. That is something more than being a plant, even in bloom; then no care is taken of one, and rain is the only moisture. Now I am attended to. A girl turns me every morning and gives me a bath from the pail every night. Yes, even the vicar's wife has admired me, and said that I was the finest piece in the parish. I am sure I could not be happier."

Then the Linen was taken indoors and put under the scissors. How they cut and tore it, and pricked it with needles! for that was indeed done. But that was no pleasure. But the piece of Linen was trans-

formed into twelve pieces of wearing-apparel not to be mentioned by name, but which everybody requires. There were twelve of them.

"Now first I am something," said the Linen. "That was my fate. It is splendid. Now I am of some use in the world, and that is the right pleasure. We are twelve, but we are all alike, and make a dozen. What remarkable luck!"

Years went by, and now they could last no longer.

"There must be an end to everything," said each. "I should certainly like to last a little longer; but one must not ask for impossibilities."

And then they were torn into rags. They were cut, milled, and boiled till they did not recognize themselves; and so they became fine white Paper.

"What a surprise, — what a charming surprise!" said the Paper. "Now I am finer than ever, and they will write on me. What may there not be written! It is a marvellous fate!"

And there was written on it the most beautiful stories, and people read them, which made them so much wiser and better. It was a great blessing which was thus given the Paper through those words.

"That is more than I dreamed of when I was a little field-flower. How could I think that I ever should carry joy and knowledge to men! I cannot understand it; but it is true. Heaven knows I have only done what I was able to with my weak powers in order to exist; and thus I am led from one honor to another. Whenever I think of that, and 'that is the whole song,' it is lifted into something higher and better. Probably I shall now travel, so that everybody may read me; that is most likely. Before I had blossoms, and now I have the pleasantest thoughts for each flower. I am the happiest of all."

But the Paper did not travel. It went to the printer's, where everything written upon it was printed in a book, — or rather in hundreds of books; for in that manner many more people would derive benefit and pleasure therefrom than if the original paper had been sent round the world and been worn out.

"Well, that is certainly the right thing," said the Paper. "It did not occur to me at first. I remain at home, and am venerated like an old veteran. It is I that am written on. The words went straight from the pen on to me. I remain, and the books circulate. Then something may indeed be done. Oh, how happy I am!"

Then the Paper was tied up and put on a shelf. "It is good to rest

after work," it said. "It is quite right that one should contemplate what there is in oneself. Only now I know what is in *me*. And to 'know thyself,' — that is a real step forward. What will follow next? Some step forward, I am sure. There is always progress."

One day the Paper was put on the hearth. It was to be burned instead of being sold to the grocer to be used for bags. And all the children of the house stood around to see it flare up and to see the many red sparks in the ashes, looking as if they were running away, and then disappear. That was called "children leaving school," and



"AND ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE HOUSE STOOD AROUND TO SEE IT FLARE UP."

the last spark was the school-teacher. Often he is believed to have gone up, when he has not.

And all the Paper lay in a heap on the fire. Oh, how it flared up! It was quite a big flame. It rose higher in the air than the Flax had ever dreamt of raising its blue flowers, and it shone brighter than the white Linen. All the letters became suddenly red, and then all the words and thoughts went up in flames.

"I am ascending right to the sun," said a voice in the Flame; and thousands of voices joined in this as the Flame shot up the chimney. And with it, finer than the Flame, floated a number of invisible beings,

as many as there had been blossoms on the Flax. They were still lighter than the Flame which created them; and when that went out, and only the black ashes remained of the Paper, they danced once more over it, and where they touched it they left their footprints. They were the red sparks. The children left school, and the teacher was the last. It was fun to see the children singing over the dead ashes: —

"Snip-snap-snurre,
Basselurre!
And that is the whole song."

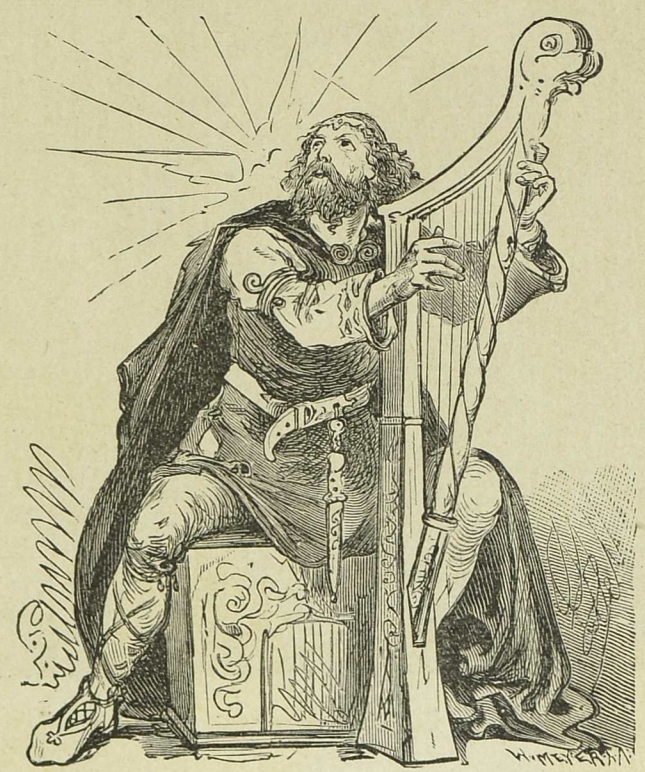
But the little invisible beings said: "There is no ending to the song; that is the most glorious of all. We know it, and therefore we are the happiest of all."

That the children could, however, not understand nor hear, and neither should they; for children ought not to know everything.

LII.

THE BIRD PHŒNIX.

In the Garden of Paradise, beneath the Tree of Knowledge, stood a rose-bush. Here was born from the first rose a Bird whose flight was like that of the light, — splendid its color and lovely its song.



"OVER THE HARP OF THE ICELAND BARD HOVERED THE SWAN WITH PURPLE BEAK."

But when Eve plucked the apple, and with Adam was driven out from the Garden, a spark fell from the sword of the Avenging Angel, which set fire to the Bird's nest. The Bird perished in the flames, but from its purple egg rose the only, the only Bird Phœnix. Legends tell us that it dwells in Arabia, and that every hundred years it sets fire to

its nest and perishes; but that a new Bird Phœnix — *then* the only one — rises from the purple egg.

The Bird flutters around us, quick as the light, in splendid color, in lovely song. When the mother sits by the cradle of her child, it is by the pillow, fanning a halo round the child's head. It flies through the lowly cottage and there is sunshine and the scent of violets within.



"BORN IN FLAMES, PERISHING IN FLAMES."

But the Bird Phœnix is not only the bird of Arabia, it floats in the rays of the Northern Lights across the ice-fields of Lapland, and runs among the yellow flowers of Greenland during the short summer. In the copper mines of Sweden and in the coal mines of England it flies like a dusty moth across the hymn-book in the hands of the pious miner. It floats down the sacred waters of the Ganges on a lotus-leaf, and the eyes of the Hindoo maiden beam at the sight of it.

Bird Phœnix! Do you not know it? The Bird of Paradise. The

sacred Swan of Song. It sat on the Thespis-chariot as a croaking raven, flapping its black, mud-besmeared wings. Over the harp of the Iceland Bard hovered the Swan with purple beak, and on the shoulder of Shakespeare it sat like the Raven of Odin of yore, whispering in his ear, — IMMORTALITY. It flew through the knightly hall of Wartburg.

Bird Phœnix! Do you not know it? It sang you the Marseillaise, and you kissed the feather that fell from its wing. It came in the splendor of Paradise, and maybe you turned from it to the sparrow with spurious gold on its wings.

The Bird of Paradise! Resuscitated every hundred years; born in flames, perishing in flames; your image framed in gold hangs in the halls of the rich, but you yourself are often flying neglected afar, — only a myth, — the Bird Phœnix in the Land of Arabia!

In the Garden of Paradise, where thou wert born below the Tree of Knowledge, the Almighty Creator kissed thee and gave thee thy real name, — POETRY.

LIII.

A STORY.

OUT in the garden all the apple-trees were in blossom; they had hurried to flower before they shot green leaves. In the yard all the ducks and the cat were sunning themselves. In the fields too, where the corn stood so splendidly green, there was a chirping and singing of little birds, as if it were some great festival; and that it really was, for it was Sunday. The bells rung merrily, and people went to church in their best clothes, looking so happy; and that there was good cause for, as it was a day when one might exclaim, "How good the Lord is towards us!"

But inside, in the church, the Parson spoke loudly and in wrath. He said that all people were so wicked that God would punish them, and that when they died they would go to Hell to eternal tortures, and that they never should know rest. It was awful to listen to; and he described so vividly that place as a sink of iniquity, where there was not a breath of fresh air, only vapors of sulphur, and where there was no bottom, but a continual sinking and silence. To have this described was awful in itself, but it became still more so because the Parson was speaking from the depths of his heart; and everybody in church was terrified.

But outside all the little birds sang so merrily, and the sun shone so warmly that it seemed as if every little flower exclaimed, "God is so wonderfully kind towards us all!" Yes, out there it was not as the Parson preached.

At night, on going to bed, the Parson saw his Wife sit silent and thoughtful, and he said to her, "What is the matter with you?"

"'What is the matter?'" she repeated. "The matter is that I cannot collect my thoughts; that I cannot believe that there are so many wicked people who will burn eternally — oh, how long! I am only a miserable sinner, but even I should never have the heart to let the most wicked sinner burn eternally; and how could then the Lord do

so, who is so merciful and knows whence evil springs? No, I will not believe that, though you say it."

It was autumn, and the leaves were falling, when the severe Parson was sitting by the bed of one pious being whose eyes were closed forever. It was his Wife.

"If ever any one rests in peace and obtains the mercy of the Lord, it will be you," said the Parson, folding her hands and saying a prayer.

And then she was buried. Two heavy tears rolled down the cheeks of the austere man; and in the parsonage it was gloomy and silent, for the sunshine had disappeared. She was gone.



"AND EVERYBODY IN CHURCH WAS TERRIFIED."

It was night; a cold wind swept over the Parson's face, and he opened his eyes. It seemed as if the moonlight were streaming into his room, but there was no moon. A figure stood before him, and he recognized his deceased Wife, who was looking at him sorrowfully, as if she wished to say something to him.

And the Parson half rose from his bed, and stretching out his arms towards her, said, "Are not even you vouchsafed eternal rest? You suffer, — the best and the most pious?"

And the Dead bowed her head with a "yes," and laid her hand on her breast.

"And can I not obtain the rest for you?" asked the Parson.

"You can," was the reply.

"And how?"

"Give me a hair — only a single hair — from the head of the sinner whom God shall condemn to eternal punishment."

"Yes; as easy as that, one so good and pious as you ought to be redeemed," said the Parson.

"Then follow me," said the Dead. "By my side we may go whither you wish. Invisible to the living, we stand in their most secret chambers; but you must point out the sinner condemned to eternal punishment unhesitatingly, and before cock-crow he must be found."

And quick as thought itself they were in a great city, on the houses of which the names of the cardinal sins shone in letters of fire, — Arrogance, Avariciousness, Drink; in short, the whole seven-colored rainbow of sin.

"I knew I should find what I sought in there," said the Parson.

And they stood before the magnificently lighted entrance, the broad staircase of which was covered with carpets and flowers, while dance-music resounded through the rooms. By the door stood a major-domo with a gold-knobbed stick in his hand.

"Our ball may compare with the Queen's," he said to the crowd outside. From head to foot he seemed to say, "Wretched mob, staring into the hall, you are dirt compared with me!"

"Arrogance!" cried the Dead Wife. "Do you see him?"

"He!" exclaimed the Parson. "No, he is only a fool; he will not be condemned to eternal punishment."

"'Only a fool!'" it sounded through the house of Arrogance; and fools they were all there.

Then they flew through the bare room of the miser, who sat there shrivelled up, cold, hungry, and thirsty, with thoughts only for the gold before him. They saw him rise feverish from his wretched couch and take out a stone from the wall, behind which he felt for a sock with gold coins in it; and they saw him finger with trembling hands his ragged coat in which gold coins were sewed.

"He is mad, — a morbid disease, surrounded by fear and bad dreams!" exclaimed the Parson.

And they vanished quickly, standing next by the couch of the felon, where one slept by the side of another. Like a wild beast one of them rushed up with a terrible cry, striking the person next to him, who

turned round, saying angrily, "Hold your tongue and go to sleep; this occurs every night."

"Every night!" shrieked the other. "Yes, every night he comes howling and lies down on me. When my blood has been up I have done a wicked thing or two. I am born with a quick temper, and that brought me here a second time. But if I have done wrong, I suffer my punishment. There is only one deed I have never confessed. When I left here last, and was passing the farm of my former master, something rose suddenly within me. I struck a match. It came a little too near the straw roof—and all burned. I became hot within. I helped to save cattle and goods. Nothing living burned but a flock of pigeons and the yard dog; I forgot him. I could hear him howl; and that howl I hear every night when I want to sleep; and when I sleep, the dog comes, howls, and tries to choke me. But you don't listen. You can sleep all the night, while I cannot get ten minutes!" And the blood mounted to his head, and he struck his companion.



"BUT IF I HAVE DONE WRONG, I SUFFER MY PUNISHMENT."

"Wild Jack has gone mad again," said the felons around, and they seized him; but he fought like a savage beast till he was overpowered and bound.

"You are killing him! You are killing him!" cried the Parson. And as he stretched out his hands over the sinner, who had already suffered too heavily, the scene changed.

They flew through splendid halls and lowly huts, and each one of the cardinal sins passed before them. An angel read the sins and their defences. They were certainly poor before God; but God reads the human heart, and knows all. He is mercy and love. The hand of the Parson trembled; he dared not stretch forth his hand and tear a hair

from the head of the sinner. Tears flowed from his eyes, like the tears of love and mercy which quenched the fire of Hell.

Then the cock crowed!

"Merciful God! Give her the rest which I cannot obtain for her."

"That I do now possess," said the Dead. "It was your hard words and your dark belief about God and the beings he has made which drove me to you. Learn to know mankind! Even in the wicked there is a particle of God, — a particle which will *conquer*."

And a kiss was imprinted on the Parson's lips. It became light around him; God's bright sun shone into the room, where his Wife stood alive and loving, awaking him from a dream sent by God.

LIV.

THE HISTORY OF THE YEAR.

It was at the end of January, and there was a terrible snow-storm. The snow was drifted in whirls by the wind through lanes and streets, encrusted the window-panes, and lay heaped up on the roofs. The people who chanced to be out of doors sped along as if some one were chasing them, ran up against one another, fell into one another's arms, and then kept their hold for a moment, fearing to lose their footing if they let it go again. Horses and carriages were all powdered with snow, and footmen stood with their backs to the carriages to escape the wind cutting their faces; foot-passengers kept steadily in lee of the vehicles, which rolled slowly through the deep snow; and when at last the storm was over, and a narrow path had been swept in front of the houses, people came to a dead stop whenever they met, neither party liking to step aside into the snow to give room for the other to pass. Silently they would stand, facing each other, till at last, tacitly arriving at a mutual compromise, each would sacrifice one foot in the snow-drift.

Towards evening came a lull. The sky looked as if it had been swept, and seemed higher and more transparent; the stars might have been taken to be spick-and-span new, they were so dazzlingly bright, and a few glistened with such a soft, blue light. The air was very keen; so much so that the uppermost layer of snow was frozen quite hard. And now in the early morning hour the little gray Sparrows came forth. They hopped up and down wherever the snow had been shovelled away; but there was not much to be found to eat, and the poor things were half starved as well as half frozen.

"Twit!" said one; "this is what folks call the New Year! Why, it is worse than the Old! I am very discontented, and no wonder. We might just as well have kept the Old Year!"

"Yes, and all the world have been running about making such a fuss with saluting the New Year!" said a little frozen Sparrow. "They were

quite wild with joy because the Old Year has gone and is done with; and I was glad, too, for I expected we should now get warmer days, but it has turned out a regular take-in, — it freezes worse than ever. Men must have made a mistake in their reckoning."

"That's just it; so they have," rejoined a third, — an old Sparrow with a hoary white head. "They have something which they call an almanac, — it is all their own invention, — and they want to make



"THERE WAS A TERRIBLE SNOW-STORM."

everything go on as that goes on; but they can't do it, after all. When Spring comes, that is the real beginning of the year; that is the course of Nature, and that is what I go by."

"But when will Spring come?" asked the others.

"Spring comes when the stork comes; but he is very unpunctual, and here in town there is no one who understands anything about the matter; they know better in the country. Suppose we fly thither and wait. We shall be nearer Spring there than here."

"That is all very well," remarked another Sparrow, who had kept on twittering for a long time without saying anything; "but for my part, I have many comforts here in town which I fear I should miss in the

country. In a house up yonder lives a family of human beings, who very sensibly have contrived to set in the wall three or four flower-pots, with the opening turned inside and the bottom outside, and in the bottom a hole is cut large enough for me to fly in and out; it is there that my mate and I have our nest, and thence all our young ones have taken their first flight. The family of human beings have of course arranged all this that they may have the pleasure of looking at us, else why should they have done it? And they strew crumbs of bread about, — all for their own amusement, — and that 's the way we get our living; and thus we are provided for. So I believe I shall stay here, and my mate will stay here too, although we are very discontented; yes, we shall stay here."

"And we will fly away into the country, to see if Spring is coming," said the others. And away they flew.

In the country it was Winter with a vengeance. The frost was some degrees keener than in town; and the cutting, icy wind blew pitilessly over the snow-covered fields. The peasant, sitting in his sledge, swathed in thick woollen wraps, let his whip lie in his lap and beat himself with his arms to get something like life into them; while the snow creaked under the hoofs of his lean, steaming horses, and the half-frozen Sparrows hopped about in the ruts left by the sledge. "Twit! will Spring never come? We have been waiting so long!"

"So long!" The words were wafted far over the fields from the highest of the snowy banks. Perhaps it was Echo who repeated them; perhaps it was the strange Old Man who sat up there on the highest snow-drift exposed to wind and weather. He was perfectly white, like a peasant in his frock of coarse white wool; he had long white hair and a white beard, and large bright eyes glittered in his wan face.

"And who 's that Old Man up there, I wonder?" said the Sparrows.

"I know," replied a grave old Raven, perched upon a fence close by, who was condescending enough to acknowledge that we are all small birds in the sight of Him who made us, and therefore did not disdain to converse even with Sparrows, and enlighten their ignorance with his superior wisdom. "I know who the Old Man is; he is Winter, the Old Man of last year. He is not dead, as the almanac says; no, he is a sort of Regent for the young Prince Spring, who is coming. Yes, Winter rules, and will do so for some time to come. Ugh! do you not shrink with cold, you little ones?"

