

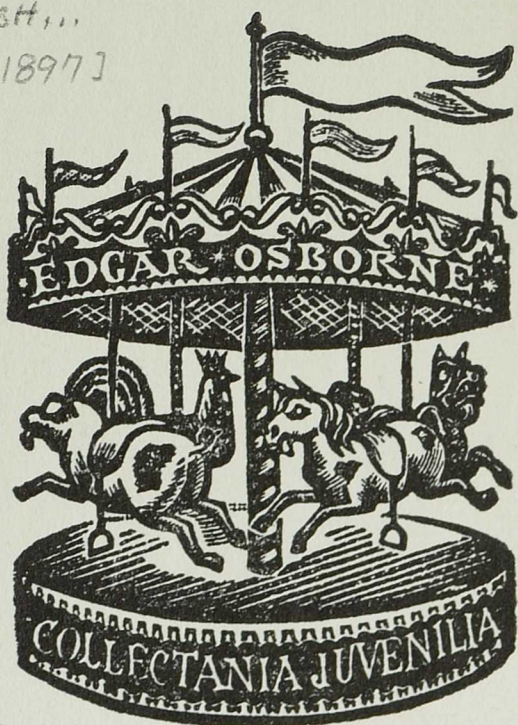
THE
MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER
THE
HARDY TIN SOLDIER



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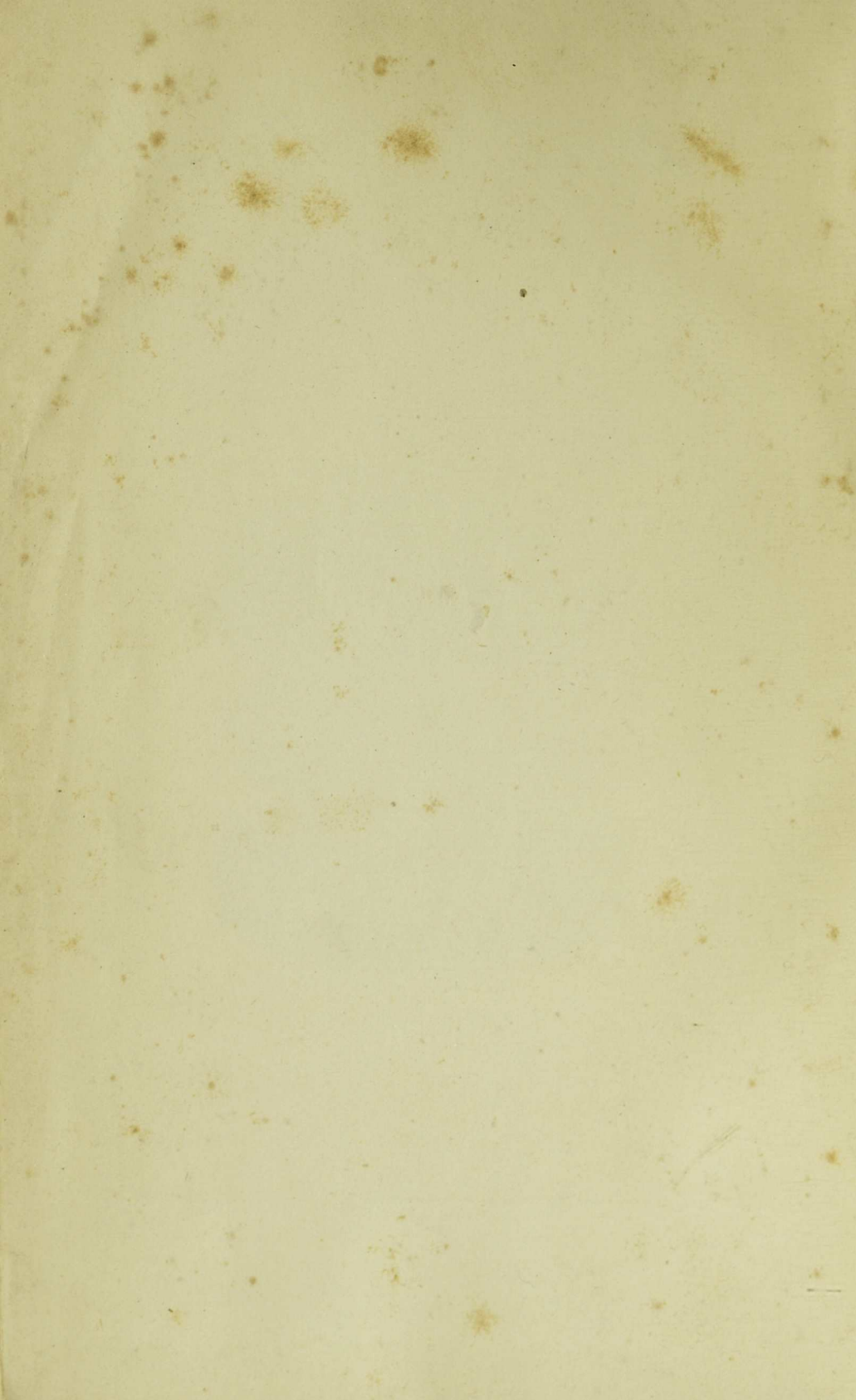
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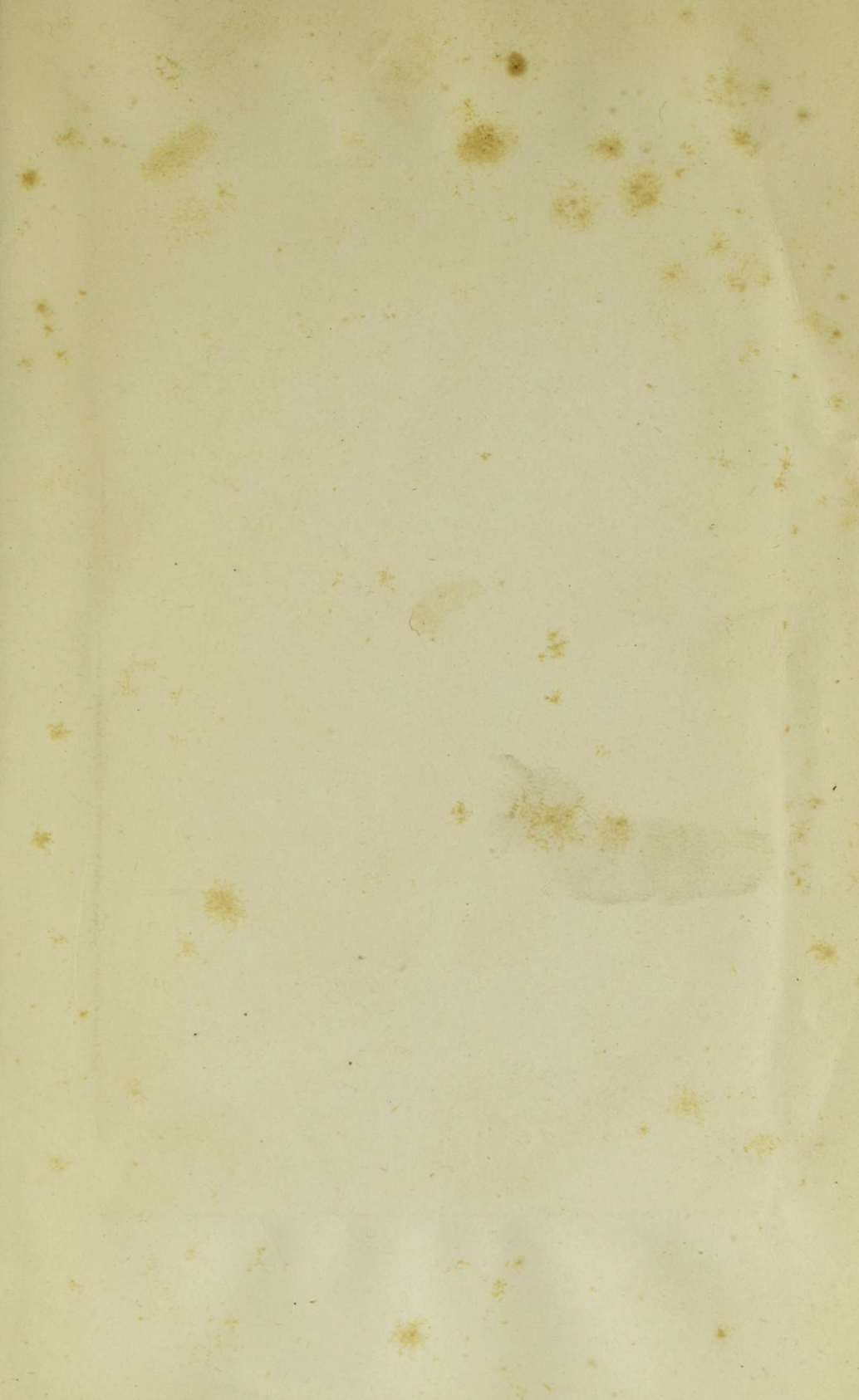
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Wilfred H. Martin







THE MARSH KING'S
DAUGHTER.

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

TRANSLATED BY

H. W. DULCKEN, PH.D.

ILLUSTRATED WITH EIGHTEEN PICTURES.

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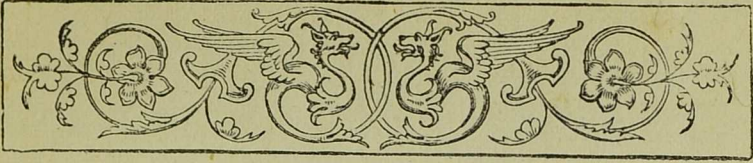
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THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER.

THE storks tell their little ones very many stories, all of the moor and the marsh. These stories are generally adapted to the age and capacity of the hearers. The youngest are content if they are told "Kribble-krabble, plurre-murre" as a story, and find it charming; but the older ones want something with a deeper meaning, or at any rate something relating to the family. Of the two oldest and longest stories that have been preserved among the storks, we are only acquainted with one, namely, that of Moses, who was exposed by his mother on the banks of the Nile, and whom the King's daughter found, and who afterwards became a great man and a prophet. That history is very well known.

The second story is not known yet, perhaps, because it is quite an inland story. It has been handed down from mouth to mouth, from stork-

mamma to stork-mamma, for thousands of years, and each of them has told it better and better ; and now *we* 'll tell it best of all.

The first stork pair who told the story had their summer residence on the wooden house of the Viking, which lay near the wild moor in Wend-syssel ; that is to say, if we are to speak out of the abundance of our knowledge, hard by the great moor in the circle of Hjörning, high up by the Skagen, the northern point of Jutland. The wilderness there is still a great wide moor-heath, about which we can read in the official description of districts. It is said that in old times there was here a sea, whose bottom was upheaved ; now the moorland extends for miles on all sides, surrounded by damp meadows, and unsteady shaking swamp, and turf moor, with blueberries and stunted trees. Mists are almost always hovering over this region, which seventy years ago was still inhabited by wolves. It is certainly rightly called the "wild moor ;" and one can easily think how dreary and lonely it must have been, and how much marsh and lake there was here a thousand years ago. Yes, in detail, exactly the same things were seen then that may yet be beheld. The reeds had the same height, and bore the same kind of long leaves

and bluish-brown feathery plumes that they bear now; the birch stood there, with its white bark and its fine loosely-hanging leaves, just as now; and as regards the living creatures that dwelt here—why, the fly wore its gauzy dress of the same cut that it wears now; and the favourite colours of the stork were white picked out with black, and red stockings. The people certainly wore coats of a different cut from those they now wear; but whoever stepped out on the shaking moorland, be he huntsman or follower, master or servant, met with the same fate a thousand years ago that he would meet with to-day. He sank and went down to the Marsh King, as they called him, who ruled below in the great moorland empire. They also called him the Gungel King; but we like the name of Marsh King better, and by that we'll call him, as the storks did. Very little is known of the Marsh King's rule; but perhaps that is a good thing.

In the neighbourhood of the moorland, hard by the great arm of the German Ocean and the Cattegat, which is called the Lümfjorden, lay the wooden house of the Viking, with its stone water-tight cellars, with its tower, and its three projecting storeys. On the roof the Stork had built his nest; and Stork-mamma there hatched the eggs,

and felt sure that her hatching would come to something.

One evening Stork-papa stayed out very long ; and when he came home he looked very bustling and important.

“ I’ve something very terrible to tell you,” he said to the Stork-mamma.

“ Let that be,” she replied ; “ remember that I’m hatching the eggs, and you might agitate me, and I might do them a mischief.”

“ You must know it,” he continued. “ She has arrived here—the daughter of our host in Egypt—she has dared to undertake the journey here—and she’s gone !”

“ She who came from the race of the fairies ? Oh, tell me all about it ! You know I can’t bear to be kept long in suspense when I’m hatching eggs.”

“ You see, mother, she believed in what the doctor said, and you told me true. She believed that the moor flowers would bring healing to her sick father, and she has flown all the way here in swan’s plumage, in company with the other swan-princesses, who come to the North every year to renew their youth. She has come here, and she is gone !”

“You are much too long-winded!” exclaimed the Stork-mamma, “and the eggs might catch cold. I can’t bear being kept in such suspense!”

“I have kept watch,” said the Stork-papa; “and to-night, when I went into the reeds—there where the marsh ground will bear me—three swans came. Something in their flight seemed to say to me, ‘Look out! That’s not altogether swan—it’s only swan’s feathers!’ Yes, mother, you have a feeling of intuition just as I have; you know whether a thing is right or wrong.”

“Yes, certainly,” she replied; “but tell me about the Princess. I’m sick of hearing of the swan’s feathers.”

“Well, you know that in the middle of the moor there is something like a lake,” continued Stork-papa. “You can see one corner of it if you raise yourself a little. There, by the reeds and the green mud, lay a great elder stump; and on this the three swans sat, flapping their wings and looking about them. One of them threw off her plumage, and I immediately recognized her as our house Princess from Egypt! There she sat, with no covering but her long black hair. I heard her tell the others to pay good heed to the swan’s plumage, while she dived down into the water to pluck the flowers

which she fancied she saw growing there. The others nodded, and picked up the empty feather dress and took care of it. 'I wonder what they will do with it?' thought I; and perhaps she asked herself the same question. If so, she soon got an answer—a very practical answer—for the two rose up and flew away with her swan's plumage. 'Do thou dive down,' they cried; 'thou shalt never see Egypt again! Remain thou here in the moor!' And so saying, they tore the swan's plumage into a thousand pieces, so that the feathers whirled about like a snow-storm; and away they flew—the two faithless Princesses!"

"Why, that is terrible!" said Stork-mamma. "I can't bear to hear any more of it. But now tell me what happened next."

"The Princess wept and lamented aloud. Her tears fell fast on the elder stump, and the latter moved; for it was not a regular elder stump, but the Marsh King—he who lives and rules in the depths of the moor! I myself saw it—how the stump of the tree turned round, and ceased to be a tree stump; long thin branches grew forth from it like arms. Then the poor child was terribly frightened, and sprang up to flee away. She ran across to the soft, green, slimy ground; but that



The Princess left in the Marsh.

cannot even carry me, much less her. She sank immediately, and the elder stump dived down too, and it was he who drew her down. Great black bubbles rose up out of the moor slime, and the last trace of both of them vanished when these burst. Now the Princess is buried in the wild moor, and never more will she bear away a flower to Egypt. Your heart would have burst, mother, if you had seen it."

“You ought not to tell me anything of the kind at such a time as this,” said Stork-mamma; “the eggs might suffer by it. The Princess will find some way of escape; some one will come to help her. If it had been you or I, or one of our people, it would certainly have been all over with us.”

“But I shall go and look every day to see if anything happens,” said Stork-papa.

And he was as good as his word.

A long time had passed, when at last he saw a green stalk shooting up out of the deep moor-ground. When it reached the surface, a leaf spread out and unfolded itself broader and broader; close by it, a bud came out. And one morning, when Stork-papa flew over the stalk, the bud opened through the power of the strong sunbeams, and in the cup of the flower lay a beautiful child—a little girl—looking just as if she had risen out of the bath. The little one so closely resembled the Princess from Egypt, that at the first moment the Stork thought it must be the Princess herself; but on second thoughts, it appeared more probable that it must be the daughter of the Princess and of the Marsh King; and that also explained her being placed in the cup of the water-lily.

“But she cannot possibly be left lying there,”

thought the Stork-papa; "and in my nest there are so many persons already. But stay, I have a thought. The wife of the Viking has no children, and how often has she not wished for a little one! People always say, 'The stork has brought a little one;' and I will do so in earnest this time. I shall fly with the child to the Viking's wife. What rejoicing there will be yonder!"

And the Stork lifted the little girl out of the flower-cup, flew to the wooden house, picked a hole with his beak in the bladder-covered window, laid the charming child on the bosom of the Viking's wife, and then hurried up to the Stork-mamma, and told her what he had seen and done; and the little storks listened to the story, for they were big enough to do so now.

"So, you see," he concluded, "the Princess is not dead, for she must have sent the little one up here; and now that is provided for too."

"Ah, I said it would be so, from the very beginning!" said the Stork-mamma; "but now think a little of your own family. Our travelling time is drawing on; sometimes I feel quite restless in my wings already. The cuckoo and the nightingale have started; and I heard the quails saying that they were going too, so soon as the wind was fa-

vourable. Our young ones will behave well at the exercising, or I am much deceived in them."

The Viking's wife was extremely glad when she woke next morning and found the charming infant lying in her arms. She kissed and caressed it; but it cried violently, and struggled with its arms and legs, and did not seem rejoiced at all. At length it cried itself to sleep; and as it lay there still and tranquil, it looked exceedingly beautiful. The Viking's wife was in high glee: she felt light in body and soul; her heart leaped within her; and it seemed to her as if her husband and his warriors, who were absent, must return quite as suddenly and unexpectedly as the little one had come.

Therefore she and the whole household had enough to do in preparing everything for the reception of her lord. The long coloured curtains of tapestry, which she and her maids had worked, and on which they had woven pictures of their idols, Odin, Thor, and Friga, were hung up; the slaves polished the old shields that served as ornaments; and cushions were placed on the benches, and dry wood laid on the fireplace in the midst of the hall, so that the flame might be fanned up at a moment's notice. The Viking's wife herself as-

sisted in the work, so that towards evening she was very tired, and went to sleep quickly and lightly.

When she awoke towards morning, she was violently alarmed, for the infant had vanished! She sprang from her couch, lighted a pine torch, and searched all round about; and, behold, in the part of the bed where she had stretched her feet, lay, not the child, but a great ugly frog! She was horror-struck at the sight, and seized a heavy stick to kill the frog; but the creature looked at her with such strange, mournful eyes, that she was not able to strike the blow. Once more she looked round the room—the frog uttered a low, wailing croak, and she started, sprang from the couch, and ran to the window and opened it. At that moment the sun shone forth, and flung its beams through the window on the couch and on the great frog; and suddenly it appeared as though the frog's great mouth contracted and became small and red, and its limbs moved and stretched and became beautifully symmetrical, and it was no longer an ugly frog which lay there, but her pretty child!

“What is this?” she said. “Have I had a bad dream? Is it not my own lovely cherub lying there?” And she kissed and hugged it; but the child struggled and fought like a little wild cat.

Not on this day nor on the morrow did the Viking return, although he certainly was on his way home ; but the wind was against him, for it blew towards the south, favourably for the storks. A good wind for one is a contrary wind for another.

When one or two more days and nights had gone, the Viking's wife clearly understood how the case was with her child—that a terrible power of sorcery was upon it. By day it was charming as an angel of light, though it had a wild, savage temper ; but at night it became an ugly frog, quiet and mournful, with sorrowful eyes. Here were two natures changing inwardly as well as outwardly with the sunlight. The reason of this was that by day the child had the form of its mother, but the disposition of its father ; while, on the contrary, at night the paternal descent became manifest in its bodily appearance, though the mind and heart of the mother then became dominant in the child. Who might be able to loosen this charm that wicked sorcery had worked ?

The wife of the Viking lived in care and sorrow about it ; and yet her heart yearned towards the little creature, of whose condition she felt she should not dare tell her husband on his return ; for he would, probably, according to the custom

which then prevailed, expose the poor child on the public highway, and let whoever listed take it away. The good Viking woman could not find it in her heart to allow this, and she therefore determined that the Viking should never see the child except by daylight.

One morning the wings of Storks were heard rushing over the roof; more than a hundred pairs of those birds had rested from their exercise during the previous night, and now they soared aloft, to travel southwards.

“All males here, and ready,” they cried; “and the wives and children too.”

“How light we feel!” screamed all the young Storks in chorus: “it seems to be creeping all over us, down into our very toes, as if we were filled with frogs. Ah, how charming it is, travelling to foreign lands!”

“Mind you keep close to us during your flight,” said papa and mamma. “Don’t use your beaks too much, for that tires the chest.”

And the Storks flew away.

At the same time the sound of the trumpets rolled across the heath, for the Viking had landed with his warriors; they were returning home, richly laden with spoil, from the Gallic coast, where

the people, as in the land of the Britons, sang in frightened accents :

“Deliver us from the wild Northmen!”

And life and tumultuous joy came with them into the Viking's castle on the moorland. The great mead-tub was brought into the hall, the pile of wood was set ablaze, horses were killed, and a great feast was to begin. The officiating priest sprinkled the slaves with the warm blood ; the fire crackled, the smoke rolled along beneath the roof ; but they were accustomed to that. Guests were invited, and received handsome gifts : all feuds and all malice were forgotten. And the company drank deep, and threw the bones of the feast in each other's faces, and this was considered a sign of good humour. The bard, a kind of minstrel, but who was also a warrior and had been on the expedition with the rest, sang them a song, in which they heard all their warlike deeds praised, and everything remarkable specially noticed. Every verse ended with the burden :

“Goods and gold, friends and foes will die ; every man
must one day die ;
But a famous name will never die !”

And with that they beat upon their shields, and



The Viking's Feast.

hammered the table in glorious fashion with bones and knives.

The Viking's wife sat upon the high seat in the open hall. She wore a silken dress, and golden armlets, and great amber beads: she was in her costliest garb. And the bard mentioned her in his song, and sang of the rich treasure she had brought her brave husband. The latter was delighted with the beautiful child, which he had seen in the day-time in all its loveliness; and the savage ways of the little creature pleased him especially. He declared that the girl might grow up to be a stately heroine, strong and determined as a man. She would not wink her eyes when a practised hand cut off her eyebrows with a sword by way of a jest.

The full mead-barrel was emptied, and a fresh one brought in; for these were people who liked to enjoy all things plentifully. The old proverb was indeed well known, which says, "The cattle know when they should quit the pasture, but a foolish man knoweth not the measure of his own appetite." Yes, they knew it well enough; but one *knows* one thing, and one *does* another. They also knew that "even the welcome guest becomes wearisome when he sitteth long in the house;" but for all that

they sat still, for pork and mead are good things ; and there was high carousing, and at night the bondmen slept among the warm ashes, and dipped their fingers in the fat grease and licked them. Those were glorious times, they thought.

Once more in the year the Viking sallied forth, though the storms of autumn had already begun to roar : he went with his warriors to the shores of Britain, for he declared that was but an excursion across the water ; and his wife stayed at home with the little girl. And thus much is certain, that the poor lady soon got to love the frog with its gentle eyes and its sorrowful sighs, almost better than the pretty child that bit and beat all around her.

The rough damp mist of autumn, which devours the leaves of the forest, had already descended upon thicket and heath. “ Birds featherless,” as they called the snow, flew in thick masses, and winter was coming on fast. The sparrows took possession of the storks’ nests, and talked about the absent proprietors according to their fashion ; but these—the stork pair, with all the young ones—what had become of them ?

The storks were now in the land of Egypt, where the sun sent forth warm rays, as it does here

on a fine midsummer day. Tamarinds and acacias bloomed in the country around; the crescent of Mahomet glittered from the cupolas of the temples, and on the slender towers sat many a stork pair resting after their long journey. Great troops divided the nests, built close together on venerable pillars, and in fallen temple arches of forgotten cities. The date palm lifted up its screen as if it would be a sunshade; the greyish-white pyramids stood like masses of shadow in the clear air of the far desert, where the ostrich ran his swift career, and the lion gazed with his great grave eyes at the marble sphinx which lay half buried in the sand. The waters of the Nile had fallen, and the whole river bed was crowded with frogs, and this spectacle was just according to the taste of the Stork family. The young Storks thought it was optical illusion, they found everything so glorious.

“Yes, it’s delightful here; and it’s always like this in our warm country,” said the Stork-mamma.

And the young ones felt quite frisky on the strength of it.

“Is there anything more to be seen?” they asked. “Are we to go much farther into the country?”

“There’s nothing further to be seen,” answered

the Stork-mamma. "Behind this delightful region there are luxuriant forests, whose branches are interlaced with one another, while prickly climbing plants close up the paths—only the elephant can force a way for himself with his great feet; and the snakes are too big and the lizards too quick for us. If you go into the desert, you'll get your eyes full of sand when there's a light breeze, but when it blows great guns you may get into the middle of a pillar of sand. It is best to stay here, where there are frogs and locusts. I shall stay here, and you shall stay too."

And there they remained. The parents sat in the nest on the slender minaret, and rested, and yet were busily employed smoothing and cleaning their feathers, and whetting their beaks against their red stockings. Now and then they stretched out their necks, and bowed gravely, and lifted their heads with their high foreheads and fine smooth feathers, and looked very clever with their brown eyes. The female young ones strutted about in the juicy reeds, looked slyly at the other young storks, made acquaintances, and swallowed a frog at every third step, or rolled a little snake to and fro in their bills, which they thought became them well, and, moreover, tasted nice. The young male

Storks began a quarrel, beat each other with their wings, struck with their beaks, and even pricked each other till the blood came. And in this way sometimes one couple was betrothed, and sometimes another, of the young ladies and gentlemen, and that was just what they wanted, and their chief object in life : then they took to a new nest, and began new quarrels, for in hot countries people are generally hot tempered and passionate. But it was pleasant for all that, and the old people especially were much rejoiced, for all that young people do seems to suit them well. There was sunshine every day, and every day plenty to eat, and nothing to think of but pleasure. But in the rich castle, at the Egyptian host's, as they called him, there was no pleasure to be found.

The rich mighty lord reclined on his divan, in the midst of the great hall of the many-coloured walls, looking as if he were sitting in a tulip ; but he was stiff and powerless in all his limbs, and lay stretched out like a mummy. His family and servants surrounded him, for he was not dead, though one could not exactly say that he was alive. The healing moor flower from the North, which was to have been found and brought home by her who loved him best, never appeared. His beau-



The King of Egypt deceived by the Princesses.

teous young daughter, who had flown in the swan's plumage over sea and land to the far North, was never to come back again. "She is dead!" the two remaining swan-maiden's had said, and they had concocted a complete story, which ran in this manner:

"We three together flew high up in the air: a hunter saw us, and shot his arrow at us; it struck our young companion and friend; and slowly, singing her farewell song, she sank down, a dying swan, into the woodland lake. By the shore of the lake, under a weeping birch tree, we laid her in the cool earth. But we had our revenge. We bound fire under the wings of the swallow who had built her nest beneath the huntsman's thatch; the house burst into flames, the huntsman was burned in the house, and the glare shone over the sea as far as the hanging birch beneath which she sleeps. Never will she return to the land of Egypt."

And then the two wept. And when Stork-papa heard the story, he clapped with his beak so that it could be heard a long way off.

"Treachery and lies!" he cried. "I should like to run my beak deep into their chests."

"And perhaps break it off," interposed the Stork-mamma; "and then you would look well.

Think first of yourself, and then of your family, and all the rest does not concern you."

"But to-morrow I shall seat myself at the edge of the open cupola when the wise and learned men assemble to consult on the sick man's state: perhaps they may come a little nearer the truth."

And the learned and wise men came together and spoke a great deal, out of which the Stork could make no sense—and it had no result, either for the sick man or for the daughter in the swampy waste. But for all that we may listen to what the people said, for we have to listen to a great deal of talk in the world.

But then it's an advantage to hear what went before, what has been said; and in this case we are well informed, for we know just as much about it as Stork-papa.

"Love gives life! the highest love gives the highest life! Only through love can his life be preserved."

That is what they all said, and the learned men said it was very cleverly and beautifully spoken.

"That is a beautiful thought," Stork-papa said immediately.

"I don't quite understand it," Stork-mamma

replied ; “ and that ’s not my fault, but the fault of the thought. But let it be as it will, I ’ve something else to think of.”

And now the learned men had spoken of love to this one and that one, and of the difference between the love of one’s neighbour and love between parents and children, of the love of plants for the light, when the sunbeam kisses the ground and the germ springs forth from it. Everything was so fully and elaborately explained that it was quite impossible for Stork-papa to take it in, much less to repeat it. He felt quite weighed down with thought, and half shut his eyes, and the whole of the following day he stood thoughtfully on one leg : it was quite heavy for him to carry, all that learning.

But one thing the Stork-papa understood. All, high and low, had spoken out of their inmost hearts, and said that it was a great misfortune for thousands of people, yes, for the whole country, that this man was lying sick and could not get well, and that it would spread joy and pleasure abroad if he should recover. But where grew the flower that could restore him to health ? They had all searched for it, consulted learned books, the twinkling stars, the weather and the wind ;

they had made inquiries in every byway of which they could think ; and at length the wise men and the learned men had said, as we have already told, that " Love begets life—it will restore a father's life ;" and upon this occasion they had surpassed themselves, and said more than they understood. They repeated it, and wrote down as a recipe, " Love begets life." But how was the thing to be prepared according to the recipe ? That was a point they could not get over. At last they were decided upon the point that help must come by means of the Princess, through her who clave to her father with her whole soul ; and at last a method had been devised whereby help could be procured in this dilemma. Yes, it was already more than a year ago since the Princess had sallied forth by night, when the brief rays of the new moon were waning : she had gone out to the marble sphinx, had shaken the dust from her sandals, and gone onward through the long passage which leads into the midst of one of the great pyramids, where one of the mighty Kings of antiquity, surrounded by pomp and treasure, lay swathed in mummy cloths. There she was to incline her ear to the breast of the dead King ; for thus, said the wise men, it should be made manifest to her where she might

find life and health for her father. She had fulfilled all these injunctions, and had seen in a vision that she was to bring home from the deep lake in the northern moorland—the very place had been accurately described to her—the lotus flower which grows in the depths of the waters, and then her father would regain health and strength.

And therefore she had gone forth in the swan's plumage out of the land of Egypt to the open heath, to the woodland moor. And the Stork-papa and Stork-mamma knew all this; and now we also know it more accurately than we knew it before. We know that the Marsh King had drawn her down to himself, and know that to her loved ones at home she is dead for ever. One of the wisest of them said, as the Stork-mamma said too, "She will manage to help herself;" and at last they quieted their minds with that, and resolved to wait and see what would happen, for they knew of nothing better that they could do.

"I should like to take away the swan's feathers from the two faithless Princesses," said the Stork-papa; "then, at any rate, they will not be able to fly up again to the wild moor and do mischief. I'll hide the two swan-feather suits up there till somebody has occasion for them."

“But where do you intend to hide them?” asked Stork-mamma.

“Up in our nest in the moor,” answered he. “I and our young ones will take turns in carrying them up yonder on our return, and if that should prove too difficult for us, there are places enough on the way where we can conceal them till our next journey. Certainly one suit of swan’s feathers would be enough for the Princess, but two are always better. In those northern countries no one can have too many wraps.”

“No one will thank you for it,” quoth Stork-mamma; “but you’re the master. Except at breeding-time, I have nothing to say.”

In the Viking’s castle by the wild moor, whither the storks bent their flight when the spring approached, they had given the little girl the name of Helga; but this name was too soft for a temper like that which was associated with her beautiful form. Every month this temper showed itself in sharper outlines; and in the course of years—during which the storks made the same journey over and over again, in autumn to the Nile, in spring back to the moorland lake—the child grew to be a great girl; and before people were aware of it, she was a beautiful maiden in her sixteenth

year. The shell was splendid, but the kernel was harsh and hard ; and she was hard, as indeed were most people in those dark, gloomy times. It was a pleasure to her to splash about with her white hands in the blood of the horse that had been slain in sacrifice. In her wild mood she bit off the neck of the black cock the priest was about to offer up ; and to her father she said in perfect seriousness,

“ If thy enemy should pull down the roof of thy house while thou wert sleeping in careless safety ; if I felt it or heard it, I would not wake thee even if I had the power. I should never do it, for my ears still tingle with the blow that thou gavest me years ago—thou ! I have never forgotten it.”

But the Viking took her words in jest ; for, like all others, he was bewitched with her beauty, and he knew not how temper and form changed in Helga. Without a saddle she sat upon a horse as if she were part of it, while it rushed along in full career ; nor would she spring from the horse when it quarrelled and fought with the other horses. Often she would throw herself, in her clothes, from the high shore into the sea, and swim to meet the Viking when his boat steered near home ; and she cut the longest lock of her hair, and twisted it into a string for her bow.

“Self-achieved is well achieved,” she said.

The Viking's wife was strong of character and of will, according to the custom of the times; but, compared to her daughter, she appeared as a feeble timid woman; for she knew that an evil charm weighed heavily upon the unfortunate child.

It seemed as if, out of mere malice, when her mother stood on the threshold or came out into the yard, Helga would often seat herself on the margin of the well, and wave her arms in the air; then suddenly she would dive into the deep well, when her frog nature enabled her to dive and rise, down and up, until she climbed forth again like a cat, and came back into the hall dripping with water, so that the green leaves strewn upon the ground floated and turned in the streams that flowed from her garments.

But there was one thing that imposed a check upon Helga, and that was the evening twilight. When that came she was quiet and thoughtful, and would listen to reproof and advice; and then a secret feeling seemed to draw her towards her mother. And when the sun sank, and the usual transformation of body and spirit took place in her, she would sit quiet and mournful, shrunk to the shape of the frog, her body indeed much larger

than that of the animal whose likeness she took, and for that reason much more hideous to behold, for she looked like a wretched dwarf with a frog's head and webbed fingers. Her eyes then assumed a very melancholy expression. She had no voice, and could only utter a hollow croaking that sounded like the stifled sob of a dreaming child. Then the Viking's wife took her on her lap, and forgot the ugly form as she looked into the mournful eyes, and said,

“I could almost wish that thou wert always my poor dumb frog-child, for thou art only the more terrible when thy nature is veiled in a form of beauty.”

And the Viking woman wrote Runic characters against sorcery and spells of sickness, and threw them over the wretched child; but she could not see that they worked any good.

“One can scarcely believe that she was ever so small that she could lie in the cup of a water-lily,” said Stork-papa, “now she's grown up the image of her Egyptian mother. Ah! we shall never see that poor lady again. Probably she did not know how to help herself, as you and the learned men said. Year after year I have flown to and fro, across and across the great moorland, and she has



The transformed Princess.

never once given a sign that she was still alive. Yes, I may as well tell you that every year, when I came here a few days before you to repair the nest and attend to various matters, I spent a whole

night in flying to and fro over the lake, as if I had been an owl or a bat, but every time in vain. The two suits of swan's feathers which I and the young ones dragged up here out of the land of the Nile have consequently not been used: we had trouble enough with them to bring them hither in three journeys; and now they lie down here in the nest, and if it should happen that a fire broke out, and the wooden house were burned, they would be destroyed."

"And our good nest would be destroyed too," said Stork-mamma; "but you think less of that than of your plumage stuff and of your moor-princess. You'd best go down into the mud and stay there with her. You're a bad father to your own children, as I said already when I hatched our first brood. I only hope neither we nor our children will get an arrow in our wings through that wild girl. Helga doesn't know in the least what she does. I wish she would only remember that we have lived here longer than she, and that we have never forgotten our duty, and have given our toll every year, a feather, an egg, and a young one, as it was right we should do. Do you think I can now wander about in the courtyard and everywhere, as I was wont in former days, and as

I still do in Egypt, where I am almost the play-fellow of the people, and that I can press into pot and kettle as I can yonder? No, I sit up here and am angry at her, the stupid chit! And I am angry at you too. You should just have left her lying in the water-lily, and she would have been dead long ago."

"You are much better than your words," said Stork-papa. "I know you better than you know yourself."

And with that he gave a hop, and flapped his wings heavily twice, stretched out his legs behind him, and flew away, or rather sailed away, without moving his wings. He had already gone some distance, when he gave a great *flap!* The sun shone upon his grand plumage, and his head and neck were stretched forth proudly. There was power in it, and dash!

"After all, he's handsomer than any of them," said Stork-mamma to herself; "but I won't tell him so."

Early in that autumn the Viking came home, laden with booty and bringing prisoners with him. Among these was a young Christian priest, one of those who contemned the gods of the North.

Often in those later times there had been a talk, in hall and chamber, of the new faith that was spreading far and wide in the South, and which, by means of Saint Ansgarius, had penetrated as far as Hedeby on the Schlei. Even Helga had heard of this belief in One who, from love to men and for their redemption, had sacrificed His life; but with her all this had, as the saying is, gone in at one ear and come out at the other. It seemed as if she only understood the meaning of the word "love," when she crouched in a corner of the chamber in the form of a miserable frog; but the Viking's wife had listened to the mighty history that was told throughout the lands, and had felt strangely moved thereby.

On their return from their voyage, the men told of the splendid temples and of their hewn stones, raised for the worship of Him whose worship is love. Some massive vessels, made with cunning art, of gold, had been brought home among the booty, and each one had a peculiar fragrance; for they were incense vessels, which had been swung by Christian priests before the altar.

In the deep cellars of the Viking's house the young priest had been immured, his hands and feet bound with strips of bark. The Viking's wife de-

clared that he was beautiful as Bulder to behold, and his misfortune touched her heart ; but Helga declared that it would be right to tie ropes to his heels, and fasten him to the tails of wild oxen. And she exclaimed,

“ Then I would let loose the dogs—hurrah !—over the moor and across the swamp ! That would be a spectacle for the gods ! And yet finer would it be to follow him in his career.”

But the Viking would not suffer him to die such a death : he purposed to sacrifice the priest on the morrow, on the death-stone in the grove, as a despiser and foe of the high gods.

For the first time a man was to be sacrificed here.

Helga begged, as a boon, that she might sprinkle the image of the god and the assembled multitude with the blood of the priest. She sharpened her glittering knife, and when one of the great savage dogs, of whom a number were running about near the Viking's abode, ran by her, she thrust the knife into his side, “ merely to try its sharpness,” as she said. And the Viking's wife looked mournfully at the wild, evil-disposed girl ; and when night came on and the maiden exchanged beauty of form for gentleness of soul, she spoke in eloquent

words to Helga of the sorrow that was deep in her heart.

The ugly frog, in its monstrous form, stood before her, and fixed its brown eyes upon her face, listening to her words, and seeming to comprehend them with human intelligence.

“Never, not even to my lord and husband, have I allowed my lips to utter a word concerning the sufferings I have to undergo through thee,” said the Viking’s wife; “my heart is full of woe concerning thee: more powerful, and greater than I ever fancied it, is the love of a mother! But love never entered into thy heart—thy heart that is like the wet, cold moorland plants.”

Then the miserable form trembled, and it was as though these words touched an invisible bond between body and soul, and great tears came into the mournful eyes.

“Thy hard time will come,” said the Viking’s wife, “and it will be terrible to me too. It had been better if thou hadst been set out by the high road, and the night wind had lulled thee to sleep.”

And the Viking’s wife wept bitter tears, and went away full of wrath and bitterness of spirit, vanishing behind the curtain of furs that hung loose over the beam and divided the hall.

The wrinkled frog crouched in the corner alone. A deep silence reigned around ; but at intervals a half-stifled sigh escaped from its breast, from the breast of Helga. It seemed as though a painful new life were arising in her inmost heart. She came forward and listened ; and, stepping forward again, grasped with her clumsy hands the heavy pole that was laid across before the door. Silently and laboriously she pushed back the pole, silently drew back the bolt, and took up the flickering lamp which stood in the ante-chamber of the hall. It seemed as if a strong hidden will gave her strength. She drew back the iron bolt from the closed cellar door, and crept in to the captive. He was asleep ; and when he awoke and saw the hideous form, he shuddered as though he had beheld a wicked apparition. She drew her knife, cut the bonds that confined his hands and feet, and beckoned him to follow her.

He uttered some holy names, and made the sign of the cross ; and when the form remained motionless at his side, he said,

“ Who art thou ? Whence this animal shape that thou bearest, while yet thou art full of gentle mercy ? ”

The frog-woman beckoned him to follow, and

led him through corridors shrouded with curtains, into the stables, and there pointed to a horse. He mounted on its back, but she also sprang up before him, holding fast by the horse's mane. The prisoner understood her meaning, and in a rapid trot they rode on a way which he would never have found, out on to the open heath.

He thought not of her hideous form, but felt how the mercy and loving-kindness of the Almighty were working by means of this monstrous apparition; he prayed pious prayers, and sang songs of praise. Then she trembled. Was it the power of song and of prayer that worked in her, or was she shuddering at the cold morning twilight that was approaching? What were her feelings? She raised herself up, and wanted to stop the horse and to alight; but the Christian priest held her back with all his strength, and sang a pious song, as if that would have the power to loosen the charm that turned her into the hideous semblance of a frog. And the horse galloped on more wildly than ever: the sky turned red, the first sunbeam pierced through the clouds, and as the flood of light came streaming down, the frog changed its nature. Helga was again the beautiful maiden with the wicked, demoniac spirit. He held a beau-



The Flight.

tiful maiden in his arms, but was horrified at the sight : he swung himself from the horse, and compelled it to stand. This seemed to him a new and terrible sorcery ; but Helga likewise leaped from

the saddle and stood on the ground. The child's short garment reached only to her knee. She plucked the sharp knife from her girdle, and quick as lightning she rushed in upon the astonished priest.

“ Let me get at thee !” she screamed ; “ let me get at thee, and plunge this knife in thy body ! Thou art pale as straw, thou beardless slave !”

She pressed in upon him. They struggled together in a hard strife, but an invisible power seemed given to the Christian captive. He held her fast ; and the old oak tree beneath which they stood came to his assistance, for its roots, which projected over the ground, held fast the maiden's feet that had become entangled in it. Quite close to them gushed a spring ; and he sprinkled Helga's face and neck with the fresh water, and commanded the unclean spirit to come forth, and blessed her in the Christian fashion ; but the water of faith has no power when the well-spring of faith flows not within.

And yet the Christian showed his power even now, and opposed more than the mere might of a man against the evil that struggled within the girl. His holy action seemed to overpower her : she dropped her hands, and gazed with frightened



The Christian Priest's spell.

eyes and pale cheeks upon him who appeared to her a mighty magician learned in secret arts ; he seemed to her to speak in a dark Runic tongue, and to be making cabalistic signs in the air. She would not have winked had he swung a sharp knife or a glittering axe against her ; but she trembled when he signed her with the sign of the cross on her brow and her bosom, and she sat there like a tame bird with bowed head.

Then he spoke to her in gentle words of the kindly deed she had done for him in the past night, when she came to him in the form of the hideous frog, to loosen his bonds and to lead him out to life and light; and he told her that she too was bound in closer bonds than those that had confined him, and that she should be released by his means. He would take her to Hedeby (Schleswig), to the holy Ansgarius, and yonder in the Christian city the spell that bound her would be loosed. But he would not let her sit before him on the horse, though of her own accord she offered to do so.

“Thou must sit behind me, not before me,” he said. “Thy magic beauty hath a power that comes of evil, and I fear it; and yet I feel that the victory is sure to him who hath faith.”

And he knelt down and prayed fervently. It seemed as though the woodland scenes were consecrated as a holy church by his prayer. The birds sang as though they belonged to the new congregation, the wild flowers smelt sweet as incense; and while he spoke the horse that had carried them both in headlong career stood still before the tall bramble bushes, and plucked at them, so that the ripe juicy berries fell down upon Helga's hands, offering themselves for her refreshment.

Patiently she suffered the priest to lift her on the horse, and sat like a somnambulist, neither completely asleep nor wholly awake. The Christian bound two branches together with bark, in the form of a cross, which he held up high as they rode through the forest. The wood became thicker as they went on, and at last became a trackless wilderness.

The wild sloe grew across the way, so that they had to ride round the bushes. The bubbling spring became not a stream but a standing marsh, round which likewise they were obliged to lead the horse. There was strength and refreshment in the cool forest breeze ; and no small power lay in the gentle words, which were spoken in faith and in Christian love, from a strong inward yearning to lead the poor lost one into the way of light and life.

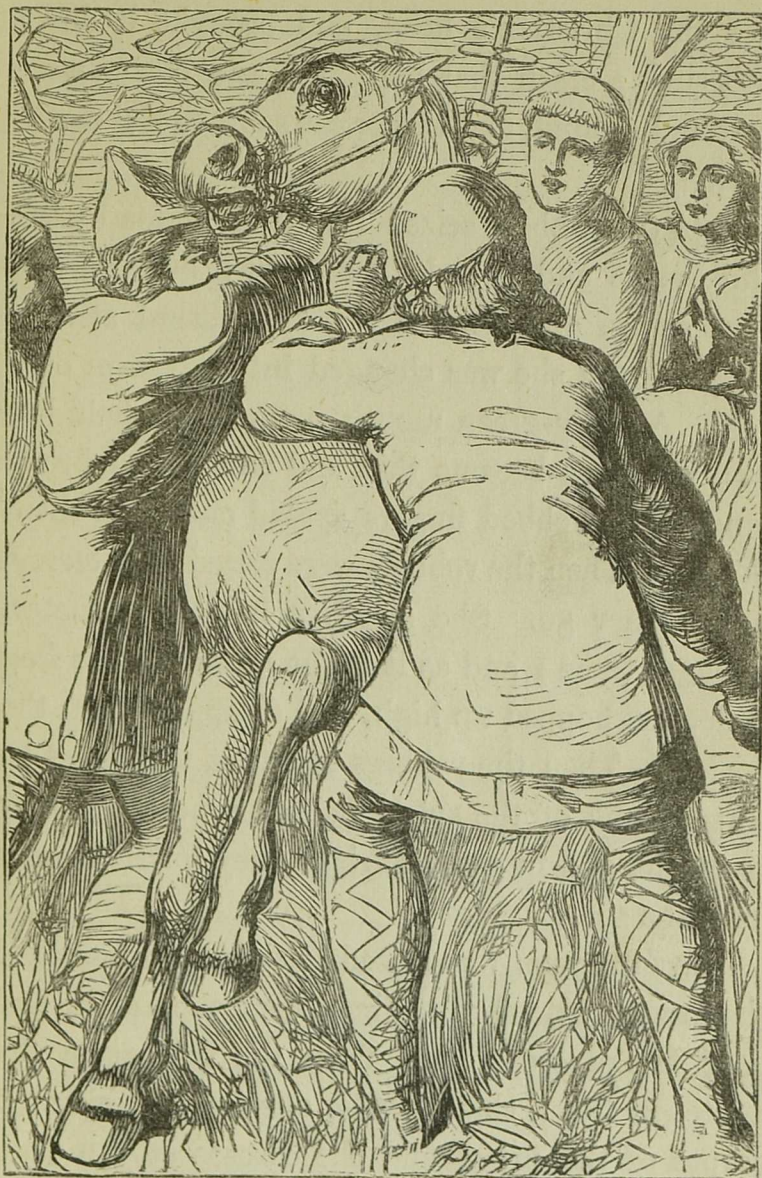
They say the rain-drops can hollow the hard stone, and the waves of the sea can smooth and round the sharp edges of the rocks. Thus did the dew of mercy, that dropped upon Helga, smooth what was rough and penetrate what was hard in her. The effects did not yet appear, nor was she aware of them herself ; but doth the seed in the bosom of earth know, when the refreshing dew and the quickening sunbeams fall upon it, that it hath

within itself the power of growth and blossoming? As the song of the mother penetrates into the heart of the child, and it babbles the words after her without understanding their import until they afterwards engender thought, and come forward in due time clearer and more clearly, so here also did the Word work, that is powerful to create.

They rode forth from the dense forest, across the heath, and then again through pathless roads; and towards evening they encountered a band of robbers.

“Where hast thou stolen that beauteous girl?” cried the robbers.

And they seized the horse's bridle, and dragged the two riders from its back. The priest had no weapon save the knife he had taken from Helga, and with this he tried to defend himself. One of the robbers lifted his axe to slay him, but the young priest sprang aside and eluded the blow, which struck deep into the horse's neck, so that the blood spurted forth, and the creature sank down on the ground. Then Helga seemed suddenly to wake from her long reverie, and threw herself hastily upon the gasping animal. The priest stood before her to protect and defend her, but one of the robbers swung his iron hammer



Helga and the Priest attacked by Robbers.

over the Christian's head, and brought it down with such a crash that his blood and brains were scattered around, and the priest sank to the earth, dead.

Then the robbers seized beautiful Helga by her white arms and her slender waist; but the sun went down, and its last ray disappeared at that moment, and she was changed into the form of a frog. A white-green mouth spread over half her face, her arms became thin and slimy, and broad hands with webbed fingers spread out upon them like fans. Then the robbers were seized with terror, and let her go. She stood, a hideous monster, amongst them; and as it is the nature of the frog to do, she hopped up high, and disappeared in the thicket. Then the robbers saw that this must be a bad prank of the spirit Loke, or the evil power of magic, and in great affright they hurried away from the spot.

The full moon was already rising. Presently it shone with splendid radiance over the earth, and poor Helga crept forth from the thicket in the wretched frog's shape. She stood still beside the corpse of the priest and the carcase of the slain horse. She looked at them with eyes that appeared to weep, and from the frog-mouth came forth a

croaking like the voice of a child bursting into tears. She leaned first over the one, then over the other, brought water in her hollow hand, which had become larger and more capacious by the webbed skin, and poured it over them ; but dead they were, and dead they would remain, she at last understood. Soon wild beasts would come and tear their dead bodies ; but no, that must not be ! so she dug up the earth as well as she could, in the endeavour to prepare a grave for them. She had nothing to work with but a stake and her two hands encumbered with the webbed skin that grew between the fingers, and which were torn by the labour, so that the blood flowed over them. At last she saw that her endeavours would not succeed. Then she brought water and washed the dead man's face, and covered it with fresh green leaves ; she brought green boughs and laid them upon him, scattering dead leaves in the spaces between. Then she brought the heaviest stones she could carry and laid them over the dead body, stopping up the interstices with moss. And now she thought the grave-hill would be strong and secure. The night had passed away in this difficult work—the sun broke through the clouds, and beautiful Helga stood there in all her loveliness, with bleeding

hands, and with the first tears flowing that had ever bedewed her maiden cheeks.

Then in this transformation it seemed as if two natures were striving within her. Her whole frame trembled, and she looked around as if she had just awoke from a troubled dream. Then she ran towards the slender tree, clung to it for support, and in another moment she had climbed to the summit of the tree, and held fast. There she sat like a startled squirrel, and remained the whole day long in the silent solitude of the wood, where everything is quiet, and, as they say, dead. Butterflies fluttered around in sport, and in the neighbourhood were several ant-hills, each with its hundreds of busy little occupants moving briskly to and fro. In the air danced a number of gnats, swarm upon swarm, and hosts of buzzing flies, ladybirds, gold beetles, and other little winged creatures; the worm crept forth from the damp ground, the moles came out; but except these all was silent around—silent, and, as people say, dead—for they speak of things as they understand them. No one noticed Helga, but some flocks of crows, that flew screaming about the top of the tree on which she sat: the birds hopped close up to her on the twigs with pert curiosity; but when the glance



Helga in the Tree.

of her eye fell upon them, it was a signal for their flight. But they could not understand her—nor, indeed, could she understand herself.

When the evening twilight came on, and the sun was sinking, the time of her transformation roused her to fresh activity. She glided down from the tree, and as the last sunbeam vanished she stood in the wrinkled form of a frog, with the torn webbed skin on her hands; but her eyes now

gleamed with a splendour of beauty that had scarcely been theirs when she wore her garb of loveliness, for they were a pair of pure, pious, maidenly eyes that shone out of the frog-face. They bore witness of depth of feeling, of the gentle human heart; and the beauteous eyes overflowed in tears, weeping precious drops that lightened the heart.

On the sepulchral mound she had raised there yet lay the cross of boughs, the last work of him who slept beneath. Helga lifted up the cross, in pursuance of a sudden thought that came upon her. She planted it upon the burial mound, over the priest and the dead horse. The sorrowful remembrance of him called fresh tears into her eyes, and in this tender frame of mind she marked the same sign in the sand around the grave; and as she wrote the sign with both her hands, the webbed skin fell from them like a torn glove; and when she washed her hands in the woodland spring, and gazed in wonder at their snowy whiteness, she again made the holy sign in the air between herself and the dead man; then her lips trembled, the holy name that had been preached to her during the ride from the forest came to her mouth, and she pronounced it audibly.

Then the frog-skin fell from her, and she was

once more the beauteous maiden. But her head sank wearily, her tired limbs required rest, and she fell into a deep slumber.

Her sleep, however, was short. Towards midnight she awoke. Before her stood the dead horse, beaming and full of life, which gleamed forth from his eyes and from his wounded neck; close beside the creature stood the murdered Christian priest, "more beautiful than Bulder," the Viking woman would have said; and yet he seemed to stand in a flame of fire.

Such gravity, such an air of justice, such a piercing look shone out of his great mild eyes, that their glance seemed to penetrate every corner of her heart. Beautiful Helga trembled at the look, and her remembrance awoke as though she stood before the tribunal of judgment. Every good deed that had been done for her, every loving word that had been spoken, seemed endowed with life. She understood that it had been love that kept her here during the days of trial, during which the creature formed of dust and spirit, soul and earth, combats and struggles; she acknowledged that she had only followed the leading of temper, and had done nothing for herself; everything had been given her, everything had happened as it were by

the interposition of Providence. She bowed herself humbly, confessing her own deep imperfection in the presence of the Power that can read every thought of the heart—and then the priest spoke.