"Yes, that is just what I say," answered the smallest and youngest of the Sparrows. "The almanac is a mere human invention; it is not

founded upon Nature. They should have let us make it, — us Sparrows, whose organs are so much finer and more delicate than theirs."

One week passed, a second had nearly passed; the wood was black, the frozen lake looked dark and heavy as lead, the clouds — nay, clouds they were not, they were damp, icy-cold vapors — brooded in dull stillness over the landscape, flocks of great black crows flew by, but silently; not so much as a single "caw!" was heard. It seemed as though all Nature were sleeping. Suddenly a sunbeam shot across the lake, whereupon it smiled and shone like molten tin, and the snowy mantle on field and bank glittered with countless sparkles; but the hoary white form, Winter, still sat motionless, gazing steadily toward the South, seemingly unobservant that his carpet of snow was, as it were, sinking into the earth, and that here and there a tiny green spot peeped forth all alive with busy, twittering Sparrows.

"Quiwit! Quiwit! Surely Spring has come at last!"

"Spring!" the joyous sound re-echoed over field and meadow, and through the woods, where the bright moss clung, fresh and green, to trunk and stem. And now from the sunny South came flying through the air the first two storks, each bearing on its back a beautiful little child; one was a boy, the other a girl. They kissed the earth on alighting, and wherever they set their feet white flowers sprang forth from under the snow. Hand in hand they went up to the old ice-man, Winter, and lovingly nestled upon his breast, when lo! they all three vanished from sight, the landscape vanishing with them, a thick, wet mist enveloping the whole. Gradually the air cleared again, the wind swept along furiously, driving the mist before it, and the sun shone out so warmly! Winter, old Winter was gone, and Spring's lovely children were seated on the throne of the Year.

"Ah, this is what I call New Year!" shouted the Sparrows. "Now we shall have our rights again, and have compensation for the inclemency of that severe old Winter."

Wherever the two children turned, green buds shot forth from bush and tree, the grass grew higher, the young green corn brightened in color, and the little maiden scattered flowers around her; she had such abundance of them that however zealously she might throw them away, still her lap was full. In her haste she shook a perfect shower of snow-white blossoms over apple and peach trees, so that they stood arrayed in glorious apparel, though as yet they had no leafy garment. And she clapped her hands, and the boy clapped his; and then the birds flew

forth, they knew not why, and one and all twittered and chirped and sang, "Spring has come!"

It was a lovely sight to see! Many an old, old lady tottered over the threshold of her door in the joyous sunshine, looked at the yellow blossoms that ornamented the meadow just as in the days of her youth, and felt that the world had become young again. "It is glorious to be out to-day!" she would then say.

And the wood was still half-brown, half-green, bud after bud slowly expanding; but the primrose, so fresh and fragrant, was already out,



"SPRING HAS COME!"

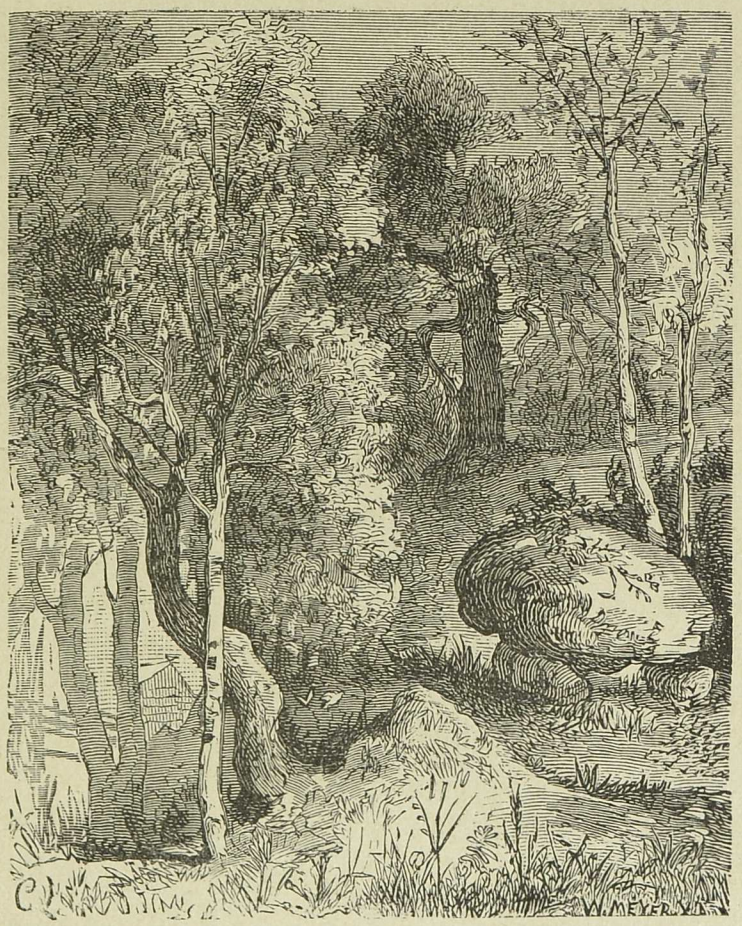
violets clustered together in tufts, and anemones, cowslips, and oxlips raised their heads, and every single blade of grass had a grace and glory of its own. A splendid, variegated carpet was the turf, and on it sat the two sweet children of Spring holding each other's hands, singing, smiling, and growing more and more.

A soft rain fell from heaven upon them, but they noticed it not; the gentle raindrops mingled with their own tears of joy. Bride and bridegroom kissed each other; and lo! the wood burst in a moment into fulness of life. When the sun rose, all the woods were clothed in green. And hand in hand the bridal pair passed under the fragrant, leafy canopy, where only the sunbeams and the shadows cast by the clouds gave variety to the changing green. A virgin purity, a refreshing

scent, dwelt in those delicate leaves; clear, bright, and lively rippled the silver brooklet between reeds of velvet green, over a mosaic of sparkling pebbles. "Beautiful forever, never-dying, never-failing!" — such seemed the song of Nature. And the cuckoo and the lark sang of Spring, — joyous Spring, and yet the willow-trees kept their blossoms wrapped in woolly gloves, so unnecessarily cautious were they!

Days and weeks passed by, and now an intense heat seemed to have fallen upon the earth; waves of hot air were wafted through the corn, which was now changing from green to golden. On the forest lakes the Lotus of the North, the white water-lily, spread out its large leaves on the watery mirror, and the fishes sought shelter under their shade. And on the very hottest side of the wood, where the sun scorched the cottage-wall and heated through and through the petals of the roses that had burst open to greet him, where the cherry-trees were laden with juicy, sun-ripened berries, there sat a beautiful Woman, — the same whom we saw as a merry child, as a happy bride. She was gazing on the slowly-drifting clouds, mountain-like in form and color, — heavy, dark clouds, drifting from three sides, ever higher and higher on the sky, till at last they closed over the wood not unlike a petrified sea reversed; and everything became hushed into a magic stillness. Not a breath stirred the air, not a leaf rustled, not a bird dared to raise its voice; all Nature seemed, as it were, waiting with awed expectation. Meantime roads and lanes were quickly cleared, every one in carriage, on horse, or on foot hurrying under cover. All at once it lightened. It was as though the sun had burst forth for a second, dazzling, blinding, scorching. Then there was a deep, rolling crash, followed by darkness. Water came down in torrents; night and light, stillness and the roar of thunder, alternated in rapid succession. Grass and corn lay beaten to the ground as though they never could rise again. Suddenly the rain abated, falling only in single drops, the sun shining, and blade and leaf glittering like hundreds and thousands of diamonds; the birds sang, the fishes darted up to the surface of the water, the gnats danced, and yonder, on the stone washed by the current, sat Summer himself, in his prime of manhood, with his vigorous limbs and dripping wet hair; as though renewed by his fresh water-bath he sat basking in the warm sunshine. And in very truth all things were renewed; all creatures were joyful, healthful, and beautiful; it was Summer, — warm, luxuriant Summer.

And sweet and reviving was the fragrance wafted from the clover-field, and the bees hovered and hummed over the spot where Danish kings, warriors, and sages had been wont to meet in olden time. The bramble had now twined round the altar-stone, which, washed by the rain, shone brightly in the sunshine, and thither flew the Queen Bee with her swarm, stored her wax, and made sweet honey. None saw it



"IT WAS SUMMER."

save Summer and his Wife. They, strong and healthful, loved the noonday heat; to them that old heathen altar, once stained with human blood, stood now enriched with the pure, sinless offerings of Nature to her God.

And the evening sky glowed like gold; no cathedral dome was ever half so rich and glorious; and the pale moon reigned in her beauty during the hours between evening and morning. It was summer.

Days and weeks went by again; and now the keen scythes of the reapers gleamed in the cornfields, the apple-boughs bent their red and

yellow freights, the hops sent forth their delicious perfume and hung down their large cups; and under the hazel-bushes, heavy with nuts, sat Summer and his Wife looking grave and weary.

"What wealth!" said she. "Blessing and prosperity on every side, everything home-like and pleasant, and yet — I know not what is wanting to me — I yearn for rest, perfect rest; I cannot tell why. See, they are already ploughing the fields! More and more riches will men ever be striving for! And oh, look at the storks flying yonder in a line, as though following the plough, — the birds of Egypt who bore us hither through the air! Rememberest thou not how we were brought together into this Northern land when children? Flowers we brought with us, warm sunshine, and green leaves, — beautiful leaves. But the Wind has touched them with his rough hand; the trees are now turning brown and dark like the trees of the South, but they bear no golden fruits like theirs!"

"Is that what thou longest for?" asked Summer; "look up, then, and rejoice!" And he lifted his arm, and immediately the foliage was dyed in hues of crimson and gold, all the woods around standing arrayed in a costly festive garb. The dog-rose hedges grew bright with blood-red hips, the elder-boughs hung heavy with large brown berries, the wild chestnuts dropped ripe from their dark-green calyxes, and on the woodland banks violets blossomed again.

Meantime the Queen of the Year grew yet more pale and languid. "What a cold wind!" she sighed. "There are such wet mists at night! Oh, how I long for the home of my childhood!"

And she saw the storks fly away, every one, and she stretched her hands after them; she glanced at the empty nests, and in one grew a long-stalked corn-flower; it looked just as if the nest was meant as a hedge to fence it in. The Sparrows hopped up and peeped in: "Twit! so master and mistress are off! they can't bear — not they — that the wind should blow upon them, so they have taken themselves off. Good riddance!"

Yellower and yellower grew the foliage, leaf after leaf fell, boisterous storms were abroad. It was late Autumn; and on a bed of yellow leaves lay the Queen of the Year, her gentle eyes fixed on the glittering stars, and her husband stood beside her. A gust shook the trees, again the leaves fell, and lo! she was gone; but a fair butterfly, the latest of the year, fluttered through the cold air.

Now came damp mists, icy blasts, and dark, long nights. The hair

of the Monarch of the Year was hoary-white, but he noticed it not, or perhaps fancied it was so from the snow-flakes that fell from the sky; and a thin shroud of snow already covered the green fields. And the church-bells rang in the merry Christmas-tide.

"Bells ringing, bells ringing!" said the Monarch of the Year. "Yes, they ring for a birth! Soon will be born the new royal couple, and I shall have rest, like my beloved, — rest in yon glistening stars with her!" And in the ever-fresh, ever-green pine wood stood amid the snow the Angel of Christmas consecrating the young trees that should be chosen to celebrate the holy, happy festival.

"Joy to you with your green boughs! Go bring joy with you into the warm dwellings of the children of men!" said the King of the Year, whom a few weeks had worn into a weary old man with snow-white beard. "It is nearly time for me to rest; the young sovereigns of the year will now take my crown and sceptre."

"But the rule is yet thine," spake the Angel of Christmas, — "rule, and not rest! See that the snow lies warm over the young seed; learn to bear that homage and honor should be paid to another while thou art still ruler; learn to be forgotten, and yet to live and work. Thine hour of release will come in good time, as soon as Spring comes."

"When will Spring come?" asked Winter.

"Spring will come when the stork comes."

And so with thin locks and flowing beard, both alike hoary-white, bowed with age, but strong as the storm, strong as the ice, sat Winter on the high snow-drift, gazing southwards, just as the Winter before him had sat and gazed. And the ice and the snow creaked, the skaters skimmed over the smooth lakes, and crows and ravens were seen standing out in bold relief upon the white ground. Not a breath of wind was stirring. Winter clasped his hands in the still air, and the ice grew yards thick between land and land.

Then out came the Sparrows from the town and asked again, "Who is the old man up there?" And the Raven, or a son of his, which amounts to the same thing, was ready at hand and prompt to answer, "It is Winter, the Old Man of last year. He is not dead, as the almanac says; he is Regent for the young Prince Spring who is coming."

"When Spring comes," said the Sparrows, "we shall have good times, and a better government; the old is fit for nothing!"

And in silent thought Winter bowed his head towards the black, leafless groves, where every tree displayed the delicate curves and arching

of its boughs. Icy cold vapors darkened the sky during Winter's slumber; and the weary old Monarch dreamed pleasantly of his youth and his manhood, and at day-dawn all the woods stood gemmed with glittering hoar-frost. That was Winter's dream of Summer. But the sun soon kissed the hoar-frost from the branches.

"When *is* Spring coming? I wish it were Spring!" chirped the Sparrows.



"ON THE BACK OF EACH RODE A LOVELY CHILD."

"Spring!" it resounded from the snow-covered banks. And the sun shone warmer and warmer, the snow melted, the birds carolled, "Spring is coming!"

And high through the air flew the first stork, the second following. On the back of each rode a lovely child; and the children leaped down on the open field, and they kissed the earth and they kissed the Old Man, and he vanished in a mist.

The history of the year was at an end.

"It is all very fine," said the Sparrows, "and all very pleasant, but it is not according to the almanac; so one or the other must be quite wrong."

LV.

THE SILENT BOOK.

By the high-road in the forest lay a solitary farm. The road ran right through it. The sun shone on it, and all the windows were open, behind which there was life and bustle; but without, in a bower of blooming lilacs, stood an open coffin. The deceased had been placed there, for he was to be buried the same day; but nobody stood sorrowing by the side of the coffin, nobody wept over the dead man. His face was hidden by a white cloth, and under his head lay a big book, every leaf of which was a foolscap, and between each lay withered flowers, hidden and forgotten, — a whole herbarium, collected in different places. They should follow him into the grave: he had asked that. Every flower was a chapter of his life.

"Who was he?" we asked; and the reply was, "The old Student from Upsala."[1] It was said that once he was merry and happy; that he knew languages, and could write and sing funny songs. But something happened, and he took to — drink. Then his health gave way, and he was placed on this farm, his board being paid for. He was like a child when the dark mood was absent; but when it was not, he became strong and ran about in the wood like a chased beast. When, however, he was brought back and the book with the withered flowers was given to him, he would sit all the day gazing at a single flower, and often tears would course down his cheeks. Heaven only knew what he was thinking about. But he asked that the book should be placed in his coffin; and now it lies yonder, and in a few moments the lid will be nailed down, and he will have sweet repose in the grave.

The cloth was raised. There was peace in his face; a sunbeam fell on it; a swallow scudded rapidly into the bower, turned in its flight, and twittered over the head of the dead man.

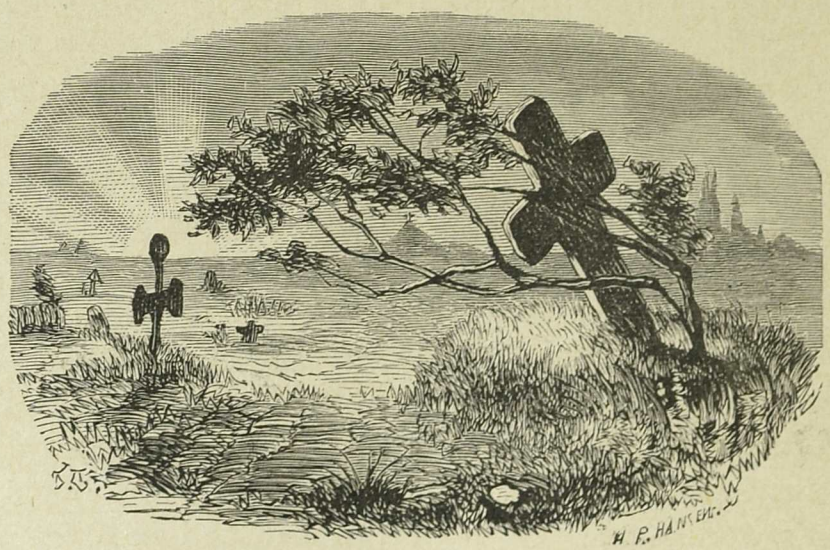
[1] Here is the most celebrated university in Scandinavia. — Tr.

How strange it is — we all know, no doubt, the feeling — to bring out old letters from one's youth and read them again! They recall the hopes and disappointments of a whole life. How many of those we then knew so well are now like dead to us, and still they are living! But it is long since we thought of them, — those whom we once thought we should cling to through joy and sorrow.



"HEAVEN ONLY KNEW WHAT HE WAS THINKING ABOUT."

The withered oak-leaf here in the book reminds of the friend, — the friend at school, the friend for life. He fixed the leaf on the breast in the green woods, when the bond of friendship was pledged for life. Where is he now? The leaf hidden, — the bond forgotten. Here is an exotic, a plant too delicate for the garden of the North. There seems fragrancy still in its leaves. *She* gave it to him, — the young lady from the lord's castle. Here is a water-lily which he plucked himself, and watered with his salt tears. And here is a nettle; what does that represent? What did he think of when he gathered and preserved that? Here is a lily-of-the-valley from the solitary woods; here a rose-twig from the flower-pot in the garret; and here a bare, dried blade of grass!



"HIDDEN — FORGOTTEN!"

The blooming lilac droops its fresh, fragrant blossoms over the head of the dead man; the swallow again scuds past, — "Quiwitt! Quiwitt!" There is the man with the hammer and the nails. The lid is laid over the dead man, whose head rests on the Silent Book. Hidden — forgotten!

LVI.

"THERE IS A DIFFERENCE."

It was in the month of May. The wind was still cold, but Spring had come, said trees and shrubs, fields and meadows. There were flowers everywhere, even right up to the hedge; and just here Spring spoke for herself, from a little apple-tree on which there was a solitary Branch so fresh and so blooming, covered with pink buds on the point of opening. It knew quite well how pretty it was, — for that is in the leaf as well as in the blood, — and therefore it was not surprised when the earl's carriage stopped in the road before it, and the young Countess said it was lovely, — it was Spring in her loveliest form. And the Branch was broken off, and the Countess herself held it in her delicate little hand as she drove to the castle. Here were fine rooms, and snow-white curtains fluttered before the open windows, near which stood splendid flowers in transparent vases; and in one of these, which looked like virgin snow, the Apple-tree Branch was placed, between fresh green beech-tree branches. It looked so lovely!