“Thou daughter of the moorland,” he said, “out of the earth, out of the moor, thou camest ; but from the earth thou shalt arise. I come from the land of the dead. Thou, too, shalt pass through the deep valleys into the beaming mountain region, where dwell mercy and completeness. I cannot lead thee to Hedeby, that thou mayest receive Christian baptism ; for, first, thou must burst the veil of waters over the deep moorland, and draw forth the living source of thy being and of thy birth ; thou must exercise thy faculties in deeds before the consecration can be given thee.”

And he lifted her upon the horse, and gave her a golden censer similar to the one she had seen in the Viking's castle. The open wound in the forehead of the slain Christian shone like a diadem. He took the cross from the grave and held it aloft. And now they rode through the air, over the rustling wood, over the hills where the old heroes lay buried, each on his dead war-horse ; and the iron figures rose up and galloped forth, and stationed themselves on the summits of the hills. The golden



Helga is taken back to the Marsh.

hoop on the forehead of each gleamed in the moonlight, and their mantles floated in the night breeze. The dragon that guards buried treasures likewise lifted up his head and gazed after the riders. The

gnomes and wood spirits peeped forth from beneath the hills and from between the furrows of the fields, and flitted to and fro with red, blue, and green torches, like the sparks in the ashes of a burned paper.

Over woodland and heath, over river and marsh they fled away, up to the wild moor; and over this they hovered in wide circles. The Christian priest held the cross aloft—it gleamed like gold; and from his lips dropped pious prayers. Beautiful Helga joined in the hymns he sang, like a child joining in its mother's song. She swung the censer, and a wondrous fragrance of incense streamed forth thence, so that the reeds and grass of the moor burst forth into blossom. Every germ came forth from the deep ground. All that had life lifted itself up. A veil of water-lilies spread itself forth like a carpet of wrought flowers, and upon this carpet lay a sleeping woman, young and beautiful. Helga thought it was her own likeness she saw upon the mirror of the calm waters; but it was her mother whom she beheld, the Moor King's wife, the Princess from the banks of the Nile.

The dead priest commanded that the slumbering woman should be lifted up on the horse; but the horse sank under the burden, as though its body



Helga meets with her Mother in the Marsh.

had been a cloth fluttering in the wind. But the holy sign gave strength to the airy phantom, and then the three rode from the moor to the firm land near the castle of the Viking.

Then the cock crowed in the Viking's castle, and the phantom shapes dissolved and floated away in air; but mother and daughter stood opposite each other.

"Am I really looking at my own image from beneath the deep waters?" asked the mother.

"Is it myself that I see reflected on the clear mirror?" exclaimed the daughter.

And they approached one another and embraced. The heart of the mother beat quickest, and she understood the quickening pulses.

"My child! thou flower of my own heart! my lotus flower of the deep waters!"

And she embraced her child anew, and wept; and the tears were as a new baptism of life and love to Helga.

"In the swan's plumage came I hither," said the mother, "and here also I threw off my dress of feathers. I sank through the shaking moorland, far down into the black slime, which closed like a wall around me. But soon I felt a fresher stream: a power drew me down, deeper and ever deeper.

I felt the weight of sleep upon my eyelids ; I slumbered, and dreams hovered round me. It seemed to me that I was again in the pyramid in Egypt, and yet the waving willow trunk that had frightened me up in the moor was ever before me. I looked at the clefts and wrinkles in the stem, and they shone forth in colours, and took the form of hieroglyphics—it was the case of the mummy at which I was gazing ; at last the case burst, and forth stepped the thousand-year-old King, the mummied form, black as pitch, shining black as the wood snail or the fat mud of the swamp : whether it was the Marsh King or the mummy of the pyramids I knew not. He seized me in his arms, and I felt as if I must die. When I returned to consciousness a little bird was sitting on my bosom, beating with its wings, and twittering and singing. The bird flew away from me up towards the heavy dark covering ; but a long green band still fastened him to me. I heard and understood his longing tones : ‘Freedom ! sunlight to my father !’ Then I thought of my father and the sunny land of my birth, my life, and my love ; and I loosened the band and let the bird soar away home to the father. Since that hour I have dreamed no more. I have slept a sleep, a long

and heavy sleep, till within this hour; harmony and incense awoke me and set me free."

The green band from the heart of the mother to the bird's wings, where did it flutter now? whither had it been wafted? Only the Stork had seen it. The band was the green stalk, the bow at the end, the beautiful flower, the cradle of the child that had now bloomed into beauty, and was once more resting on its mother's heart.

And while the two were locked in each other's embrace, the old Stork flew round them in smaller and smaller circles, and at length shot away in swift flight towards his nest, whence he brought out the swan-feather suits he had preserved there for years, throwing one to each of them, and the feathers closed around them, so that they soared up from the earth in the semblance of two white swans.

"And now we will speak with one another," quoth Stork-papa, "now we understand each other, though the beak of one bird is differently shaped from that of another. It happens more than fortunately that you came to-night. To-morrow we should have been gone—mother, myself, and the young ones; for we're flying southward. Yes, only look at me! I am an old friend from the land

of the Nile, and mother has a heart larger than her beak. She always declared the Princess would find a way to help herself; and I and the young ones carried the swan's feathers up here. But how glad I am! and how fortunate that I am here still! At dawn of day we shall move hence, a great company of storks. We'll fly first, and do you follow us; thus you cannot miss your way; moreover, I and the youngsters will keep a sharp eye on you."

"And the lotus flower which I was to bring with me," said the Egyptian Princess, "she is flying by my side in the swan's plumage! I bring with me the flower of my heart; and thus the riddle has been read. Homeward! homeward!"

But Helga declared she could not quit the Danish land before she had once more seen her foster-mother, the affectionate Viking woman. Every beautiful recollection, every kind word, every tear that her foster-mother had wept for her, rose up in her memory, and in that moment she almost felt as if she loved the Viking woman best of all.

"Yes, we must go to the Viking's castle," said Stork-papa; "mother and the youngsters are waiting for us there. How they will turn up their eyes and flap their wings! Yes, you see, mother doesn't speak much—she's short and dry, but she

means all the better. I'll begin clapping at once, that they may know we're coming."

And Stork-papa clapped in first-rate style, and they all flew away towards the Viking's castle.

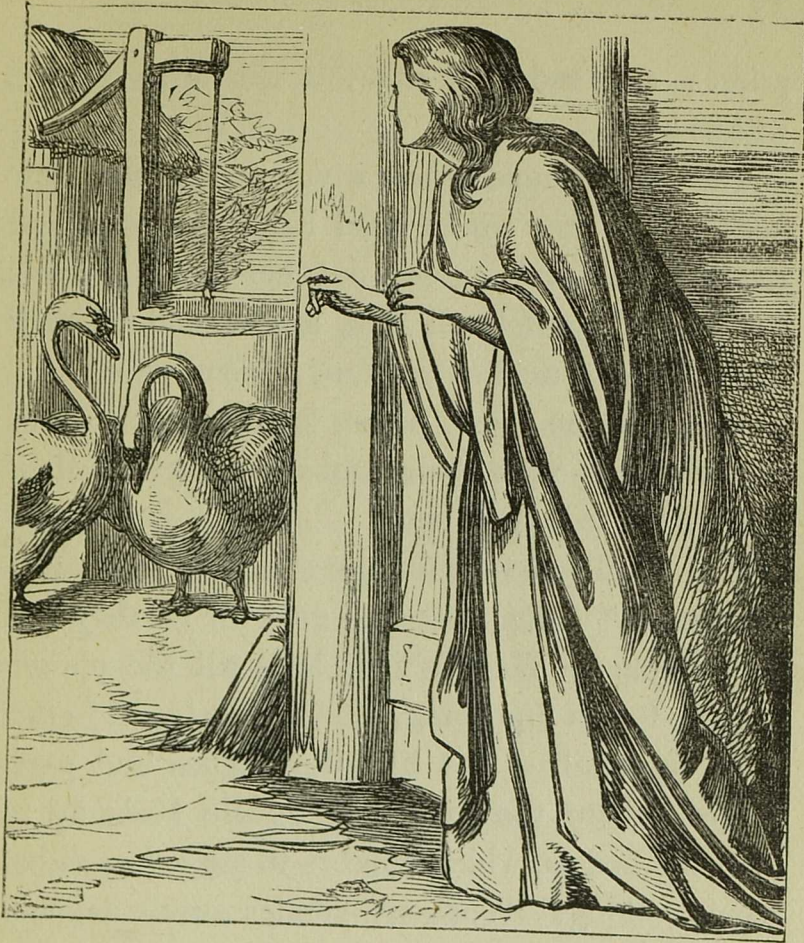
In the castle every one was sunk in deep sleep. The Viking's wife had not retired to rest until it was late. She was anxious about Helga, who had vanished with a Christian priest three days before: she knew Helga must have assisted him in his flight, for it was the girl's horse that had been missed from the stables; but how all this had been effected was a mystery to her. The Viking woman had heard of the miracles told of the Christian priest, and which were said to be wrought by him and by those who believed in his words and followed him. Her passing thoughts formed themselves into a dream, and it seemed to her that she was still lying awake on her couch, and that deep darkness reigned without. The storm drew near: she heard the sea roaring and rolling to the east and to the west, like the waves of the North Sea and the Cattegat. The immense snake which was believed to surround the span of the earth in the depths of the ocean was trembling in convulsions; she dreamed that the night of the fall of the gods had come—Ragnarok, as the heathen called the

last day, when everything was to pass away, even the great gods themselves. The war-trumpet was sounded, and the gods rode over the rainbow, clad in steel, to fight the last battle. The winged Valkyrs rode before them, and the dead warriors closed the train. The whole firmament was ablaze with Northern Lights, and yet the darkness seemed to predominate. It was a terrible hour.

And close by the terrified Viking woman Helga seemed to be crouching on the floor in the hideous frog form, trembling and pressing close to her foster-mother, who took her on her lap and embraced her affectionately, hideous though she was. The air resounded with the blows of clubs and swords, and with the hissing of arrows, as if a hail-storm were passing across it. The hour was come when earth and sky were to burst, the stars to fall, and all things to be swallowed up in Surtur's sea of fire; but she knew that there would be a new heaven and a new earth, that the corn-fields then would wave where now the ocean rolled over the desolate tracks of sand, and that the unutterable God would reign; and up to Him rose Bulder the gentle, the affectionate, delivered from the kingdom of the dead; he came; the Viking woman saw him, and recognized his countenance; it

was that of the captive Christian priest. "White Christian!" she cried aloud, and with these words she pressed a kiss upon the forehead of the hideous frog-child. Then the frog-skin fell off, and Helga stood revealed in all her beauty, lovely and gentle as she had never appeared, and with beaming eyes. She kissed her foster-mother's hands, blessed her for all the care and affection lavished during the days of bitterness and trial, for the thoughts she had awakened and cherished in her, for naming the name, which she repeated, "White Christian;" and beautiful Helga arose in the form of a mighty swan, and spread her white wings with a rushing like the sound of a troop of birds of passage winging their way through the air.

The Viking woman awoke; and she heard the same noise still continuing without. She knew it was the time for the storks to depart, and that it must be those birds whose wings she heard. She wished to see them once more, and to bid them farewell as they set forth on their journey. Therefore she rose from her couch and stepped out upon the threshold, and on the top of the gable she saw stork ranged behind stork, and around the castle, over the high trees, flew bands of storks wheeling in wide circles; but opposite the threshold where



The disguised Princesses bid farewell to the Viking Woman.

she stood, by the well where Helga had often sat and alarmed her with her wildness, sat two white swans gazing at her with intelligent eyes. And she remembered her dream, which still filled her soul as if it were reality. She thought of Helga in the shape of a swan, and of the Christian

priest; and suddenly she felt her heart rejoice within her.

The swans flapped their wings and arched their necks, as if they would send her a greeting, and the Viking's wife spread out her arms towards them as if she felt all this, and smiled through her tears, and then stood sunk in deep thought.

Then all the storks arose, flapping their wings and clapping with their beaks, to start on their voyage towards the South.

"We will not wait for the swans," said Stork-mamma: "if they want to go with us they had better come. We can't sit here till the plovers start. It is a fine thing, after all, to travel in this way, in families, not like the finches and partridges, where the male and female birds fly in separate bodies, which appears to me a very unbecoming thing. What are yonder swans flapping their wings for?"

"Well, every one flies in his own fashion," said Stork-papa: "the swans in an oblique line, the cranes in a triangle, and the plovers in a snake's line."

"Don't talk about snakes while we are flying up here," said Stork-mamma. "It only puts ideas into the children's heads which can't be gratified."

“Are those the high mountains of which I have heard tell?” asked Helga, in the swan’s plumage.

“They are storm clouds driving on beneath us,” replied her mother.

“What are yonder white clouds that rise so high?” asked Helga again

“They are the mountains covered with perpetual snow which you see yonder,” replied her mother.

And they flew across the lofty Alps towards the blue Mediterranean.

“Africa’s land! Egypt’s strand!” sang, rejoicingly, in her swan’s plumage, the daughter of the Nile, as from the lofty air she saw her native land looming in the form of a yellowish wavy stripe of shore.

And all the birds gladly caught sight of it, and hastened their flight.

“I can scent the Nile mud and wet frogs,” said Stork-mamma; “I begin to feel quite hungry. Yes, now you shall taste something nice; and you will see the maraboo bird, the crane, and the ibis. They all belong to our family, though they are not nearly so beautiful as we. They give themselves great airs, especially the ibis. He has been quite spoiled by the Egyptians, for they make a mummy of him and stuff him with spices. I would rather

be stuffed with live frogs, and so would you, and so you shall. Better have something in one's inside while one is alive than to be made a fuss with after one is dead. That's my opinion, and I am always right."

"Now the storks are come," said the people in the rich house on the banks of the Nile, where the royal lord lay in the open hall on the downy cushions, covered with a leopard-skin, not alive and yet not dead, but waiting and hoping for the lotos flower from the deep moorland in the far North. Friends and servants stood around his couch.

And into the hall flew two beauteous swans. They had come with the storks. They threw off their dazzling white plumage, and two lovely female forms were revealed, as like each other as two dew-drops. They bent over the old, pale, sick man, they put back their long hair, and while Helga bent over her grandfather, his white cheeks reddened, his eyes brightened, and life came back to his wasted limbs. The old man rose up cheerful and well; and daughter and granddaughter embraced him joyfully, as if they were giving him a morning greeting after a long heavy dream.

And joy reigned through the whole house, and likewise in the Stork's nest, though there the chief



The King of Egypt's recovery.

cause was certainly the good food, especially the numberless frogs, which seemed to spring up in heaps out of the ground. And while the learned men wrote down hastily, in flying characters, a sketch of the history of the two Princesses, and of the flower of health that had been a source of joy for the home and the land, the Stork pair told the story to their family in their own fashion, but not till all had eaten their fill, otherwise the youngsters would have found something more interesting to do than to listen to stories.

“Now, at last, you will become something,” whispered Stork-mamma, “there’s no doubt about that.”

“What should I become?” asked Stork-papa. “What have I done? Nothing at all!”

“You have done more than the rest. But for you and the youngsters the two Princesses would never have seen Egypt again, or have effected the old man’s cure. You will turn out something! They must certainly give you a doctor’s degree, and our youngsters will inherit it, and so will their children after them, and so on. You already look like an Egyptian doctor—at least in my eyes.”

“I cannot quite repeat the words as they were spoken,” said Stork-papa, who had listened from

the roof to the report of these events, made by the learned men, and was now telling it again to his own family. "What they said was so confused, it was so wise and learned, that they immediately received rank and presents; even the head cook received an especial mark of distinction—probably for the soup."

"And what did you receive?" asked Stork-mamma. "Surely they ought not to forget the most important person of all, and you are certainly he! The learned men have done nothing throughout the whole affair but used their tongues; but you will doubtless receive what is due to you."

Late in the night, when the gentle peace of sleep rested upon the now happy house, there was one who still watched. It was not Stork-papa, though he stood upon one leg and slept on guard—it was Helga who watched. She bowed herself forward over the balcony, and looked into the clear air, gazed at the great gleaming stars, greater and purer in their lustre than she had ever seen them in the North, and yet the same orbs. She thought of the Vilking woman in the wild moorland, of the gentle eyes of her foster-mother, and of the tears which the kind soul had wept over the poor frog-child that now lived in splendour under the

gleaming stars, in the beauteous spring air on the banks of the Nile. She thought of the love that dwelt in the breast of the heathen woman, the love that had been shown to a wretched creature, hateful in human form, and hideous in its transformation. She looked at the gleaming stars, and thought of the glory that had shone upon the forehead of the dead man, when she flew with him through the forest and across the moorland; sounds passed through her memory, words she had heard pronounced as they rode onward, and when she was borne wondering and trembling through the air, words from the great Fountain of love that embraces all human kind.

Yes, great things had been achieved and won! Day and night beautiful Helga was absorbed in the contemplation of the great sum of her happiness, and stood in the contemplation of it like a child that turns hurriedly from the giver to gaze on the splendours of the gifts it has received. She seemed to lose herself in the increasing happiness, in contemplation of what might come, of what would come. Had she not been borne by miracle to greater and greater bliss? And in this idea she one day lost herself so completely, that she thought no more of the Giver. It was the exuberance of

youthful courage, unfolding its wings for a bold flight! Her eyes were gleaming with courage, when suddenly a loud noise in the courtyard below recalled her thoughts from their wandering flight. There she saw two great ostriches running round rapidly in a narrow circle. Never before had she seen such creatures—great clumsy things they were, with wings that looked as if they had been clipped, and the birds themselves looking as if they had suffered violence of some kind; and now for the first time she heard the legend which the Egyptians tell of the ostrich.

Once, they say, the ostriches were a beautiful glorious race of birds, with strong large wings; and one evening the larger birds of the forest said to the ostrich, "Brother, shall we fly to-morrow, *God willing*, to the river to drink?" And the ostrich answered, "I will." At daybreak, accordingly, they winged their flight from thence, flying first up on high, towards the sun, that gleamed like the eye of God—higher and higher, the ostrich far in advance of all the other birds. Proudly the ostrich flew straight towards the light, boasting of his strength, and not thinking of the Giver or saying, "God willing!" Then suddenly the avenging angel drew aside the veil from the flaming ocean

of sunlight, and in a moment the wings of the proud bird were scorched and shrivelled up, and he sank miserably to the ground. Since that time the ostrich has never again been able to raise himself in the air, but flees timidly along the ground, and runs round in a narrow circle. And this is a warning for us men, that in all our thoughts and schemes, in all our doings and devices, we should say, "God willing." And Helga bowed her head thoughtfully and gravely, and looked at the circling ostrich, noticing its timid fear, and its stupid pleasure at sight of its own great shadow cast upon the white sunlit wall. And seriousness struck its roots deep into her mind and heart. A rich life in the present and future happiness was given and won; and what was yet to come? the best of all, "*God willing.*"

In early spring, when the storks flew again towards the North, beautiful Helga took off her golden bracelet, and scratched her name upon it; and beckoning to the Stork-father, she placed the golden hoop around his neck, and begged him to deliver it to the Vilking woman, so that the latter might see that her adopted daughter was well, and had not forgotten her.

"That's heavy to carry," thought the Stork-



A Message to the Viking Woman.

papa, when he had the golden ring round his neck ;
“but gold and honour are not to be thrown into
the street. The stork brings good fortune ; they’ll
be obliged to acknowledge that over yonder.”

“You lay gold and I lay eggs,” said the Stork-mamma. “But with you it’s only once in a way, whereas I lay eggs every year; but neither of us is appreciated—that’s very disheartening.”

“Still one has one’s own inward consciousness, mother,” replied Stork-papa.

“But you can’t hang that round your neck,” Stork-mamma retorted; “and it won’t give you a good wind or a good meal.”

The little nightingale, singing yonder in the tamarind tree, will soon be going north too. Helga the fair had often heard the sweet bird sing up yonder by the wild moor; now she wanted to give it a message to carry, for she had learned the language of birds when she flew in the swan’s plumage; she had often conversed with stork and with swallow, and she knew the nightingale would understand her. So she begged the little bird to fly to the beech wood on the peninsula of Jutland, where the grave-hill had been reared with stones and branches, and begged the nightingale to persuade all other little birds that they might build their nests around the place, so that the song of birds should resound over that sepulchre for evermore. And the nightingale flew away—and time flew away.

In autumn the eagle stood upon the pyramid and saw a stately train of richly laden camels approaching, and richly attired armed men on foaming Arab steeds, shining white as silver, with pink trembling nostrils, and thick manes hanging down almost over their slender legs. Wealthy guests, a royal Prince of Arabia, handsome as a Prince should be, came into the proud mansion on whose roof the Stork's nest now stood empty: those who had inhabited the nest were away now in the far north; but they would soon return. And, indeed, they returned on that very day that was so rich in joy and gladness. Here a marriage was celebrated, and fair Helga was the bride, shining in jewels and silk. The bridegroom was the young Arab Prince, and bride and bridegroom sat together at the upper end of the table, between mother and grandfather.

But her gaze was not fixed upon the bridegroom, with his manly sun-burned cheeks, round which a black beard curled; she gazed not at his dark fiery eyes that were fixed upon her—but far away at a gleaming star that shone down from the sky.

Then strong wings were heard beating the air. The storks were coming home, and however tired the old Stork pair might be from the journey, and however much they needed repose, they did not

fail to come down at once to the balustrades of the verandah, for they knew what feast was being celebrated. Already on the frontier of the land they had heard that Helga had caused their figures to be painted on the wall—for did they not belong to her history?

“That’s very pretty and suggestive,” said Stork-papa.

“But it’s very little,” observed Stork-mamma. “They could not possibly have done less.”

And when Helga saw them, she rose and came out on the verandah, to stroke the backs of the Storks. The old pair waved their heads and bowed their necks, and even the youngest among the young ones felt highly honoured by the reception.

And Helga looked up to the gleaming star, which seemed to glow purer and purer; and between the star and herself there floated a form, purer than the air, and visible through it: it floated quite close to her. It was the spirit of the dead Christian priest: he too was coming to her wedding feast—coming from heaven.

“The glory and brightness yonder outshines everything that is known on earth!” he said.

And fair Helga begged so fervently, so beseechingly, as she had never yet prayed, that it might

be permitted her to gaze in there for one single moment, that she might be allowed to cast but a single glance into the brightness that beamed in the kingdom.

Then he bore her up amid splendour and glory. Not only around her, but within her, sounded voices and beamed a brightness that words cannot express.

“Now we must go back ; thou wilt be missed,” he said.

“Only one more look !” she begged. “But one short minute more !”

“We must go back to the earth. The guests will all depart.”

“Only one more look—the last.”

And Helga stood again in the verandah ; but the marriage lights without had vanished, and the lamps in the hall were extinguished, and the storks were gone—nowhere a guest to be seen—no bridegroom—all seemed to have been swept away in those few short minutes !

Then a great dread came upon her. Alone she went through the great empty hall into the next chamber. Strange warriors slept yonder. She opened a side door which led into her own chamber ; and, as she thought to step in there, she suddenly

found herself in the garden; but yet it had not looked thus here before—the sky gleamed red—the morning dawn was come.

Three minutes only in heaven, and a whole night on earth had passed away!

Then she saw the Storks again. She called to them, spoke their language; and Stork-papa turned his head towards her, listened to her words, and drew near.

“You speak our language,” he said; “what do you wish? Why do you appear here—you, a strange woman?”

“It is I—it is Helga—dost thou not know me? Three minutes ago we were speaking together yonder in the verandah!”

“That’s a mistake,” said the Stork; “you must have dreamed all that!”

“No, no!” she persisted. And she reminded him of the Viking’s castle, and of the great ocean, and of the journey hither.

Then Stork-papa winked with his eyes, and said,

“Why, that’s an old story which I heard from the time of my great-grandfather. There certainly was here in Egypt a Princess of that kind from the Danish land, but she vanished on the evening of her wedding-day, many hundred years

ago, and never came back! You may read about it yourself yonder on the monument in the garden; there you'll find swans and storks sculptured, and at the top you are yourself in white marble!"

And thus it was. Helga saw it, and understood it, and sank on her knees.

The sun burst forth in glory; and as, in time of yore, the frog-shape had vanished in its beams and the beautiful form had stood displayed, so now in the light a beauteous form, clearer, purer than air—a beam of brightness—flew up into heaven!

The body crumbled to dust, and a faded lotos flower lay on the spot where Helga had stood.

"Well, that's a new ending to the story," said Stork-papa. "I had certainly not expected it. But I like it very well."

"But what will the young ones say to it?" said Stork-mamma.

"Yes, certainly, that's the important point," replied he.





TWELVE BY THE MAIL.

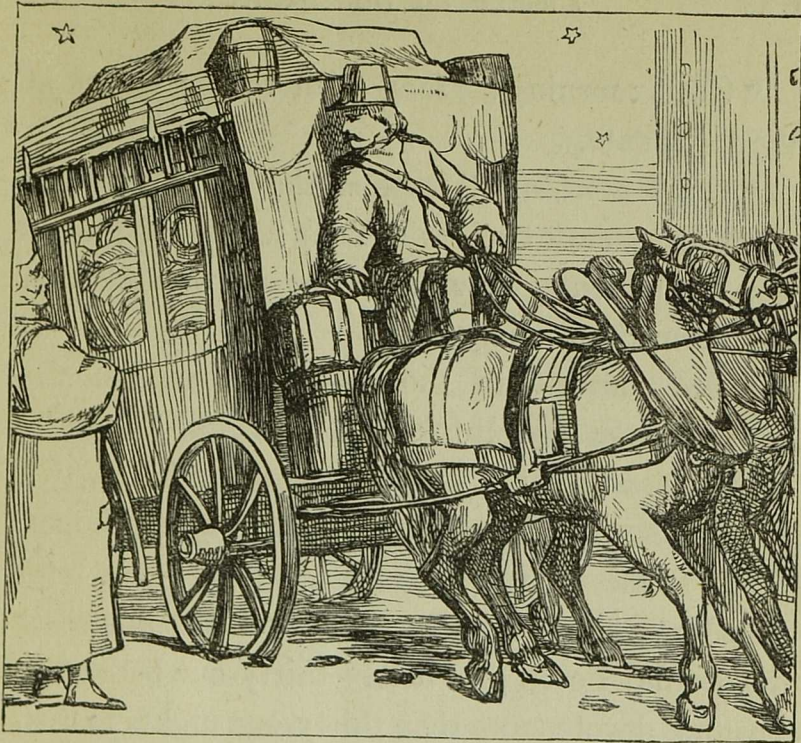
T was bitterly cold; the sky gleamed with stars, and not a breeze was stirring.

“Bump!” an old pot was thrown at the neighbour’s house doors. “Bang, bang!” went the gun; for they were welcoming the New Year. It was New Year’s-eve! The church clock was striking twelve.

“Tan-ta-ra-ra!” the mail came lumbering up. The great carriage stopped at the gate of the town. There were twelve persons in it; all the places were taken.