And so the Branch became very proud; and that was only human.

And many people called, some of whom said something, and others nothing at all; and the Apple-tree Branch understood there was a difference between people as well as between plants. "Some are for ornament, others for use, and some we might do without," thought the Branch. And as it stood where it could see into the garden as well as into the fields, it had plenty of flowers and plants to look at and contemplate. There were rich and poor ones, — some too poor.

"Poor castaway plants!" thought the Apple-tree Branch. "There is indeed a difference; and how unhappy they must feel, if such things *can* feel like me and mine. There is indeed a difference, but that of course there must be; otherwise we should be all alike." And the Branch looked pityingly at some particular flowers which grew in profusion out in the fields. Nobody made a wreath of them, they

were too common for that; they were even to be found between the paving-stones of the street. They grew like weeds, and had the ugly name of "dandelion."[1]

"Poor, despised plants!" said the Apple-tree Branch. "You cannot help what you are, — that you are so common, and have that ugly name. But it is with plants as with people, — there is a difference."

"A difference," said the Sunbeam, kissing the blooming Apple-tree Branch; but it kissed also the yellow dandelion flowers out in the fields.



"OUT IN THE FIELDS."

And all the Sunbeam's brothers kissed the poor flowers too, as well as the rich.

The Apple-tree Branch had never thought of the boundless love of God for everything which lives in Him. It had never thought of the beautiful and good which may die in obscurity but are not forgotten; but that was only human, too.

The Sunbeam, the ray of light, knew better. "You do not see far nor clearly," it said. "Which is the plant you pity in particular?"

"The dandelion," replied the Apple-tree Branch. "It is never put into a bouquet; it is trodden under foot. There are too many of them, and when they run to seed they fly like wool along the roads, sticking

[1] In Danish, "the Devil's milk-pails." — Tr.

to people's clothes. They are only weeds; but weeds, of course, must exist too. I am really glad I was not made one of them."

And a troop of children came running into the fields, the smallest of whom was so tiny she had to be carried; and she was put on the grass among the yellow flowers, where she sat laughing, and kicking with her little legs, rolling over and kissing the yellow flowers in pure innocence. Some of the bigger children broke the flowers off and bent the hollow stalks round into one another, link by link, till there was a whole chain of them. First one was made for the neck, then one for the shoulder, and then one each for the waist and head. There was quite an array of green links and chains. Then they took carefully the stalks on which hung the light feathery balls, — the remarkable airy little woolly flowers which look as if they were made of feather and down. They held them to their mouths so as to blow all away in one breath; for he that could do that should have a suit of new clothes before the year was out, their grandmother had said.

The despised flower was in this case a real prophet.

"Do you see," said the Sunbeam, — "do you see its beauty and its power?"

"Yes, to children," replied the Apple-tree Branch.

Then an old woman came walking into the fields and began to dig with a blunt knife round the root of the plant, pulling it out. Some of the roots she wanted to make coffee from, and others were to go to the chemist to be paid for and used in medicine.

"Still, beauty is something higher," said the Apple-tree Branch. "Only the chosen few may enter the kingdom of beauty. There is a difference between plants, as well as between people."

And the Sunbeam spoke of God's boundless love toward all creation, and the *equal* division of everything and at all times.

"Well, that may be your opinion," said the Apple-tree Branch.

Then some people entered the room with the young Countess who had placed the Branch in the lovely transparent vase in the bright sunshine. She carried in her hand a flower or something, hidden by three or four big leaves, which protected it so that not a breath of wind should hurt it, and it was carried more carefully than the Apple-tree Branch had ever been carried. Just as carefully the leaves were now removed, exposing the delicate seed-crown of the despised dandelion. That was the flower she had plucked so carefully and taken such care of, that not one of the fine feathery points should be lost. It was perfect, and she

admired its lovely shape, its aerial transparency, its whole divine composition, its beauty even when it should be blown away by the wind.

"Only see how lovely the Lord has made it!" she said. "I will paint it together with the Apple-tree Branch, which is so much admired by everybody. But this poor flower too has received just as much from the Lord in another form; they are so different from each other, and still both children in the realm of beauty."

And the Sunbeam kissed the poor flower as well as the Apple-tree Branch, whose petals seemed to blush thereby.

LVII.

UNDER THE WILLOW-TREE.

DOWN by Kiöge town the country is somewhat barren; the town lies close by the shore, — a neat little town, but it might be still prettier; a flat plain surrounds it, and there are woods in the far distance. But when a place becomes thoroughly familiar and home-like, we may often find in it a secret charm, an undefined beauty, the memory whereof will excite a sigh and a longing thought even amid the loveliest scenes this world can show. It must be allowed, however, that on the outskirts of Kiöge, where a cluster of cottage gardens run down to the little brook which, rippling past them, makes its way to the sea, it is really very pleasant in the summer. As for those two little playmates, Canute and Joan, they thought the spot quite beautiful; they were neighbors' children. In the garden of Canute's parents stood an elder-tree, in that of Joan's an old willow; and the children used to creep under the gooseberry-bush hedge that divided the gardens, and play together. Their favorite haunt was the willow-tree; there they would play for hours, though it was somewhat dangerous, for the tree leaned over the brook, and they were often near falling into the water. But the Lord takes care of little children; were it not so, there would be small chance of their living to be grown-up men and women. However, these children were very careful; as for the boy, he was so shy of the water that not even in summer, when all the other children took such delight in dabbling about in wet places, could he be got down to the shore; he was much laughed at, but he cared not for that. And one night little Joan dreamed that she was sailing in a boat in Kiöge Bay, and that



"THEIR FAVORITE HAUNT WAS THE WILLOW-TREE."

Canute came out through the sea after her, and that the water first washed over his neck and at last closed over his head. She told this dream to Canute, and after that he would no longer bear being called a coward patiently; he would insist that he had good reason to shun the water, and would refer triumphantly to Joan's dream. He was quite proud of that dream, and with the water he would have nothing to do.

Not only in their parents' gardens did Canute and Joan play together; sometimes they rambled along the high-roads, where alongside the ditches stood a whole row of willow-trees, by no means handsome, certainly, as they were much cut and chopped about the crowns; but then they were planted for use, not for ornament.[1] The old willow-tree in the children's garden was much more picturesque.

There is a large open space in the town of Kiöge, where in market-time used to stand rows of booths, with silk ribbons, boots and shoes, and all possible things, and, what was best of all, nice cakes of gingerbread. Now the man who sold the latter always lodged during market-time with the parents of little Canute, into whose hands came many nice pieces of gingerbread, which were of course honestly shared with Joan. But there was one thing they enjoyed still more; and that was that the gingerbread-seller could tell stories about everything in the world, even about his own gingerbread; nay, concerning this he one evening related a wonderful story that made a strong impression upon the two children, and for that reason we give it here; it is short enough: —

"Once there lay upon the counter two cakes of gingerbread," — so began the story, — "the one had the form of a man with a hat on, the other that of a damsel without a hat, but with a bit of leaf-gold on her head. And both had their faces on the side that was turned uppermost. The gingerbread man had a bitter almond for a heart, a little to the left. They were left as samples on the counter. They lay there so long that at last they fell in love with each other; but neither spoke of it, which was a pity, for silent love can never come to any good. 'He is a man, he must say the first word,' thought the gingerbread damsel; but she would have been so glad to know that her affections were returned. As for the other, he grew hotter and hotter internally. At last he dreamed he was a living, active, greedy street-boy, possessed of four farthings, and that he bought the little damsel and ate her. And thus they lay for days and weeks together on the counter, and grew quite dry;

[1] For the purpose of supplying withes. — Tr.

and the damsel's sentiments became more and more refined and feminine. 'It is happiness enough for me that I am beside him on the counter,' she thought; and as she thought thus she broke in halves. 'Had she known my love, she would have held out longer,' thought he.

"That is the story, and here are the two identical cakes," concluded the gingerbread-seller. "They are remarkable on account of their history and their silent love, which came to no good. Look! here you have them;" and he gave to Joan the whole man, and to Canute the broken little damsel. But the children were so impressed with the story that they did not like to eat the hero and heroine of it. The next day, however, they went to walk in Kiöge churchyard, where the old wall is overgrown with ivy, which hangs over it winter and summer like a rich green carpet; and they set up the two cakes among the green leaves, in full sunshine, and they told the story of these silent lovers to a number of other children. All admired the story; but when at the end of it all eyes again turned to the gingerbread pair, behold, a great big boy had seized the poor little damsel and eaten her! The children shed tears of dismay; and then, lest the poor forsaken cake should feel himself alone in the world, they ate the man too. But they never forgot the story.



"HE ONE EVENING RELATED A WONDERFUL STORY."

While these children were continually together at the elder-bush or under the willow-tree, the little girl used to sing the prettiest songs in a voice as clear as silver bells. Canute had no such notes in his throat, but he always knew the words of her songs. All the Kiöge folk who passed by when Joan was singing would stop to listen, and say, "What a sweet voice that little creature has!"

Those were blessed days, but were not to last forever. The little girl's mother died; her father removed to Copenhagen and married

again. The neighbors parted with tears, especially the children, but the elders promised to write to each other at least once a year. Canute was apprenticed to a shoemaker, for he was now too big to be allowed to idle away his time; and then he was confirmed.

Oh, how he longed to go to Copenhagen to see little Joan! Copenhagen being only five miles from Kiöge, in clear weather Canute could see the towers beyond the Bay, and on his confirmation day he could plainly distinguish the gold cross gleaming on the summit of the Church of Our Lady.

But did Joan remember him? Yes! At Christmas-time came a letter from her father to his; they were thriving at Copenhagen, and Joan's beautiful voice had been taken notice of; she was being trained to sing in public. And she herself sent a whole half-crown to her old neighbors at Kiöge, that they might drink her health on Christmas-day. And her own hand had added a postscript to the letter, and in it she said, "Kind greetings to Canute!"

He wept for joy. Every day had Joan been in his thoughts, and now he knew that she, too, was not unmindful of him. The older he grew the more one idea grew fixed, namely, that she must become his little wife. When he thought so, a smile would steal over his face, and he would sew on so energetically that he nearly sewed his fingers to his shoe-soles; but that did not matter. He would not be mute like the two gingerbread cakes; he had learned wisdom from that story.

At last the time came when he was to go to Copenhagen. He had found a master there. How glad Joan would be, and how surprised! She was now seventeen years of age, he nineteen. He would have bought a wedding ring before he started, but he thought that he could get it better in Copenhagen. He took leave of his parents, and trudged quickly away through autumn rain and mist, the yellow leaves falling around him; wet to the skin, he reached Copenhagen, and went straight to his new master.

The following Sunday he had resolved paying his visit to Joan's father. He had on his best clothes, and his new hat from Kiöge. He found the house, and walked up staircase after staircase; it almost made him giddy to think how people were crowded above each other in this great city.[1] He entered a pleasant, well-furnished room, and was kindly received by Joan's father; her step-mother was a stranger to him, but she gave him her hand and offered him a cup of coffee.

[1] In Copenhagen, as in other Continental cities, the majority of people live in flats. — Tr.

"Joan will be pleased to see you," said her father. "Ah! I have great joy and pride in that girl, thank Heaven! She has her own room and pays us for it." And he knocked at his daughter's door as ceremoniously as though she had been a stranger, and they were bidden to come in. Well, it was charming! The Queen herself could not have a prettier room, Canute thought. There were curtains down to the ground, there was a real velvet arm-chair, there were flowers and pictures, and a looking-glass which one might almost run into; it was as big as a door. Canute saw all this at a glance, and yet he hardly seemed to see anything but Joan. And she was so altered! Canute had never imagined she was so beautiful. So graceful, too! There was not a girl like her in all Kiöge. For a moment she looked with a startled glance at Canute, but only one moment. Then she ran up to him almost as though she would have kissed him; but she did not kiss him, though she was very near doing so. Oh, she was indeed glad to see the friend of her childhood! Did not tears stand in her eyes? And then she had so many questions to ask about everything, from Canute's parents down to the old elder-bush and willow, which she called "Mother Elder" and "Father Willow." She recollected everything, even the story of the two gingerbread cakes that lay together on the counter; and then she laughed so heartily! But Canute's cheeks burned and his heart beat so fast! One thing was certain, she had not grown proud. He saw that it was to please her that her father invited him to stay for the rest of the evening; and she poured out the tea and offered him a cup with her own hand. After tea she took a book and read aloud, and then she sang; and the tears ran down Canute's cheeks the while. He was ashamed of himself, and felt thoroughly stupid; and yet she pressed his hand and seemed pleased. It was an incomparable evening, — such an evening as spoils one's sleep for the night; and we may be sure that Canute did not sleep. At leave-taking Joan's father said, "Ah, you won't quite forget us, then? Don't let the winter go away without seeing us again."

He resolved he would soon call again. But meanwhile, after his day's work was ended, Canute used to walk through the town, and his walk always took him through the street where Joan lived; and he would look up at her window, which was usually lighted, and once he could discern the shadow of her face on the window-curtain; that was a fortunate evening! "In a few days I shall see her again, and then I will tell her what is on my mind, — that she must become my

little wife! True, I am only a poor journeyman shoemaker, but I will become a master; I will work and strive so hard!"

And he paid his second visit, but — how unlucky! — they were going out. However, Joan pressed his hand, and promised to send him on the following Wednesday a ticket for a play in which she was going to sing and act; she wanted him to hear her. How kind that was of her! And on Wednesday the ticket came, and he went. She looked lovely and sang beautifully. Even the King smiled at her, as though it were a pleasure to him to see her; and the people clapped and applauded her, and Canute with them. How small, how insignificant he felt! But it mattered not, he loved her so unspeakably. And she? She certainly loved him; and as he was the man, he must speak the first word.

He went to see her the third time; he felt as solemn as though he were going to church. Joan received him alone; that was just what he wished.

"I am so glad you have come!" she said; "I had half a mind to send my father to you, but I had a fancy that you would come this evening of your own accord. And I have something to tell you; next Friday I am going to France."

The room whirled round before Canute's eyes as she spoke; his heart seemed ready to burst, though no tears came into his eyes. But Joan's grew moist, for she saw that he was grieved. "You dear, faithful friend," she said; and at this Canute's tongue was loosed, and he told her how passionately he loved her. But as he spoke, Joan turned deadly pale; she let go his hand, and replied in a grave, sad voice, "Don't make yourself and me unhappy, Canute! I will always be a good sister to you, but nothing more;" and she stroked his burning forehead with her soft hand.

"God gives us all the strength we need, if we do but desire it," she added. At this moment her step-mother entered. "Canute is quite beside himself because I am going away," said Joan to her; and she patted his shoulder as if he were a child. "Now, do be a man! Be good and rational, as in the old times under the willow-tree, when we were both children."

The old people thought they had only been talking about Joan's journey. They were very kind to Canute, but he was utterly bewildered; his thoughts seemed like a broken thread, carried to and fro by the wind. Joan handed him his tea, and sang as before, but all seemed changed. When he rose to go, Canute did not offer his hand, but she

took it, saying, "Won't you give your sister your hand at parting, my old playmate, my brother?" And her tears fell as she repeated the word "brother;" but that did him little good. And so they parted.

And Joan sailed for France, and Canute remained in Copenhagen. His comrades asked what made him so silent and moody, and bade him enjoy himself while he was young. But Canute could not share in their pleasures; they would have taken him to places where he felt he could not take Joan, and she was always with him in his thoughts. So he spent the evenings in wandering about alone, past the house where she had dwelt; her little window was now dark, dreary, and empty. So seemed all the world, too, to Canute. The winter came on and the waters froze; but when spring followed, the ice broke up and the first steamer sailed. A longing to travel came over him; out into the world he would go, only not too near France.



"NOW, DO BE A MAN!"

So he buckled on his knapsack and wandered through Germany, from town to town; and not till he reached the famous old city of Nuremberg did he rest. Nuremberg is a wonderful town, as quaint as if it had been cut out of an old picture. The streets run according to their own will; the houses don't seem to trouble themselves about standing evenly in rows; balconies with tiny towers, scroll-work, and statues project over the pavement, and high up from the strangely formed roofs gutters shaped like dragons or wonderfully long-bodied dogs run out into the middle of the streets.

In the market-place stood Canute with his knapsack on his back; near him splashed one of those ancient fountains where the curious images representing personages in the Bible or in history stand amid the sparkling streams of water. A pretty servant-girl was just fetching water from the fountain; she offered her pitcher to Canute, and pitying

the poor fellow's weary looks, gave him a rose out of her posy. This seemed to him a good omen. And now the tones of the organ reached his ears; it sounded so home-like, reminding him of Kiöge church. He entered the great cathedral; the sun shone through its colored window-panes, and threw a brilliant light among the tall slender pillars. He felt happier; calm peace and pious trust filled his soul.

He resolved to sojourn at Nuremberg; he sought out a good master, lodged with him, and learned the language of the country.

The old graves round the town have been converted into tiny kitchen-gardens, but the high walls with their heavy towers still remain. The rope-maker twists his ropes on the wooden gallery along the wall towards the town, and here and there from holes and crevices spring forth elder-bushes, which spread their branches over the small, lowly dwellings beneath. In one of these houses dwelt Canute's master, and close over the little attic chamber where he slept the elder drooped its boughs.

He remained here through the summer and the following winter, but when spring came he could bear it no longer. The elder was in full blossom, and the scent of the flowers brought back to him so vividly his own garden at Kiöge; and therefore Canute left his master and sought out another farther in the town, where elder-trees did not grow.

Close by one of the old bridges, opposite a water-mill, he found his next resting-place. The river flowed on, hemmed in by houses decorated with old tumble-down balconies, — one could almost fancy the houses had a mind to shake them down into the water. Here grew no fragrant elder-bushes; scarce even a flower-pot was seen. But here, nevertheless, stood a withered old willow-tree, clinging fast to the house nearest it, as though to escape being torn away by the stream, and stretching its boughs over the water just like the willow-tree in Joan's old garden at Kiöge. So he had fled from "Mother Elder" to "Father Willow," and the old tree looked so home-like on bright, moonlight evenings! He could not endure it. Why not? Ask the Willow; ask the fragrant Elder. He bade his master good-by, and quitted Nuremberg.

To no one did he ever speak of Joan; he kept his grief within him, and many a strange fancy he had. It seemed to him that the strap of his knapsack tightened so that he could hardly breathe; he loosened it, but felt no relief. Only half the world was without him; the other half lay within, deep in his heart.