“Hurrah! hurrah!” sang the people in the houses of the town; for the New Year was being welcomed, and as the clock struck they stood up with the filled glass in their hand, to drink success to the new comer.

“Happy New Year!” was the cry. “A pretty wife! plenty of money! and no sorrow or care!”



The arrival of the Mail.

This wish was passed round, and then glasses were clashed together till they rang again, and in front of the town gate the post-carriage stopped with the strange guests, the twelve travellers.

And who were these strangers? Each of them had his passport and his luggage with him; they even brought presents for me, and for you, and for all the people of the little town. Who were they? What did they want, and what did they bring with them?

“Good morning!” they cried to the sentry at the town gate.

“Good morning!” replied the sentry, for the clock had struck twelve. “Your name and profession?” the sentry inquired of the one who alighted first from the carriage.

“See yourself, in the passport,” replied the man: “I am myself!” And a capital fellow he looked, arrayed in a bear-skin and fur boots. “I am the man on whom many persons fix their hopes. Come to me to-morrow, and I’ll give you a New Year’s present. I throw pence and dollars among the people; I even give balls—thirty-one balls; but I cannot devote more than thirty-one nights to this. My ships are frozen in, but in my office it is warm and comfortable. I’m a great merchant. My name is JANUARY, and I only carry accounts with me.

Now the second alighted. He was a merry companion; he was a theatre director, manager of the masque balls and all the amusements one can imagine. His luggage consisted of a great tub.

“We’ll dance the cat out of the tub at carnival time,” said he. “I’ll prepare a merry tune for you and for myself too. I have not a long time to live—the shortest, in fact, of my whole family, for I only become twenty-eight days old. Some-

times they pop me in an extra day, but I trouble myself very little about that—hurrah!”

“You must not shout so,” said the sentry.

“Certainly, I may shout,” retorted the man. “I’m Prince Carnival, travelling under the name of FEBRUARY.”

The third now got out. He looked like fasting himself, but carried his nose very high, for he was related to the “Forty Knights,” and was a weather prophet. But that’s not a profitable office, and that’s why he praised fasting. In his button-hole he had a little bunch of violets, but they were very small.

“MARCH! MARCH!” the fourth called after him, and slapped him on the shoulder, “do you smell nothing? Go quickly into the guard-room; there they’re drinking punch, your favourite drink; I can smell it out here already. Forward, Master MARCH!”

But it was not true; the speaker only wanted to let him feel the influence of his own name, and make an APRIL fool of him; for with that the fourth began his career. He looked very jovial, did little work, but had the more holidays.

“If it were only a little more steady in the world!” said he; “but sometimes one is in a good

humour, sometimes in a bad one, according to circumstances; now rain, now sunshine. I am a kind of house or office-letting agent, also a manager of funerals; I can laugh or cry, according to circumstances. Here in this box I have my summer wardrobe, but it would be very foolish to put it on. Here I am now. On Sundays I go out walking in shoes and white silk stockings, and with a muff."

After him, a lady came out of the carriage. She called herself Miss MAY. She wore a summer costume and overshoes, a light green dress, and anemones in her hair, and she was so scented with wild thyme that the sentry had to sneeze. "God bless you," she said, and that was her salutation. How pretty she was! and she was a singer—not a theatre singer nor a ballad singer, but a singer of the woods, for she roamed through the gay green forest and sang there for her own amusement.

"Now comes the young dame," said those in the carriage.

And the young dame stepped out, delicate, proud, and pretty. It was easy to see that she was Mistress JUNE, accustomed to be served by drowsy marmots. She gave a great feast on the longest day of the year, that the guests might have time to partake of the many dishes at her



The Passengers dismounting.

table. She, indeed, kept her own carriage; but still she travelled in the mail with the rest, because she wanted to show that she was not high minded. But she was not without protection, for her elder brother JULY was with her.

He was a plump young fellow, clad in summer garments, and with a Panama hat. He had but little baggage with him, because it was cumbersome in the great heat; therefore he had only provided himself with swimming trousers, and those are not much.

Then came the mother herself, Madam AUGUST, wholesale fruit dealer and proprietress of a large number of fish-ponds, and land cultivator, in a great crinoline. She was fat and hot, could use her hands well, and would herself carry out beer to the workmen in the fields.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,” said she: “that is written in the *Book*. Afterwards come the excursions, dances, and playing in the green wood, and the harvest feasts.”

She was a thorough housewife.

After her, a man came out of the coach — a painter, Mr. Master-Colourer SEPTEMBER; all the forest trees had to receive him; the leaves were to change their colours, but how beautifully! when he wished it: soon the wood gleamed with red, yellow, and brown. The master whistled like the black magpie, was a quick workman, and wound the brown green hop plants round his beer-jug. That was an ornament for the jug, and he had a good idea of ornament. There he stood with his colour-pot, and that was his whole luggage.

The landed proprietor followed him, one who cared for the ploughing and preparing of the land, and also for field sports. Squire OCTOBER brought his dog and his gun with him, and had nuts in his

game-bag. "Crack! crack!" He had much baggage, even his English plough, and he spoke of farming, but one could scarcely hear what he said for the coughing and gasping of his neighbour.

It was NOVEMBER who coughed so violently as he got out. He was very much plagued by a cold; he was constantly having recourse to his pocket-handkerchief, and yet, he said, he was obliged to accompany the servant girls, and initiate them into their new winter service. He said he should get rid of his cold when he went out wood-cutting, and had to saw and split wood, for he was sawyer-master to the firewood guild. He spent his evenings cutting the wooden soles for skates, for he knew, he said, that in a few weeks there would be occasion to use these amusing shoes.

At length appeared the last passenger, old Mother DECEMBER, with her fire stool: the old lady was cold, but her eyes glistened like two bright stars. She carried under her arm a flower-pot, in which a little fir tree was growing.

"This tree I will guard and cherish, that it may grow large by Christmas-eve, and may reach from the ground to the ceiling, and may rear itself upward with flaming candles, golden apples, and little carved figures. The fire stool warms like a

stove. I bring the story-book out of my pocket, and read aloud, so that all the children in the room become quite quiet, but the little figures on the trees become lively, and the little waxen angel on the top spreads out his wings of gold leaf, flies down from his green perch, and kisses great and small in the room, yes, even the poor children who stand out in the passage and in the street, singing the carol about the Star of Bethlehem."

"Well, now the coach may drive away," said the sentry: "we have the whole twelve. Let the chaise drive up."


"First let all the twelve come in to me," said the captain on duty, "one after the other. The passports I will keep here. Each of them is available for a month; when that has passed, I shall write their behaviour on each passport. Mr. JANUARY, have the goodness to come here."

And Mr. JANUARY stepped forward.

"When a year has passed I think I shall be able to tell you what the twelve have brought me, and you, and all of us. Now I do not know it, and they don't know it themselves, probably, for we live in strange times."



THE SHADOW.

N hot countries the sun burns very strongly: there the people become quite mahogany brown, and in the very hottest countries they are even burned into negroes. But this time it was only to the hot countries that a learned man out of the cold regions had come. He thought he could roam about there just as he had been accustomed to do at home, but he soon altered his opinion. He and all sensible people had to remain at home, where the shutters and doors were shut all day long, and it looked as if all the inmates were asleep or had gone out. The narrow street with the high houses in which he lived was, however, built in such a way that the sun shone upon it from morning till evening—it was really unbearable! The learned man from the cold regions was a young man and a clever man: it seemed to him as if he was sitting in a glowing oven that exhausted him greatly, and he became quite thin; even his

Shadow shrivelled up and became much smaller than it had been at home ; the sun even took the Shadow away, and it did not return till the evening when the sun went down. It was really a pleasure to see this. So soon as a light was brought into the room the Shadow stretched itself quite up the wall, farther even than the ceiling, so tall did it make itself ; it was obliged to stretch to get strength again. The learned man went out into the balcony to stretch himself ; and so soon as the stars came out in the beautiful clear sky, he felt himself reviving. On all the balconies in the streets—and in the hot countries there is a balcony to every window—young people now appeared, for one must breathe fresh air, even if one has got used to becoming mahogany brown ; then it became lively above and below. The tinkers and tailors—by which we mean all kinds of people—sat below in the street ; then tables and chairs were brought out, and candles burned, yes, more than a thousand candles ; one talked and then sang, and the people walked to and fro ; carriages drove past, mules trotted, “Kling-ling-ling !” for they had bells on their harness. Dead people were buried with solemn songs ; the church bells rang, and it was indeed very lively in the street. Only in one

house, just opposite to that in which the learned man dwelt, it was quite quiet, and yet somebody lived there, for there were flowers on the balcony, blooming beautifully in the hot sun, and they could not have done this if they had not been watered, so that some one must have watered them ; therefore there must be people in that house. Towards evening the door was half opened, but it was dark, at least in the front room ; farther back, in the interior, music was heard. The strange learned man thought this music very lovely, but it was quite possible that he only imagined this, for out there in the hot countries he found everything requisite, if only there had been no sun. The stranger's landlord said he did not know who had taken the opposite house—one saw nobody there, and so far as the music was concerned, it seemed very monotonous to him.

“ It was just,” he said, “ as if some one sat there, always practising a piece that he could not manage—always the same piece. He seemed to say, ‘ I shall manage it, after all ;’ but he did not manage it, however long he played.”

Will the stranger awake at night ? He slept with the balcony door open : the wind lifted up the curtain before it, and he fancied that a wonder-

ful radiance came from the balcony of the house opposite; all the flowers appeared like flames of the most gorgeous colours, and in the midst, among the flowers, stood a beautiful slender maiden: it seemed as if a radiance came from her also. His eyes were quite dazzled; but he had only opened them too wide just when he awoke out of his sleep. With one leap he was out of bed; quite quietly he crept behind the curtain; but the maiden was gone, the splendour was gone, the flowers gleamed no longer, but stood there as beautiful as ever. The door was ajar, and from within sounded music, so lovely, so charming, that one fell into sweet thought at the sound. It was just like magic work. But who lived there? Where was the real entrance? for towards the street and towards the lane at the side the whole ground floor was shop by shop, and the people could not always run through there.

One evening the stranger sat upon his balcony; in the room just behind him a light was burning, and so it was quite natural that his Shadow fell on the wall of the opposite house; yes, it sat just among the flowers on the balcony, and when the stranger moved, his Shadow moved too.

“I think my Shadow is the only living thing we see yonder,” said the learned man. “Look how

gracefully it sits among the flowers. The door is only ajar, but the Shadow ought to be sensible enough to walk in and look round, and then come back and tell me what it has seen.

“Yes, you would thus make yourself very useful!” said he, as if in sport. “Be so good as to slip in. Now, will you go?” And then he nodded at the Shadow, and the Shadow nodded back at him. “Now go, but don’t stay away altogether.”

And the stranger stood up, and the Shadow on the balcony opposite stood up too, and the stranger moved round, and if any one had noticed closely he would have remarked how the Shadow went away in the same moment, straight through the half-opened door of the opposite house, as the stranger returned into his room and let the curtain fall.

Next morning the learned man went out to drink coffee and read the papers.

“What is this?” said he, when he came out into the sunshine. “I have no Shadow! So it really went away yesterday evening, and did not come back. That’s very tiresome.”

And that fretted him, but not so much because the Shadow was gone as because he knew that there was a story of a man without a shadow. All the people in the house knew this story, and if the

learned man came home and told his own history, they would say that it was only an imitation, and he did not choose them to say that of him. So he would not speak of it at all, and that was a very sensible idea of his.

In the evening he again went out on his balcony: he had placed the light behind him, for he knew that a shadow always wants its master for a screen, but he could not coax it forth. He made himself little and he made himself long, but there was no shadow, and no shadow came. He said, "Here! here!" but that did no good.

That was vexatious, but in the warm countries everything grows very quickly, and after the lapse of a week he remarked to his great joy that a new shadow was growing out of his legs when he went into the sunshine, so that the root must have remained behind. After three weeks he had quite a respectable shadow, which, when he started on his return to the North, grew more and more, so that at last it was so long and great that he could very well have parted with half of it.

When the learned man got home he wrote books about what is true in the world, and what is good, and what is pretty; and days went by, and years went by, many years.

He was one evening sitting in his room when there came a little quiet knock at the door. "Come in!" said he; but nobody came. Then he opened the door, and there stood before him such a remarkably thin man that he felt quite uncomfortable. This man was, however, very respectably dressed, and looked like a man of standing.

"Whom have I the honour to address?" asked the professor.

"Ah!" replied the genteel man, "I thought you would not know me; I have become so much a body that I have got real flesh and clothes. You never thought to see me in such a condition. Don't you know your old Shadow? You certainly never thought I would come again. Things have gone remarkably well with me since I was with you last. I've become rich in every respect: if I want to buy myself free from servitude I can do it!

"And he rattled a number of valuable charms, which hung by his watch, and put his hand upon the thick gold chain he wore round his neck; and how the diamond rings glittered on his fingers! and everything was real!

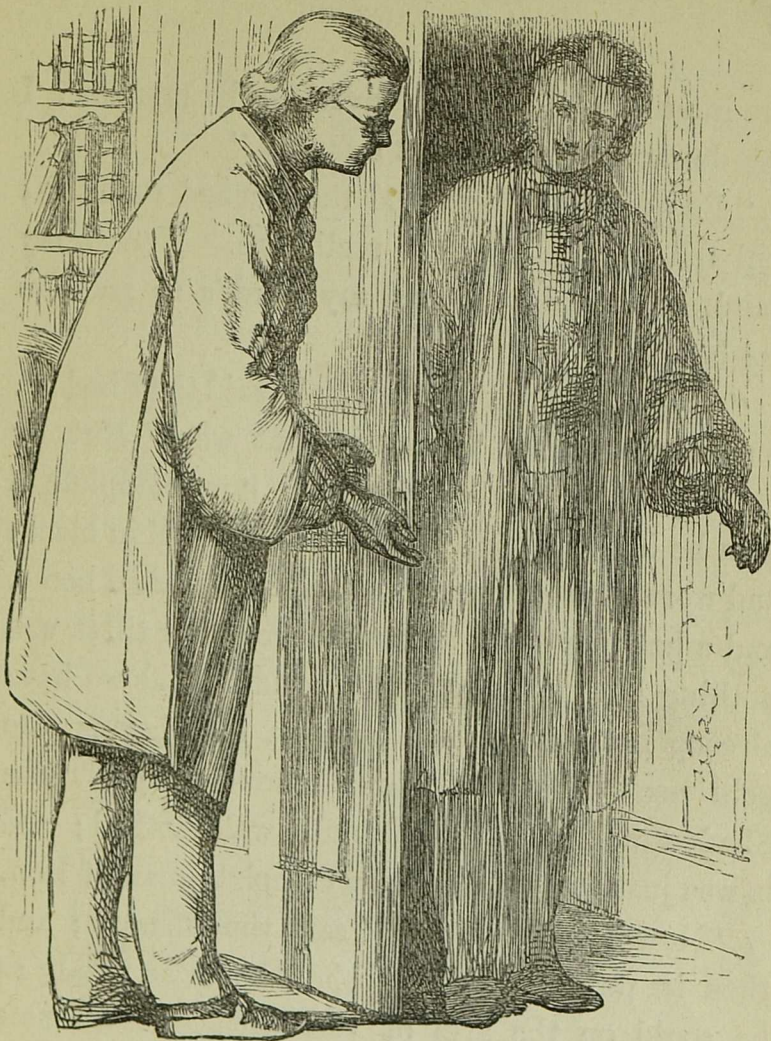
"No, I cannot regain my self-possession at all!" said the learned man. "What's the meaning of all this?"

“Nothing common,” said the Shadow. “But you yourself don’t belong to common folks; and I have, as you very well know, trodden in your footsteps from my childhood upwards. So soon as I found that I was experienced enough to find my way through the world alone, I went away. I am in the most brilliant circumstances; but I was seized with a kind of longing to see you once more before you die, and I wanted to see these regions once more, for one always holds by one’s fatherland. I know that you have got another shadow: have I anything to pay to it, or to you? You have only to tell me.”

“Is it really you?” said the learned man. “Why, that is wonderful! I should never have thought that I should ever meet my old Shadow as a man!”

“Only tell me what I have to pay,” said the Shadow, “for I don’t like to be in any one’s debt.”

“How can you talk in that way?” said the learned man; “of what debt can there be a question here? You are as free as any one! I am exceedingly pleased at your good fortune! Sit down, old friend, and tell me a little how it has happened, and what you saw in the warm countries, and in the house opposite ours.”



The visit of the Shadow.

“Yes, that I will tell you,” said the Shadow; and it sat down. “But then you must promise me never to tell any one in this town, when you meet me, that I have been your Shadow! I have

the intention of engaging myself to be married; I can do more than support a family."

"Be quite easy," replied the learned man; "I will tell nobody who you really are. Here's my hand. I promise it; and my word's as good as my bond."

"A Shadow's word in return!" said the Shadow, for he was obliged to talk in that way. But, by the way, it was quite wonderful how complete a man he had become. He was dressed all in black, and wore the very finest black cloth, polished boots, and a hat that could be crushed together till it was nothing but crown and rim, besides what we have already noticed of him, namely, the charms, the gold neck-chain, and the diamond rings. The Shadow was indeed wonderfully well clothed; and it was just this that made a complete man of him.

"Now I will tell you," said the Shadow; and then he put down his polished boots as firmly as he could on the arm of the learned man's new shadow that lay like a poodle dog at his feet. This was done perhaps from pride, perhaps so that the new shadow might stick to his feet; but the prostrate shadow remained quite quiet, so that it might listen well, for it wanted to know how one could get free and work up to be one's own master.

“Do you know who lived in the house opposite to us?” asked the Shadow. “That was the most glorious of all; it was Poetry! I was there for three weeks, and that was just as if one had lived there a thousand years, and could read all that has been written. For this I say, and it is truth, I have seen everything, and I know everything!”

“Poetry!” cried the learned man. “Yes, she often lives as a hermit in great cities. Poetry! Yes, I myself saw her for one single brief moment, but sleep was heavy on my eyes: she stood upon the balcony gleaming as the Northern Light gleams, flowers with living flames. Tell me! tell me! You were upon the balcony. You went through the door, and then——”

“Then I was in the ante-room,” said the Shadow. “You sat opposite, and were always looking across at the ante-room. There was no light; a kind of semi-obscurity reigned there; but one door after another in a whole row of halls and rooms stood open, and there it was light; and the mass of light would have killed me, if I had got as far as to where the maiden sat. But I was deliberate; I took my time; and that’s what one must do.”

“And what didst thou see then?” asked the learned man.

“I saw everything! and I will tell you what; but—it is really not pride on my part—as a free man, and with the acquirements I possess, besides my good position and my remarkable fortune, I wish you would say *you* to me.”

“I beg your pardon,” said the learned man. “This *thou* is an old habit, and old habits are difficult to alter. You are perfectly right, and I will remember it. But tell me everything you saw.”

“Everything,” said the Shadow; “for I saw everything, and I know everything.”

“How did things look in the inner room?” asked the learned man. “Was it there as in a cool grave? Was it there like in a holy temple? Were the chambers like the starry sky, when one stands on the high mountains?”

“Everything was there,” said the Shadow. “I was certainly not quite inside; I remained in the front room, in the half darkness; but I stood there remarkably well. I saw everything, and know everything. I have been in the ante-room at the Court of Poetry.”

“But what did you see? Did all the gods of antiquity march through the halls? Did the old heroes fight there? Did lovely children play there and relate their dreams?”

“I tell you that I have been there, and so you will easily understand that I saw everything that was to be seen. If you had got there you would not have remained a man ; but I became one ; and at the same time I learned to understand my inner being and the relation in which I stood to Poetry. Yes, when I was with you, I did not think of these things ; but you know that whenever the sun rises or sets I am wonderfully great. In the moonshine I was almost more noticeable than you yourself. I did not then understand my inward being : in the ante-room it was revealed to me. I became a man ! I came out ripe. But you were no longer in the warm countries. I was ashamed to go about as a man in the state I was then in : I required boots, clothes, and all this human varnish, by which a man is known. I hid myself : yes, I can confide the secret to you — you will not put it into a book. I hid myself under the old cake-woman’s gown, and the woman had no idea how much she concealed ! Only in the evening did I go out : I ran about the streets in the moonlight ; I stretched myself quite long up the wall : that tickled my back quite agreeably. I ran up and down, looked through the highest windows into the halls and through the roofs, where nobody

could see, and I saw what nobody saw, and what nobody ought to see. On the whole it is a bad world: I should not like to be a man, if I were not allowed to be of some consequence. I saw the most incomprehensible things going on among men and women, and parents, and 'dear, incomparable children.' I saw what no one else knows, but what they would be very glad to know, namely, bad goings on at their neighbours'. If I had written a newspaper, how it would have been read! But I wrote directly to the persons interested, and there was terror in every town to which I came. They were so afraid of me, they were remarkably fond of me. The professor made me a professor; the tailor gave me new clothes (I am well provided); the coining superintendent coined money for me; the women declared I was handsome: and thus I became the man I now am! And now, farewell! Here is my card; I live on the sunny side, and am always at home in rainy weather."

And the Shadow went away.

"That was very remarkable!" said the learned man.

Years and days passed by, and the Shadow came again.

"How goes it?" he asked.

“Ah!” said the learned man, “I am writing about the true, the good, and the beautiful; but nobody cares to hear of anything of the kind: I am quite in despair, for I take that very much to heart.”

“That I do not,” said the Shadow. “I’m becoming fat and hearty, and that’s what one must try to become. You don’t understand the world, and you’re getting ill; you must travel. I’ll make a journey this summer; will you go too? I should like to have a travelling companion; will you go with me as my shadow? I shall be very happy to take you, and I’ll pay the expenses.”

“I suppose you travel very far?” said the learned man.

“As you take it,” replied the Shadow. “A journey will do you a great deal of good. Will you be my shadow? then you shall have everything on the journey for nothing.”

“That’s too strong!” said the learned man.

“But it’s the way of the world,” said the Shadow, “and so it will remain!”

And he went away.

The learned man was not at all fortunate. Sorrow and care pursued him, and what he said of the true and the good and the beautiful was as little

valued by most people as a nutmeg would be by a cow. At last he became quite ill.

“You really look like a shadow!” said people to him; and a shudder run through him at these words, for he attached a peculiar meaning to them.

“You must go to a watering-place,” said the Shadow, who came to pay him a visit. “There’s no other help for you. I’ll take you with me, for the sake of old acquaintance. I’ll pay the expenses of the journey, and you shall make a description of it, and shorten time for me on the way. I want to visit a watering-place. My beard doesn’t grow quite as it should, and that is a kind of illness; and a beard I must have. Now just be reasonable, and accept my proposal; we shall travel like comrades.”

And they travelled. The Shadow was master now, and the master was shadow: they drove together, they rode together, and walked side by side, and before and behind each other, just as the sun happened to stand. The Shadow always knew when to take the place of honour. The learned man did not particularly notice this, for he had a very good heart, and was, moreover, particularly mild and friendly. Then one day the master said to the Shadow,

“As we have in this way come to be travelling companions, and have also from childhood’s days grown up with one another, shall we not drink brotherhood? That sounds more confidential.”

“You’re saying a thing there,” said the Shadow, who was now really the master, “that is said in a very kind and straightforward way. I will be just as kind and straightforward. You, who are a learned gentleman, know very well how wonderful nature is. There are some men who cannot bear to smell brown paper, they become sick at it; others shudder to the marrow of their bones if one scratches with a nail upon a pane of glass; and I for my part have a similar feeling when any one says ‘thou’ to me; I feel myself, as I did in my first position with you, oppressed by it. You see that this is a feeling, not pride. I cannot let you say ‘thou’* to me, but I will gladly say ‘thou’ to you; and thus your wish will be at any rate partly fulfilled.”

And now the Shadow addressed his former master as “thou.”

“That’s rather strong,” said the latter, “that

* On the Continent, people who have “drunk brotherhood” address each other as “thou,” in preference to the more ceremonious “you.”

I'm to say 'you,' while he says 'thou.'" But he was obliged to submit to it.

So they came to a bathing-place, where many strangers were, and among them a beautiful Princess, who had this disease, that she saw too sharply, which was very disquieting. She at once saw that the new arrival was a very different personage from all the rest.

"They say he is here to get his beard to grow, but I see the real reason, he can't throw a shadow."

She had now become inquisitive, and therefore she at once began a conversation with the strange gentleman on the promenade. As a Princess, she was not obliged to use much ceremony, therefore she said outright to him at once,

"Your illness consists in this, that you can't throw a shadow."

"Your Royal Highness must be much better," replied the Shadow. "I know your illness consists in this, that you see too sharply; but you have got the better of that. I have a very unusual shadow: don't you see the person who always accompanies me? Other people have a common shadow, but I don't love what is common. One often gives one's servants finer cloth for their liveries than one wears oneself, and so I have let my shadow deck

himself out like a separate person ; yes, you see I have even given him a shadow of his own. That cost very much, but I like to have something peculiar.”

“How !” said the Princess, “can I really have been cured? This bathing-place is the best in existence ; water has wonderful power now-a-days. But I’m not going away from here yet, for now it begins to be amusing. The foreign Prince—for he must be a Prince—pleases me remarkably well. I only hope his beard won’t grow, for if it does he’ll go away.”

That very evening the Princess and the Shadow danced together in the great ball-room. She was light, but he was still lighter ; never had she seen such a dancer. She told him from what country she came, and he knew the country—he had been there, but just when she had been absent. He had looked through the windows of her castle, from below as well as from above ; he had learned a good many circumstances, and could therefore make allusions, and give replies to the Princess, at which she marvelled greatly. She thought he must be the cleverest man in all the world, and was inspired with great respect for all his knowledge. And when she danced with him again, she fell in love

with him, and the Shadow noticed that particularly, for she looked him almost through and through with her eyes. They danced together once more, and she was nearly telling him, but she was discreet; she thought of her country and kingdom, and of the many people over whom she was to rule.

“He is a clever man,” she said to herself, “and that is well, and he dances capitally, and that is well too; but has he well-grounded knowledge?—that is just as important, and he must be examined.”

And she immediately put such a difficult question to him, that she could not have answered it herself; and the Shadow made a wry face.

“You cannot answer me that,” said the Princess.

“I learned that in my childhood,” replied the Shadow, “and I believe my very shadow, standing yonder by the door, could answer it.”

“Your shadow!” cried the Princess: “that would be very remarkable.”

“I do not assert as quite certain that he can do so,” said the Shadow, “but I am almost inclined to believe it. But your Royal Highness will allow me to remind you, that he is so proud of passing for a man, that, if he is to be in a good humour, and he should be so to answer rightly, he must be treated exactly like a man.”

“I like that,” said the Princess.

And now she went to the learned man at the door; and she spoke with him of sun and moon, of the green forests, and of people near and far; and the learned man answered very cleverly and very well.

“What a man that must be, who has such a clever shadow!” she thought. “It would be a real blessing for my country and for my people if I chose him; and I’ll do it!”

And they soon struck a bargain—the Princess and the Shadow; but no one was to know anything of it till she had returned to her kingdom.

“No one—not even my shadow!” said the Shadow; and for this he had especial reasons.