But when he saw mountains, there came some relief; tears swelled to his eyes, and he breathed more freely. The Alps seemed to him like the folded wings of the earth, — glorious wings, which when spread open displayed pictures of black woods, foaming waters, clouds, and snow. "On the last day the earth will lift up its great wings, fly into the bosom of its Maker, and burst like a bubble in the beams of His unapproachable light. When will that day come?" he sighed.

Silently he wandered through a land that seemed to him like a verdant fruit garden; pretty lace-makers nodded to him from the wooden balconies of the houses, the mountain-tops glowed in the red evening sun, and still lakes lay gleaming amid the dark trees. Then he thought of the shore at Kiöge Bay; but it was with quiet sadness, no longer with agony. And when he beheld the Rhine rushing forward, rolling, roaring, and breaking into wreaths of snow-white foam, the rainbow fluttering like a loose ribbon above it, he remembered the noisy, riotous water of the mill at Kiöge. He loved the Rhine, and would have tarried in its neighborhood, but he could not; there were too many elders and willows. So he crossed the Alps; over thistles, Alpine roses, and snow, he passed into the warm summer sun. He had bidden farewell to the northern lands, and was now among chestnut groves and vineyards, the mountains standing up like a wall between him and his past. That was as it should be.

He stayed at Milan, working under a German master, who, with his good old wife, took a great liking to the quiet foreign lad who spoke so little, labored so diligently, and bore himself always like a good Christian. And now it seemed as though the heavy burden had been lifted from his heart. He loved to mount to the roof of the splendid marble dome of the great cathedral; he could have fancied the fairies had carved it out of northern snow, and fretted it into its numberless bas-reliefs, with its one hundred and four tapering spires, its two thousand statues. From every corner, every arch, every pinnacle, those white statues smiled upon him; above him extended the blue sky, below him lay the city and the wide green plains of Lombardy, shut in towards the north by the high mountains with their eternal snow. He often thought of the old church at Kiöge, and the ivy wreaths trailing over the red walls, but he longed not for them; here, behind the mountains, would he be buried.

He had lived for a year at Milan; it was now three years since he had left home. One day his master treated him to the opera. From the floor to the ceiling, in seven rows of curtained boxes, sat

ladies with bouquets in their hands, as though it were a ball; the light was as dazzling as the brightest sunshine, the music was so loud and beautiful, — far more beautiful than that he had heard at Copenhagen, — but then Joan was *there*. Surely it was sorcery! the curtain rose, and before his eyes stood Joan herself, in silk and gold, and with a crown on her head; she sang, she smiled, as only Joan could sing and smile, and she looked straight at Canute.

Poor fellow! he seized his master's hand and shouted "Joan!" But the music drowned his voice, and his master nodded and answered, "To be sure it is Joan." And he took out a printed paper and showed Canute her name in full on it. No, it was not a dream! and every one applauded, and flung flowers and wreaths at her feet. And when the performance was over, the people crowded round her carriage and drew it away, and Canute was among the foremost; and when they had reached her house he stood close by the carriage door. The light shone on her gentle face as she stepped out and smiled and spoke her thanks so sweetly; and Canute looked full at her, and she looked directly at him, but she did not recognize him. A great gentleman with a star on his breast gave her his arm as she entered the house; he was her betrothed.

Canute heard this repeated from one to another. He went straight home and began packing his knapsack; no entreaties could detain him. He was told winter was coming on, that snow was already falling up in the mountains; it mattered not. Wherever the slow, heavy wagon had a path made for it, he could follow, his knapsack on his back, his staff in hand.

He had wandered till late in the evening; he was weary, and saw neither village nor hostelry near. The stars twinkled above, his knees tottered, his head was dizzy; down in the valley below him stars were gleaming out also; it was as though the sky was spread below as well as above him. Brighter and brighter grew these stars of the earth. At last he comprehended that a little town glittering with lights lay beneath. He collected all his strength, walked on, and reached a miserable inn. Four-and-twenty hours he tarried here; he needed rest so much, and the valleys were full of half-melted snow. But a poor wandering minstrel came that way, and he played an old Danish melody, and then Canute could rest no longer; he must hasten back to Denmark. Never had he confessed his homesickness; no one knew his innermost soul. In the only letter his parents had written to

him during the last twelve months he read these words: "Thou art hardly a true Dane! Thou lovest foreign lands, and we love our own home." So thought his parents, and he had never gainsaid them.



"BUT SHE DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM."

It was evening; he was trudging along on the open high-road. It was freezing, and the country grew flatter and less sheltered as he walked on; by the wayside stood an old willow-tree; the whole scene looked quite Danish and home-like. Weak and wayworn, he seated himself under the willow-tree; his head drooped, his eyes closed. He felt that the willow bowed its branches toward him; nay, the tree had become a vigorous old man, — Father Willow himself, — and lifted him, the weary son, upon his arms, and bore him back to his Danish home near the open shore, — to Kiöge Bay, to the garden of his childhood. Yes, it was actually the Willow-tree from Kiöge, that had gone out into the world to seek him; and now he was found, and borne home to the tiny garden by the brookside; and there stood Joan in her splendid array,

and with the golden crown on her head, as he had seen her last; and she said "Welcome!" And close in front of him stood two wondrous figures, and these were the two celebrated gingerbread cakes, man and woman; but they looked far more human, far more life-like, than in his childhood, and they spoke to him, too. "Thanks!" they both said. "Thou hast loosed our tongues; thou hast taught us freely to speak our thoughts else they can never come to good. Ours has come to good at last; we are betrothed!" And the two figures went hand in hand through the streets of Kiöge, up to the church, and Canute and Joan followed, hand in hand likewise. And the church stood there as of old, with its red walls and beautiful green ivy; and both the gates of the great church-door opened, and the organ sent forth solemn notes; and the two figures walked up the aisle. "We are bride and bridegroom," they said; and then they stepped apart to make room for Canute and Joan between them. And he and Joan knelt down side by side, and she drooped her head on his face, and ice-cold tears dropped from her eyes; that was because the ice about her heart had melted beneath the warmth of his strong love; and the tears fell on his burning cheeks, and — he awoke. There he sat, that cold winter evening, in a foreign land, under the old Willow-tree; it was hailing, and the hard-frozen lumps beat against his face.



"FROZEN TO DEATH, — UNDER THE WILLOW-TREE!"

"That was the happiest hour of my life," he muttered, "but it was a dream. Oh, let me dream again!" And he again closed his eyes; he slept, he dreamed.

Next morning there was a fall of snow; it tossed and whirled softly over his feet. The country-folk passed by on their way to church; they stopped to see who it was. There sat the young wanderer, dead, — frozen to death, — under the Willow-tree.

LVIII.

THE OLD GRAVESTONE.

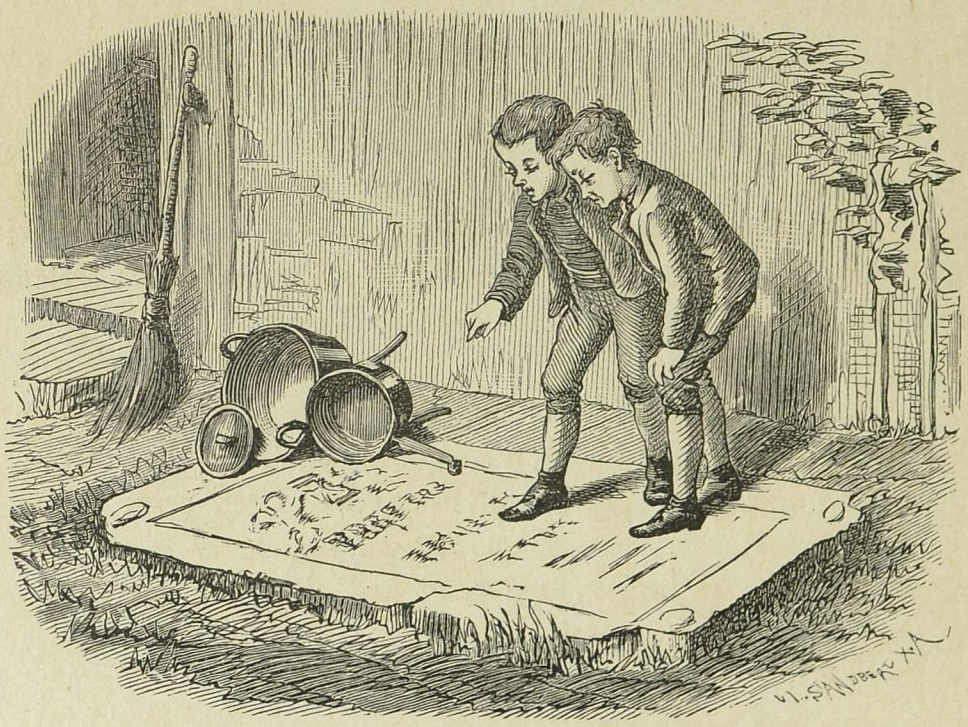
In a little town, at the time of the year when people say, "The evenings are drawing in," sat at night a family. It was still mild and warm. The lamp was lit, the long curtains were half drawn, and there was a splendid moonlight without. But the talk was not of that. They were talking of a great old stone lying down in the yard, close by the kitchen-door, where the servants would place pans and kettles on it to dry in the sun, and where the children would often play. It was really an old gravestone.

"Yes," said the father of the family, "I believe it comes from the churchyard at the old convent which was pulled down; for they sold the pulpit, the epitaphs, and the gravestones. My poor father bought several of the latter, which were broken up and used for road-making; but there was one too many, and that has remained in the yard ever since."

"It is easy to see it is a gravestone," said the oldest boy, "for one can still see an hourglass and parts of an angel; but the inscription is nearly all gone, with the exception of the name Preben and a capital S after it, and a little lower down the name of Martha. That is all which can be made out, and that only when it has been raining or the stone has been washed."

"Dear me!" exclaimed an old man in the room, — old enough, it seemed, to have been grandfather to all present, — "that is Preben Swan and his wife's gravestone. Yes, that couple was the last which was buried there. They were an honest couple; everybody knew them and everybody liked them. I remember them as a boy; they were the oldest couple in the town. People said they had plenty of money, still they went plainly dressed, but their linen was snow-white. They were a fine old couple, Preben and Martha. When they were sitting on the seat on the steps in front of their house, — over which an old lime-tree spread its branches, — nodding pleasantly to everybody, it

did one's heart good to see them. They were very kind to the poor; they fed and clothed them, and there was sense and Christianity in all their charity. The wife died first. I recollect the day so well, for I called as a little boy with father at old Preben's just as she had died. The old man was deeply moved, and wept like a child. The body lay in the bedroom next to where we were sitting, and Preben was speaking to my father and some neighbors of how lonely he should feel,



"IT WAS REALLY AN OLD GRAVESTONE."

of what a blessing she had been to him, of the years they had been living together, and how they became acquainted and married. I was, as I have said, a little boy listening to this, but still I felt a strange sensation on hearing what the old man said, and seeing him become more and more animated, and the color rising to his cheeks, as he spoke of their days of courtship, and told them how handsome she was, and of the many innocent pretexts he had invented to meet her. Then he spoke of their wedding day, and his eyes brightened thereat; it was as if he were living those days of happiness over again. And now the body of her — an old woman — was lying in the next room, while he was an old man, speaking of the days of hope. Yes, yes, such is life! Then I was a child too, and now I am as old, — as old as Preben Swan.

Time passes, and all things change. I remember so well the day she was buried. Preben walked close behind the coffin. A few years previously the old couple had had their inscription and name cut on a gravestone, with the exception of the year of death; and the stone was carried to the churchyard the same night and laid over the grave. A year after it was raised, and old Preben joined his wife.

"They were not so rich as people believed; what was left went to distant relatives, whom nobody had ever heard of. The old wooden house, with the seat on the stone steps below the lime, was pulled down by the corporation, as it was too rickety and risky to be left standing. Afterwards this was the fate of the convent and churchyard too, and Preben and Martha's gravestone was sold with the rest, to anybody who would buy it; and now it has happened that it has not been broken to pieces and used, but still lies in the yard for the children to play on, and as a drying-place for the pots of the kitchen-maids. The hard high street now crosses the spot where once was the resting-place of old Preben and his wife. Nobody remembers them any more."



"THEY WERE A FINE OLD COUPLE, PREBEN AND MARTHA."

And the old man who related all this shook his head sorrowfully. "Forgotten! — all shall be forgotten," he muttered.

Then they talked in the room about other things; but the youngest boy — a child with large serious eyes — crept up on a chair behind the curtains and looked into the yard below, where the moon shone brightly on the great stone, which always before had seemed to him uninteresting and commonplace, but now it lay there like the leaf of a story-book. The stone contained all the boy had heard about Preben and his wife; and he looked up at the bright moon in the clear, high sky, and it seemed to him as if God's face shone on the earth.

"Forgotten! — all shall be forgotten," was repeated in the room. But at that moment an invisible angel kissed the boy's brow and breast, and whispered: "Preserve with care the seed-corn given to thee; preserve it till it bears fruit. Through thee, my child, shall the obliterated inscription on the decaying gravestone stand in golden letters for coming generations. The old couple shall again wander through their former streets smiling, and sit with red, fresh cheeks on the stone steps below the lime, nodding to poor and rich. The seed-corn of this hour shall in the course of years grow to a lovely poem. That which is good and beautiful is never forgotten; it lives in legend and song."

LIX.

ON THE DAY OF DEATH.

THE most sacred of all the days in our life is that on which we die. It is the last day, the great sacred day of transformation. Hast thou thought really seriously of this important, irrevocable last hour on earth?

A man, a true believer as he was called, a champion of the Gospel, which was his law, a conscientious servant towards his God, lay on his death-bed, and Death stood by his side with austere, divine face.

"The hour has come; you must follow me," said Death, touching his feet with an icy-cold hand; and they became benumbed. Then Death touched his forehead, then his heart, which broke thereby, and the soul followed the Angel of Death.



"DEATH STOOD BY ITS SIDE WITH AUSTERE, DIVINE FACE."

But during the few seconds between the touch of foot, forehead, and heart, heavy waves seemed to pass through the dying man, bringing with them all that life had been accompanied by. It was as when we look at a glance into a terrible abyss, gauging in the flash of a thought its immense depth, and in the same manner we look at the star-myriad, recognizing planets and suns in the great space.

In such a moment the frightened sinner shudders and has nothing to lean against; it is as if he were sinking into bottomless depths. But the pious leans his head towards

God, and resigns himself like a child, with the words, "Thy will, not mine."

But this dying man had not the heart of a child. He felt that he was *a man;* he did not shudder like the sinner, for he knew he was a true believer. He had clung to the forms of religion in all their severity. He knew that millions were going the wide road to perdition; with fire and sword he could have destroyed their body in life as their soul was destroyed after death. He went his way towards Heaven, where Mercy — the promised Mercy — would open the gates for *him.*

And the Soul followed the Angel of Death; but once more it looked towards the bed where the image of dust lay in the white shroud, — a strange impression of its own self.

And they flew and they walked, — it seemed like a gigantic dome, but still as if in a forest. Nature was pruned, puffed up, hooped, and dressed, — artificial, like the old French parks. There was a masquerade.

"That is human life," said the Angel.

All the figures seemed more or less in fancy dress. It was not always those who were the noblest and greatest who dressed in velvet and gold, and it was not always the poorest and the most lowly who were in rags. It was a strange fancy ball, and especially it was remarkable that every one hid something from the others under his dress, but all pulled at one another in order to expose it, and then one saw here the head of a grinning monkey, there a goat, a serpent, or a stupid fish.

That was the animal we all have within us, — the animal grown into our heart. And the animals tore and kicked to get out, as every one held his dress tighter over it; but fellow beings tore it aside, crying, "Do you see it? That is he! That is she!" And each one exposed the misery of the other.

"And what was the animal in me?" asked the Wandering Soul. And the Angel pointed to a proud form around whose head there was a shining variegated halo, but at the man's heart were hidden the animal's feet, — the feet of a peacock. The halo was only that of the bird's tail.

And as they proceeded, great birds cried jeeringly from trees with the voice of human beings, "You wanderer in death, do you recollect me?" They were all the evil thoughts and desires of its life calling to it.

And the Soul shuddered for a moment, for it knew the voices, its evil thoughts and desires, which rose as witnesses against it.

"In our flesh, in our evil nature, dwells no good," said the Soul; "but the thoughts in me did not assume action. The world did not see the evil fruit." And it hurried still more to get away from the jeering cries; but the great black birds hovered round it shrieking as if to be heard all over the world. And the Soul flew as if chased; but at every step its foot struck sharp stones of flint, and they cut the feet, causing great agony.

"How came these sharp stones here?" asked the Soul. "They lie like withered leaves all over the ground."

"They represent every unkind word you have said, which hurt the heart of your neighbor still more," was the reply.

"That I did not think of," said the Soul.

"Do not condemn, and thou shalt not be condemned," sounded through the air.

"We have all sinned," said the Soul, raising its head. "I have kept the Law and the Gospel; I have done all I could; I am not like others."

Now they were at the gates of Heaven, and the Angel guarding the entrance said, "Who art thou? Tell me thy faith and show me thy actions."

"I have rigidly observed all the commandments; I have humbled myself in the eyes of the world; I have hated and persecuted all evil, — those who went the wide road to eternal perdition, — and I would do so still with fire and sword were I able."

"Art thou then one of the followers of Mahomet?" said the Angel.

"I? No, certainly not."

"'For they that take the sword shall perish with the sword,' says the Son. His faith thou hast not. Art thou perhaps one of the sons of Israel, who say with Moses, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'?"

"I am a Christian."

"That I do not gather from thy faith and thy actions. The teachings of Christ are Reconciliation, Love, and Mercy."

"Mercy!" it sounded through the immense space, and the gates of Heaven opened, and the Soul floated towards the eternal glory.