And they came to the country where the Princess ruled, and where her home was.

“Listen, my friend,” said the Shadow to the learned man. “Now I am as lucky and powerful as any one can become, I’ll do something particular for you. You shall live with me in my palace, drive with me in the royal carriage, and have a hundred thousand dollars a year; but you must let yourself be called a shadow by every one, and may never say that you were once a man; and once a year, when I sit on the balcony and show

myself, you must lie at my feet as it becomes my shadow to do. For I will tell you I am going to marry the Princess, and this evening the wedding will be held."

"Now, that's too strong," said the learned man. "I won't do it; I won't have it; that would be cheating the whole country and the Princess too. I'll tell everything—that I'm the man and you are the Shadow, and that you only wear men's clothes!"

"No one would believe that," said the Shadow. "Be reasonable, or I'll call the watch."

"I'll go straight to the Princess," said the learned man.

"But I'll go first," said the Shadow; "and you shall go to prison."

And that was so; for the sentinals obeyed him of whom they knew that he was to marry the Princess.

"You tremble," said the Princess, when the Shadow came to her. "Has anything happened? You must not be ill to-day, when we are to have our wedding."

"I have experienced the most terrible thing that can happen," said the Shadow. "Only think!—such a poor shallow brain cannot bear much—"

only think! my shadow has gone mad; he fancies he has become a man, and—only think!—that I am his shadow.”

“That is terrible!” said the Princess. “He is locked up, I hope?”

“Certainly. I’m afraid he will never recover.”

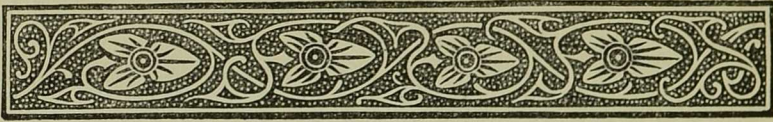
“Poor shadow!” cried the Princess. “He is very unfortunate; it would really be a good action to deliver him from his little bit of life. And when I think how prone the people are, now-a-days, to take the part of the low against the high, it seems to me quite necessary to put him quietly out of the way.”

“That’s certainly hard, for he was a faithful servant,” said the Shadow; and he pretended to sigh.

“You’ve a noble character,” said the Princess, and she bowed before him.

In the evening the whole town was illuminated, and cannon were fired—bang!—and the soldiers presented arms. That *was* a wedding! The Princess and the Shadow stepped out on the balcony to show themselves and receive another cheer.

The learned man heard nothing of all this festivity, for he had already been executed.



THE HAPPY FAMILY.

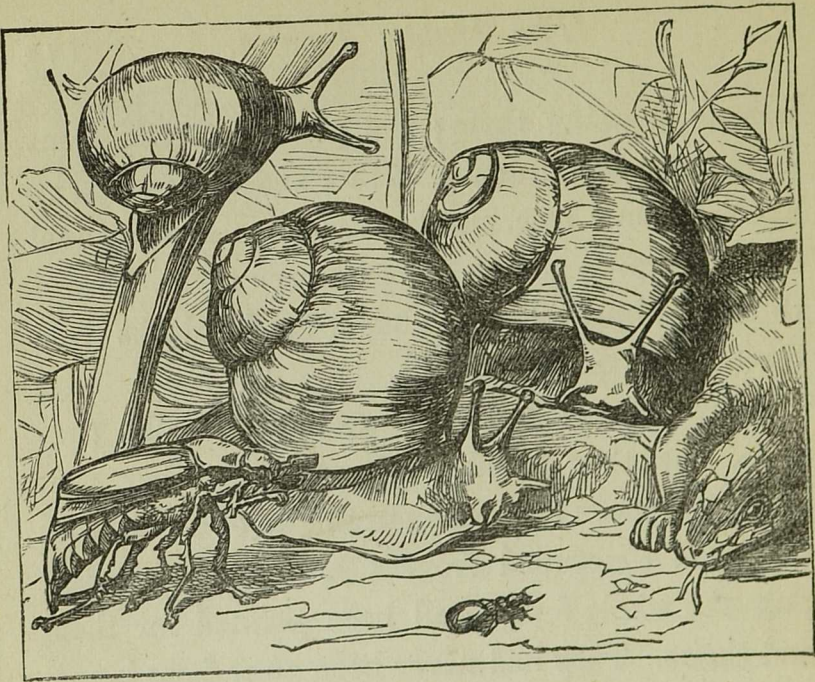
THE biggest leaf here in the country is certainly the burdock leaf. Put one in front of your waist and it's just like an apron, and if you lay it upon your head it is almost as good as an umbrella, for it is quite remarkably large. A burdock never grows alone; where there is one tree there are several more. It's splendid to behold! and all this splendour is snails' meat. The great white snails, which the grand people in old times used to have made into fricassees, and when they had eaten them they would say, "H'm, how good that is!" for they had the idea that it tasted delicious. These snails lived on burdock leaves, and that's why burdocks were sown.

Now, there was an old estate, on which people ate snails no longer. The snails had died out, but the burdocks had not. These latter grew and grew in all the walks and on all the beds; there

was no stopping them; the place became a complete forest of burdocks. Here and there stood an apple or plum tree, and but for this nobody would have thought a garden had ever been there. Everything was burdock, and among the burdocks lived the two last ancient Snails.

They did not know themselves how old they were, but they could very well remember that there had been a great many more of them, that they had descended from a foreign family, and that the whole forest had been planted for them and theirs. They had never been away from home, but it was known to them that something existed in the world called the *ducal palace*, and that yonder one was boiled, and one became black, and was laid upon a silver dish; but what was done afterwards they did not know. Moreover, they could not imagine what that might be, being boiled and laid upon a silver dish; but it was stated to be fine, and particularly grand. Neither the cockchafer, nor the toad, nor the earthworm, whom they questioned about it, could give them any information, for none of their own kind had ever been boiled and laid on silver dishes.

The old white Snails were the grandest in the world; they knew that. The forest was there for



The grand old Snails.

their sake, and the ducal palace too, so that they might be boiled and laid on silver dishes.

They led a very retired and happy life, and as they themselves were childless, they had adopted a little common snail, which they brought up as their own child. But the little thing would not grow, for it was only a common snail, though the old people, and particularly the mother, declared one could easily see how he grew. And when the father could not see it, she requested him to feel the little snail's shell, and he felt it, and acknowledged that she was right.

One day it rained very hard.

“Listen, how it’s drumming on the burdock leaves, rum-dum-dum, rum-dum-dum!” said the Father-Snail.

“That’s what I call drops,” said the mother. “It’s coming straight down the stalks. You’ll see it will be wet here directly. I’m only glad that we have our good houses, and that the little one has his own. There has really been more done for us than for any other creature; one can see very plainly that we are the grand folks of the world! We have houses from our birth, and the burdock forest has been planted on our account; I should like to know how far it extends, and what lies beyond it.”

“There’s nothing,” said the Father-Snail, “that can be better than here at home; I have nothing at all to wish for.”

“Yes,” said the mother, “I should like to be taken to the ducal palace, and boiled, and laid upon a silver dish; that has been done to all our ancestors, and you may be sure it’s quite a distinguished honour.”

“The ducal palace has perhaps fallen in,” said the Father-Snail, “or the forest of burdocks may have grown over it, so that the people can’t get

out at all. You need not be in a hurry. But you always hurry so, and the little one is beginning just the same way. Has he not been creeping up that stalk these three days? My head quite aches when I look up at him."

"You must not scold him," said the Mother-Snail. "He crawls very deliberately. We shall have much joy in him; and we old people have nothing else to live for. But have you ever thought where we shall get a wife for him? Don't you think that farther in the wood there may be some more of our kind?"

"There may be black snails there, I think," said the old man, "black snails without houses; but they're too vulgar. And they're conceited, for all that. But we can give the commission to the ants; they run to and fro, as if they had some business; they're sure to know of a wife for our young gentleman."

"I certainly know the most beautiful of brides," said one of the Ants; "but I fear it would not do, for she is the Queen!"

"That does not matter," said the old Snails. "Has she a house?"

"She has a castle," replied the Ant. "The most beautiful ant's castle, with seven hundred passages."

“Thank you!” said the Mother-Snail; “our boy shall not go into an ant-hill. If you know of nothing better, we’ll give the commission to the white gnats; they fly far about in rain and sunshine. They know the burdock wood, inside and outside.”

“We have a wife for him!” said the Gnats. “A hundred man-steps from here a little snail, with a house, is sitting on a gooseberry bush; she is quite alone, and old enough to marry. It’s only a hundred man-steps from here.”

“Yes, let her come to him,” said the old people. “He has a whole burdock forest, and she has only a bush.”

And so they brought the little maiden snail. Eight days passed before she arrived; but that was the rare circumstance about it, for by this one could see that she was of the right kind.

And then they had a wedding. Six glow-worms lighted as well as they could: with this exception it went very quietly, for the old snail people could not bear feasting and dissipation. But a capital speech was made by the Mother-Snail. The father could not speak, he was so much moved. Then they gave the young couple the whole burdock forest for an inheritance, and said what they had

always said, namely, that it was the best place in the world, and that the young people, if they lived honourably, and increased and multiplied, would some day be taken with their children to the ducal palace, and boiled black, and laid upon a silver dish. And when the speech was finished, the old people crept into their houses, and never came out again, for they slept. The young snail pair now ruled in the forest, and had a numerous progeny. But as the young ones were never boiled and put into silver dishes, they concluded that the ducal palace had fallen in, and that all the people in the world had died out. And as nobody contradicted them, they must have been right. And the rain fell down upon the burdock leaves to play the drum for them; and the sun shone to colour the burdock forest for them; and they were happy, very happy; the whole family was happy, uncommonly happy!





The Soldier found by the Boys.

The Hardy Tin Soldier.

THE
HARDY TIN SOLDIER.

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

TRANSLATED BY
H. W. DULCKEN, PH.D.

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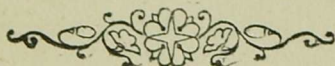
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THE HARDY TIN SOLDIER.

THERE were once five and twenty tin soldiers ; they were all brothers, for they had all been born of one old tin spoon. They shouldered their muskets, and looked straight before them : their uniform was red and blue, and very splendid. The first thing they had heard in the world, when the lid was taken off their box, had been the words "Tin soldiers !" These words were uttered by a little boy, clapping his hands. The soldiers had been given to him, for it was his birthday ; and now he put them upon the table. Each soldier was exactly like the rest ; but one of them had been cast last of all, and there had not been enough tin to finish him ; but he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others on their two ; and it was just this Soldier who became remarkable.

On the table upon which they had been placed stood many other playthings, but the toy that attracted most attention was a neat castle of card-



The Birthday Present of Tin Soldiers.

board. Through the little windows one could see straight into the hall. Before the castle some little trees were placed round a little looking-glass, which was to represent a clear lake. Waxen swans

swam on this lake, and were mirrored in it. This was all very pretty; but the prettiest of all was a little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle: she was also cut out in paper, but she had a dress of the clearest gauze, and a little narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders, that looked like a scarf; and in the middle of this ribbon was a shining tinsel rose as big as her whole face. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer; and then she lifted one leg so high that the Tin Soldier could not see it at all, and thought that, like himself, she had but one leg.

“That would be the wife for me,” thought he; “but she is very grand. She lives in a castle, and I have only a box, and there are five and twenty of us in that. It is no place for her. But I must try to make acquaintance with her.”

And then he lay down at full length behind a snuff-box which was on the table; there he could easily watch the little dainty lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance.

When the evening had come, all the other tin soldiers were put into their box, and the people in the house went to bed. Now the toys began to play at “visiting,” and at “war,” and “giving balls.” The tin soldiers rattled in their box, for

they wanted to join, but could not lift the lid. The nutcracker threw somersaults, and the pencil amused itself on the table: there was so much noise that the canary woke up, and began to speak too, and even in verse. The only two who did not stir from their places were the Tin Soldier and the dancing lady: she stood straight up on the point of one of her toes, and stretched out both her arms; and he was just as enduring on his one leg, and he never turned his eyes away from her.

Now the clock struck twelve, and—bounce!—the lid flew off the snuff-box; but there was not snuff in it, but a little black Goblin: you see it was a trick.

“Tin Soldier!” said the Goblin, “don’t stare at things that don’t concern you.”

But the Tin Soldier pretended not to hear him.

“Just you wait till to-morrow!” said the Goblin.

But when the morning came, and the children got up, the Tin Soldier was placed in the window; and whether it was the Goblin or the draught that did it, all at once the window flew open, and the soldier fell head over heels out of the third storey. That was a terrible passage! He put his leg straight up, and stuck with his helmet downwards and his bayonet between the paving-stones.

The servant-maid and the little boy came down directly to look for him, but though they almost trod upon him they could not see him. If the Soldier had cried out "Here I am!" they would have found him; but he did not think it fitting to call out loudly, because he was in uniform.

Now it began to rain; the drops soon fell thicker, and at last it came down in a complete stream. When the rain was past, two street boys came by.

"Just look!" said one of them, "there lies a tin soldier. He must come out and ride in the boat."

And they made a boat out of a newspaper, and put the Tin Soldier in the middle of it; and so he sailed down the gutter, and the two boys ran beside him and clapped their hands. Goodness preserve us! how the waves rose in that gutter, and how fast the stream ran! But then it had been a heavy rain! The paper boat rocked up and down, and sometimes turned round so rapidly that the Tin Soldier trembled; but he remained firm, and never changed countenance, and looked straight before him, and shouldered his musket.

All at once the boat went into a long drain, and it became as dark as if he had been in his box.

"Where am I going now?" he thought. "Yes,

yes, that's the Goblin's fault. Ah! if the little lady only sat here with me in the boat, it might be twice as dark for what I should care."

Suddenly there came a great Water Rat, which lived under the drain.

"Have you a passport?" said the Rat. "Give me your passport."

But the Tin Soldier kept silence, and held his musket tighter than ever.

The boat went on, but the Rat came after it. Hu! how he gnashed his teeth, and called out to the bits of straw and wood,

"Hold him! hold him! he hasn't paid toll—he hasn't shown his passport!"

But the stream became stronger and stronger. The Tin Soldier could see the bright daylight where the arch ended; but he heard a roaring noise, which might well frighten a bolder man. Only think.—Just where the tunnel ended, the drain ran into a great canal; and for him that would have been as dangerous as for us to be carried down a great waterfall.

Now he was already so near it that he could not stop. The boat was carried out, the poor Tin Soldier stiffening himself as much as he could, and no one could say that he moved an eyelid. The

boat whirled round three or four times, and was full of water to the very edge—it must sink. The Tin Soldier stood up to his neck in water, and the boat sank deeper and deeper, and the paper was loosened more and more; and now the water closed over the Soldier's head. Then he thought of the pretty little dancer, and how he should never see her again; and it sounded in the Soldier's ears:

“Farewell, farewell, thou warrior brave,
For this day thou must die!”

And now the paper parted, and the Tin Soldier fell out; but at that moment he was snapped up by a great fish.

Oh, how dark it was in that fish's body! It was darker yet than in the drain tunnel; and then it was very narrow too. But the Tin Soldier remained unmoved, and lay at full length shouldering his musket.

The fish swam to and fro: he made the most wonderful movements, and then became quite still. At last something flashed through him like lightning. The daylight shone quite clear, and a voice said aloud, “The Tin Soldier!” The fish had been caught, carried to market, bought, and taken into the kitchen, where the cook cut him open with a large knife. She seized the Soldier round the body

with both her hands, and carried him into the room, where all were anxious to see the remarkable man who had travelled about in the inside of a fish; but the Tin Soldier was not at all proud. They placed him on the table, and there—no!—What curious things may happen in the world! The Tin Soldier was in the very room in which he had been before: he saw the children, and the same toys stood on the table; and there was the pretty castle with the graceful little dancer. She was still balancing herself on one leg, and held the other extended in the air. She was hardy too. That moved the Tin Soldier: he was very nearly weeping tin tears, but that would not have been proper. He looked at her, but they said nothing to each other.

Then one of the little boys took the Tin Soldier and flung him into the stove. He gave no reason for doing this. It must have been the fault of the Goblin in the snuff-box.

The Tin Soldier stood there quite illuminated, and felt a heat that was terrible; but whether this heat proceeded from the real fire or from love he did not know. The colours had quite gone off from him; but whether that had happened on the journey, or had been caused by grief, no one could say. He looked at the little lady, she looked at

him, and he felt that he was melting ; but he still stood firm, shouldering his musket. Then suddenly the door flew open, and the draught of air caught the dancer, and she flew like a sylph just into the stove to the Tin Soldier, and flashed up in a flame, and she was gone. Then the Tin Soldier melted down into a lump, and when the servant-maid took the ashes out next day, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But of the dancer nothing remained but the tinsel rose, and that was burned as black as a coal.

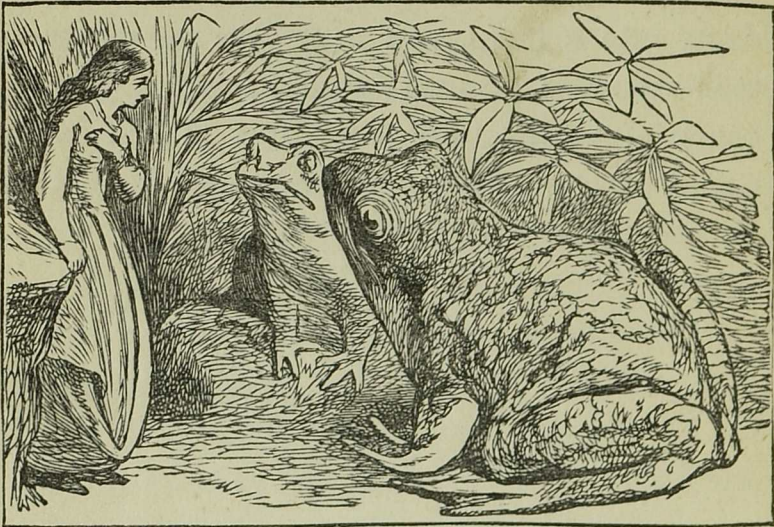


THUMBELINA.

THERE was once a woman who wished for a very little child ; but she did not know where she should procure one. So she went to an old witch, and said,

“ I do so very much wish for a little child ; can you not tell me where I can get one ? ”

“Oh! that could easily be managed,” said the witch. “There you have a barleycorn: that is not of the kind which grows in the countryman’s field, and which the chickens get to eat. Put that



Thumbelina and the Toads.

into a flower-pot, and you shall see what you shall see.”

“Thank you,” said the woman; and she gave the witch twelve shillings, for that is what it cost. Then she went home and planted the barleycorn, and immediately there grew up a great handsome

flower, which looked like a tulip ; but the leaves were tightly closed, as though it were still a bud.

“That is a beautiful flower,” said the woman ; and she kissed its yellow and red leaves. But just as she kissed it, the flower opened with a pop. It was a real tulip, as one could now see ; but in the middle of the flower there sat upon the green velvet stamens a little maiden, delicate and graceful to behold. She was scarcely half a thumb’s length in height, and therefore she was called Thumbelina.

A neat polished walnut-shell served Thumbelina for a cradle, blue violet-leaves were her mattresses, with a rose-leaf for a coverlet. There she slept at night ; but in the day-time she played upon the table, where the woman had put a plate with a wreath of flowers around it, whose stalks stood in water ; on the water swam a great tulip-leaf, and on this the little maiden could sit, and row from one side of the plate to the other, with two white horse-hairs for oars. That looked pretty indeed ! She could also sing, and, indeed, so delicately and sweetly, that the like had never been heard.

Once as she lay at night in her pretty bed, there came an old Toad creeping through the window, in which one pane was broken. The Toad was very

ugly, big, and damp : it hopped straight down upon the table, where Thumbelina lay sleeping under the rose-leaf.

“That would be a handsome wife for my son,” said the Toad ; and she took the walnut-shell in which Thumbelina lay asleep, and hopped with it through the window down into the garden.

There ran a great broad brook ; but the margin was swampy and soft, and here the Toad dwelt with her son. Ugh ! he was ugly, and looked just like his mother. “Croak ! croak ! brek-kek-kex !” that was all he could say when he saw the graceful little maiden in the walnut-shell.

“Don’t speak so loud, or she will awake,” said the old Toad. “She might run away from us, for she is as light as a bit of swan’s-down. We will put her out in the brook upon one of the broad water-lily leaves. That will be just like an island for her, she is so small and light. Then she can’t get away, while we put the state room under the marsh in order, where you are to live and keep house together.”

Out in the brook there grew many water-lilies with broad green leaves, which looked as if they were floating on the water. The leaf which lay farthest out was also the greatest of all, and to that

the old Toad swam out and laid the walnut-shell upon it with Thumbelina. The little tiny Thumbelina woke early in the morning, and when she saw where she was, she began to cry very bitterly; for there was water on every side of the great green leaf, and she could not get to land at all. The old Toad sat down in the marsh decking out her room with rushes and yellow weed—it was to be made very pretty for the new daughter-in-law; then she swam out, with her ugly son, to the leaf on which Thumbelina was. They wanted to take her pretty bed, which was to be put in the bridal chamber before she went in there herself. The old Toad bowed low before her in the water, and said,

“Here is my son; he will be your husband, and you will live splendidly together in the marsh.”

“Croak! croak! brek-kek-kex!” was all the son could say.

Then they took the delicate little bed, and swam away with it; but Thumbelina sat all alone upon the green leaf and wept, for she did not like to live at the nasty Toad's, and have her ugly son for her husband. The little fishes swimming in the water below had both seen the Toad, and had also heard what she said; therefore they stretched forth their heads, for they wanted to see the little girl.

So soon as they saw her they considered her so pretty that they felt very sorry she should have to go down to the ugly Toad. No, that must never be! They assembled together in the water around the green stalk which held the leaf on which the little maiden stood, and with their teeth they gnawed away the stalk, and so the leaf swam down the stream; and away went Thumbelina far away, where the Toad could not get at her.

Thumbelina sailed by many cities, and the little birds which sat in the bushes saw her, and said, "What a lovely little girl!" The leaf swam away with them farther and farther; so Thumbelina travelled out of the country.

A graceful little white butterfly always fluttered round her, and at last alighted on the leaf. Thumbelina pleased him, and she was very glad of this, for now the Toad could not reach them; and it was so beautiful where she was floating along — the sun shone upon the water, and the water glistened like the most splendid gold. She took her girdle and bound one end of it round the butterfly, fastening the other end of the ribbon to the leaf. The leaf now glided onward much faster, and Thumbelina too, for she stood upon the leaf.

There came a big Cockchafer flying up; and he

saw her, and immediately clasped his claws round her slender waist, and flew with her up into a tree. The green leaf went swimming down the brook, and the butterfly with it, for he was fastened to the leaf, and could not get away from it.

Mercy! how frightened poor little Thumbelina was when the Cockchafer flew with her up into the tree. But especially she was sorry for the fine white butterfly whom she had bound fast to the leaf, for if he could not free himself from it, he would be obliged to starve. The Cockchafer, however, did not trouble himself at all about this. He seated himself with her upon the biggest green leaf of the tree, gave her the sweet part of the flowers to eat, and declared that she was very pretty, though she did not in the least resemble a cockchafer. Afterwards came all the other cockchafers who lived in the tree to pay a visit: they looked at Thumbelina, and said,

“Why she has not even more than two legs!—that has a wretched appearance.”

“She has not any feelers!” cried another.

“Her waist is quite slender—fie! she looks like a human creature—how ugly she is!” said all the lady cockchafers.

And yet Thumberlina was very pretty. Even

the Cockchafer who had carried her off saw that; but when all the others declared she was ugly, he believed it at last, and would not have her at all—she might go whither she liked. Then they flew down with her from the tree, and set her upon a daisy, and she wept, because she was so ugly that the cockchafers would have nothing to say to her; and yet she was the loveliest little being one could imagine, and as tender and delicate as a rose-leaf.

The whole summer through poor Thumbelina lived quite alone in the great wood. She wove herself a bed out of blades of grass, and hung it up under a shamrock, so that she was protected from the rain; she plucked the honey out of the flowers for food, and drank of the dew which stood every morning upon the leaves. Thus summer and autumn passed away; but now came winter, the cold long winter. All the birds who had sung so sweetly before her flew away; trees and flowers shed their leaves; the great shamrock under which she had lived shrivelled up, and there remained nothing of it but a yellow withered stalk; and she was dreadfully cold, for her clothes were torn, and she herself was so frail and delicate—poor little Thumbelina! she was nearly frozen. It began to snow, and every snow-flake that fell upon her was

like a whole shovel-full thrown upon one of us, for we are tall, and she was only an inch long. Then she wrapped herself in a dry leaf, and that tore in the middle, and would not warm her—she shivered with cold.

Close to the wood into which she had now come lay a great corn-field, but the corn was gone long ago; only the naked dry stubble stood up out of the frozen ground. These were just like a great forest for her to wander through; and, oh! how she trembled with cold. Then she arrived at the door of the Field Mouse. This Mouse had a little hole under the stubble. There the Field Mouse lived, warm and comfortable, and had a whole room-full of corn—a glorious kitchen and larder. Poor Thumbelina stood at the door just like a poor beggar girl, and begged for a little bit of a barleycorn, for she had not had the smallest morsel to eat for the last two days.

“You poor little creature,” said the Field Mouse—for after all she was a good old Field Mouse—“come into my warm room and dine with me.”

As she was pleased with Thumbelina, she said, “If you like you may stay with me through the winter, but you must keep my room clean and

neat, and tell me little stories, for I am very fond of those.”

And Thumbelina did as the kind old Field Mouse bade her, and had a very good time of it.

“Now we shall soon have a visitor,” said the Field Mouse. “My neighbour is in the habit of visiting me once a week. He is even better off than I am, has great rooms, and a beautiful black velvety fur. If you could only get him for your husband you would be well provided for. You must tell him the prettiest stories you know.”

But Thumbelina did not care about this; she thought nothing of the neighbour, for he was a Mole. He came and paid his visits in his black velvet coat. The Field Mouse told how rich and how learned he was, and how his house was more than twenty times larger than hers; that he had learning, but that he did not like the sun and beautiful flowers, for he had never seen them.

Thumbelina had to sing, and she sang “Cockchafer, fly away,” and “When the parson goes afield.” Then the Mole fell in love with her, because of her delicious voice; but he said nothing, for he was a sedate man.

A short time before, he had dug a long passage through the earth from his own house to theirs;

and Thumbelina and the Field Mouse obtained leave to walk in this passage as much as they wished. But he begged them not to be afraid of the dead bird which was lying in the passage. It was an entire bird, with wings and a beak. It certainly must have died only a short time before, and was now buried just where the Mole had made his passage.