But the light was so dazzling that it retreated as before a drawn sword, and the melodies sounded so soft and touching that no earthly tongue can imitate them. And the Soul floated, bowing deeper and deeper; but the heavenly glory entered it, and it felt what it had

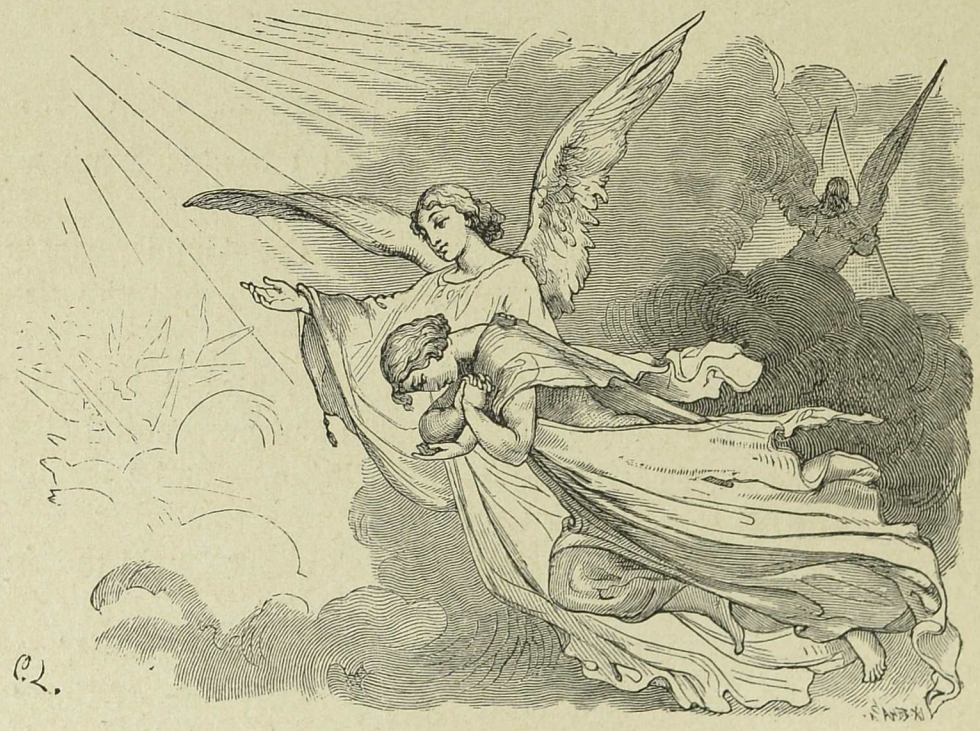
never felt before, — the weight of its own arrogance, its harshness, and sin. It became clear within.

"What good I did in the world," said the Soul, "I could not help doing; but the evil, that was my own."

And the Soul was dazzled by the pure, heavenly glory. Powerless it sank, so it seemed, deeper and deeper into its own inner darkness; weighted, unripe for Paradise, and thinking of the severe and just Lord, it did not dare to whisper — "Mercy!"

But Mercy — the unexpected Mercy — was there.

The kingdom of God was in the entire immensity, God's love pervaded the inexhaustible fulness.



"AND THE SOUL WAS DAZZLED BY THE PURE, HEAVENLY GLORY."

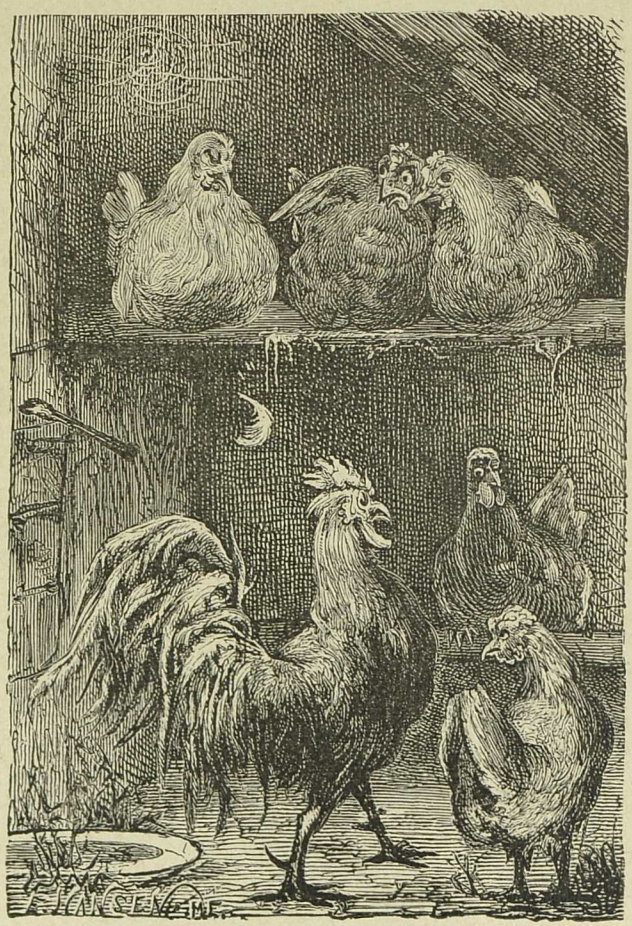
"Sacred, glorious, loving, and eternal art thou, human soul!" it sounded in song.

And we shall all of us, in the last day of our life on earth, like this soul retreat tremblingly before the heavenly glory, bow low, and sink humbly, still supported by His love. *His* Mercy shall uphold us, and we shall float in different spheres, purified, nobler, and better, — more and more approach the glory of the light, and strengthened by Him be able to enter the eternal splendor.

LX.

"IT IS REALLY TRUE!"

"It is an awful tale," said a Hen, though it had happened in the opposite side of the town. "There is an awful tale from a hen-house. I am afraid of sleeping alone to-night; I am glad there are several of us on the roost." And so she told them, and the feathers rose on the other Hens, while the Cock let his comb droop. It is really true!



"THE MORE I PLUCK MYSELF THE HANDSOMER I BECOME, I BELIEVE."

But we will begin with the beginning, and that was in another hen-house, in another part of the town.

The sun set, and all the Hens flew up to roost. One of them was white-feathered and long-legged, laid the regulation number of eggs, and was, as a hen considered, respectable in every respect. When she reached the roost, she plucked herself and a little feather fell off.

"There went that," she said. "The more I pluck myself the handsomer I become, I believe." Now that was said in fun, for she was the lively one among the Hens, but otherwise, as we have said, very respectable. And so she slept.

It was dark around; hen sat by hen, but the one sitting nearest her did not sleep. She listened and still did not listen, as it behooves one in this world if one desires to live in peace. But to her neighbor she was obliged to tell it.

"Did you hear what was said here? I mention no names, but there is a Hen which will pluck herself to look handsome. If I were a Cock I should despise her."

And right above the Hens sat the Owl, with husband and children. They had sharp ears in that family, as the neighbor-hen said, and they rolled their eyes and Mother-Owl flapped her wings.

"Don't listen," she said. "But I suppose you did. I heard it with my own ears, and one must hear a good deal before they deceive. One of the Hens has so far forgotten herself as a respectable hen that she sits plucking all her feathers off, while the Cock is looking on."

"Prenez garde aux enfants!" said Father-Owl. "That is not right for the children to hear."

"I will, however, tell it to our neighbor-owl. She is such a respectable, social owl," said Mother-Owl. And so she flew.

"O-o-h! o-o-h!" they both shrieked right into the house of the Pigeons. "Have you heard it? Have you heard it? O-o-h! There is a Hen which has plucked all its feathers off for the sake of the Cock. She is freezing to death, if she is not dead already. O-o-h!"

"Where? Where?" cooed the Pigeons.

"In the neighboring farm. I have as good as seen it myself. It is not a proper thing to relate, but it is really true!"

"Sure! Sure! every word," cooed the Pigeons, whispering into the hen-house underneath. "There is a Hen — some say two — who has plucked all her feathers off in order not to look like the others, so as to attract the attention of the Cock. It is risky, for they may die of cold. And they *have* both died."

"Wake up! Wake up!" crowed the Cock, flying up on the fence. He was still half asleep, but he crowed all the same: "Three Hens have died from unrequited love to a Cock; they have plucked off all their feathers. It is a nasty tale, and I will not keep it. Let it pass on!"

"Let it pass on!" whined the Bat. And the hens cackled and the Cocks crowed: "Let it pass on! Let it pass on!"

And so the tale flew from hen-house to hen-house, and at last reached the one whence it had been started.

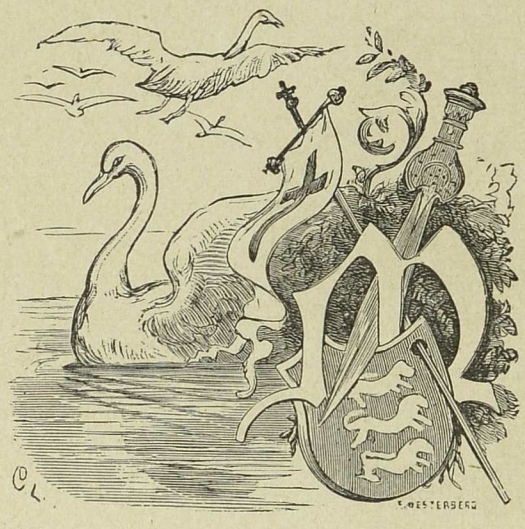
"There are five Hens," it was said, "all of which had plucked off their feathers to show which had become leanest from unrequited love to the Cock; and so they pecked each other till they bled, and they fell down dead, a disgrace to their families and a great loss to their owner."



"IT IS REALLY TRUE!"

And the Hen which had lost the little feather of course did not know her own story, and as she was a respectable Hen, she said, "I despise those Hens; but there are more like them. A tale like that ought not to be kept secret, and I will do my best to get it into the paper and to circulate it in the country. It serves those Hens right, and their families too."

And the tale came in the paper; and it is really true that a little feather *may* grow to five hens.



LXI.

THE SWAN'S NEST.

MIDWAY between the North Sea and the Baltic lies an old Swan's Nest, called Denmark. Here swans have been and will be born, the names of which shall never die.

In pagan times a flock of swans flew thence across the Alps to the fresh green plains of Lombardy, where it was delicious to dwell. They were called LONGOBARDS.

Another flock with glittering feathers and faithful eyes flew to Byzantium, seating themselves around the throne of the Emperor, and spreading out their great white wings to protect him. They were called VÆRINGER.

From the shore of France sounded a cry of terror before the savage swans which came with fire under their wings from the North, and the people prayed, "Save us, O Lord, from the savage Northmen!"

On the fresh greensward of Britain, by the open shore, stood the Danish swan with the triple royal crown on its head. It held its golden sceptre over the land.

The heathens fell on their knees on the shores of Pomerania before the Danish Swans with the white cross on red, and the drawn swords.

"That was in bygone ages," you say.

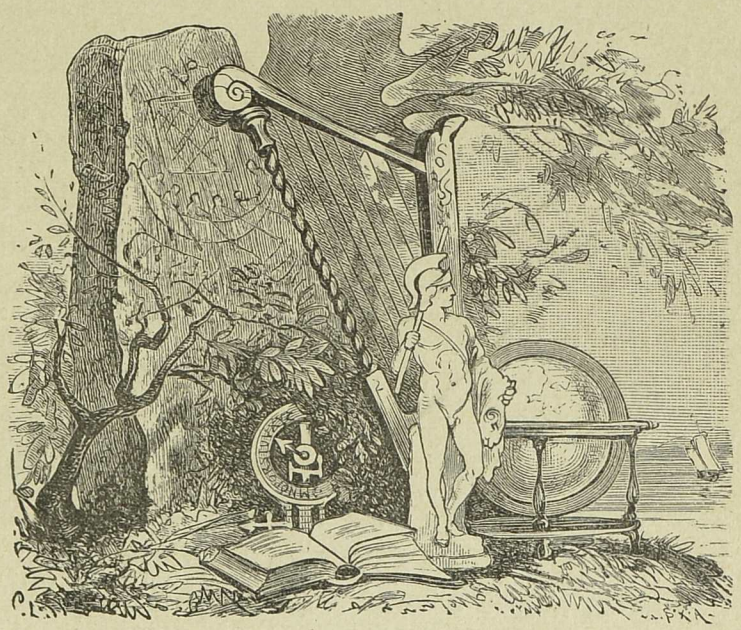
Even in more recent times great swans have left the nest.

It brightened in the sky, the light shone over the countries of the world. The swan dispersed with its strong wings the heavy darkness, and the heavens became more visible; it was as if they came nearer the earth. That was the swan Tycho Brahe.

"Yes, that was then," you say; "but in our days?"

Then we saw swan fly with swan in glorious flight. One let its wing glide across the strings of the golden harp, and it sounded throughout the North. Norway's mountains rose into the glittering sunshine of bygone ages; a breeze passed through firs and birches, and the gods of the North and the heroes and the heroines of history appeared on the dark background of the forest.[1]

We saw a swan strike the marble rock with its wings so that it split, and the forms of beauty held captive in the stone came forth in broad daylight. All the people in the countries of the world raised their heads to gaze at the giant forms.[2]



We saw a third swan weave the thread of thought which is now carried from shore to shore round the earth, so that speech flies through the lands with the speed of lightning.[3]

Our Lord loves the old Swan's Nest between the North Sea and the Baltic. Let only the mighty birds come to try to destroy it. That shall never be! Even the unfledged little swans shall form a ring on the edge of the nest, — that we have seen.[4] They will endure thrusts in their young hearts till the blood pours forth; they will fight with beak and claws.

Centuries shall still pass by and swans shall fly from the nest and be seen and heard far and wide before the time comes when it may be said with truth and justice, "That is the last swan, — the last swan from the old Swan's Nest!"

[1] Adam Öhlenschläger, "Denmark's Shakespeare" (1779–1850).

[2] Bertel Thorvaldsen, the famous sculptor.

[3] Hans Christian Örsted, inventor of the magnetic telegraph (1777–1851).

[4] In the Dano-German wars. —Tr.

LXII.

GOOD TEMPER.

My father left me the best inheritance, — good temper. And who was my father? Well, that has nothing to do with the temper. He was active and pleasant, stout and hale, his whole appearance being opposed to his calling. But what was his calling? Well, if that was to be printed at the beginning of a book, it is probable that several who read it would put the book away, saying, "It looks so unpleasant; I don't care about that sort of thing." And still my father was neither a horse-slaughterer nor a hangman; on the contrary, his calling placed him at the head of the most respectable citizens of the town, and he held his position by right, it being his proper place. He *must* be at the head of all, before the bishop and even princes of the blood. He was there, because he was the driver of a hearse!

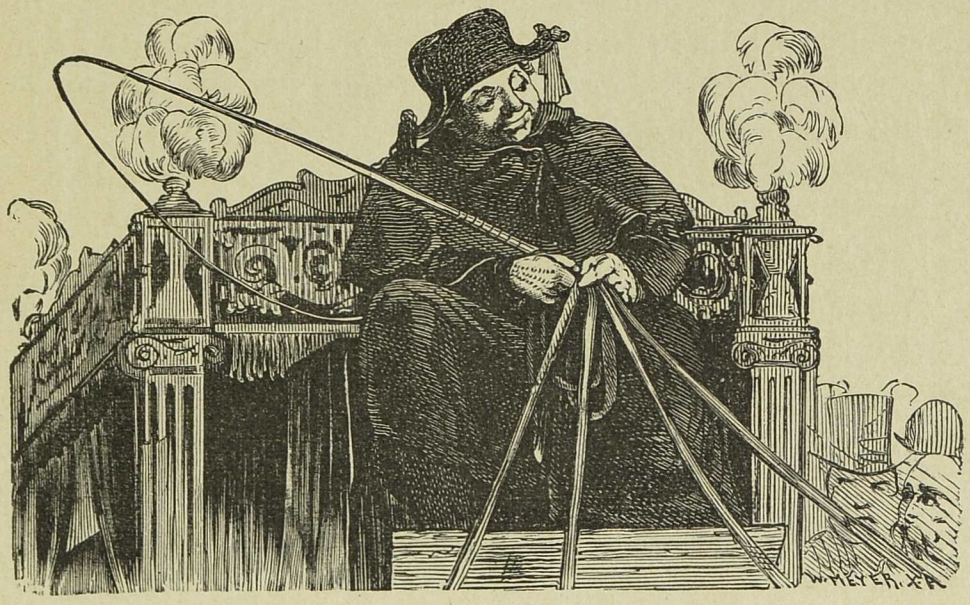
There, now it's out! And this I may say, that when any one saw my father sitting high in front of Death's omnibus, clad in the long black coat and the three-cornered, black-tasselled hat on his head, and saw his face too, which was like a picture of the sun, round and smiling, — nobody could think of grief and burial, for that face said, "It does n't matter; it will go better than any one thinks."

So from him I have my good temper and the habit of often visiting the cemetery; and that is very nice if one only enters it with good spirits. And I also take in the "Advertiser," which *he* used to do too.

I am not quite young. I have neither wife, children, nor library; but, as I have said, I take in the "Advertiser." That is my favorite paper, and so it was my father's. It does much good, and contains all that people need know, — who preaches in the churches, and who preaches in the new books; where houses are to be let, servants to be hired, and clothes and food to be obtained; who becomes bankrupt, and who does good. And then there are all the innocent poems, which do nobody harm; marriages desired, and appointments which are kept

and not kept. Everything so natural and simple! One may indeed live and be buried happily through taking in the "Advertiser;" and then one has at the end of one's days a whole heap of paper to lie on instead of shavings.

The "Advertiser" and my walks in the cemetery are my most elevating enjoyments, my two most refreshing forms of bath for my good temper.



"FOR HE WAS THE DRIVER OF A HEARSE."

Any one may peruse the "Advertiser" by himself; but to walk with me in the cemetery! Let us go thither while the sun is shining and the trees are green. Let us take a walk among the graves! Each one of them is like a closed book with the back upwards, so that one can read the title telling us what it contains, and which still tells nothing at all. But I know, — I know from my father and myself. I have it in my grave-register, and that is a book which I have written myself for instruction and amusement. There they all are, and a few more. Now we are at the cemetery.

Here, behind the white railings, by which stood once a rose-tree, — now it is gone, but a little evergreen from the next grave stretches its green finger thither to make a show, — lies a very unhappy man. And still he was "well off," as it is said, for while he lived he had a good income; but he took the world too much to heart, — or, to speak more correctly, Art. If in the evening he was sitting at the theatre enjoying the performance with his whole soul, he would go nearly mad

if only the machinist put too strong a light into the cheeks of the moon, or a curtain hung before the proscenium when it ought to have been behind, or when a palm-tree was introduced into a scene from the vegetable gardens at Copenhagen, a cactus into one from the Tyrol, or a beech-tree into one from Arctic Norway. What does that matter? Who else thinks of such things? Why, it is comedy, — something to laugh at! Now the public applauded too much, now too little. "The wood is wet to-night," he used to say, "it won't burn to-night." And when he turned round to look at the people, they laughed at the very moment when there was nothing to laugh at; and that vexed him, and he fretted over it and became unhappy. Now he is in his grave.

Here rests a very happy man, — that is to say, a man of high birth; and that was his fortune, for otherwise he would never have become anything; but everything is so wisely arranged by Nature that it is a pleasure to think of it. His coat was embroidered back and front, and his place was in the drawing-room, like one of those pearl-embroidered bell-pulls, which have always a good serviceable cord behind them to do the work. He too had a good stout cord behind him to do the work, — a substitute which performed his duty, and does so still behind some other embroidered bell-pull. Why, everything is so wisely arranged, one may well have a good temper!