The Mole took a bit of decayed wood in his mouth, and it glimmered like fire in the dark; and then he went first and lighted them through the long dark passage. When they came where the dead bird lay, the Mole thrust up his broad nose against the ceiling, so that a great hole was made, through which the daylight could shine down. In the middle of the floor lay a dead Swallow, his beautiful wings pressed close against his sides, and his head and feet drawn back under his feathers: the poor bird had certainly died of cold. Thumbelina was very sorry for this; she was very fond of all the little birds, who had sung and twittered so prettily before her through the summer; but the Mole gave him a push with his short legs, and said,

“Now he doesn’t pipe any more. It must be miserable to be born a little bird. I’m thankful that none of my children can be that: such a bird

has nothing but his 'tweet-tweet,' and has to starve in the winter!"

"Yes, you may well say that, as a clever man," observed the Field Mouse. "Of what use is all this 'tweet-tweet' to a bird when the winter comes? He must starve and freeze. But they say that's very aristocratic."

Thumbelina said nothing; but when the two others turned their backs on the bird, she bent down, put the feathers aside which covered his head, and kissed him upon his closed eyes.

"Perhaps it was he who sang so prettily before me in the summer," she thought. "How much pleasure he gave me, the dear beautiful bird!"

The Mole now closed up the hole through which the daylight shone in, and accompanied the ladies home. But at night Thumbelina could not sleep at all; so she got up out of her bed, and wove a large beautiful carpet of hay, and carried it and spread it over the dead bird, and laid the thin stamens of flowers, soft as cotton, and which she had found in the Field Mouse's room, at the bird's sides, so that he might lie soft in the ground.

"Farewell, you pretty little bird!" said she. "Farewell! and thanks to you for your beautiful song in the summer, when all the trees were green,

and the sun shone down warmly upon us." And then she laid the bird's head upon her heart. But the bird was not dead; he was only lying there torpid with cold; and now he had been warmed, and came to life again.

In autumn all the swallows fly away to warm countries; but if one happens to be belated, it becomes so cold that it falls down as if dead, and lies where it fell, and then the cold snow covers it.

Thumbelina fairly trembled, she was so startled; for the bird was large, very large, compared with her, who was only an inch in height. But she took courage, laid the cotton closer round the poor bird, and brought a leaf that she had used as her own coverlet, and laid it over the bird's head.

The next night she crept out to him again—and now he was alive, but quite weak; he could only open his eyes for a moment, and look at Thumbelina, who stood before him with a bit of decayed wood in her hand, for she had not a lantern.

"I thank you, you pretty little child," said the sick Swallow; "I have been famously warmed. Soon I shall get my strength back again, and I shall be able to fly about in the warm sunshine."

"Oh," she said, "it is so cold without. It snows

and freezes. Stay in your warm bed, and I will nurse you."

Then she brought the Swallow water in the petal of a flower; and the Swallow drank, and told her how he had torn one of his wings in a thorn bush, and thus had not been able to fly so fast as the other swallows, which had sped away, far away, to the warm countries. So at last he had fallen to the ground, but he could remember nothing more, and did not know at all how he had come where she had found him.

The whole winter the Swallow remained there, and Thumbelina nursed and tended him heartily. Neither the Field Mouse nor the Mole heard anything about it, for they did not like the poor Swallow. So soon as the spring came, and the sun warmed the earth, the Swallow bade Thumbelina farewell, and she opened the hole which the Mole had made in the ceiling. The sun shone in upon them gloriously, and the Swallow asked if Thumbelina would go with him; she could sit upon his back, and they would fly away far into the greenwood. But Thumbelina knew that the old Field Mouse would be grieved if she left her.

"No, I cannot," said Thumbelina.

"Farewell, farewell, you good, pretty girl!"

said the Swallow; and he flew out into the sunshine. Thumbelina looked up after him, and the tears came into her eyes, for she was heartily fond of the poor Swallow.

“Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!” sang the bird, and flew into the green forest. Thumbelina felt very sad. She did not get permission to go out into the warm sunshine. The corn which was sown in the field over the house of the Field Mouse grew up high into the air; it was quite a thick wood for the poor girl, who was only an inch in height.

“You are betrothed now, Thumbelina,” said the Field Mouse. “My neighbour has proposed for you. What great fortune for a poor child like you! Now you must work at your outfit, woollen and linen clothes both, for you must lack nothing when you have become the Mole’s wife.”

Thumbelina had to turn the spindle, and the Mole hired four spiders to weave for her day and night. Every evening the Mole paid her a visit; and he was always saying that when the summer should draw to a close, the sun would not shine nearly so hot, for that now it burned the earth almost as hard as a stone. Yes, when the summer should have gone, then he would keep his wedding day with Thumbelina. But she was not glad at

all, for she did not like the tiresome Mole. Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it went down, she crept out at the door, and when the wind blew the corn ears apart, so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how bright and beautiful it was out here, and wished heartily to see her dear Swallow again. But the Swallow did not come back; he had doubtless flown far away into the fair green forest. When autumn came on, Thumbelina had all her outfit ready.

“In four weeks you shall celebrate your wedding,” said the Field Mouse to her.

But Thumbelina wept, and declared she would not have the tiresome Mole.

“Nonsense,” said the Field Mouse. “Don’t be obstinate, or I will bite you with my white teeth. He is a very fine man whom you will marry. The Queen herself has not such a black velvet fur; and his kitchen and cellar are full. Be thankful for your good fortune.”

Now the wedding was to be held. The Mole had already come to fetch Thumbelina: she was to live with him, deep under the earth, and never to come out into the warm sunshine, for that he did not like. The poor little thing was very sorrowful; she was now to say farewell to the

glorious sun, which, after all, she had been allowed by the Field Mouse to see from the threshold of the door.

“Farewell, thou bright sun!” she said, and stretched out her arms towards it, and walked a little way forth from the house of the Field Mouse, for now the corn had been reaped, and only the dry stubble stood in the fields. “Farewell!” she repeated, twining her arms round a little red flower which still bloomed there. “Greet the little Swallow from me, if you see her again.”

“Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!” a voice suddenly sounded over her head. She looked up; it was the little Swallow, who was just flying by. When he saw Thumbelina he was very glad; and Thumbelina told him how loth she was to have the ugly Mole for her husband, and that she was to live deep under the earth, where the sun never shone. And she could not refrain from weeping.

“The cold winter is coming now,” said the Swallow. “I am going to fly far away into the warm countries. Will you come with me? You can sit upon my back, then we shall fly from the ugly Mole and his dark room—away, far away, over the mountains, to the warm countries, where the sun shines warmer than here, where it is

always summer, and there are lovely flowers. Only fly with me, you dear little Thumbelina, you who have saved my life when I lay frozen in the dark earthy passage.”

“ Yes, I will go with you,” said Thumbelina; and she seated herself on the bird’s back, with her feet on his outspread wing, and bound her girdle fast to one of his strongest feathers; then the Swallow flew up into the air over forest and over sea, high up over the great mountains, where the snow always lies; and Thumbelina felt cold in the bleak air, but then she hid under the bird’s warm feathers, and only put out her little head to see and admire all the beauties beneath her.

At last they came to the warm countries. There the sun shone far brighter than here; the sky seemed twice as high; and in ditches and on the hedges grew the most beautiful blue and green grapes; lemons and oranges hung in the woods; the air was fragrant with myrtles and balsams; and on the roads the loveliest children ran about, playing with great gay butterflies. But the Swallow flew still farther, and it became more and more beautiful. Under the most glorious green trees, by the blue lake, stood a palace of dazzling white marble, from the olden time. Vines clus-

tered around the lofty pillars; at the top were many swallows' nests, and in one of these the Swallow lived who carried Thumbelina.

"That is my house," said the Swallow; "but it is not right that you should live there. It is not yet properly arranged by a great deal, and you will not be content with it. Select for yourself one of the splendid flowers which grow down yonder, then I will put you into it, and you shall have everything as nice as you can wish."

"That is capital," cried she, and clapped her little hands.

A great marble pillar lay there, which had fallen to the ground and had been broken into three pieces; but between these pieces grew the most beautiful great white flowers. The Swallow flew down with Thumbelina, and set her upon one of the broad leaves. But what was the little maid's surprise? There sat a little man in the midst of the flower, as white and transparent as if he had been made of glass: he wore the neatest gold crown on his head, and the brightest wings on his shoulders: he himself was not bigger than Thumbelina. He was the angel of the flower. In each of the flowers dwelt such a little man or woman, but this one was king over them all.

“Heavens! how beautiful he is!” whispered Thumbelina to the Swallow.

The little prince was very much frightened at the Swallow; for it was quite a gigantic bird to him, who was so small. But when he saw Thumbelina, he became very glad; she was the prettiest maiden he had ever seen. Therefore he took off his golden crown, and put it upon her, asked her name, and if she would be his wife, and then she should be queen of all the flowers. Now this was truly a different kind of man to the son of the Toad, and the Mole with the black velvet fur. She therefore said “Yes” to the charming prince. And out of every flower came a lady or a lord, so pretty to behold that it was a delight: each one brought Thumbelina a present; but the best gift was a pair of beautiful wings which had belonged to a great white fly; these were fastened to Thumbelina’s back, and now she could fly from flower to flower. Then there was much rejoicing; and the little Swallow sat above them in his nest, and was to sing the marriage song, which he accordingly did as well as he could; but yet in his heart he was sad, for he was so fond, oh! so fond of Thumbelina, and would have liked never to part from her.

“You shall not be called Thumbelina,” said

the Flower Angel to her; "that is an ugly name, and you are too fair for it—we will call you Maia."

"Farewell, farewell!" said the little Swallow, with a heavy, heavy heart; and she flew away again from the warm countries, far away back to Denmark. There she had a little nest over the window of the man who can tell fairy tales. Before him he sang, "Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" and from him we have the whole story.

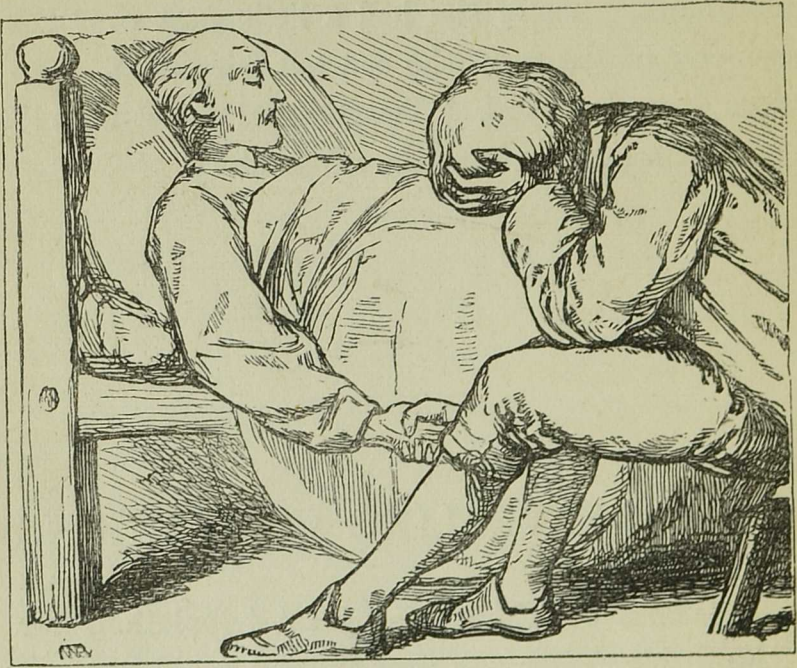


THE TRAVELLING COMPANION.

Poor JOHN was in great tribulation, for his father was very ill, and could not get well again. Except these two, there was no one at all in the little room: the lamp on the table was nearly extinguished, and it was quite late in the evening.

"You have been a good son, John," said the sick father. "Providence will help you through the world." And he looked at him with mild

earnest eyes, drew a deep breath, and died : it was just as if he slept. But John wept, for now he had no one in the world, neither father nor mother, neither sister nor brother. Poor John ! He lay



John at the Death-bed of his Father.

on his knees before the bed, kissed his dead father's hand, and shed very many bitter tears ; but at last his eyes closed, and he went to sleep, lying with his head against the hard bed-post.

Then he dreamed a strange dream : he saw the

sun and moon shine upon him, and he beheld his father again fresh and well, and he heard his father laugh as he had always laughed when he was very glad. A beautiful girl, with a golden crown upon her long shining hair, gave him her hand, and his father said, "Do you see what a bride you have gained? She is the most beautiful in the whole world!" Then he awoke, and all the splendour was gone. His father was lying dead and cold in the bed, and there was no one at all with them. Poor John!

In the next week the dead man was buried. The son walked close behind the coffin, and could now no longer see the good father who had loved him so much. He heard how they threw the earth down upon the coffin, and stopped to see the last corner of it; but the next shovel-full of earth hid even that: then he felt just as if his heart would burst into pieces, so sorrowful was he. Around him they were singing a psalm; those were sweet holy tones that arose, and the tears came into John's eyes; he wept, and that did him good in his sorrow. The sun shone magnificently on the green trees, just as if it would have said, "You may no longer be sorrowful, John! Do you see how beautiful the sky is? Your father is up there,

and prays to the Father of all that it may always be well with you."

"I will always do right, too," said John, "then I shall go to heaven to my father; and what joy that will be when we see each other again! How much I shall then have to tell him! and he will show me so many things, and explain to me the glories of heaven, just as he taught me here on earth. Oh, how joyful that will be!"

He pictured that to himself so plainly, that he smiled, while the tears were still rolling down his cheeks. The little birds sat up in the chestnut trees, and twittered, "Tweet-weet! tweet-weet!" They were joyful and merry, though they had been at the burying; but they seemed to know that the dead man was now in heaven; that he had wings, far larger and more beautiful than theirs; that he was now happy, because he had been good upon earth, and they were rejoiced at it. John saw how they flew from the green tree out into the world, and he felt inclined to fly too. But first he cut out a great cross of wood to put on his father's grave; and when he brought it there in the evening the grave was decked with sand and flowers: strangers had done this, for they were all very fond of the good father who was now dead.

Early next morning John packed up his little bundle, and put in his belt his whole inheritance, which consisted of fifty dollars and a few silver shillings; with this he intended to wander out into the world. But first he went to the churchyard, to his father's grave, to say a prayer and to bid him farewell.

Out in the field where he was walking all the flowers stood fresh and beautiful in the warm sunshine; and they nodded in the wind, just as if they would have said, "Welcome to the green wood! Is it not fine here?" But John turned back once more to look at the old church, in which he had been christened when he was a little child, and where he had been every Sunday with his father at the service, and had sung his psalm; then high up in one of the openings of the tower he saw the ringer standing in his little pointed red cap, shading his face with his bent arm to keep the sun from shining in his eyes. John nodded a farewell to him, and the little ringer waved his red cap, laid his hand on his heart, and kissed his hand to John a great many times, to show that he wished the traveller well and hoped he would have a prosperous journey.

John thought what a number of fine things he

would get to see in the great splendid world; and he went on farther—farther than he had ever been before. He did not know the places at all through which he came, nor the people whom he met. Now he was far away in a strange region.

The first night he was obliged to lie down on a haystack in the field to sleep, for he had no other bed. But that was very nice, he thought; the King could not be better off. There was the whole field, with the brook, the haystack, and the blue sky above it; that was certainly a beautiful sleeping-room. The green grass with the little red and white flowers was the carpet; the elder bushes and the wild rose hedges were garlands of flowers, and for a wash-hand basin he had the whole brook with the clear fresh water; and the rushes bowed before him and wished him “good evening” and “good morning.” The moon was certainly a great night-lamp, high up under the blue ceiling, and that lamp would never set fire to the curtains with its light. John could sleep quite safely, and he did so, and never woke until the sun rose and all the little birds were singing around, “Good morning! good morning! Are you not up yet?”

The bells were ringing for church; it was Sunday. The people went to hear the preacher, and

John followed them, and sang a psalm and heard God's word. It seemed to him just as if he was in his own church where he had been christened and had sung psalms with his father.

Out in the churchyard were many graves, and on some of them the grass grew high. Then he thought of his father's grave, which would at last look like these, as he could not weed it and adorn it. So he sat down and plucked up the long grass, set up the wooden crosses which had fallen down, and put back in their places the wreaths which the wind had blown away from the graves ; for he thought, "Perhaps some one will do the same to my father's grave, as I cannot do it."

Outside the churchyard gate stood an old beggar leaning on his crutch. John gave him the silver shillings which he had, and then went away happy and cheerful into the wide world. Towards evening the weather became terribly bad. He made haste to get under shelter, but dark night soon came on ; then at last he came to a little church, which lay quite solitary on a small hill.

"Here I will sit down in a corner," said he, and went in. "I am quite tired and require a little rest."

Then he sat down, folded his hands, and said his

evening prayer; and before he was aware of it he was asleep and dreaming, while it thundered and lightened without.

When he awoke it was midnight, but the bad weather had passed by, and the moon shone in upon him through the windows. In the midst of the church stood an open coffin, with a dead man in it who had not yet been buried. John was not at all timid, for he had a good conscience, and he knew very well that the dead do not harm any one. The living who do evil are bad men. Two such living bad men stood close by the dead man, who had been placed here in the church till he should be buried. They had an evil design against him, and would not let him rest quietly in his coffin, but were going to throw him out before the church door, the poor dead man!

“Why will you do that?” asked John. “That is bad and wicked. Let him rest, for mercy’s sake.”

“Nonsense!” replied the two bad men. “He has cheated us. He owed us money and could not pay it, and now he’s dead into the bargain, and we shall not get a penny! So we mean to revenge ourselves famously: he shall lie like a dog outside the church door.”

“I have not more than fifty dollars,” cried John, “that is my whole inheritance; but I will gladly give it you, if you will honestly promise me to leave the poor dead man in peace. I shall manage to get on without the money; I have hearty strong limbs, and Heaven will always help me.”

“Yes,” said these ugly bad men, “if you will pay his debt we will do nothing to him, you may depend upon that.”

And then they took the money he gave them, laughed aloud at his good nature, and went their way. But he laid the corpse out again in the coffin, and folded its hands, took leave of it, and went away contentedly through the great forest.

All around, wherever the moon could shine through between the trees, he saw the graceful little elves playing merrily. They did not let him disturb them; they knew that he was a good innocent man; and it is only the bad people who never get to see the elves. Some of them were not larger than a finger's breadth, and had fastened their long yellow hair with golden combs: they were rocking themselves, two and two, on the great dew-drops that lay on the leaves and on the high grass; sometimes the drop rolled away, and then they fell down between the long grass-stalks,

which occasioned much laughter and noise among the other little creatures. It was charming. They sang, and John recognized quite plainly the pretty songs which he had learned as a little boy. Great coloured spiders, with silver crowns on their heads, had to spin long hanging bridges and palaces from hedge to hedge ; and as the tiny dew-drops fell on these they looked like gleaming glass in the moon-light. This continued until the sun rose. Then the little elves crept into the flower-buds, and the wind caught their bridges and palaces, which flew through the air in the shape of spiders' webs.

John had just come out of the wood when a strong man's voice called out behind him,

“Hallo, friend! whither are you journeying?”

“Into the wide world!” he replied. “I have neither father nor mother, and am but a poor lad ; but Providence will help me.”

“I am going out into the wide world, too,” said the strange man : “shall we two keep one another company?”

“Yes, certainly,” said John ; and so they went on together. Soon they became very fond of each other, for they were both good men. But John saw that the stranger was much more clever than himself. He had travelled through almost the

whole world, and knew how to tell of almost everything that existed.

The sun already stood high when they seated themselves under a great tree to eat their breakfast; and just then an old woman came up. Oh, she was very old, and walked quite bent, leaning upon a crutch-stick; upon her back she carried a bundle of firewood which she had collected in the forest. Her apron was untied, and John saw that three great stalks of fern and some willow twigs looked out from within it. When she was close to them, her foot slipped; she fell and gave a loud scream, for she had broken her leg, the poor old woman!

John directly proposed that they should carry the old woman home to her dwelling; but the stranger opened his knapsack, took out a little box, and said that he had a salve there which would immediately make her leg whole and strong, so that she could walk home herself, as if she had never broken her leg at all. But for that he required that she should give him the three rods which she carried in her apron.

“That would be paying well!” said the old woman, and she nodded her head in a strange way. She did not like to give away the rods, but then it

was not agreeable to lie there with a broken leg. So she gave him the wands; and as soon as he had only rubbed the ointment on her leg, the old mother arose, and walked much better than before—such was the power of this ointment. But then it was not to be bought at the chemist's.

“What do you want with the rods?” John asked his travelling companion.

“They are three capital fern brooms,” replied he. “I like those very much, for I am a whimsical fellow.”

And they went on a good way.

“See how the sky is becoming overcast,” said John, pointing straight before them. “Those are terribly thick clouds.”

“No,” replied his travelling companion, “those are not clouds, they are mountains—the great glorious mountains, on which one gets quite up over the clouds, and into the free air. Believe me, it is delicious! To-morrow we shall certainly be far out into the world.”

But that was not so near as it looked; they had to walk for a whole day before they came to the mountains, where the black woods grew straight up towards heaven, and there were stones almost as big as a whole town. It might certainly be

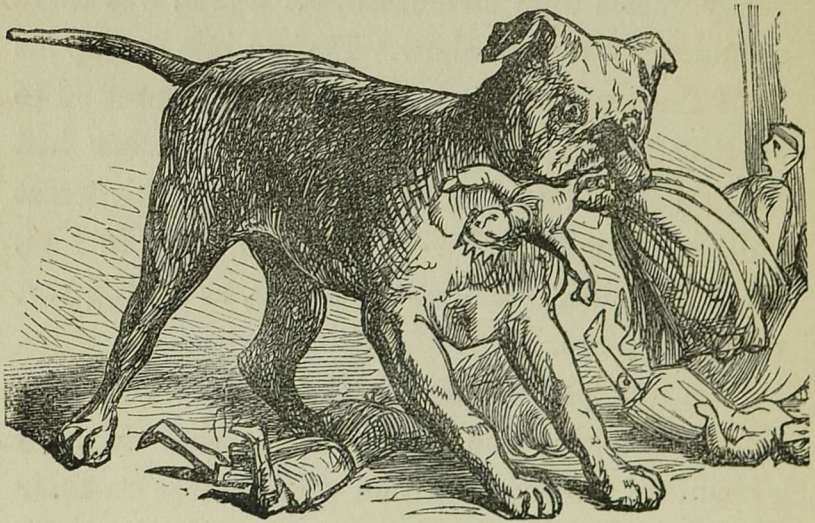
hard work to get quite across them, and for that reason John and his comrade went into the inn to rest themselves well, and gather strength for the morrow's journey.

Down in the great common room of the inn many guests were assembled, for a man was there exhibiting a puppet-show. He had just put up his little theatre, and the people were sitting round to see the play. Quite in front a fat butcher had taken his seat in the very best place; his great bulldog, who looked very much inclined to bite, sat at his side, and made big eyes, as all the rest were doing too.

Now the play began; and it was a very nice play, with a king and a queen in it; they sat upon a beautiful throne, and had gold crowns on their heads and long trains to their clothes, for their means admitted of that. The prettiest of wooden dolls with glass eyes and great moustaches stood at all the doors, and opened and shut them so that fresh air might come into the room. It was a very pleasant play, and not at all mournful. But—goodness knows what the big bulldog can have been thinking of!—just as the queen stood up and was walking across the boards, as the fat butcher did not hold him, he made a spring upon the stage,

and seized the queen round her slender waist so that it cracked again. It was quite terrible !

The poor man who managed the play was very much frightened and quite sorrowful about his queen, for she was the daintiest doll he possessed,



The Bulldog worries the Puppet.

and now the ugly bulldog had bitten off her head. But afterwards, when the people went away, the stranger said that he would soon put her to rights again ; and then he brought out his little box, and rubbed the doll with the ointment with which he had cured the old woman when she broke her leg. As soon as the doll had been rubbed, she was whole

again ; yes, she could even move all her limbs by herself ; it was no longer necessary to pull her by her string. The doll was like a living person, only that she could not speak. The man who had the little puppet-show was very glad, now he had not to hold this doll any more. She could dance by herself, and none of the others could do that.

When night came on, and all the people in the inn had gone to bed, there was some one who sighed so fearfully, and went on doing it so long, that they all got up to see who this could be. The man who had shown the play went to his little theatre, for it was there that somebody was sighing.

All the wooden dolls lay mixed together, the king and all his followers ; and it was they who sighed so pitiably, and stared with their glass eyes, for they wished to be rubbed a little as the queen had been, so that they might be able to move by themselves. The queen at once sank on her knees, and stretched forth her beautiful crown, as if she begged, " Take this from me, but rub my husband and my courtiers ! " Then the poor man, the proprietor of the theatre and the dolls, could not refrain from weeping, for he was really sorry for them. He immediately promised the travelling companion that he would give him all the money

he should receive the next evening for the representation if the latter would only anoint four or five of his dolls. But the comrade said he did not require anything at all but the sword the man wore by his side; and, on receiving this, he anointed six of the dolls, who immediately began to dance so gracefully that all the girls, the living human girls, fell a dancing too. The coachman and the cook danced, the waiter and the chambermaid, and all the strangers, and the fire-shovel and tongs; but these latter fell down just as they made their first leaps. Yes, it was a merry night!

Next morning John went away from them all with his travelling companion, up on to the high mountains, and through the great pine woods. They came so high up that the church steeples under them looked at last like little blueberries among all the green; and they could see very far, many, many miles away, where they had never been. So much splendour in the lovely world John had never seen at one time before. And the sun shone warm in the fresh blue air, and among the mountains he could hear the huntsmen blowing their horns so gaily and sweetly that tears came into his eyes, and he could not help calling

out, "How kind has Heaven been to us all, to give us all the splendour that is in this world!"

The travelling companion also stood there with folded hands, and looked over the forest and the towns into the warm sunshine. At the same time there arose lovely sounds over their heads: they looked up, and a great white swan was soaring in the air, and singing as they had never heard a bird sing till then. But the song became weaker and weaker; he bowed his head and sank quite slowly down at their feet, where he lay dead, the beautiful bird!

"Two such splendid wings," said the travelling companion, "so white and large, as those which this bird has, are worth money; I will take them with me. Do you see that it was good I got a sabre?"

And so, with one blow, he cut off both the wings of the dead swan, for he wanted to keep them.

They now travelled for many, many miles over the mountains, till at last they saw a great town before them with hundreds of towers, which glittered like silver in the sun. In the midst of the town was a splendid marble palace, roofed with pure red gold. And there the King lived.

John and the travelling companion would not

go into the town at once, but remained in the inn outside the gates, that they might dress themselves; for they wished to look nice when they came out into the streets. The host told them that the King was a very good man, who never did harm to any one; but his daughter, yes, goodness preserve us! she was a bad Princess. She possessed the most exquisite beauty—no one could be so pretty and so charming as she was—but of what use was that? She was a wicked witch, through whose fault many gallant Princes had lost their lives. She had given permission to all men to seek her hand. Any one might come, be he Prince or beggar: it was all the same to her. He had only to guess three things she had just thought of, and about which she questioned him. If he could do that she would marry him, and he was to be King over the whole country when her old father should die; but if he could not guess the three things, she caused him to be hanged or to have his head cut off! Her father, the old King, was very sorry about it; but he could not forbid her to be so wicked, because he had once said that he would have nothing to do with her lovers; she might do as she liked. Every time a Prince came, and was to guess to gain the Princess, he was

unable to do it, and was hanged or lost his head. He had been warned in time, you see, and might have given over his wooing. The old King was so sorry for all this misery and woe, that he used to lie on his knees with all his soldiers for a whole day in every year, praying that the Princess might become good; but she would not, by any means. The old women who drank brandy used to colour it quite black before they drank it, they were in such deep mourning—and they certainly could not do more.

“The ugly Princess!” said John; “she ought really to have the rod; that would do her good. If I were only the old King she should be well punished!”

Then they heard the people outside shouting “Hurrah!” The Princess came by; and she was really so beautiful that all the people forgot how wicked she was, and that is the reason they cried “Hurrah!” Twelve beautiful virgins, all in white silk gowns, and each with a golden tulip in her hand, rode on coal-black steeds at her side. The Princess herself rode on a noble snow-white horse, decked with diamond and rubies. Her riding-habit was all cloth of gold, and the whip she held in her hand looked like a sunbeam; the golden



John and his Companion see the Princess riding by.

crown on her head was just like little stars out of the sky; and her mantle was sewn together out of more than a thousand beautiful butterflies' wings. In spite of this, she herself was much more lovely than all her clothes.

When John saw her, his face became as red as a drop of blood, and he could hardly utter a word. The Princess looked just like the beautiful lady with the golden crown, of whom he had dreamed

on the night when his father died. He found her so enchanting that he could not help loving her greatly. It could not be true that she was a wicked witch, who caused people to be beheaded or hanged if they could not guess the riddles she put to them.

“Every one has her permission to aspire to her hand, even the poorest beggar. I will really go to the castle, for I cannot help doing it!”

They all told him not to attempt it, for certainly he would fare as all the rest had done. His travelling companion too tried to dissuade him; but John thought it would end well. He brushed his shoes and his coat, washed his face and his hands, combed his nice fair hair, and then went quite alone into the town and to the palace.

“Come in!” said the old King, when John knocked at the door.

John opened it, and the old King came towards him in a dressing-gown and embroidered slippers; he had the crown on his head, and the sceptre in one hand and the orb in the other.

“Wait a little!” said he, and put the orb under his arm, so that he could reach out his hand to John. But as soon as he learned that his visitor was a suitor, he began to weep so violently that both the sceptre and the orb fell to the ground.

and he was obliged to wipe his eyes with his dressing-gown. Poor old King!

“Give it up!” said he. “You will fare badly, just as all the others have done. Well, you shall see!”

Then he led him out into the Princess’s pleasure garden. There was a terrible sight! In every tree there hung three or four Kings’ sons who had wooed the Princess, but had not been able to guess the riddles she proposed to them. Each time that the breeze blew all the skeletons rattled, so that the little birds were frightened, and never dared to come into the garden. All the flowers were tied up to human bones, and in the flower-pots skulls stood and grinned. That was certainly a strange garden for a Princess.

“Here you see it,” said the old King. “It will chance to you as it has chanced to all these whom you see here; therefore you had better give it up. You will really make me unhappy, for I take these things very much to heart!”

John kissed the good old King’s hand, and said it would go well, for that he was quite enchanted with the beautiful Princess.

Then the Princess herself came riding into the courtyard with all her ladies; and they went out

to her and wished her good morning. She was beautiful to look at, and she gave John her hand. And he cared much more for her then than before. She could certainly not be a wicked witch, as the people asserted. Then they betook themselves to the hall, and the little pages waited upon them with preserves and gingerbread nuts. But the old King was quite sorrowful; he could not eat anything at all. Besides, the gingerbread nuts were too hard for him.

It was settled that John should come to the palace again the next morning; then the judges and the whole council would be assembled, and would hear how he succeeded with his answers. If it went well, he should come twice more; but no one had yet come who had succeeded in guessing right the first time; and if he did not manage better than they, he must die.

John was not at all anxious as to how he should fare. On the contrary, he was merry, thought only of the beautiful Princess, and felt quite certain that he should be helped. But *how* he did not know, and preferred not to think of it. He danced along on the road returning to the inn, where his travelling companion was waiting for him.

John could not leave off telling how polite the Princess had been to him, and how beautiful she was. He declared he already longed for the next day, when he was to go into the palace and try his luck in guessing.

But the travelling companion shook his head and was quite downcast.

“I am so fond of you!” said he. “We might have been together a long time yet, and now I am already to lose you! You poor dear John, I should like to cry, but I will not disturb your merriment on the last evening, perhaps, we shall ever spend together. We will now be merry, very merry. To-morrow, when you are gone, I can weep undisturbed.”

All the people in the town had heard directly that a new suitor for the Princess had arrived, and there was great sorrow on that account. The theatre remained closed, the women who sold cakes tied bits of crape round their sugar men, and the King and the priests were on their knees in the churches. There was great lamentation; for John would not, they all thought, fare better than the other suitors had fared.

Towards evening the travelling companion mixed a great bowl of punch, and said to John,

“Now we will be very merry, and drink to the health of the Princess.”

But when John had drunk two glasses, he became so sleepy that he found it impossible to keep his eyes open, and he sank into a deep, heavy sleep. The travelling companion lifted him very gently from his chair and laid him in the bed; and when it grew to be dark night, he took the two great wings which he had cut off the swan, and bound them to his own shoulders. Then he put in his pocket the longest of the rods he had received from the old woman who had fallen and broken her leg; and he opened the window and flew away over the town, straight towards the palace, where he seated himself in a corner under the window which looked into the bed-room of the Princess.

All was quiet through the whole town. Now the clock struck a quarter to twelve, the window was opened, and the Princess came out in a long white cloak, and with black wings, and flew away across the town to a great mountain. But the travelling companion made himself invisible, so that she could not see him at all, and flew behind her, and whipped the Princess with his rod, so that the blood almost came wherever he struck. Oh, that

was a voyage through the air! The wind caught her cloak, so that it spread out on all sides like a great sail, and the moon shone through it.

“How it hails! how it hails!” said the Princess at every blow she got from the rod; and it served her right. At last she arrived at the mountain, and knocked there. There was a loud rolling like thunder, and the mountain opened, and the Princess went in. The travelling companion followed her, for no one could see him—he was invisible. They went through a great long passage, where the walls shone in quite a peculiar way; there were above a thousand glowing spiders, running up and down the walls and gleaming like fire. Then they came into a great hall, built of silver and gold; flowers as big as sunflowers, red and blue, shone on the walls; but no one could pluck these flowers, for the stems were ugly poisonous snakes, and the flowers were streams of fire pouring out of their mouths. The whole ceiling was covered with shining glow-worms and sky-blue bats, flapping their thin wings. It looked quite terrific! In the middle of the floor was a throne carried by four skeleton horses, with harness of fiery red spiders; the throne itself was of milk-white glass, and the cushions were little black

mice, biting each other's tails. Above it was a canopy of pink spider's web, trimmed with some pretty little green flies, which gleamed like jewels. On the throne sat an old magician, with a crown on his ugly head and a sceptre in his hand. He kissed the Princess on the forehead, made her sit down beside him on the costly throne, and then the music began. Great black grasshoppers played on jews'-harps, and the owl beat her wings upon her body, because she hadn't a drum. That was a strange concert! Little black goblins with a Jack-o'-lantern light on their caps danced about in the hall. But no one could see the travelling companion: he had placed himself just behind the throne, and heard and saw everything. The courtiers, who now came in, were very grand and noble; but he who could see it all knew very well what it all meant. They were nothing more than broomsticks with heads of cabbages on them, which the magician had animated by his power, and to whom he had given embroidered clothes. But that did not natter, for, you see, they were only wanted for show.

After there had been a little dancing, the Princess told the magician that she had a new suitor, and therefore she inquired of him what she should

think of to ask the suitor when he should come to-morrow to the palace.

“Listen!” said the magician, “I will tell you that: you must choose something very easy, for then he won’t think of it. Think of one of your shoes. That he will not guess. Let him have his head cut off; but don’t forget when you come to me to-morrow night to bring me his eyes, for I’ll eat them.”

The Princess courtesied very low, and said she would not forget the eyes. The magician opened the mountain, and she flew home again; but the travelling companion followed her, and beat her again so hard with the rod that she sighed quite deeply about the heavy hail-storm, and hurried, as much as she could, to get back into the bedroom through the open window. The travelling companion, for his part, flew back to the inn, where John was still asleep, took off his wings, and then laid himself upon the bed, for he might well be tired.

It was quite early in the morning when John awoke. The travelling companion also got up, and said he had had a wonderful dream in the night about the Princess and her shoe; and he therefore begged John to ask if the Princess had

not thought about her shoe. For it was this he had heard from the magician in the mountain.

“I may just as well ask about that as about anything else,” said John. “Perhaps it is quite right, what you have dreamed. But I will bid you farewell; for, if I guess wrong, I shall never see you more.”

Then they embraced each other, and John went into the town and to the palace. The entire hall was filled with people; the judges sat in their arm-chairs and had eider-down pillows behind their heads, for they had a great deal to think about. The old King stood up and wiped his eyes with a white pocket handkerchief. Now the Princess came in. She was much more beautiful than yesterday, and bowed to them all in a very affable manner; but to John she gave her hand, and said, “Good morning to you!”

Now John was to guess what she had thought of. Oh, how lovingly she looked at him! But as soon as she heard the single word “shoe” pronounced, she became as white as chalk in the face, and trembled all over. But that availed her nothing, for John had guessed right!

Wonderful! How glad the old King was! He threw a somersault beautiful to behold. And all

the people clapped their hands in honour of him and of John, who had guessed right the first time.

The travelling companion was glad too, when he heard how well matters had gone. But John felt very grateful; and he was sure he should receive help the second and third time, as he had been helped the first. The next day he was to guess again.

The evening passed just like that of yesterday. While John slept the travelling companion flew behind the Princess out of the mountain, and beat her even harder than the time before, for now he had taken two rods. No one saw him, and he heard everything. The Princess was to think of her glove; and this he again told to John as if it had been a dream. Thus John could guess well, which caused great rejoicing in the palace. The whole court threw somersaults, just as they had seen the King do the first time. But the Princess lay on the sofa, and would not say a single word. Now the question was, if John could guess properly the third time. If he succeeded, he was to have the beautiful Princess and inherit the whole kingdom after the old King's death. If he failed, he was to lose his life, and the magician would eat his beautiful blue eyes.

That evening John went early to bed, said his prayers, and went to sleep quite quietly. But the travelling companion bound his wings to his back and his sword by his side, and took all three rods with him, and so flew away to the palace.

It was a very dark night. The wind blew so hard that the tiles flew off from the roofs, and the trees in the garden where the skeletons hung bent like reeds before the storm. The lightning flashed out every minute, and the thunder rolled just as if it were one peal lasting the whole night. Now the window opened, and the Princess flew out. She was as pale as death; but she laughed at the bad weather, and declared it was not bad enough yet. And her white cloak fluttered in the wind like a great sail; but the travelling companion beat her with the three rods, so that the blood dripped upon the ground, and at last she could scarcely fly any farther. At length, however, she arrived at the mountain.

“It hails and blows!” she said. “I have never been out in such weather.”

“One may have too much of a good thing,” said the magician. “I shall think of something of which he has never thought, or he must be a greater conjuror than I. But now we will be



The Death of the Magician.

merry!" And he took the Princess by the hands, and they danced about with all the little goblins and Jack-o'-lanterns that were in the room. The red spiders jumped just as merrily up and down

the walls: it looked as if fiery flowers were spurt-
ing out. The owl played the drum, the crickets
piped, and the black grasshoppers played on the
jews'-harp. It was a merry ball.

When they had danced long enough, the Princess
was obliged to go home, for she might be missed
in the palace. The magician said he would accom-
pany her, then they would have each other's com-
pany on the way.

Then they flew away into the bad weather, and
the travelling companion broke all his three rods
across their backs. Never had the magician been
out in such a hail-storm. In front of the palace
he said good bye to the Princess, and whispered
to her at the same time, "Think of my head!"
But the travelling companion heard it; and just
at the moment when the Princess slipped through
the window into her bed-room, and the magician
was about to turn back, he seized him by his long
beard, and with his sabre cut off the ugly conjuror's
head just by the shoulders, so that the magician
did not even see him. The body he threw out into
the sea to the fishes; but the head he only dipped
into the water, and then tied it in his silk hand-
kerchief, took it with him into the inn, and then
lay down to sleep.

Next morning he gave John the handkerchief, and told him not to untie it until the Princess asked him to tell her thoughts.

There were so many people in the great hall of the palace, that they stood as close together as radishes bound together in a bundle. The council sat in the chairs with the soft pillows, and the old King had new clothes on; the golden crown and sceptre had been polished, and everything looked quite stately. But the Princess was quite pale, and had a coal-black dress on, as if she were going to be buried.

“Of what have I thought?” she asked John.

And he immediately untied the handkerchief, and was himself quite frightened when he saw the ugly magician’s head. All present shuddered, for it was terrible to look upon; but the Princess sat just like a statue, and would not utter a single word. At length she stood up, and gave John her hand, for he had guessed well. She did not look at any one, only sighed aloud, and said,

“Now you are my lord!—this evening we will hold our wedding.”

“I like that!” cried the old King. “Thus I will have it.”

All present cried “Hurrah!” The soldiers’ band

played music in the streets, the bells rang, and the cake-women took off the black crape from their sugar dolls, for joy now reigned around. Three oxen roasted whole, and stuffed with ducks and fowls, were placed in the middle of the market, that every one might cut himself a slice; the fountains ran with the best wine; and whoever bought a penny cake at the baker's, got six biscuits into the bargain, and the biscuits had raisins in them.

In the evening the whole town was illuminated; the soldiers fired off the cannon, and the boys let off crackers; and there was eating and drinking, clinking of glasses, and dancing, in the palace. All the noble gentlemen and pretty ladies danced with each other, and one could hear, a long distance off, how they sang—

“Here are many pretty girls, who all love to dance;
See, they whirl like spinning-wheels, retire and advance.
Turn, my pretty maiden, do,
Till the sole falls from your shoe.”

But still the Princess was a witch, and did not like John. That occurred to the travelling companion; and so he gave John three feathers out of the swan's wings and a little bottle with a few drops in it, and told John that he must put a large tub of water before the Princess's bed; and

when the Princess was about to get into bed, he should give her a little push, so that she should fall into the tub; and then he must dip her three times, after he had put in the feathers and poured in the drops; she would then lose her magic qualities, and love him very much.

John did all that the travelling companion had advised him to do. The Princess screamed out loudly while he dipped her under, and struggled under his hands in the form of a great coal-black swan with fiery red eyes. When she came up the second time above the water, the swan was white, with the exception of a black ring round her neck. John let the water close for the third time over the bird, and in the same moment it was changed into the beautiful Princess. She was more beautiful even than before, and thanked him, with tears in her lovely eyes, that he had freed her from the magic spell.

The next morning the old King came with his whole court, and then there was great congratulations till late into the day. Last of all came the travelling companion; he had his staff in his hand and his knapsack on his back. John kissed him many times, and said he must not depart, he must remain with the friend of whose happiness

he was the cause. But the travelling companion shook his head, and said mildly and kindly,

“No, now my time is up. I have only paid my debt. Do you remember the dead man whom the bad people wished to injure? You gave all you possessed in order that he might have rest in his grave. I am that man.”

And in the same moment he vanished.

The wedding festivities lasted a whole month. John and the Princess loved each other truly, and the old King passed many pleasant days, and let their children ride on his knees and play with his sceptre. And John afterwards became King over the whole country.



THE NAUGHTY BOY.

THERE was once an old poet—a very good old poet. One evening as he sat at home there was dreadfully bad weather without. The rain streamed down: but the old poet sat comfort-

ably by his stove, where the fire was burning and the roasting apples were hissing.

“There won’t be a dry thread left on the poor people who are out in this weather !” said he—for he was a good old poet.

“Oh, open to me ! I am cold, and quite wet,” said a little child outside ; and it cried aloud, and knocked at the door, while the rain streamed down and the wind made all the casements of the house rattle.

“You poor little creature !” said the poet ; and he went to open the door.

There stood a little boy ; he was quite naked, and the water ran in streams from his long fair curls. He was shivering with cold, and had he not been let in, he would certainly have perished in the bad weather.

“You little creature !” said the poet, and took him by the hand, “come to me, and I will warm you. You shall have wine and an apple, for you are a capital boy.”

And so he was. His eyes sparkled like two bright stars, and though the water ran down from his fair curls, they fell in beautiful ringlets. He looked like a little angel-child, but was white with cold and trembled all over. In his hand he carried

a famous bow, but it looked quite spoiled by the wet; all the colours in the beautiful arrows had been blurred together by the rain.

The old poet sat down by the stove, took the little boy on his knees, pressed the water out of the long curls, warmed his hands in his own, and made him some sweet whine-whey; then the boy recovered himself, and his cheeks grew red, and he jumped to the floor and danced round the old poet.

“You are a merry boy,” said the old poet.

“What is your name?”

“My name is Cupid,” he replied; “don’t you know me? There lies my bow—I shoot with that, you may believe me! See, now the weather is clearing up outside, and the moon shines.”

“But your bow is spoiled,” said the old poet.

“That would be a pity,” replied the little boy; and he took the bow and looked at it. “Oh, it is quite dry, and has suffered no damage; the string is quite stiff—I will try it!” Then he bent it, and laid an arrow across, aimed, and shot the good old poet straight through the heart. “Do you see now that my bow was not spoiled?” said he, and laughed out loud and ran away.

What a naughty boy to shoot at the old poet in that way, who had admitted him into the warm



The old Poet shot through the heart by Cupid.

room, and been so kind to him, and given him the best wine and the best apple!

The good poet lay upon the floor and wept; he was really shot straight into the heart.

“Fie!” he cried, “what a naughty boy this

Cupid is ! I shall tell that to all good children, so that they may take care, and never play with him, for he will do them a hurt ! ”

All good children, girls and boys, to whom he told this, took good heed of this naughty Cupid ; but still he tricked them, for he is very cunning. When the students come out from the lectures, he runs at their side with a book under his arm, and has a black coat on. They cannot recognize him at all. And then they take his arm and fancy he is a student too ; but he thrusts the arrow into their breasts. Yes, he is always following people ! He sits in the great chandelier in the theatre and burns brightly, so that the people think he is a lamp ; but afterwards they see their error. He runs about in the palace garden and on the promenades. Yes, he once shot your father and your mother straight through the heart ! Only ask them, and you will hear what they say. Oh, he is a bad boy, this Cupid ; you must never have anything to do with him. He is after every one. Only think, once he shot an arrow at old grandmamma ; but that was a long time ago. The wound has indeed healed long since, but she will never forget it. Fie on that wicked Cupid ! But now you know him, and what a naughty boy he is.



THE JEWISH GIRL.

AMONG the children in a charity school sat a little Jewish girl. She was a good, intelligent child, the quickest in all the school; but she had to be excluded from one lesson, for she was not allowed to take part in the scripture-lesson, for it was a Christian school.

In that hour the girl was allowed to open the geography-book, or to do her sum for the next day; but that was soon done; and when she had mastered her lesson in geography, the book indeed remained open before her, but the little one read no more in it: she listened silently to the words of the Christian teacher, who soon became aware that she was listening more intently than almost any of the other children.

“Read your book, Sara,” the teacher said, in mild reproof; but her dark beaming eye remained fixed upon him; and once when he addressed a

question to her, she knew how to answer better than any of the others could have done. She had heard and understood, and had kept his words in her heart.

When her father, a poor honest man, first brought the girl to the school, he had stipulated that she should be excluded from the lessons on the Christian faith. But it would have caused disturbance, and perhaps might have awakened discontent in the minds of the others, if she had been sent from the room during the hours in question, and consequently she stayed; but this could not go on any longer.

The teacher betook himself to the father, and exhorted him either to remove his daughter from the school, or to consent that Sara should become a Christian.

“I can no longer be a silent spectator of the gleaming eyes of the child, and of her deep and earnest longing for the words of the Gospel,” said the teacher.

Then the father burst into tears.

“I know but little of the commandment given to my fathers,” he said; “but Sara’s mother was steadfast in the faith, a true daughter of Israel, and I vowed to her as she lay dying that our child

should never be baptized. I must keep my vow, for it is even as a covenant with God Himself."

And accordingly the little Jewish maiden quitted the Christian school.

Years have rolled on.

In one of the smallest provincial towns there dwelt, as servant in a very humble household, a maiden who held the Mosaic faith. Her hair was black as ebony, her eye dark as night, and yet full of splendour and light, as is usual with the daughters of Israel. It was Sara. The expression in the countenance of the now grown-up maiden was still that of the child sitting upon the school-room bench and listening with thoughtful eyes to the words of the Christian teacher.

Every Sunday there pealed from the church the sounds of the organ and the song of the congregation. The strains penetrated into the house where the Jewish girl, industrious and faithful in all things, stood at her work.

"Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath-day," said a voice within her, the voice of the Law; but her Sabbath-day was a working day among the Christians, and that seemed unfortunate to her. But then the thought arose in her soul: "Doth

God reckon by days and hours?" And when this thought grew strong within her, it seemed a comfort that on the Sunday of the Christians the hour of prayer remained undisturbed; and when the sound of the organ and the songs of the congregation sounded across to her as she stood in the kitchen at her work, then even that place seemed to become a sacred one to her. Then she would read in the Old Testament, the treasure and comfort of her people, and it was only in this one that she could read, for she kept faithfully in the depths of her heart the words the teacher had spoken when she left the school, and the promise her father had given to her dying mother, that she should never receive Christian baptism, or deny the faith of her ancestors. The New Testament was to be a sealed book to her; and yet she knew much of it; and the Gospel echoed faintly among the recollections of her youth.

One evening she was sitting in a corner of the living-room. Her master was reading aloud; and she might listen to him, for it was not the Gospel that he read, but an old story-book, therefore she might stay. The book told of a Hungarian knight who was taken prisoner by a Turkish pasha, who caused him to be yoked with his oxen to the plough,



Sara listening to the singing in the Church.

and driven with blows of the whip till the blood came, and he almost sank under the pain and ignominy he endured. The faithful wife of the knight at home parted with all her jewels, and pledged castle and land. The knight's friends amassed large sums, for the ransom demanded was almost unattainably high: but it was collected at last, and the knight was freed from servitude and misery. Sick and exhausted, he reached his home. But soon another summons came to war against the foes of Christianity: the knight heard the cry, and he could stay no longer, for he had neither peace nor rest. He caused himself to be lifted on his war-horse; and the blood came back to his cheek, his strength appeared to return, and he went forth to battle and to victory. The very same pasha who had yoked him to the plough became his prisoner, and was dragged to his castle. But not an hour had passed when the knight stood before the captive pasha, and said to him,

“What dost thou suppose awaiteth thee?”

“I know it,” replied the Turk. “Retribution.”

“Yes, the retribution of the Christian!” resumed the knight. “The doctrine of Christ commands us to forgive our enemies and to love our fellow-man, for it teaches us that God is love

Depart in peace, depart to thy home : I will restore thee to thy dear ones ; but in future be mild and merciful to all who are unfortunate.”

Then the prisoner broke out into tears, and exclaimed,

“ How could I believe in the possibility of such mercy ? Misery and torment seemed to await me, they seemed inevitable ; therefore I took poison, which I secretly carried about me, and in a few hours its effects will slay me. I must die—there is no remedy ! But before I die, do thou expound to me the teaching which includes so great a measure of love and mercy, for it is great and god-like ! Grant me to hear this teaching, and to die a Christian ! ” And his prayer was fulfilled.

That was the legend which the master read out of the old story-book. All the audience listened with sympathy and pleasure ; but Sara, the Jewish girl, sitting alone in her corner, listened with a burning heart ; great tears came into her gleaming black eyes, and she sat there with a gentle and lowly spirit as she had once sat on the school bench, and felt the grandeur of the Gospel ; and the tears rolled down over her cheeks.

But again the dying words of her mother rose up within her :

“Let not my daughter become a Christian,” the voice cried; and together with it arose the word of the Law: “Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother.”

“I am not admitted into the community of the Christians,” she said; “they abuse me for being a Jew girl—our neighbour’s boys hooted me last Sunday, when I stood at the open church door, and looked in at the flaming candles on the altar, and listened to the song of the congregation. Ever since I sat upon the school bench I have felt the force of Christianity, a force like that of a sun-beam, which streams into my soul, however firmly I may shut my eyes against it. But I will not pain thee in thy grave, O my mother, I will never be unfaithful to the oath of my father, I will not read the Bible of the Christians. I have the religion of my people, and to that will I hold!”

And years rolled on again.

The master died. His widow fell into poverty; and the servant girl was to be dismissed. But Sara refused to leave the house: she became the staff in time of trouble, and kept the household together, working till late in the night to earn the daily bread through the labour of her hands; for

no relative came forward to assist the family, and the widow become weaker every day, and lay for months together on the bed of sickness. Sara worked very hard, and in the intervals sat kindly ministering by the sick-bed: she was gentle and pious, an angel of blessing in the poverty-stricken house.

“Yonder on the table lies the Bible,” said the sick woman to Sara. “Read me something from it, for the night appears to be so long—oh, so long!—and my soul thirsts for the word of the Lord.”

And Sara bowed her head. She took the book, and folded her hands over the Bible of the Christians, and opened it, and read to the sick woman. Tears stood in her eyes, which gleamed and shone with ecstasy, and light shone in her heart.

“O my mother,” she whispered to herself, “thy child may not receive the baptism of the Christians, or be admitted into the congregation—thou hast willed it so, and I shall respect thy command: we will remain in union together here upon earth; but beyond this earth there is a higher union, even union in God! He will be at our side, and lead us through the valley of death. It is He that descendeth upon the earth when it is athirst, and covers it with fruitfulness. I understand it—I

know not how I came to learn the truth; but it is through Him, through Christ!"

And she started as she pronounced the sacred name, and there came upon her a baptism as of flames of fire, and her frame shook, and her limbs tottered so that she sank down fainting, weaker even than the sick woman by whose couch she had watched.

"Poor Sara!" said the people; "she is overcome with night watching and toil!"

They carried her out into the hospital for the sick poor. There she died; and from thence they carried her to the grave, but not to the churchyard of the Christians, for yonder was no room for the Jewish girl; outside, by the wall, her grave was dug.

But God's sun, that shines upon the graves of the Christians, throws its beams also upon the grave of the Jewish girl beyond the wall; and when the psalms are sung in the churchyard of the Christians, they echo likewise over her lonely resting-place; and she who sleeps beneath is included in the call to the resurrection, in the name of Him who spake to his disciples:

"John baptized you with water, but I will baptize you with the Holy Ghost."



THE MONEY-PIG.

IN the nursery a number of toys lay strewn about: high up on the wardrobe stood the money-box made of clay and purchased of the potter, and it was in the shape of a little pig; of course the pig had a slit in its back, and this slit had been so enlarged with a knife that whole dollar pieces could slip through; and, indeed, two such had slipped into the box, besides a number of pence. The money-pig was stuffed so full that it could no longer rattle, and that is the highest point of perfection a money-pig can attain. There it stood upon the cupboard, high and lofty, looking down upon everything else in the room: it knew very well that what it had in its stomach would have bought all the toys, and that's what we call having self-respect.