Here rests, — well, this is very sad, — here rests a man who for seven and-sixty years thought only of making a capital joke. He lived only to make a capital joke; and at last he *did* really get one into his head, according to his own belief, and became so delighted thereby that he died, and nobody gained anything from it, as nobody was ever told what it was. I can imagine he does not even rest in his grave in spite of that capital joke; for, supposing it was a joke which should be said at the breakfast-table to "take," and that he, now dead, can only, as people believe, get out at midnight, the joke does not of course suit the situation; nobody laughs, and he may go back into the grave with his good joke. That is a sad resting-place.

Here rests a very miserly lady; while she lived she used to get up at night and mew, in order that her neighbors should believe that she kept a cat. So miserly was she.

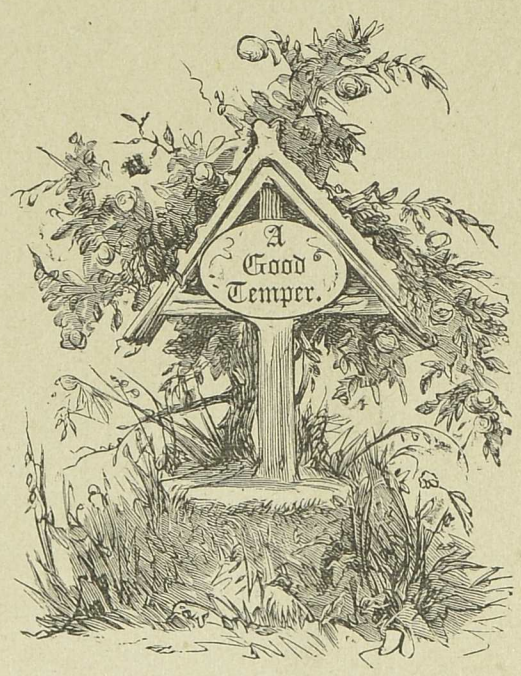
Here rests a maiden of good family. In society she would always let her voice be heard, and so she sang even, "Mi manca la voce!" That was the only truth in *her* life.

Here rests a maiden of a different kind. When the canary of the

heart begins to shriek, Sense puts the fingers into her ears. Lovely maiden was going to be married — it is an every-day story; but it is truly said, "Let the dead rest in peace."

Here rests a widow who had honey on her tongue but gall in her heart. She went about in families preying for the faults of others.

Here is a family grave. Every member of that family believed so firmly in the opinions of the rest, that if the whole world said "That is so," and the youngest child coming from school said, "I have heard it *so*," his way was the right one, for he was one of the family. And certain it is that if their cock crowed at midnight they would say it was morning, even if the watchman and all the bells in the city should announce that it was midnight.



The great Goethe concludes his "Faust" with the words "May be continued;" and so may also our wandering here in the cemetery. I often come here. If one of my friends or my enemies vexes me, I go out to the cemetery, select a grass-grown spot, which I reserve for him or her I wish to bury, and so I bury either at once. There they then lie dead and powerless until they return as better beings. Their life and deeds I record in my grave-register. And so everybody ought to do, and not become vexed when anybody annoys them, but bury them at once, and retain one's good temper and the "Advertiser," — the paper often written by people whose hands are guided.

And when the time comes when my own life's story shall be bound in the cover of the grave, inscribe upon it: —

"A Good Temper."

And that is my story.

LXIII.

A HEART-GRIEF.

THIS story is really in two parts; the first part might be left out, but it gives some introductory details, and such are useful.

We were staying at the country-house of a gentleman, and it happened that the family was away for a few days. Then a lady arrived from the neighboring town who had a pug-dog with her, and who came, so she said, to dispose of shares in her tannery. She brought her papers with her, and we advised her to put them in an envelope, and write the address and name of the owner of the house outside, — "General War-Commissary, Knight," etc.



"THEN A LADY ARRIVED FROM A NEIGHBORING TOWN."

She listened to us, seized the pen, halted, and asked us kindly to repeat the title, but slowly. We did so, and she wrote; but in the middle of "General War- — " she stopped, sighed, and said, "I am only a woman." Puggie had been placed on the floor while she wrote, and he growled; and so he might. He was taken out for pleasure and for the sake of his health; and then one should not be put on the floor. His appearance was a snubby nose and pig's back.

"He does n't bite," said the lady; "he has no teeth. He is like a member of the family, faithful, though bad-tempered; but that is caused by his having been teased by my grandchildren. They play 'being married,' and they want him to be bridesmaid; and that fatigues him, poor thing!"

And she left her papers, and went off with Puggie on her arm. That is the first part, which might perhaps have been left out.

PUGGIE DIED! That is the second part.

A week afterwards we arrived in the town, putting up at the inn. Our windows faced the yard, which was divided by a plank partition, in one part of which hung hides and skins, raw and tanned; and here was all the apparatus required in a tannery, and that belonged to the widow. Puggie had died the same morning, and was buried in the yard. The grandchildren — that is to say, those of the widow, for Puggie had not been married — filled up the grave, and it was a pretty one; it might have been pleasant to lie there. The grave was bordered with pieces of flower-pots and strewn with sand. On the top of it was placed the upper half of a bottle, with the neck upwards, and that was not at all allegorical.

The children danced round the grave, and the eldest, a handsome boy seven years of age, proposed that Puggie's grave should be exhibited to all those living in the street, the price of admission being a trouser-button, for that was a thing every boy was sure to have, as well as one to spare for a girl; and the proposal was adopted unanimously.

And all the children from the street, and even the back-street, came and gave their buttons, and many went about with only one brace that afternoon; but then they had seen Puggie's grave, and the sight was worth that.



"THEN SHE SAT DOWN AND BURST INTO TEARS."

But outside the tannery, close by the gate, stood a poor ragged little girl, so prettily shaped, with curly hair, and eyes so blue and bright that it was a pleasure to look at them. She did not say a word, neither did she cry; but she looked as far into the yard as she was able every time the gate was opened. She had no button, she knew that, therefore she remained standing sorrowful without till they had all seen enough and had gone away. Then she sat down and burst into tears, holding her little brown hands before her eyes. She was the only one who had not seen Puggie's grave. It was a heart-grief as great as that of many a grown-up person.

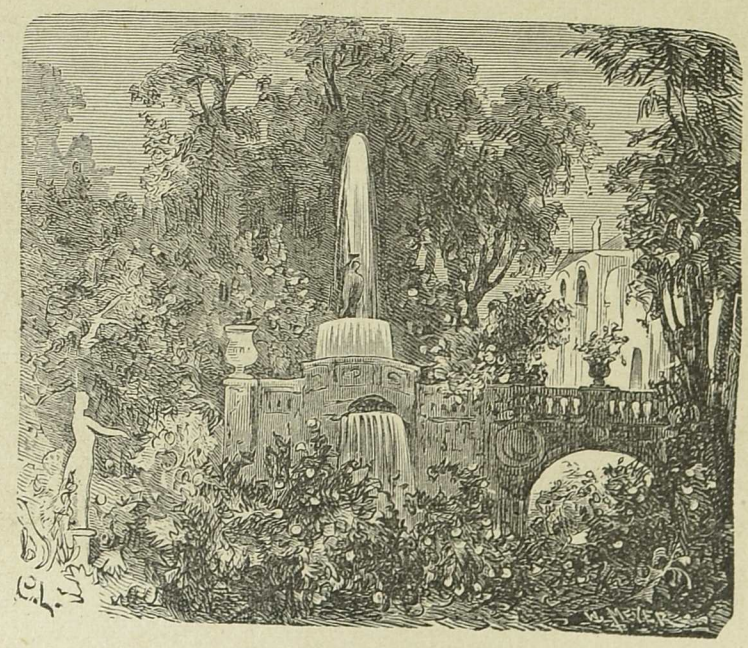
We saw it from above; and seen from above, this, like so many of our own and other people's sorrows, may well be laughed at.

That is the story, and he who does not understand it may take shares in the tannery of the widow.

LXIV.

THE WORLD'S LOVELIEST ROSE.

THERE was once a great Queen whose gardens abounded with the loveliest flowers of every season and every clime; but of all flowers she loved roses best. Of these she had an infinite number of different varieties, from the fragrant dog-rose from the hedges, with all its wild grace and smooth green leaves, to the rarest Provençal. The roses



"THE ROSES GREW IN UNCHECKED LUXURIANCE."

grew in unchecked luxuriance up the palace walls, twined their branches round window-sills and balcony, flung them in through the passages, and spread along the ceilings of the saloons, all varying in perfume, delicacy of tint, and beauty of form.

But sorrow and anguish dwelt within; the Queen lay on her sick-bed, and the physicians declared she must die.

"There is yet a remedy that may save her life," said the wisest man among them; "bring her the World's Loveliest Rose, that which is the expression of the highest and purest love; let but her gaze be fixed upon that before her eyes close, and she will not die."

And old and young came round her, bringing roses; all brought the loveliest treasures of their gardens. But this was not what the Sage had meant. From the garden of Love must the wonder-working flower be gathered; but who could tell *which* rose in that garden was the expression of the highest and purest love?

And minstrels sang the praise of the World's Loveliest Rose, each extolling his own chosen favorite; and heralds were sent out far and wide to every loving heart of every age and rank throughout the land.

"No one has yet named the flower," said the Sage. "No one yet has pointed to the spot whence it sprang in its glory. It is not the rose from the sepulchres of Romeo and Juliet, nor from Valborg's[1] grave, albeit the perfume of those roses shall live forever in song and saga. It is not the rose that shot forth from Winkelried's bleeding lances, though no death is sweeter than that which he encounters who fights for his fatherland, no rose redder than the blood that gushes from a hero's breast. Neither is it that wondrous blossom for whose sake men give away the strength and freshness of their lives, tending it in some lonely chamber through weary days and sleepless nights, — the magic Rose of Science."

"I know where it blossoms," said a happy mother, who had come to the Queen's bedside with her infant in her arms. "I know where to find the World's Loveliest Rose, — the rose that is the expression of the highest and purest love. It blooms on the blushing cheeks of my sweet child, when, strengthened by sleep, it opens its eyes and smiles on me with all its innocent and confiding love."

"Beautiful is that rose, but there is another more beautiful," replied the Sage.

"Yes, far more beautiful," exclaimed another woman. "I have seen it. A rose more holy or more pure cannot be found; but it was pale, pale as the frail rose of China. I saw it blossoming on the Queen's own cheeks. She had laid aside her royal crown, and went to spend the long, sad night with her sick child; she wept over it, kissed it, and breathed a prayer to Heaven for it, — a prayer such as only mothers in their hour of extremest anguish can breathe."

[1] The Juliet of the North.

"Holy and marvellous in its power is the white Rose of Sorrow, but the one I speak of is holier and more powerful still."

"Ay, the World's Loveliest Rose I have seen at the altar of the Lord," said the pious old Bishop. "I have seen it beaming like the face of an angel. A bevy of young maidens went up to the Holy Table to renew their baptismal covenant, the roses blushing and paling alternately on their fresh cheeks. There was one young girl standing among her companions; I saw her look up to her God with all the purity and loving devotion of her virgin soul; then I saw the expression of the highest and purest love!"

"Blessed, thrice blessed is Piety!" said the sage; "still even thou hast not discovered the World's Loveliest Rose."



"AND HE SAT DOWN BY THE BEDSIDE, AND READ ALOUD FROM THE BOOK."

Then a child entered the chamber, — the Queen's little son; his eyes were glistening and his cheeks wet with tears; and in his hands, open, he carried a large book bound in velvet and having great silver clasps.

"Mother," cried the child, "oh, listen to what I have read here!" and he sat down by the bedside and read aloud from the book. He read of Him who gave Himself up to death on the Cross to save mankind. "Greater love than that does not exist."

And a faint rosy tint passed over the Queen's cheeks, the glance of her eye grew stronger and brighter; for from the leaves of that book she felt wafted to her the fragrance of the World's Loveliest Rose, — the Rose that sprang forth from the blood of Christ shed on Calvary.

"I see it!" she exclaimed. "He can never die who looks upon that Rose, the Loveliest of the earth!"

LXV.

THE GOBLIN AT THE HUCKSTER'S.

THERE was once a Student of the right sort, who lived in a garret and possessed nothing at all. And there was also a Huckster of the right sort, who lived on the first floor and owned the whole house; and to him the House-Goblin kept himself, for by him he was given a dish of rice-porridge every Christmas Eve, with a big lump of butter in the middle.[1] That the Huckster could afford to give, and therefore the Goblin stayed in the shop; and that is very instructive.

One evening the Student came in by the back door to buy some candles and cheese; he had nobody to send, therefore he went himself. He was served with what he ordered, and having paid for it, was going away, the Huckster and his wife saying "good-night" to him. The wife was a woman who could do more than nod; she had great speaking powers. And the Student returned the greeting, but stopped suddenly, beginning to read the paper in which the cheese was wrapped. It was a leaf torn from an old book which ought not to have been torn up, — a book full of poetry.

"There is more of it," said the Huckster. "I gave an old woman some coffee for it. If you give me sixpence you may have the rest."

"Thank you," said the Student, "give it to me instead of the cheese; I can eat bread and butter. It would be a pity to have the whole of that book torn up. You are a fine fellow, a practical fellow, but you do not understand more of poetry than the Tub there."

And that was rather rude to say, particularly as regards the Tub; but the Huckster laughed and the Student laughed, for it was of course said in fun. But the Goblin was vexed that any one should dare to say

[1] According to popular superstition in Scandinavia old houses have a House-Goblin (*Nisse*), a kind of good imp, for whom a dish of rice-porridge (a favorite Scandinavian dish) is placed in an out-of-the-way place every Christmas Eve. Generally it is purloined by some domestic animal or rats or mice, and thus the superstitious belief is confirmed. — TR.

such a thing to the Huckster, who was the landlord, and who sold the finest butter.

When it was night and the shop was closed and everybody had gone to bed except the Student, the Goblin went in and took away the good lady's tongue, for she did not want that while she was asleep; and whatever object in the room he put the tongue on, it began to talk and express its thoughts and feelings as well as the lady herself. But only one could have it at a time; and that was a blessing, for otherwise they would of course have interrupted each other.

And the Goblin put the tongue into the Tub in which the old newspapers were lying.

"Is it true," he asked, "that you do not know what poetry is?"

"Of course I do," responded the Tub. "It is something which always stands near the bottom of the newspaper and is cut out. I fancy I have more of that sort of thing in me than the Student, and I am only a poor Tub compared with the Huckster."



"'NOW, I'LL GIVE THE STUDENT SOMETHING,' SAID THE GOBLIN."

Then the Goblin put the tongue into the Coffee-mill; and oh, how it went! Then he put it in the Butter-cask and the Sill; and they were all of the same opinion as the Tub; and what the majority says must be respected.

"Now I'll give the student something," said the Goblin.

And he crept softly upstairs to the garret where the Student lived. There was a light inside, and the Goblin peeped through the key-hole, and saw him sitting reading in the torn book from below. But how light it was in there! From the book a clear beam of light emanated, which changed to a tree with a thick stem, spreading its branches high and wide over the Student. Every leaf was so fresh, and every blossom a lovely girl's head, some with beaming dark eyes and others with bright blue

ones. Every fruit was a shining star, and a strange, beautiful melody was heard.

Such a splendor the little Goblin had never dreamed of, much less seen or felt. And he remained there on tiptoe, staring and staring until the light went out. The Student had put out his lamp and gone to bed; but the Goblin remained outside, for the music sounded still so beautifully, — a splendid lullaby for the Student to rest by.

"Here is splendor!" said the Goblin. "I had never expected this. I believe I will stay with the Student." And he thought, — and thought sensibly too, — and so he sighed, "the Student has no porridge!" And then he went away, — yes, away down to the Huckster's again.

And it was well he returned, for the Tub had used up nearly all the good lady's power of speech by telling, first from one side, then from the other, of all it contained; and now it was just on the point of turning to tell it from the other end too, when the Goblin came and took the tongue away to the lady. But ever afterwards the whole shop, from the Sill to the Firewood, took their views from the Tub, and they respected it so much and had such a high opinion of it that when the Huckster later on read the critical articles in the newspaper of the plays and art, they believed that they came from the Tub.

But the little Goblin did not remain longer down below listening to wisdom and sense, for as soon as the light shone from the garret it seemed as if the rays drew him thither like chains, and he was obliged to run up and peep through the key-hole. There a grandeur surrounded him like that we feel when God paces the surging sea in a storm, and the little Goblin burst into tears. He did not know why he cried, but in the tears there was something so magnificent. "How lovely it would be," he thought, "sitting under yonder tree with the Student!" But that could never be; so he was contented with his key-hole.

He stood there on the staircase even when the autumn wind blew down through the hole in the loft, and then it was so cold, so cold; but the little one did not feel it till the light within went out. Hugh! how he froze then! And he crept down back into his warm corner; it was pleasant and comfortable there. And when the Christmas porridge came — well, then the Huckster had no rival.

But in the middle of the night the Goblin was awakened by a great noise without; people hammered at the doors and the firemen shouted. There was a great fire; the whole street was illuminated. Was it there or next door? There was a confusion. The Huckster's wife was so

upset that she took her gold ear-rings out of her ears and put them in her pocket, to save at all events something; the Huckster ran for his bonds, and the servant-girl for her silk mantle, for she could afford one. Every one wanted to save the most precious he had, and so did also the little Goblin. And he ran upstairs into the Student's room, who was standing quite quietly at the open window looking at the fire, which was next door. The little Goblin seized the wonderful book on the table, put it into his red cap, and held it tightly with both hands. The greatest treasure in the house was saved! And so he rushed out right on to the roof, up the chimney-stack, where he perched himself in the light from the burning house, holding on with both hands to the red cap in which lay the book. Now he felt his own heart and to whom he really belonged. But when the fire was put out, and he again collected his thoughts, he said, "I will divide myself between them. I cannot throw the Huckster entirely over, on account of the porridge."



"AND WHEN THE CHRISTMAS PORRIDGE CAME."

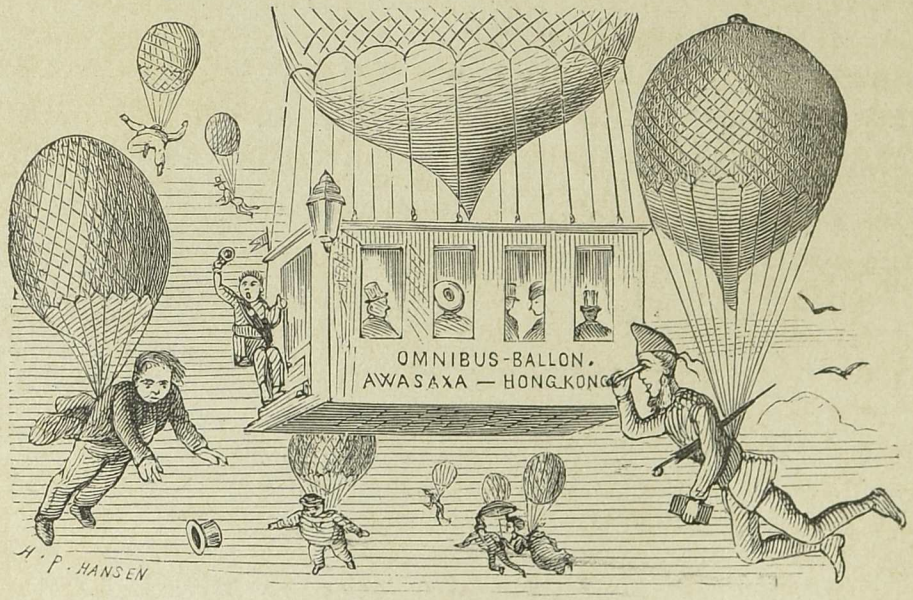
And that was very human. We also go to the Huckster — for the sake of the porridge.

LXVI.

THOUSANDS OF YEARS HENCE.

THOUSANDS of years hence they will come across the sea on the wings of steam through the air. The young inhabitants of America will come to visit Europe. They will come to see the remains of our decaying cities, as we in the present day journey to the crumbling splendors of Asia Minor.

In thousands of years they will come!



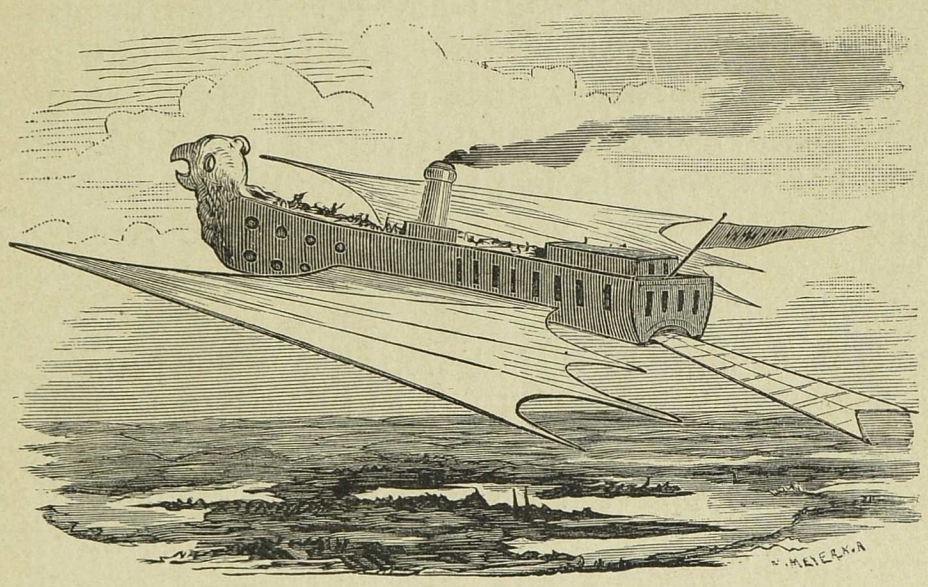
"IN THOUSANDS OF YEARS THEY WILL COME!"

The Thames, the Rhine, and the Danube still roll their waves, Mont Blanc still stands with its snow cap, and the Northern Lights shine over the North; but generations upon generations are dust, whole series of the mighty of the moment are forgotten, while those who sleep in the earth are unknown to the owner of the corn-covered soil.

"To Europe!" it sounds from the young generation of America. "To the land of our forefathers, the lovely land of reminiscence and fancy, — to Europe!"

The Ship of the Air arrives; it is full of tourists, for the journey by that is shorter than by sea. The electric thread below the ocean has already signalled the air caravan. Already a glimpse of Europe is seen; it is the shores of Ireland we see, but the passengers are still asleep. They will not be called till they have passed Ireland. *There* they touch the soil — Europe — in the Land of Shakespeare, as it is called by the Sons of Genius, and by others the Land of Machinery and Politics.

Here they remain a day; that is all the time the restless generation can afford to devote to the great England and Scotland.



"THROUGH THE AIR, ACROSS THE SEA TO ITALY."

The journey now lies through the Channel Tunnel to France, the land of Charles the Great and Napoleon. Somebody mentions Molière, and the divines speak about the classic and romantic school of past ages, and eulogium is passed upon heroes, scalds, and sages whom our time does not know, but who are to be born on Europe's Crater, — Paris.

Now the aerial ship flies forward across the land whence Columbus sailed, where Calderon sang dramas in rhythmic verse, and where Cortes was born. Lovely black-eyed maidens still dwell in the fertile valleys, and Cid and Alhambra are mentioned in ancient ballads.

Through the air, across the sea to Italy, where the ancient Rome lay, goes the journey. Rome is razed to the earth, and the Campagna is a desert. Of the Church of St. Peter only fragments are shown, and they are not believed to be genuine.

Then to Greece, to sleep one night at the splendid hotel on the top of Olympus; and so they have been there.

The journey now lies toward the Bosphorus, to rest a few hours on the spot where Constantinople once stood. Poor fishermen dry their nets where legend relates about the gardens of the harem in the time of the Turks.

Remains of cities by the Danube, cities unknown to us, are passed; but here and there, at places fragrant with fame, the ship is lowered for a while.

Down there lies Germany, which was once encircled by the closest net of railways and canals, — the land where Luther preached, where Goethe sang, where Mozart in his time bore the crown of music. Great names which we do not know shine on the scrolls of science and art. A day in Germany, a day in Scandinavia — in the land of Örsted and Linnæus, and of Norway's ancient heroes, and the journey is for home. Iceland is passed, but the Geyser boils no more, and Hecla is extinct; but like the eternal monument of the Sagas the rugged rock still stands in the raging ocean.

"There is really much to see in Europe," says the young American, "and we have seen it in eight days; and that is indeed possible, as the great traveller" — a name as yet unknown to us — "informs us in his celebrated work, 'Europe seen in Eight Days.'"

LXVII.

"EVERYTHING IN ITS RIGHT PLACE!"

IT is more than a hundred years ago.

Near the large lake behind the wood stood an old Baronial Hall, deep moats half choked up with reeds and rushes surrounding it. Close by the bridge leading over the moat to the carriage entry stood a venerable willow-tree bending over the reeds.



"'EVERYTHING IN ITS RIGHT PLACE!' HE CRIED."

The merry noise of horns and hoof-tramps came nearer and nearer from the high-road beyond, and the little goose-girl hurried her geese on one side to make room for the hunting-party; on they galloped, and the girl had to jump up on one of the high stones of the bridge to escape being run over. She was scarcely more than a child, slight and delicate as a fairy, with the sweetest expression in her face, and such sparkling hazel eyes. But the hunters took no notice either of her graceful form or her bright eyes; on they galloped, and one of them,

the Lord of the Hall, as he passed, in pure wantonness struck her on the breast with the handle of his whip, pushing her over the bridge.

"Everything in its right place!" he cried; "so down with you into the mud!" And he laughed at his own coarse jest, and all his comrades laughed too. And with their loud laugh, and the yet louder bark of the hounds, the whole party swept past.

The poor little goose-girl as she fell had seized hold of one of the overhanging willow-boughs; clinging to it she held herself above the slough of the moat, and as soon as hunters, horses, hounds, and horns were safe within the Hall gates, she struggled to clamber upon the bridge again. But the willow-bough she held on to broke off from the trunk, and she was on the point of falling heavily among the reeds, when a strong hand from above seized and saved her. A wandering pedler had witnessed the little scene, and hurried up to help the poor girl.

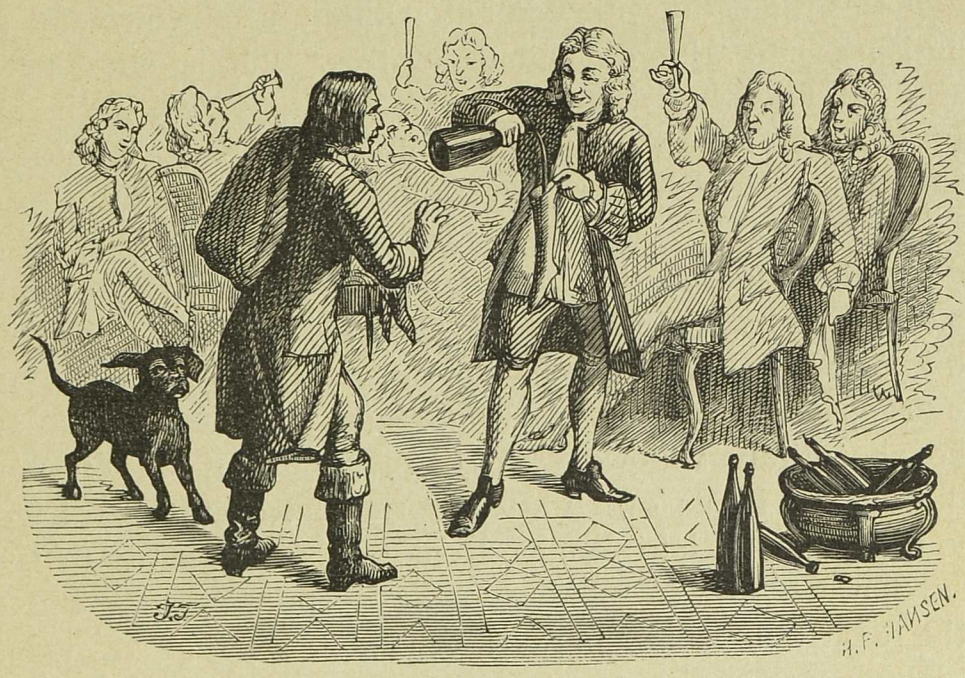
"Everything in its right place!" he repeated, laughing, as he lifted her up and set her upon dry land; and he tried to set the cracked willow-bough straight again, but he did not succeed. It stubbornly refused to return to "its right place;" so he stuck it into the soft earth, saying, "Grow there, if you can, and supply a cane for the folk at the Hall." And gathering up his chattels, the pedler passed on through the gates to display them in the servants' hall. Meantime uproarious tumult reigned in the banqueting-hall, — unseemly songs, coarse jests, and rude laughter mingling with the bark of dogs; for the hounds had been called in to share the day's sport to the end. Wine and ale foamed in pitcher and glass, and the dogs were made to eat with their masters. The pedler was soon summoned to bring in his pack, but only as a jest; the wine was in and the sense out. Ale was poured into a stocking, and he was bidden to swallow it quickly; and that was thought a capital joke. But in another moment the humor of the party took another turn; whole herds of cattle, broad lands, and peasants' farms were staked upon cards and lost and won.

"Everything in its right place!" repeated the pedler when he was safe out of the Sodom and Gomorrah, as he called the banqueting-hall.

"The open road, the King's highway, that is *my* right place; in that Hall I am quite out of my element." And the little goose-girl, standing behind a stile, nodded to him a grateful farewell.

Days and weeks passed away, and the broken willow bough which the pedler had stuck into the soft mud of the moat was still fresh and green, and even thrust out new shoots; the little goose-girl saw that it must

have struck root, and she quite rejoiced over it; it was her tree, she thought. But while the willow-sprig throve so well, everything throve ill at the Hall; drinking and gambling, these were the two reeds on which the Lord of the Hall leaned. And six years had not fully passed away when he wandered with bag and staff, a ruined man, banished from the home of his fathers; and that home was purchased by a pedler, the very same who had been made a laughing-stock in his banqueting-hall, and made to drink ale out of a stocking. Thrift and



"ALE WAS POURED INTO A STOCKING."

honesty — that had been the rule of *his* life; and now the pedler was Lord of the Hall, and from that hour a card was never seen in it. "Paper was meant for something better," he was wont to say; "but when the Evil One first saw God's book, he determined he would have *his* Bible too, and so he invented cards."

The new Lord of the Hall hastened to take to himself a wife, and who should she be but the little goose-girl, then grown up into a good, pious, and modest maiden? Her gentle nature stood her instead of gentle blood, and in her new attire she moved as refined, courteous, and noble as any high-born lady in the land. And now came happy and peaceful times for the Old Hall, — the lady ruling all within and her husband all without; and blessing seemed to rest on all their labors.

The moats were drained, and fruit-trees planted in their place; the rooms were all kept clean, the floors bright as a mirror, and in the state saloon sat Madam, with her daughters and her maidens, through the long winter evenings, spinning wool and flax. And every Sunday evening the Bible was read aloud to the whole assembled household, — read by the Magistrate himself; for a Magistrate the pedler became in his old age. And children grew up around him, and children's children, and all were well brought up, though not all were gifted with an equal portion of sense; that could not be expected in any family.

And all this time the willow-bough without had grown and spread, and flourished into a large, magnificent tree. "It is our genealogical tree," the old folk were wont to say; and they bade their children to hold it in honor, and they especially impressed this upon those among them who, as aforesaid, were not overburdened with brains.

And now the hundred years are gone and past; our own generation has succeeded. The lake has become a marsh; an oblong strip of water encased in stone is all that remains of the moat, and over it a splendid old tree droops its branches, — a willow-tree; it stands there as if to prove how beautiful a willow-tree may become if it is but left alone and suffered to grow in its own way. Storms have at times handled it roughly, the trunk is cleft asunder from the crown almost to the root, grass and flowers grow in all the crevices, especially near the crown, where the great boughs are parted; wind and weather have conveyed mould enough to supply a perfect little hanging garden; chickweed, raspberry-bushes, — nay, even a tiny little mountain-ash has taken root there, and, slender and delicate, grows embedded in the old willow-tree, reflecting itself in the black water whenever the wind drifts the duck-weed aside into a corner of the stream. A little footpath leads past the tree across the fields.

And high on the bank near the wood, commanding a charming prospect, stands the New Hall. The Old one has been razed to the ground, wiped out of the landscape, as it were. The New Hall is large and splendid; the broad steps leading up to the door look like a bower of roses and large-leaved plants; the window-panes are marvellously bright, and the lawn on which they open is as smooth a green as if it were swept morning and evening. The saloons within are rich with costly paintings, chairs and couches of splendid velvet and silk so cleverly constructed that they can almost walk on their own legs, and there are

tables with marble slabs, books bound in morocco with gilt edges. For rich people dwell here now, and grand people too, with baronial title.

"Everything in its right place!" is still the family motto; and accordingly the pictures that had once hung in glory and honor on the walls of the Old Hall have been banished to the passage leading to the servants' room. Among the "old rubbish," as they were called, were two quaint old portraits, one of a grave-looking man wearing a wig and a crimson coat, the other of a fair lady, her hair powdered and combed back after the old fashion, and holding a red rose in her hand. Both pictures were encircled with a wreath of willow-boughs; they are portraits of the old Magistrate and his wife, from whom the present occupants claim descent. The pictures are in a tolerable state of preservation, except that they are pierced with small round holes innumerable, the juvenile Barons having used them as targets when they were trying their skill with the cross-bow.

"But they are not really of our family," remarked one of the young Barons. "He was a pedler and she was a goose-girl. They were not like our papa and mamma!"

"Mere rubbish," were these old pictures! "Everything in its right place!" so the great-grandparents were sent to the servants' hall.

The little Barons had a Tutor; he was a clergyman's son, and lived at the Hall. One day the Tutor, his pupils, and their eldest sister, who had lately been confirmed, went out for a walk; they took the path leading past the old willow-tree, and as they went along the young girl made herself a bouquet of wild-flowers and green sprays. "Everything in its right place." And out among the green fields, in the fresh morning air, these children of Danish soil looked as fair as any bouquet of gorgeous exotics. But while her fingers were busy her ears were open to hear every word the Tutor was saying. It pleased her greatly to hear him speak of the beauty of Nature, and of that beauty more excellent than Nature's, — moral beauty; to hear him tell of the gallant deeds and heroic lives of the great men and noble women of history. For hers was a thoroughly happy and healthful mind; noble and elevated thoughts were natural to her, and she had a heart large enough to embrace and love all that God has created.

The party stopped at the old willow-tree; the youngest of the young Barons wanted to have a flute cut for him out of it; his Tutor broke off a bough for the purpose.

"Oh, don't do that, pray!" cried the young Baroness. But her protest came too late; it was done. "Oh, you should not touch our famous

old tree; I love it so much! At home they all laugh at me about it, but I don't care for that. There is a legend about this tree — "

And she went on to relate what we have heard already about the Old Hall, the goose-girl and the pedler who met there for the first time, the ancestors of the family at the New Hall, and of the young Baroness herself.

"They would not be ennobled, those good, honest old folk," she added. "They were fond of the proverb, 'Everything in its right place!' and they never would buy the title to higher rank than they could claim by birth. It was their son, my grandfather, who was made a Baron; he was a very learned man, was much respected and beloved by Princes and Princesses, and used to go to all their grand festivities. He was his parents' favorite son, too. I don't know why, but I do love those old folk so much; I always think there must have been something so home-like, so patriarchal, about that Old Hall, with the mistress of the house sitting spinning among her maidens, and the old Magistrate reading the Bible aloud."

"Yes, they were excellent people, right-minded people!" replied the Tutor. And he forthwith fell into a discourse upon the difference between the aristocracy and the middle classes; no one who heard his enthusiasm for the old nobility could have imagined that he himself was born a plebeian.

"It is glorious to belong to a race that has made itself illustrious; glorious to know that the blood that flows in one's own veins is the same that has glowed like living fire in the good cause of old; glorious to claim as one's own rightful heritage a name that is, as it were, a passport everywhere. So long as the nobles are noble, who shall deny them honor and precedence? I know that the fashion of the time is to decry respect for our old nobility as a stupid, worn-out prejudice, and to assume that the lower we descend into the mud of poverty and obscurity, the brighter will be the gems of true goodness to be found glittering among the rubbish. But that is not my way of thinking, for it is perfectly stupid and utterly false. Many examples of true nobility of soul may be found among the nobly born; I could cite several, but I will instance only one, which I learned from my mother. She was staying at a great house, where my grandmother had been nurse, or some such thing, to its mistress; my mother was in the drawing-room with the old lord, when he noticed a poor old woman hobbling upon crutches into the court-yard; she used to come once every week for a small allowance.

'Poor thing!' he said; 'it is too bad to let her walk up here;' and as he spoke he was out at the door and down the steps, — he, the old lord, nearly eighty years of age, himself hurried down to the poor woman, to spare her the labor of walking upstairs to fetch her money. This may seem a trivial anecdote enough, but, trivial as it is, it reveals a truly kind and noble character. Honor to all such! honor to the courtesy and gentleness that smooth down the harsh barriers between class and class! Honor to him that acknowledges the same human nature everywhere, whether it be clothed in woollen or in purple and fine linen! But as for those gentry who brag of their 'blood,' and pride themselves on their 'pedigrees,' with less of right and of cause than high-mettled Arab steeds, and who raise their necks and eyebrows in scorn at the rest of the world, — such as these disgrace the nobility they are too often supposed to represent; they have, of their own accord, put on the ridiculous mask given them by Thespis, and are rightly handed over to the satirist."