The others thought of that too, even if they did not exactly express it, for there were many

other things to speak of. One of the drawers was half pulled out, and there lay a great handsome Doll, though she was somewhat old, and her neck had been mended. She looked out and said,

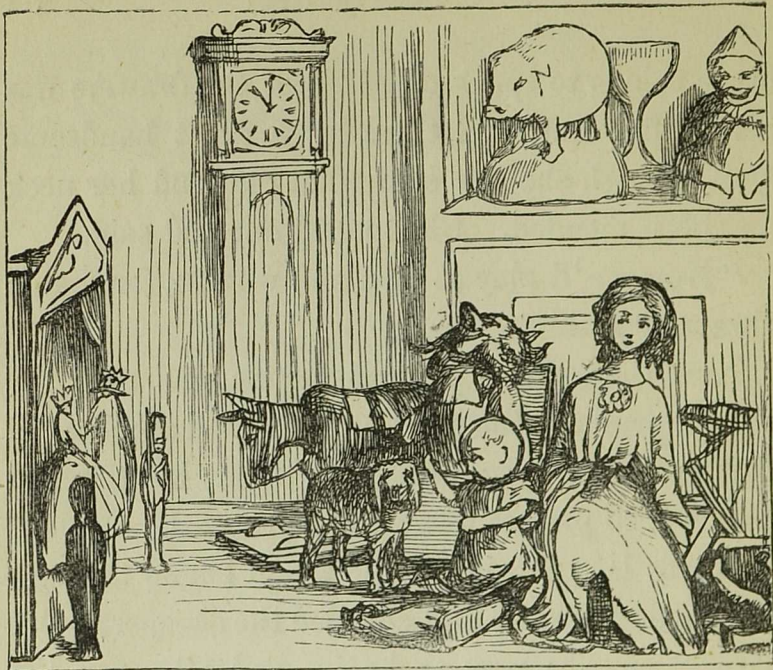
“Now we’ll play at men and women, for that is always something.”

Now there was a general uproar, and even the framed prints on the walls turned round and showed that there was a wrong side to them; but they did not do it to protest against the proposal.

It was late at night; the moon shone through the window-frames and afforded the cheapest light. The game was now to begin, and all, even the children’s Go-Cart, which certainly belonged to the coarser playthings, were invited to take part in the sport.

“Each one has his own peculiar value,” said the Go-Cart; “we cannot all be noblemen. There must be some who do the work, as the saying is.”

The money-pig was the only one who received a written invitation, for he was of high standing, and they were afraid he would not accept a verbal message. Indeed, he did not answer to say whether he would come, nor did he come: if he was to take a part, he must enjoy the sport from his own home; they were to arrange accordingly, and so they did.



The party of Toys.

The little toy theatre was now put up in such a way that the money-pig could look directly in. They wanted to begin with a comedy, and afterwards there was to be a tea party and a discussion for mental improvement, and with this latter part they began immediately. The rocking-horse spoke of training and race; the Go-Cart of railways and steam power, for all this belonged to their profession, and it was quite right they should talk of it. The clock talked politics—ticks—ticks—and knew what was the time of day, though it was

whispered he did not go correctly; the bamboo cane stood there, stiff and proud, for he was conceited about his brass ferule and his silver top, for being thus bound above and below; on the sofa lay two worked cushions, pretty and stupid.

And now the play began.

All sat and looked on, and it was requested the audience should applaud and crack and stamp according as they were gratified. But the riding-whip said he never cracked for old people, only for young ones who were not yet married.

“I crack for everything,” said the Cracker.

And these were the thoughts they had while the play went on. The piece was worthless, but it was well played: all the characters turned their painted side to the audience, for they were so made that they should only be looked at from that side, and not from the other; and all played wonderfully well, coming out quite beyond the lamps, because the wires were a little too long, but that only made them come out the more. The darned Doll was quite exhausted with excitement — so thoroughly exhausted that she burst at the darned place in her neck, and the money-pig was so enchanted in his way that he formed the resolution to do something for one of the players, and to remember him in

his will as the one who should be buried with him in the family vault, when matters were so far advanced.

It was true enjoyment, such true enjoyment that they quite gave up the thoughts of tea, and only carried out the idea of mental recreation; That's what they call playing at men and women; and there was nothing wrong in it, for they were only playing; and each one thought of himself and of what the money-pig might think; and the money-pig thought furthest of all, for he thought of making his will and of his burial. And when might this come to pass? Certainly far sooner than was expected. Crack! it fell down from the cupboard, fell on the ground, and was broken to pieces, and the pennies hopped and danced in comical style; the little ones turned round like tops, and the bigger ones rolled away, particularly the one great silver dollar, who wanted to go out into the world. And he came out into the world, and they all succeeded in doing so; and the pieces of the money-pig were put into the dust-bin; but the next day a new money-pig was standing on the cupboard; it had not yet a farthing in its stomach, and therefore could not rattle, and in this it was like the other. And that was a beginning — and with that we will make an end.



WHAT ONE CAN INVENT.

THERE was once a young man who was studying to be a poet. He wanted to become one by Easter, and to marry, and to live by poetry. To write poems, he knew, only consists in being able to invent something; but he could not invent anything. He had been born too late—everything had been taken up before he came into the world, and everything had been written and told about.

“Happy people who were born a thousand years ago!” said he. “It was an easy matter for them to become immortal. Happy even was

he who was born a hundred years ago, for then there was still something about which a poem could be written. Now the world is written out, and what can I write poetry about?"

Then he studied till he became ill and wretched, the wretched man! No doctor could help him, but perhaps the wise woman could. She lived in the little house by the wayside, where the gate is that she opened for those who rode and drove. But she could do more than unlock the gate: she was wiser than the doctor who drives in his own carriage and pays tax for his rank.

"I must go to her," said the young man.

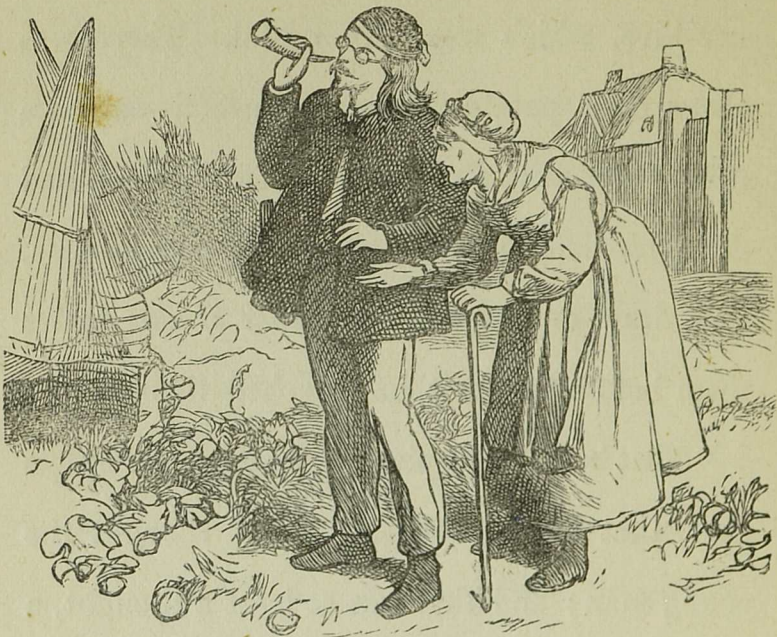
The house in which she dwelt was small and neat, but dreary to behold, for there were no flowers near it—no trees. By the door stood a

bee-hive, which was very useful. There was also a little potato-field—very useful—and an earth-bank, with sloe bushes upon it, which had done blossoming, and now bore fruit—sloes, that draw one's mouth together if one tastes them before the frost has touched them.

“That's a true picture of our poetryless time, that I see before me now,” thought the young man; and that was at least a thought, a grain of gold that he found by the door of the wise woman.

“Write that down!” said she. “Even crumbs are bread. I know why you come hither. You cannot invent anything, and yet you want to be a poet by Easter.”

“Everything has been written down,” said he. “Our time is not the old time.”



The would-be Poet.

“No,” said the woman. “In the old time wise women were burnt, and poets went about with empty stomachs, and very much out at elbows. The present time is good—it is the best of times; but you have not the right way of looking at it. Your ear is not sharpened to hear, and I fancy you do not say the Lord’s

Prayer in the evening. There is plenty here to write poems about, and to tell of, for any one who knows the way. You can read it in the fruits of the earth, you can draw it from the flowing and the standing water; but you must know how—you must understand how to catch a sunbeam. Now just you try my spectacles on, and put my ear-trumpet to your ear, and then pray to God, and leave off thinking of yourself."

The last was a very difficult thing to do—more than a wise woman ought to ask.

He received the spectacles and the ear-trumpet, and was posted in the middle of the potato-field. She put a great potato into his hand. Sounds came from within it; there came a song with words, the history of the

potato, an every-day story in ten parts—an interesting story. And ten lines were enough to tell it in.

And what did the Potato sing?

She sang of herself and of her family—of the arrival of the potato in Europe, of the misrepresentation to which she had been exposed before she was acknowledged, as she is now, to be a greater treasure than a lump of gold.

“We were distributed, by the King’s command, from the council-houses through the various towns, and proclamation was made of our great value; but no one believed in it, or even understood how to plant us. One man dug a hole in the earth and threw in his whole bushel of potatoes; another put one potato here and another there in the ground, and expected

that each was to come up a perfect tree, from which he might shake down potatoes. And they certainly grew, and produced flowers and green watery fruit, but it all withered away. Nobody thought of what was in the ground—the blessing—the potato. Yes, we have endured and suffered—that is to say, our forefathers have; they and we, it is all one.”

What a story it was!

“Well, and that will do,” said the woman.
“Now look at the sloe bush.”

“We have also some near relations in the home of the potatoes, but higher towards the north than they grew,” said the Sloes. “There were Northmen, from Norway, who steered westward through mist and storm to an unknown land, where, behind ice and snow, they

found plants and green meadows, and bushes with blue-black grapes — sloe bushes. The grapes were ripened by the frost just as we are. And they called the land ‘wine-land,’ that is, ‘Groenland’ or ‘Sloeland.’”

“That is quite a romantic story,” said the young man.

“Yes, certainly. But now come with me,” said the wise woman; and she led him to the bee-hive.

He looked into it. What life and labour! There were bees standing in all the passages, waving their wings, so that a wholesome draught of air might blow through the great manufactory: that was their business. Then there came in bees from without, who had been born with little baskets on their feet: they brought flower-

dust, which was poured out, sorted, and manufactured into honey and wax. They flew in and out: the queen-bee wanted to fly out too, but then all the other bees must have gone with her. It was not yet the time for that, but still she wanted to fly out; so the others bit off her majesty's wings, and she had to stay where she was.

"Now get upon the earth-bank," said the wise woman. "Come and look out over the highway, where you can see the people."

"What a crowd it is!" said the young man. "One story after another. It whirls and whirls! It's quite a confusion before my eyes. I shall go out at the back."

"No, go straight forward," said the woman. "Go straight into the crowd of people; look at

them in the right way. Have an ear to hear and the right heart to feel, and you will soon invent something. But, before you go away, you must give me my spectacles and my ear-trumpet again."

And so saying, she took both from him.

"Now I do not see the smallest thing," said the young man, "and now I don't hear anything more."

"Why, then, you can't be a poet by Easter," said the wise woman.

"But by what time can I be one?" asked he.

"Neither by Easter nor by Whitsuntide! You will not learn how to invent anything."

"What must I do to earn my bread by poetry?"

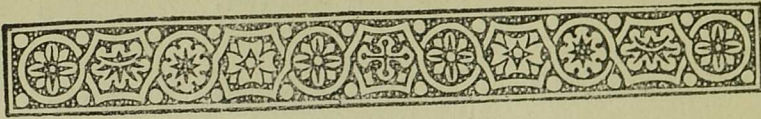
“You can do that before Shrove Tuesday. Hunt the poets! Kill their writings, and thus you will kill them. Don’t be put out of countenance. Strike at them boldly, and you’ll have carnival cake, on which you can support yourself and your wife too.”

“What one can invent!” cried the young man. And so he hit out boldly at every second poet, because he could not be a poet himself.

We have it from the wise woman: she knows

WHAT ONE CAN INVENT.





THE TOAD.

THE well was deep, and therefore the rope had to be a long one; it was heavy work turning the handle when any one had to raise a bucket-full of water over the edge of the well. Though the water was clear, the sun never looked down far enough into the well to mirror itself in the waters; but as far as its beams could reach, green things grew forth between the stones in the sides of the well.

Down below dwelt a family of the Toad race. They had, in fact, come head-over-heels down the well, in the person of old Mother-Toad,

who was still alive. The green Frogs, who had been established there a long time, and swam about in the water, called them "well-guests." But the new-comers seemed determined to stay where they were, for they found it very agreeable living "in a dry place," as they called the wet stones.

The Mother-Frog had once been a traveller. She happened to be in the water-bucket when it was drawn up, but the light became too strong for her, and she got a pain in her eyes. Fortunately she scrambled out of the bucket; but she fell into the water with a terrible flop, and had to lie sick for three days with pains in her back. She certainly had not much to tell of the things up above; but she knew this, and all the Frogs knew it, that the well was not all

the world. The Mother-Toad might have told this and that, if she had chosen, but she never answered when they asked her anything, and so they left off asking.

“She’s thick, and fat, and ugly,” said the young green Frogs; “and her children will be just as ugly as she is.”

“That may be,” retorted the Mother-Toad; “but one of them has a jewel in his head, or else I have the jewel.”

The young Frogs listened and stared; and as these words did not please them, they made grimaces, and dived down under the water. But the little Toads kicked up their hind legs from mere pride, for each of them thought that he must have the jewel; and then they sat and held their heads quite still. But at length

they asked what it was that made them so proud, and what kind of a thing a jewel might be.

“Oh, it is such a splendid and precious thing, that I cannot describe it,” said the Mother-Toad. “It’s something which one carries about for one’s own pleasure, and that makes other people angry. But don’t ask me any questions, for I shan’t answer you.”

“Well, *I* haven’t got the jewel,” said the smallest of the Toads: she was as ugly as a toad can be. “Why should I have such a precious thing? And if it makes others angry, it can’t give me any pleasure. No, I only wish I could get to the edge of the well, and look out; it must be beautiful up there.”

“You’d better stay where you are,” said the

old Mother-Toad; “for you know everything here, and you can tell what you have. Take care of the bucket, for it will crush you to death; and even if you get into it safely, you may fall out; and it’s not every one who falls so cleverly as I did, and gets away with whole eggs and whole bones.”

“Quack!” said the little Toad; and that’s just as if one of us were to say, “Aha!”

She had an immense desire to get to the edge of the well, and to look over; she felt such a longing for the green—up there; and the next morning, when it chanced that the bucket was being drawn up, filled with water, and stopped for a moment just in front of the stone on which the Toad sat, the little creature’s heart moved within it, and our Toad jumped



The Toad's reception in the World.

into the filled bucket—which presently was drawn to the top, and emptied out.

“Ugh, you beast!” said the farm labourer who emptied the bucket, when he saw the Toad. “You’re the ugliest thing I’ve seen for one while.” And he made a kick with his wooden shoe at the Toad, which just escaped being crushed by managing to scramble into the

nettles which grew high by the well's brink. Here she saw stem by stem, but she looked up also: the sun shone through the leaves, which were quite transparent; and she felt as a person would feel who steps suddenly into a great forest, where the sun looks in between the branches and leaves.

“It's much nicer here than down in the well! I should like to stay here my whole life long!” said the little Toad. So she lay there for an hour, yes, for two hours. “I wonder what is to be found up here? As I have come so far, I must try to go still farther.” And so she crawled on as fast as she could crawl, and got out upon the highway, where the sun shone upon her, and the dust powdered her all over as she marched across the way.

“I’ve got to a dry place now, and no mistake,” said the Toad. “It’s almost too much of a good thing here; it tickles one so.”

She came to the ditch; and forget-me-nots were growing there, and meadow-sweet; and a very little way off was a hedge of whitethorn, and elder bushes grew there too, and bindweed with white flowers. Gay colours were to be seen here, and a butterfly, too, was flitting by. The Toad thought it was a flower which had broken loose that it might look about better in the world, which was quite a natural thing to do.

“If one could only make such a journey as that!” said the Toad. “Croak! how capital that would be!”

Eight days and eight nights she stayed by

the well, and experienced no want of provisions. On the ninth day she thought, "Forward! onward!" But what could she find more charming and beautiful? Perhaps a little toad or a few green frogs. During the last night there had been a sound borne on the breeze, as if there were cousins in the neighbourhood.

"It's a glorious thing to live! glorious to get out of the well, and to lie among the stinging-nettles, and to crawl along the dusty road. But onward, onward! that we may find frogs or a little toad. We can't do without that; nature alone is not enough for one." And so she went forward on her journey.

She came out into the open field, to a great pond, round about which grew reeds; and she walked into it.

“It will be too damp for you here,” said the Frogs; “but you are very welcome! Are you a he or a she? But it doesn’t matter; you are equally welcome.”

And she was invited to the concert in the evening—the family concert: great enthusiasm and thin voices; we know the sort of thing. No refreshments were given, only there was plenty to drink, for the whole pond was free.

“Now I shall resume my journey,” said the little Toad; for she always felt a longing for something better.

She saw the stars shining, so large and so bright, and she saw the moon gleaming; and then she saw the sun rise, and mount higher and higher.

“Perhaps, after all, I am still in a well, only

in a larger well. I must get higher yet; I feel a great restlessness and longing." And when the moon became round and full, the poor creature thought, "I wonder if that is the bucket, which will be let down, and into which I must step to get higher up? Or is the sun the great bucket? How great it is! how bright it is! It can take up all. I must look out, that I may not miss the opportunity. Oh, how it seems to shine in my head! I don't think the jewel can shine brighter. But I haven't the jewel; not that I cry about that—no, I must go higher up, into splendour and joy. I feel so confident, and yet I am afraid. It's a difficult step to take, and yet it must be taken. Onward, therefore, straight onward!"

She took a few steps, such as a crawling

animal may take, and soon found herself on a road, beside which people dwelt: here there were flower gardens as well as kitchen gardens. And she sat down to rest by a kitchen garden.

“What a number of different creatures there are that I never knew! and how beautiful and great the world is! But one must look round in it, and not stay in one spot.” And then she hopped into the kitchen garden. “How green it is here! how beautiful it is here!”

“I know that,” said the Caterpillar on the leaf: “my leaf is the largest here. It hides half the world from me, but I don’t care for the world.”

“Cluck! cluck!” And some fowls came: they tripped about in the cabbage garden. The

Fowl who marched at the head of them had a long sight, and she spied the Caterpillar on the green leaf, and pecked at it, so that the Caterpillar fell on the ground, where it twisted and writhed.

The Fowl looked at it first with one eye and then with the other, for she did not know what the end of this writhing would be.

“It doesn’t do that with a good will,” thought the Fowl, and lifted up her head to peck at the Caterpillar.

The Toad was so horrified at this that she came crawling straight up towards the Fowl.

“Aha! it has allies,” quoth the Fowl. “Just look at the crawling thing!” And then the Fowl turned away. “I don’t care for the little green morsel: it would only tickle my throat.”

The other fowls took the same view of it, and they all turned away together.

“I writhed myself free,” said the Caterpillar.

“What a good thing it is when one has presence of mind! But the hardest thing remains to be done, and that is to get on my leaf again. Where is it?”

And the little Toad came up and expressed her sympathy. She was glad that in her ugliness she had frightened the fowls.

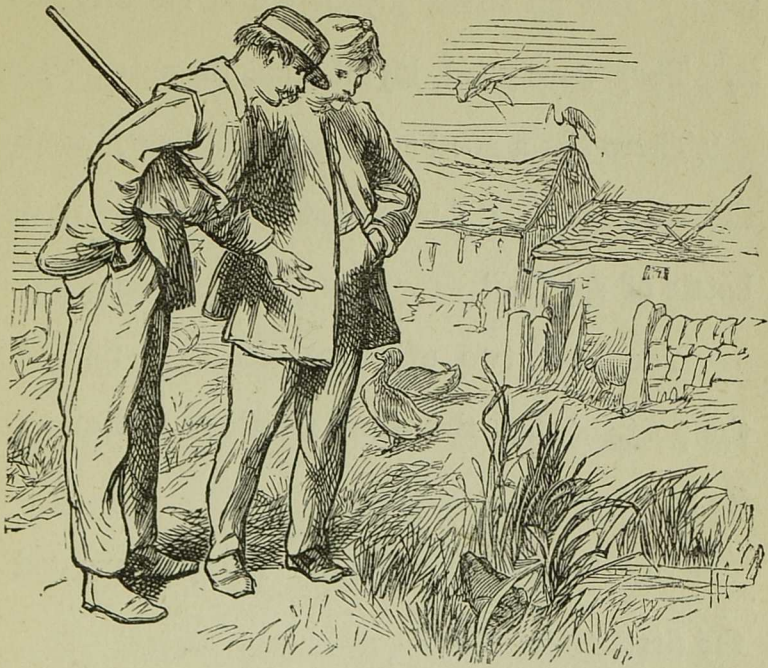
“What do you mean by that?” cried the Caterpillar. “I wriggled myself free from the Fowl. You are very disagreeable to look at. Cannot I be left in peace on my own property? Now I smell cabbage; now I am near my leaf. Nothing is so beautiful as property. But I must go higher up.”

“Yes, higher up,” said the little Toad; “higher up! she feels just as I do; but she’s not in a good humour to-day. That’s because of the fright. We all want to go higher up.” And she looked up as high as ever she could.

The stork sat in his nest on the roof of the farm-house. He clapped with his beak, and the mother-stork clapped with hers.

“How high up they live!” thought the Toad. “If one could only get as high as that!”

In the farm-house lived two young students; the one was a poet and the other a scientific searcher into the secrets of nature. The one sang and wrote joyously of everything that God had created, and how it was mirrored in his heart. He sang it out clearly, sweetly, richly, in well-sounding verses; while the other inves-



The Students.

tigated created matter itself, and even cut it open where need was. He looked upon God's creation as a great sum in arithmetic—subtracted, multiplied, and tried to know it within and without, and to talk with understanding concerning it; and that was a very sensible

thing; and he spoke joyously and cleverly of it. They were good, joyful men, those two.

“There sits a good specimen of a toad,” said the naturalist. “I must have that fellow in a bottle of spirits.”

“You have two of them already,” replied the poet. “Let the thing sit there and enjoy its life.”

“But it’s so wonderfully ugly,” persisted the first.

“Yes; if we could find the jewel in its head,” said the poet, “I too should be for cutting it open.”

“A jewel!” cried the naturalist. “You seem to know a great deal about natural history.”

“But is there not something beautiful in the popular belief that just as the toad is the ugliest

of animals, it should often carry the most precious jewel in its head? Is it not just the same thing with men? What a jewel that was that Æsop had, and still more, Socrates!”

The Toad did not hear any more, nor did she understand half of what she had heard. The two friends walked on, and thus she escaped the fate of being bottled up in spirits.

“Those two also were speaking of the jewel,” said the Toad to herself. “What a good thing that I have not got it! I might have been in a very disagreeable position.”

Now there was a clapping on the roof of the farm-house. Father-Stork was making a speech to his family, and his family was glancing down at the two young men in the kitchen garden.

“Man is the most conceited creature!” said

the Stork. "Listen how their jaws are wagging; and for all that they can't clap properly, They boast of their gifts of eloquence and their language! Yes, a fine language truly! Why, it changes in every day's journey we make. One of them doesn't understand another. Now, *we* can speak our language over the whole earth—up in the North and in Egypt. And men are not able to fly, moreover. They rush along by means of an invention they call 'railway;' but they often break their necks over it. It makes my beak turn cold when I think of it. The world could get on without men. We could do without them very well, so long as we only keep frogs and earthworms."

"That was a powerful speech," thought the little Toad. "What a great man that is yon-

der, and how high he sits! Higher than ever I saw any one sit yet; and how he can swim!" she cried, as the Stork soared away through the air with outspread pinions.

And the Mother-Stork began talking in the nest, and told about Egypt, and the waters of the Nile, and the incomparable mud that was to be found in that strange land; and all this sounded new and very charming to the little Toad.

"I must go to Egypt!" said she. "If the Stork or one of his young ones would only take me! I would oblige him in return. Yes, I shall get to Egypt, for I feel so happy! All the longing and all the pleasure that I feel is much better than having a jewel in one's head."

And it was just she who had the jewel. That

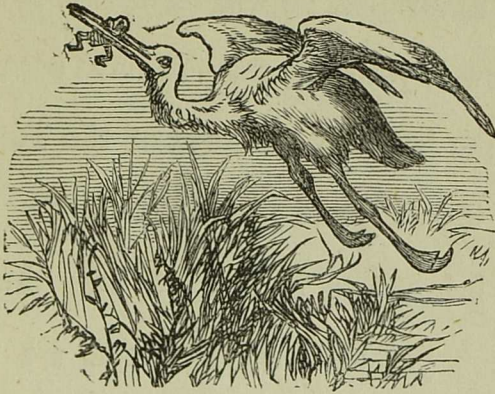
jewel was the continual striving and desire to go upward—ever upward. It gleamed in her head, gleamed in joy, beamed brightly in her longings.

Then, suddenly, up came the Stork. He had seen the Toad in the grass, and stooped down and seized the little creature anything but gently. The Stork's beak pinched her, and the wind whistled; it was not exactly agreeable, but she was going upward—upward towards Egypt—and she knew it; and that was why her eyes gleamed, and a spark seemed to fly out of them.

“Quunk!—ah!”

The body was dead—the Toad was killed! But the spark that had shot forth from her eyes: what became of that?

The sunbeam took it up ; the sunbeam carried the jewel from the head of the Toad. Whither



Upward

Ask not the naturalist ; rather ask the poet. He will tell it thee under the guise of a fairy tale ; and the Caterpillar on the cabbage, and the Stork family belong to the story. Think ! the Caterpillar is changed, and turns into a beautiful butterfly ; the Stork family flies over mountains and seas, to the distant Africa, and yet finds the shortest way home to the same

country—to the same roof. Nay, that is almost too improbable; and yet it is true. You may ask the naturalist, he will confess it is so; and you know it yourself, for you have seen it.

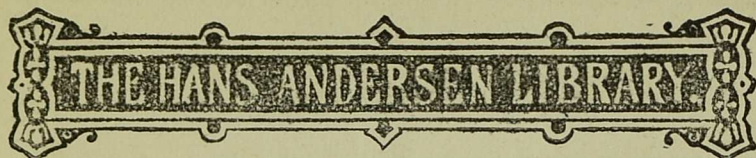
But the jewel in the head of the Toad?

Seek it in the sun; see it there if you can.

The brightness is too dazzling there. We have not yet such eyes as can see into the glories which God has created, but we shall receive them by-and-bye; and that will be the most beautiful story of all, and we shall all have our share in it.



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