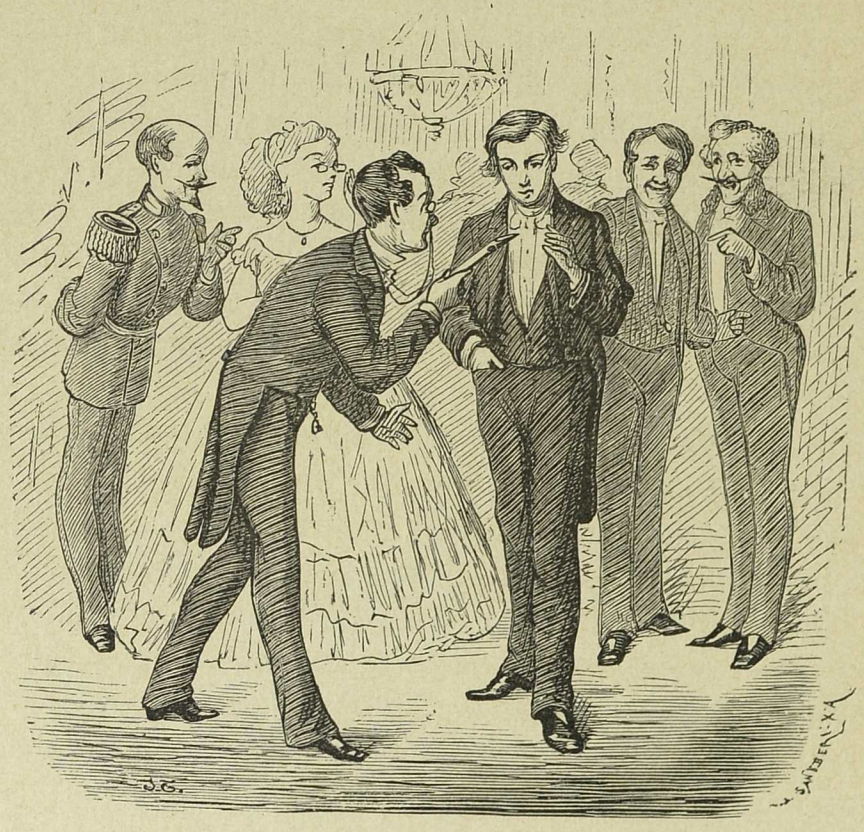
Such was the Tutor's oration; it was rather too long for the occasion, but then he was busy making the flute the while.

There was a large party at the Hall that evening; the grand saloon was crowded with guests, some from the neighborhood, some from the capital, a bevy of ladies richly dressed, with and without taste, a number of the clergy from the adjoining parishes standing in a corner together, as grave as though having met for a funeral. A funeral party it certainly was not; it was meant for a party of pleasure, but the pleasure was yet to come. Music and song went on, first one of the party volunteering, then another; but it was mostly music of that sort which is more delightful to the performer than to the audience. The little Baron brought out his flute, but neither he nor his papa, who tried it after him, could make anything of it; it was pronounced a perfect failure.

"But *you* are a performer, I am sure," said a coxcomb, addressing the Tutor; "you are of course a flute-player as well as a flute-maker. You are a universal genius, I hear, and genius is quite the rage now-a-days, — nothing like genius. Come, now, I am sure you will be so good as to delight us by playing on this little instrument." And he handed it over, announcing in a loud voice that the Tutor was going to favor the company with a solo on the flute.

It was easy to see that they wanted to ridicule the Tutor, and he refused to play; but they pressed him so long and so urgently that at last in sheer weariness he took the flute and raised it to his lips.

It was a strange flute! A sound issued from it, loud, shrill, and vibrating as that sent forth by a steam-engine, — nay, louder far. It thrilled right through the house, through garden and woodland, miles out into the country, and with the sound came also a strong, rushing wind, its stormy breath clearly uttering the words, "Everything in its right place!"



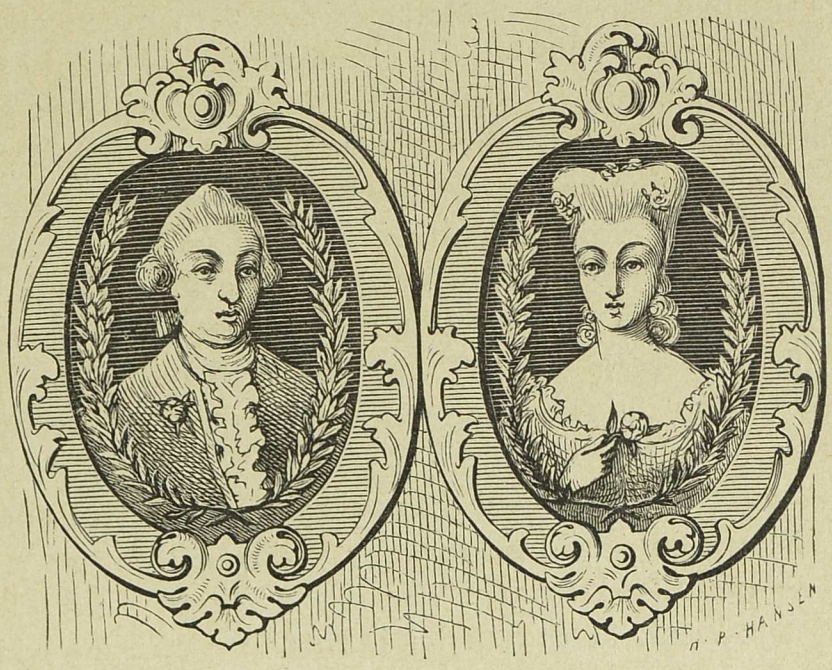
"'BUT YOU ARE A PERFORMER, I AM SURE,' SAID A COXCOMB."

Forthwith the Baron, the Master of the Hall, caught up by the storm-wind, flew out at the window and was shut up in the porter's lodge in a trice; and the porter himself was borne up, not into the drawing-room, — no, for that he was not fit, — but into the servants' hall, where the proud flunkies in their silk stockings were horror-struck at seeing such a low person sit down at table with them.

But in the grand saloon the young Baroness was wafted up to the seat of honor, where she was right worthy to sit, and the Tutor's place was beside her. There they sat together, for all the world like bride and bridegroom. An old Count, descended from one of the noblest houses in the land, retained his seat, not so much as a breath of air disturbing him. For the flute was strictly just; and the witty young

gentleman who had been the occasion of all this tumult was whirled out head foremost to join geese and gander in the poultry-yard.

Half a mile out in the country the flute wrought wonders. The family of a rich merchant who drove with four horses were all precipitated from the carriage window, and two farmers who had of late grown too wealthy to know their nearest relations were blown into a ditch. It was a dangerous flute. Lucky that at the first sound it uttered it cracked in twain and was then put safely by in the Tutor's pocket. "Everything in its right place!"



"THEY WERE CLEANED AND RESTORED, AND EVER AFTER HELD IN HONOR."

Next day no more was said about the adventure than if it had never happened. The affair was hushed up, and all things were in the same order as before, save that the two old portraits of the pedler and the goose-girl continued to hang on the walls of the saloon, whither the storm-wind had blown them. Here some connoisseur chanced to see them, and as he pronounced them to be painted by a master hand, they were cleaned and restored, and ever after held in honor. Their value had not been known before.

"Everything in its right place!" So all shall be in good time, never fear. Not in this world, though; that would be expecting rather too much.

LXVIII.

FIVE FROM A PEA-SHELL.

THERE were five Peas in a shell. They were green and the shell was green, and therefore they believed that the whole world was green; and that was quite natural. The shell grew and the Peas grew; they accommodated themselves to circumstances; they remained in a row.

The sun shone without, warming the shell, and the rain made it transparent; within it was nice and warm, light in the day and dark at night, as it ought to be, and the Peas became larger and larger, and thought more and more, for something they must of course do.

"Shall I always remain here?" said one. "I only hope I shall not become hard by remaining so long. There seems to me to be something without; I feel there is."

And weeks passed. The Peas became yellow and the shell became yellow. "The whole world is turning yellow," they said; and that they might be permitted to say.

Then they felt a pull at the shell; it was torn off, came into human hands, and was put into a pocket full of other pea-shells.

"Now it will soon be opened," they said; and they were anxious for that.

"I wonder who of us will travel the farthest," said the smallest Pea.

"Come what may," replied the eldest.

"Crack!" there the shell split, and five Peas rolled into the sunshine. They lay in a child's hand; a little boy held them, who said they were just the peas for his pop-gun; and at once one was put into it and shot away.

"I am flying into the wide world," it said; "catch me if you can;" and it was gone.

"I," said the second, "am flying right into the sun; that is just the kind of shell for me;" and it was gone.

"I sleep where I go," said the two others, "but we are sure to roll

forward." And so they rolled on the floor before they went into the pop-gun; but thither they went. "We go the farthest."

"Come what may," said the last, as it was shot into the air. And it flew up towards the board under the garret, into a fissure where there were moss and mould, and the moss closed around it. It was hidden, but not forgotten by its Maker.

"Come what may," said the Pea.

In the garret lived a poor woman who went out charing, for she was strong and active; but poor she remained, and in the room lay her half-grown-up daughter, who was so thin and delicate. She had been in bed a whole year, and seemed to be neither able to live nor die.

"She will go to her little sister," said the woman. "I had two, and it was hard enough to feed them, but the Lord shared them with me, and took one of them; He does not want to separate them, and she will join her little sister."

But the sick girl lived; she lay patient and calm all the day while her mother was out earning her living.

It was spring, and the mother was just going to her work, and the sun was shining so beautifully in through the open window on to the floor, at which the sick girl was looking.

"What is that green by the window?" she said. "It moves in the wind."

And the mother went and opened it a little.

"Lor!" she exclaimed; "it is a little Pea, which has shot out green leaves. How did it get into the hole? It is quite a little garden to look at."

And the bed of the sick girl was moved nearer to the window, where she could see the shooting Pea, and the mother went to her work.

"Mother, I believe I am getting better," said the girl at night. "The sun has shone so warmly on me to-day. The little Pea is going on so nicely, and I, too, am going to do the same; I am sure I shall get up and into the warm sunshine."

"The Lord be praised!" said the mother. But she did not believe it would go well. And she put a stick by the Pea, so that the wind should not break it off. Then she fastened a piece of string from the board to the upper window-sill, so that it should have something to twine around when it began to creep, and that it soon did. One could see how it grew every day.

"Why, bless me!" exclaimed the mother one morning; "it is in

bud." And now the hope crept into her heart too that her little sick girl would recover. It occurred to her that lately the child had been more animated, and even the last few mornings raised herself without help in bed, where she had sat looking with beaming eyes at her garden of peas, — an only plant.

A week after, the girl was up for an hour. Happy she sat in the warm sunshine; the window was open, and outside stood a white and red Pea in full bloom. The little girl bent her head and kissed the soft leaves tenderly. That day was a day of joy indeed!

"The Lord has planted it himself, and let it grow up for your sake and mine, my child," said the happy mother, smiling to the plant as to an angel from Heaven.



"THE LITTLE GIRL BENT HER HEAD AND KISSED THE SOFT LEAVES TENDERLY."

But the other Peas then? Well, that which flew into the wide world saying, "Catch me if you can!" fell into the gutter, where it became food for a pigeon. The two sleepy ones went just as far, and were eaten by pigeons too, and that was being really useful; but the fourth, which wanted to fly into the sun, fell into the gutter, where it lay days and weeks in the water swelling tremendously.

"I am getting jolly stout," it said. "I am splitting therefrom, and farther I don't think any pea can go or has gone. I am the most remarkable of the five from the shell."

And the Gutter was of the same opinion.

But by the window stood the young girl with beaming eyes and the color of health in her cheeks, and she folded her hands over the Pea and thanked the Lord for the gift.

"I stick to *my* Pea," said the Gutter.

LXIX.

A LEAF FROM HEAVEN.

HIGH up in the clear, thin air an Angel was flying with a flower from the Garden of Heaven; and just as she imprinted a kiss on it, a leaf, a very small leaf, fell off and sank down on the ground in the wood, where it struck root and grew among the other plants.

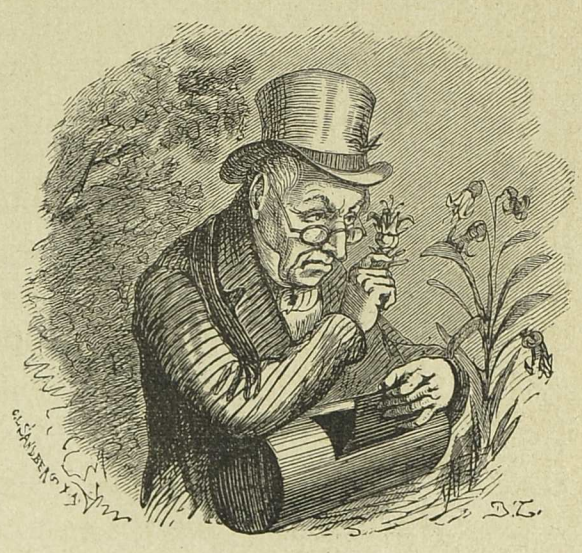
"That is a funny sprig," they said; and nobody would take any notice of it, neither the Thistle nor the Nettle.

"It is a kind of garden plant," they said sneeringly; and so they made fun of it because it was a garden plant.

But it grew like no other plant, stretching its branches to all sides like creepers.

"Where are you going to?" said the high Thistles, having barbs on every leaf. "You run along a little too freely; it is not the custom here; we won't stand it!"

Winter came, and snow covered the plant; but the layer of snow received from it a brightness penetrating it like sunshine from below. In the spring there stood a plant in bloom there, lovelier than any in the wood.



"IT IS NOT IN THE SYSTEM."

Then came a Professor of Botany, who had a certificate that he was what he was. He looked at the plant, bit it, but it was not in his flora; he could not make out to what family it belonged.

"It is a variety," he said, "which I do not know; it is not in the system."

"'Not in the system'?" repeated the Thistles and the Nettles.

The great trees around heard what was said, and even they saw that it was not of their kind; but they said nothing -- neither good nor bad; and that is always the safest when one is stupid.

Then came a poor innocent maiden through the woods, whose heart was pure and her mind enlarged through faith. All her inheritance in the world was an old Bible, but from its leaves spoke God's voice to her: "If people attempt to wound thee, remember the history of Joseph, and that God turns evil to good."

She stopped before the rare plant, whose green leaves smelled so deliciously, and whose flowers in the bright sunshine looked like a variegated pyrotechnic display; and it sounded from each one as if they hid within the deep well of melody, which ages cannot exhaust. She bent back the branches so as to inhale the scent properly; and it became brighter within her, it did her heart so much good. How she wished she had one flower; but she dared not break one, for it would soon fade with her. Therefore she took only a single green leaf, carried it home, laid it in her Bible, and there it lay fresh, ever green, and imperishable.



"'IT WILL ALSO BE OF SOME USE,' HE SAID."

It lay hidden between the leaves of the Bible, and together with that it was placed under the head of the young maiden when, some weeks later, she lay in her coffin with the sacred gravity of death on her pious face, as if the earthly form felt that she now stood before the Lord.

But out in the wood the strange plant continued to thrive till it was like a tree; and all the birds, the swallow and the stork in particular, came and bowed themselves before it.

"It is some foreign rubbish," said the Thistle and the Burdock. "In that manner nobody would behave here!"

And the black snails spat on it.

Then came a Swineherd, who tore up the Thistles and the rest to burn them for the ashes' sake, and he got hold of the rare plant among them and tore it up.

"It will also be of some use," he said, and so it was done.

But for many a day the King of the land had suffered from the deepest melancholy. He was busy and active, but that did not help. The profoundest books were read to him as well as the lightest, but without avail. Then came a message from one of the wisest men in the world, who had been consulted, informing the King that there existed a thing which would cure him. "In the King's own wood," said the Sage, "grows a plant of divine origin; it looks such and such, — it is impossible to mistake it;" and with this followed an illustration of it, so that it was impossible not to recognize it. "It is green summer and winter, so therefore take a leaf and place it on the King's forehead every night; that will clear his thoughts, and a delicious dream will strengthen him for the coming day."



"BUT FOR MANY A DAY THE KING OF THE LAND HAD SUFFERED FROM THE DEEPEST MELANCHOLY."

This was clear enough; and all the doctors and the Professor of Botany went out into the woods. But where was the plant now?

"It was in my bundle," said the Swineherd; "it has become ashes long ago. I did not know better."

"'Not know better'!" they exclaimed. "Ignorance! ignorance! how great art thou!" And those words the Swineherd might take to heart, they said.

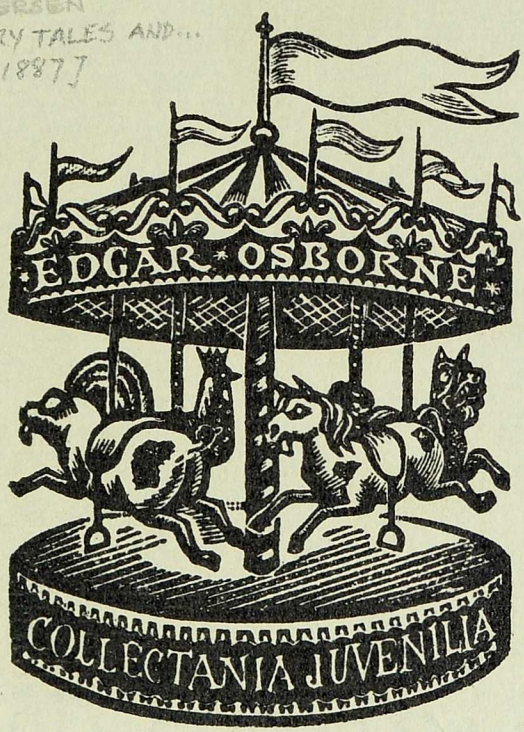
Not a leaf was to be found. The only one in existence was the one in the coffin of the maiden; but nobody knew that.

And in his sorrowing mood the King went into the wood to the spot. "Here the tree stood," he said; "it is a sacred spot."

And it was railed in with gilt railings, and a Sentry placed there night and day.

The Professor of Botany wrote a treatise about the plant from Heaven, and for that *he* was gilded; and that afforded him great pleasure, and it suited him and his family. And that is the most cheerful part of the whole story; for the plant was gone, and the King remained sorrowful and melancholy. "But that he was before," said the Sentry.

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